

Terms of Reference
for
Medical Biophysics Graduate Students' Advisory Committees
(Revised Summer Term 2016)

Advisory Committee Composition

The supervisor and at least two other faculty, usually from the Department, who are chosen by the student and the supervisor in consultation. The Department requires that at least one committee member should have a few years' experience of advisory committees in the Department.

The student has the major input because the Advisory Committee exists for the student's benefit. Because of the scientific role of the committee, faculty from other departments may be chosen. For the same reason, a fourth member may be chosen especially for PhD candidates. (The Graduate Chair is willing to advise on the formation of committees.)

Advisory Committee Responsibilities

1. Courses

- advise the student on what courses should be taken for credit and when

2. Research

- provide the student with a forum in which to discuss their work and get feedback and scientific advice, and to broaden the scientific base beyond what the supervisor alone can provide

3. Progress

- on the Department's behalf to assess periodically each student's progress, and render a report on it for the student's file
- when a student applies to transfer from the MSc to the PhD program, to decide whether to recommend the transfer to the Department
- when a student is not making much progress or is in difficulties, to advise both student and supervisor on courses of action
- recommend to the Department that a student be asked to withdraw from the program, or indeed, not to be allowed to register again, because in its opinion the student has failed to demonstrate enough progress and the necessary skills to ensure success in the program

4. Comprehensive Evaluations

- form the major part of the Departmental Committee which undertakes the required comprehensive evaluations of the student (see separate regulations and guidelines)

5. Thesis

- At the student's request to advise on the proposed content of the thesis. Likewise, at the student's request to individual members or to the whole committee, to comment on drafts of the thesis in whole or in part.

Note: in very rare cases, the Department may recommend that a committee member be an examiner of the thesis. In this situation, this advisory committee member must avoid providing the student with thesis comments without revealing his or her identity as an examiner. No one may be an examiner who has reviewed the thesis as an adviser.

6. Resolve Disputes

- assist the student if there should emerge a conflict with the supervisor

Protocol

Meetings may be called by either student or supervisor. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange the time and location of the advisory committee meeting. The supervisor normally chairs the meeting. The student normally provides for the committee members (at least 24 hours beforehand) an outline or abstract of the work to date, and an agenda for the meeting. Whenever the Committee is to render a judgement for the record, the student withdraws while the Committee makes up its mind, and then returns to hear and possibly disagree with the judgement. The Chair drafts a one or two-page report of the meeting. When both student and committee members agree that the report is a fair record of what was done and decided, then the Chair will sign it, and deliver a copy to the Graduate Secretary, who will log its arrival and put it in the student's file. Student and committee members also receive copies.

Required Meetings

The Department requires that a meeting to evaluate progress be held at about six and twelve months into the student's program, and at least annually after that.