# CANCER BIOLOGY HANDBOOK

Important URL links:

**Getting Started:**
https://biosciences.stanford.edu/
https://vpge.stanford.edu/gradgateway

**Graduate Life Office:**
https://glo.stanford.edu/

**Cancer Biology Program**
http://med.stanford.edu/cancerbiology.html

**SUNet ID**
http://accounts.stanford.edu

**Encryption**
Encryption of computers and other devices is required:
https://med.stanford.edu/irt/security.html

**AXESS**
Electronic records:
http://axess.stanford.edu

**Registrar's Office**
Catalog of courses, policies, degree requirements, etc.:
https://registrar.stanford.edu/

**Honor Code and Fundamental Standards**
Read about academic integrity, plagiarism, the standard of conduct for students at Stanford, etc.:
https://gradadmissions.stanford.edu/admitted-students/entering-stanford/honor-code-and-fundamental-standard

**Wellness Resources**
https://biosciences.stanford.edu/current-students/resources/health-and-wellness-resources/

https://tile.stanford.edu/

School of Medicine Mental Health Team

Provides mental health resources, counseling, and support tailored specifically for students in the School of Medicine. Confidential Resource.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Offers mental health support, counseling, workshops, and resources to help students manage stress, anxiety, and other personal challenges. Confidential Resource.

Confidential Support Team (CST)

The Confidential Support Team (CST) offers free, confidential support to students impacted by sexual assault and relationship violence, including domestic abuse, intimate partner abuse, stalking, and sexual or gender-based harassment and discrimination.

Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (ORSL)

Supports students in exploring and practicing diverse religions and traditions.

School of Medicine Ombudsperson

Offers confidential, impartial support to students in the School of Medicine for resolving academic, professional, and personal issues.

Stanford University Ombuds

Serves faculty, staff, students, and postdocs from all schools and centers other than the School of Medicine. Please also note that **neither Ombuds** serves community members unaffiliated with Stanford, nor staff or patients in Stanford hospitals or outpatient clinics.

Office of Graduate Education (OGE)

Provides resources, support, and programs for graduate students, focusing on academic, professional, and personal development.

BioPeers

A mentorship and peer support program connecting graduate students and postdocs in the biosciences to promote professional development and well-being.

Academic Program Student Services Officers

Each academic program has a Student Services Officer that serves as the contact person for student questions and concerns.

Graduate Life Office (GLO)

Provides support, programs, and resources for graduate students to foster community, well-being, and professional development.

**TimelyCare**
Supplement for mental and medical health, all virtual. Students can get up to 12 free therapy sessions via TimelyCare https://medicalservices.stanford.edu/timelycare

**Well-being coaches**
Students can book free sessions with a well-being coach, which can be more action-oriented than therapy/can be another option for people to try
https://wellbeing.stanford.edu/well-being/coaching/meet-well-being-coaches

**Arts prescribing program**
Connects Stanford students to art & community as a “prescription” to help support their mental health
https://arts.stanford.edu/office-of-the-vice-president-for-the-arts/arts-prescription/

## Academic & Career Resources

Biosci Careers

Provides career development resources, job postings, networking opportunities, and professional advice specifically for students and alumni in the biosciences.

Biosciences Grant Writing Academy

Offers workshops and training to help biosciences graduate students develop skills for writing successful research grant proposals and improve science communication.

Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education (VPGE)

Supports graduate students by offering resources for academic, professional, and personal development, including funding opportunities, workshops, and leadership programs. Grad Grow offers career development, professional skills training, and networking opportunities tailored to graduate students, helping them build successful careers in academia, industry, and beyond.

Academic Skills Coaching

Offers personalized coaching to help students enhance study strategies, time management, and academic skills for success.

## Stanford University Resources

SHARE Title IX and Title IV Offices

University’s central resource for redressing and preventing sexual harassment, violence, and harassment/discrimination issues experienced by all Stanford community members.

Office of Accessible Education

Provides accommodations and support services for students with disabilities.

