
Advisory Committee Meetings: Roles and Expectations

The advisory committee plays an essential role in the progression of a graduate student in the Neuroscience Graduate Program. It is intended to support the student, and the meeting itself is not intended to be a defense. This document conveys the roles and expectations of all involved in the advisory committee meeting, and supplements the information found online, which also provides information about the content of the presentation and written report. Refer to: https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/neuroscience/graduate/advisory_committee.html.

The roles described below for the supervisor and student supplement the broader roles and responsibilities of the supervisor and student, which are found online at: <https://grad.uwo.ca/administration/supervision.html>.

Role of Advisors:

- Helps ensure the scope of the project is reasonable
- Helps assess and guide the student's scientific progress
- Provides recommendations for course work
- Establishes goals / expectations for next meeting
- Makes recommendations for the transfer of a Master's student to the Doctoral program
- Guides PhD students through the Comprehensive Assessment process. Will assess progress and make recommendations, as needed
- Makes recommendation for permission to write thesis. One of the advisors (in addition to the supervisor) may approve the thesis before it is submitted for examination
- Sets timeline for next meeting
- Be available as a resource that the student can approach between meetings, if required

Role of Supervisor:

- The supervisor is a member of the advisory committee, so has the roles noted above unless otherwise specified
- Prior to the meeting, works with the student in preparing the written report and oral presentation

Role of the Program Representative:

- Serves as chairperson of the advisory committee meeting
- The program representative MUST be present for the meeting to take place
- Ensures that the objectives of the graduate program are being met
- Monitors student progress
- Completes meeting reports and communicates outcomes of the meeting

Refer to: https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/neuroscience/graduate/advisory_committee.html

Role of the Student:

- Schedule meetings at least once every six months or earlier, if needed
- One week prior to the meeting, sends a progress report to the advisory committee which includes:
 - Previous advisory committee meeting report (if applicable)
 - A new pre-filled advisory committee meeting report, including self-reflection on page 2
 - Gantt chart
- Prepare a presentation (1st meeting: 5-10 mins; All other meetings: 15-20 mins)
- Notify advisory committee of seminar presentation date

Sample meeting outline (1 hour):

1. Introductions (first meeting)
2. Presentation
3. Discussion
4. Student is asked to leave the room
5. Student is brought back in and provided feedback on their progress

How often are meetings held? At least every 6 months. If issues arise, then a meeting can be called by the student, the supervisor, the program representative, or the director of the program in shortened intervals, as needed.

Want to Transfer from MSc to PhD? After discussing this option with your supervisor, you will need to arrange a committee meeting. When scheduling the meeting please plan for 1.5 hours. In addition to your 5-page progress report you will also need to send your advisory committee a one-page plan for your PhD project, and you should be prepared to discuss the rationale and conduct of the proposed project. A transfer must be approved before the sixth term of Master's registration.

Where can students go to for assistance between meetings?

1. Supervisor, Advisors or Program Representative
2. Program Director
3. Program Coordinator
4. Student Representative
5. Peers (members of your lab, SONGS – Society of Neuroscience Graduate Students)
6. Other resources on campus:
 - i) [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#)
 - ii) [Ombudsperson](#)
 - iii) [Health & Wellness Services](#)
 - iv) [SGPS – School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#)
 - v) [SOGS – Society of Graduate Students](#)