

Thesis Committee Responsibilities

The primary charge of a thesis committee is to evaluate the scientific progress of the student and to suggest directions in research that will culminate in a successful thesis. The committee as a whole, and as individual members, should be willing as well to help in other facets of the student's scientific and professional development.

Effective mentorship from members of a thesis committee involves:

- Critical evaluation of the student's scientific progress, and of the competencies that relate to scientific pursuit in general.
- Feedback to the thesis mentor and/or student regarding feasibility of research goals and plans, especially when the proposed plan is incompatible with timely completion of the thesis.
- Cross-checks on training in responsible conduct of research and experimental design as it relates to reproducibility, verifying that the lab notebook is complete and well-managed.
- An active interest in the student's professional development, using the student's IDP as one point of discussion.
- Interactions that promote open dialog on science, skills, interests, and aspirations.
- A willingness to step in should problems in the dynamics between the student and thesis mentor and/or other elements of the research environment be recognized.
- Respect student confidentiality on mentorship concerns. If such concerns are raised without the thesis advisor present, do not share with the mentor. With student permission, bring concerns to program chair and/or graduate group chair.

Faculty should refer to the [Thesis Committee Responsibilities and Expectations](#) document for more information.

Responsibilities of the Thesis Committee Chair

The chair of the thesis committee plays the primary role in ensuring that the committee meets all of its responsibilities.

- Review student progress report, plans and IDP prior to the thesis committee meeting (provided by student one week prior to meeting).
- Prepare [Thesis Committee Meeting Evaluation](#) report (also found under [Forms](#)) and distribute to committee, student, advisor and C&MB office within one week of meeting. Please make substantive recommendations and define expectations. The full committee must approve the report.
- Communicate any concerns about student progress/plans or student-advisor interaction to program chair immediately following the thesis committee meeting.
- Serve as a key advocate for student success, being available to discuss any issues of importance, including thesis project, career planning, etc.
- Respect student confidentiality on mentorship concerns. If such concerns are raised without the thesis advisor present, do not share with the mentor. With student permission, bring concerns to program chair and/or graduate group chair.