Office of Community Standards

Promotes the mutual responsibility of members of the Stanford community to uphold the Honor Code and Fundamental Standard. The office coordinates the student conduct system, including administering the formal disciplinary processes and the informal resolution of concerns.

University Compliance Office

There are many different departments throughout Stanford responsible for monitoring, promoting and improving compliance with laws and policies in abroad array of subject areas. The University Compliance Office supports and coordinates compliance functions through the University Compliance Helpline.

Diversity and Access Office

Ensures university-wide compliance with federal, state, and local regulations concerning non-discrimination and disability access.

Legal Counsel Office

Provides free and confidential legal advice to Stanford students on various matters, including housing, contracts, and personal legal issues.

9/14/26

## OVERALL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

**135 Credits for coursework, including research, required courses and electives of choice**
**Advancing to candidacy**
**One or more retreat talks (and posters all the other years, starting in the 2nd year)**
**One or more Pizza Talks**
**One first-author paper submitted**
**Written dissertation and oral defense**

### FIRST YEAR

**General resources:** http://med.stanford.edu/cancerbiology/StudentResources.html

**CCRTP Boot Camp:** Students must participate in this multi-day orientation to clinical and basic biology at the beginning of the first year. https://med.stanford.edu/cancer/about/events/ccrtp_2026.html

**Annual Retreat:** Students must attend the annual Cancer Biology Program conference, which provides an introduction to the research ongoing in laboratories in the program and an opportunity for networking with students and faculty in the program.
https://med.stanford.edu/cancerbiology/events/AnnualScientificConference.html

**First-Year Mentors:** First-year students will be assigned first-year faculty mentors with whom they should meet to discuss rotation choices, classes, fellowship applications, and any other areas of concern. Students should minimally schedule meetings at the beginning of the fall quarter and at the end of the spring quarter before choosing a thesis laboratory. A form must be filled out by the first- year advisor to document this meeting at the end of the year.

**Fellowships:** Students are encouraged to apply for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate (NSDEG) fellowships; discussions with their mentors and program directors will help determine if these applications should be submitted the first year. First-year mentors and rotation advisors should provide feedback on the proposals. A special fellowship-writing program is held by senior Cancer Biology graduate students in the fall of the first year to help with preparation of the applications. Dr. Monte Winslow is available to read NSF applications and provide feedback.

**Laboratory Rotations:** Students are required to do 2 rotations in Cancer Biology labs before choosing a thesis lab. Typically, students will do 3 rotations in laboratories during the first year (Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters), to identify a laboratory of interest for their thesis work. See some guidelines:

https://biosciences.stanford.edu/program-overview/academic-milestones/

Students need to inform Grace of their rotation choices (before starting) to get approval from the program. Each rotation typically lasts one quarter, but it is possible to do two shorter rotations each lasting half a quarter, with permission from the Directors. Students are required to do the equivalent of 2 rotations in laboratories of faculty affiliated with the Cancer Biology program before they can choose their PhD labs.

Participating faculty:

http://med.stanford.edu/cancerbiology/ParticipatingFaculty.html

Rotations in the summer before the first year are possible:

https://biosciences.stanford.edu/pathways/advance/

Numerous faculty members present their research programs at various events (e.g., the annual retreat, the fall journal club, or the seminar series) to help first-year students select potential rotations. In addition, an email with a link to faculty who are recruiting rotating students has been provided in the Welcome Email from the directors of the program. First-year mentors can also provide advice. Students are encouraged to talk with numerous potential rotation mentors, speak with students in labs of interest about the lab and mentorship style, and to potentially attend lab meetings, to help choose their rotations. A discussion session with more senior students is also held at the beginning of the first quarter.

No more than 2 students from the program can rotate in the same lab at the same time.

**Joining a Laboratory:** At the end of the rotations, students will select a laboratory for thesis work, after discussion with their first-year mentors. The first-year mentor must sign a form to document this conversation. http://med.stanford.edu/cancerbiology/StudentResources.html

The choice of the lab must also be communicated to the program administrator and approved by the Directors. If the student decides to do his/her PhD as a joint student between two laboratories, there must be one primary faculty PhD advisor. We expect faculty thesis advisors to have an active role in the advising process, including by monitoring progress frequently and by helping define and develop realistic educational career plans through regular interactions with the advisee.

