**ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS: *DISSERTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE***

The dissertation is expected to be an original contribution to scholarship, to exemplify the highest standards of the discipline, and to be of lasting value to the intellectual community. The work for the dissertation will be in progress from the time that a student chooses a permanent laboratory in which to work and has established a Dissertation Advisory Committee.

**Dissertation Advisory Committee**

The Dissertation Advisory Committee is a critical aspect of a student’s graduate training. Preparing for the first meeting will stimulate a student to think deeply about potential thesis projects and to read extensively literature relevant to their project of choice. This and subsequent meetings provide a regular forum for a student and their thesis advisor to receive advice from other faculty members. The Dissertation Advisory Committee serves as the core of a student’s Dissertation Reading and Thesis Exam Committee. At the time of the thesis defense, it is important and useful for students to have examiners who are familiar with their work. The student’s committee is not only to be used to discuss their thesis project, but also their future ideas, options, goals and how to strategies about obtaining those goals. Moreover, the relationships developed with committee members over the years will serve students well when transitioning to positions after graduation.

No two paths through graduate school are the same. Each student requires individualized advising and mentoring for her or his development and growth. Suggestions on how to get the mentoring needed can be found at:

<http://biosciences.stanford.edu/current/advising/get-mentoring-you-need.html>

**Committee composition:**

A student should select the Dissertation Advisory Committee in consultation with her/his advisor. **You will need 2 genetics faculty members outside of your advisor. In other words = Your Advisor plus 2 genetics faculty.** If desired, additional faculty members can be added from any appropriate department at Stanford, including Genetics. Generally, members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee must also be members of the Academic Council, although in special circumstances it may be possible to include individuals who are not Academic Council members. Changes to the Dissertation Advisory Committee are allowed, but must be reported promptly to the Genetics Graduate Program Administrator.

**A student’s first committee meeting should be no later than the end of the Spring quarter of their second year.** The first meeting will consist of a thesis project proposal and include a three-page (minimum length) written summary. A student and her/his advisor should agree on an appropriate format for the summary, which should be provided to the committee a week in advance.

**Tips to schedule your meeting:**

Who are you thinking of having on your committee? Are they really busy?

Get 3-4 available days/times for your most busy committee member – ask the admin/PI to hold those for a few days

* + Send out a Doodle Poll (doodle.ch) to your other committee members and see if any of those work for everyone else (keep your fingers crossed)
  + If you are unsuccessful, start the process again.

Take it from a former grad student and her experience **“DO NOT** **WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!** **It can be really, really, REALLY challenging to find a date and time that work for ALL of your committee members.** **It took me 2 months! Heed Wendy’s warning!”**

**\*\*Subsequent meetings will be held at least once every twelve months through the fourth year, and every six months beginning in the fifth year and continuing until graduation**. Students should fill out the attached form after each meeting and submit a signed form to the Genetics Graduate Program Administrator so that the Department has a record of their meetings. *Failure to provide evidence of a committee meeting according to the schedule described above may result in withholding of a student's stipend payments until the requirement is met.*

http://genetics.stanford.edu/education/Genetics\_Dissertation\_Comm\_Form.pdf

Due to the numerous committees that faculty serve on it has been requested that you keep you meeting to an hour. Several days prior to your meeting send your committee your power point presentation.

**GRADUATION REQUIREMENT:** Also keep in mind that prior to your thesis defense, students are required to have published or submitted for publication at least one **first author paper arising from their graduate work.**