**NOTE:** Should a Cancer Biology student wish to join the laboratory of a faculty member that is not affiliated with the program, that faculty member must agree to join the Cancer Biology program and to abide by the program's goals and requirements (listed on the Cancer Biology Program application form filled out by the mentor). A student joining the laboratory of a faculty member not affiliated with the program may be asked to transfer to a different PhD program if the faculty does not agree with the program's goals and guidelines and if the research project is not related to cancer biology.

To ensure the best mentorship possible for each student, the Cancer Biology program mandates that no more than 2 students from the Cancer Biology program can join the same lab the same year. At any given time, one lab cannot have more than 5 Cancer Biology students.

**IDP:** Students must fill out Individual Development Plan forms with their thesis advisors within 30 days of joining the lab, typically during the summer quarter.

https://biosciences.stanford.edu/current/idp/

**Required Coursework:** A minimum of 135 units is required for receipt of the Ph.D. from Stanford*. You will need to take a total of 10 units of electives. Students must register for exactly 10 units every quarter[&,†]. The first year schedule is outlined below.

http://med.stanford.edu/cancerbiology/HOME/Curriculum.html

**Year 1**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Fall***[#] | Foundations | (5 units – BIOS 200) |
| | Molecular and Genetic Basis of Cancer | (4 units – CBIO 240[¥]) |
| | Journal Club - Faculty presentations | (1 unit – CBIO 280) |
| | Seminar/pizza talk series[#] | (1 unit – CBIO 245) |
| | Research Rotation | (0 units) |
| ***Winter*** | Electives | (2–5 units) |
| | Seminar/pizza talk series | (1 unit – CBIO 245) |
| | MED 255 Responsible Conduct | (1 unit) |
| | Research Rotation | (up to 10 units - CBIO 399) |
| ***Spring*** | Cellular and Clinical Aspects of Cancer | (4 units – CBIO 242[¥]) |
| | Electives | (2–5 units) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Seminar/pizza talk series | (1 unit – CBIO 245) |
| Research Rotation | (up to 10 units – CBIO 399) |

Winter or Spring: MED 255 is the required Responsible Conduct in Research course (1 unit), and it is offered every quarter, but it fills up very fast. Wake up early to be able to sign up at 8 AM!

* Transfer students may receive credit for up to 45 units of appropriate graduate study elsewhere, and at least 90 units must be completed at Stanford toward the Ph.D.

& Register for Graduate Research (CBIO 399) as needed to maintain enrollment in 10 units each quarter, including summer, until you reach TGR status (135 units), and then register for CBIO 802 (zero units).

† For all courses, use E. Rankin or A. Newman as your advisor until you find a rotation lab.

# To avoid going over 10 units in the fall quarter, do not sign up for one of the 1-unit courses (CBIO 245 or CBIO 280); however, note that these two classes are still required for 1st (and 2nd)-year students, and attendance will be monitored.

¥ CBIO 240 and CBIO 242 are the only two courses taken for letter grades.

**NOTE:** The courses listed above (BIOS 200, CBIO 240, CBIO 280, CBIO 245, CBIO 242) must all be taken during the first year and cannot be replaced by electives or other activities. **Also note that attendance is always taken for CBIO 245 and CBIO 280. We expect attendance for all classes, and only 1 (very exceptionally 2) missed classes per quarter will be allowed**. For each quarter in which more than 2 classes are missed, the student will have to take an additional quarter after the 2nd year.

**Elective Coursework:** A variety of courses are available as electives, according to the individual student's interests. If desired, different specialization tracks listed on the Cancer Biology Program website can be selected (e.g., Computational biology). In the first year, winter and spring quarters are ideal times to pursue elective coursework. A list of courses can be found here: https://explorecourses.stanford.edu

## SECOND YEAR

**Annual Retreat:** Students must attend the annual Cancer Biology Program conference, and they must present their work in the form of a poster or a talk. Second-year students will typically present a poster. Note that each student in the program is required to give at least one talk at the retreat during graduate school, typically during the 4th year.

**Qualifying Exam:** To advance to candidacy, each student must write a proposal based on his/her thesis work and defend it in front of a committee of 3 faculty members. The advisor will attend for the first 10 minutes. In a case where a committee member is absent, the exam must be rescheduled. The qualifying exam must be done before the end of December of the second year. Each student is responsible for scheduling his/her own examination before the above deadline. If the deadline is missed, the Program will consider that the student failed the exam. When scheduling the exam time with your committee members, make sure to identify a qualifying exam committee chair who will be responsible for submitting the online evaluation form following the meeting. At least two committee members must be from the Cancer Biology program, and the committee must be approved by the Program Directors before it is finalized. At least two of the three committee members must be on the Academic Council (University tenure line, UTL) (and thus only one can be on the University Medical Line, UML – check the Stanford Profiles https://profiles.stanford.edu/ or ask the Program Directors). The students can refer to Stanford graduate academic policies and procedures:

https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-4/subchapter-8/page-4-8-1

The exam itself consists of an NIH-style written grant proposal and an oral examination. The proposal is to be shared with committee members no later than 10 days prior to the examination. The format of the proposal is 7 pages, including figures but excluding references, with 1.0 line spacing, Arial 11 font, and 0.5-inch margins. The first page is a Specific Aims page, and other sections include Background-Significance and Research Plan (including a discussion of alternative approaches).

**Note on AI usage:** A core aspect of doctoral education is learning to express ideas clearly, coherently, and accurately. Since the use of generative AI can undermine this process, the Cancer Biology Program prohibits the use of generative AI to create, polish, or refine language in both the written proposal and the slides accompanying the oral examination. The use of these tools to generate ideas, hypotheses, interpretations, and conclusions related to the qualifying exam is also strictly prohibited.

For the oral examination, the goals are for the student to demonstrate:

1. A broad knowledge and understanding of the field.
2. A historical perspective, and identification of seminal contributions to the field.
3. That they have a testable hypothesis and research goal based on one or more gaps in the field.
4. Knowledge of experimental procedures.
5. Critical judgment in the evaluation of data and results.
6. An ability to draw conclusions from proposed experiments and to propose alternatives.

This is an “on-topic” exam where students are expected to defend the work that they propose for a thesis project. Just prior to the beginning of the oral exam, the student’s advisor is expected to meet with the examination committee for a brief closed-door session without the student present. After the advisor provides some background about the student to the committee, the student will then be invited into the room to begin his/her presentation and the student’s advisor will leave. Once the advisor leaves the room, the qualifying examination committee Chair will be formally in charge of the proceedings and will decide when the exam is over. Generally, students prepare a 30-minute oral presentation that reviews the project background but largely focuses on the Specific Aims and the proposed experiments. When the Chair determines that the examination is completed (generally after about 60-90 minutes), the student is asked to leave the room, and the committee deliberates in private about the student’s performance. A student’s performance will be deemed **Pass**, **Retake**, or **Fail** by the qualifying examination committee. The student will be assessed on his/her written proposal, oral presentation, and mastery of the specific field of research including background literature and experimental techniques, and general knowledge about the broader field of cancer biology. The decision of the examination committee is conveyed orally to the student immediately following the exam. In addition, the Chair is responsible for summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of the written proposal and oral presentation on the examination form and will submit the online form to Grace.

If the qualifying examination committee deems the student’s performance unsatisfactory, the student will receive a Retake decision, and the committee will request a revision of the written proposal, a retake of the oral examination, or both, prior to the end of spring quarter, second year. Students who receive a Fail, either following the first exam or a Retake, will be dismissed from the program and will leave with a master’s degree (if all 45 units have been completed).

Qualifying exam form: http://med.stanford.edu/cancerbiology/StudentResources.html

**Advancing to candidacy:** The major department grants admission to candidacy for the PhD degree once the student successfully completes the qualifying exam and required courses. Students are anticipated to be admitted to candidacy by the end of their second year of PhD studies.

The advancement to candidacy form: Grace will prepare and send the application to candidacy form at the end of Spring Quarter in Year 2. Please complete the form and return to her.

http://med.stanford.edu/cancerbiology/StudentResources.html

**Fellowships:** Second-year students can still apply for fellowships, including the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate (NSDEG) fellowships. Dr. Monte Winslow is available to read NSF applications and provide feedback.

**Required Coursework in Second Year** (Please note that exactly 10 units are required each quarter)**:**

***Fall, Winter, Spring***

| | |
|---|---|
| Seminar/pizza talk series | (1 unit – CBIO 245) |
| Thesis research | (9 units – CBIO 399) |

**NOTE:** CBIO 245 must be taken during the second year and cannot be replaced by electives or other activities. Also note that attendance is always taken for CBIO 245, and only 1, exceptionally 2, missed classes per quarter will be allowed. For each quarter in which more than 2 classes are missed, then the student will have to take an additional quarter after the 2nd year.

**Individual Development Plan (IDP):** Students must fill out IDP forms to create a plan for the next year's goals and schedule a time to discuss the form with their advisors.
https://biosciences.stanford.edu/current/idp/

**Thesis Research:** Students will conduct research in their PhD labs.

**Thesis Committee:** Choosing a qualifying exam committee provides a good opportunity to select faculty members who will be able to provide key input into the project and may become members of a permanent thesis committee, although the student and his/her mentor can decide to choose different committee members for the thesis committee. We advise not to bring the thesis committee form to the qualifying exam, so the student has more time to choose a thesis committee subsequently.

Students will select thesis committees of 3 individuals that they feel will best help them during their thesis work. At least 2 committee members must be from the Cancer Biology program, and the committee must be approved by the Program Directors before it is finalized. This can be the same set of faculty members present at the qualifying exam, or substitutions can be made. The thesis committee is best selected with the help of the student's thesis advisor. At least two of the three committee members must be on the Academic Council (University tenure line, UTL) (and thus only one can be on the University Medical Line, UML – check on the Stanford Profiles https://profiles.stanford.edu/ or ask the Program Directors). Be sure to select a thesis committee Chair who will be responsible for submitting the online thesis committee evaluation forms and will make sure that the committee meets individually with the faculty and the student during the meeting.

**NOTE:** The first thesis committee meeting should be convened within one year of the qualifying exam and must thus be convened before the end of the fall quarter of their 3rd year.

**THIRD/FOURTH YEARS**

**Grant Writing Academy and Senior Fellowships:** If they do not already have fellowships, students should apply for fellowships in the 3rd year, including the NRSA (NIH). Stanford has a grant-writing academy to help:

https://biosciences.stanford.edu/current/grants-fellowships/

**Annual Retreat:** Students must attend the annual Cancer Biology Program conference every year and they must present their work every year in the form of a poster or a talk. Note that each student in the program is required to give at least one talk at the retreat during graduate school. The 4th year is often a good time to give a talk.

**Pizza Talk Presentation:** Students must give at least one long-format pizza talk to gain experience in delivering a longer-format talk, and this is typically done in the 3rd year.

**Coursework:** Coursework should be finished by the end of the winter quarter in the 4th year. At this point, students should have a total of 135 units and will have achieved "TGR" status (Terminal Graduate Registration). Make sure to apply for TGR status with Patty and Grace to reduce your tuition costs. Students may still take courses up to 3 units per quarter.

**Teaching:** Students may opt to do TAships, for teaching experience. They will need to secure approval from their PhD advisors before committing to a TAship.

Year 3/4 – Teaching Assistant form: http://med.stanford.edu/cancerbiology/StudentResources.html

**Individual Development Plan (IDP):** Students must fill out an IDP form to formulate a plan for the next year's goals and schedule a time to discuss the form with their advisors.

https://biosciences.stanford.edu/current/idp/

**Thesis Research:** Students will perform thesis research.

**Thesis Committee Meeting:** In the 3rd year, students will schedule a meeting no later than 1 year after the qualifying exam with their thesis committees to present their research. Beginning in the 4th year, students must meet twice a year with their thesis committees, to solicit feedback on their research and on progressing toward the goals of publications and thesis defense. We strongly suggest convening one committee meeting in the fall quarter and one in the spring quarter. Students should schedule their committee meeting ~3-6 months before it is convened. Program administrators can help book a room if needed. If one member of the committee cannot attend, the student can meet that person individually before or after. At least two of the three committee members must be on the Academic Council (University tenure line, UTL) (and thus only one can be on the University Medical Line, UML – check on the Stanford Profiles https://profiles.stanford.edu/ or ask the Program Directors).

| Recommended Timetable | December | June |
|---|---|---|
| 2nd year | Qualifying Exam | |
| **3rd year** | **Thesis Committee Meeting** | |
| **4th year** | **Thesis Committee Meeting** | **Thesis Committee Meeting** |
| 5th year | Thesis Committee Meeting | Thesis Committee Meeting |

**Thesis committee meeting format:**

Length: 1-1.5 hours

During the first 5-10 minutes, the committee meets with the faculty mentor without the student present to discuss student progress and any areas the committee should be aware of.

During the next 45-50 minutes the student presents their research project providing background, gaps in the field that their work addresses, hypothesis/goals of the thesis research, research plan and data discussion, and timeline with plans for papers, meeting presentations and graduation.

During the last 5-10 minutes, the PhD mentor leaves, and the student meets with the committee to discuss their progress, support from their mentor, and areas in which the committee can provide support. In years 4-6 discussions should focus on plans for a first author paper, the transition to graduation and next steps in career.

Finally, the designated committee Chair will submit the annual committee meeting form outlining student progress as discussed by the entire committee. In addition, the student and the faculty Committee Chair must also submit their annual committee meeting forms directly to Grace via the online form.

**TGR**

Once you reach 135 units, you are eligible to apply for TGR status. This will typically occur after the fall quarter of your 4th year assuming you have taken 10 units each quarter. The benefit of TGR is that your tuition rate will be significantly decreased.

- Doctoral students who have been admitted to candidacy, completed all required courses and degree requirements other than the university oral exam and dissertation, completed 135 units of residency, and submitted a Doctoral Dissertation Reading Committee form may request Terminal Graduate Registration (TGR) status to complete their dissertations. (In the School of Medicine, a similar tuition category for M.D. students, Terminal Medical Registration or TMR, may be available upon completion of specified requirements. Refer to the School of Medicine for further information.)
- Terminal Graduate Registration (TGR) Status

**FIFTH YEAR**

Some students may graduate in the 4th year as long as they have completed all the program requirements, but students should aim to wrap up in their 5th year.

**Responsible conduct of research:** Students must re-train every 4 years, so students who have not graduated yet must take MED 255 again or take BIOS 258.

**Annual Retreat:** Students must continue to attend the required annual Cancer Biology Program conference and present their research. If a student has not yet given a retreat talk, this is a requirement for graduation and must be done in the 5th year.

**Pizza Talk Presentation:** Students must give one long-format pizza talk to gain experience in delivering a longer-format talk. This is a requirement for graduation, so students who have not yet given a Pizza talk must do so in the 5th year.

**Individual Development Plan (IDP):** Students must fill out an IDP form to make a plan for finishing up and schedule a time to discuss the form with their advisors.

**Thesis Research:** Students will perform thesis research.

**Biannual Thesis Committee Meetings:** Students must meet twice a year with their thesis committees. If a student has completed the first author paper requirement and is on track for graduating, the student may send the paper and an update to the committee and the Program Directors for review in lieu of one of the committee meetings.

**Change of Dissertation Advisor or Reading Committee Member:** The Change of Dissertation Adviser or Reading Committee Member form is for Stanford graduate students who need to update their dissertation adviser or reading committee composition. It allows students to make changes such as adding or removing a committee member, changing roles, or assigning a new advisor or co-advisor.

**Dissertation:** The Ph.D. dissertation is expected to be an original contribution to scholarship or scientific knowledge. It must follow exactly the specific written format determined by the university. It is the student's responsibility to review and follow all information and directions for writing and submitting the dissertation. Make sure to read the Directions for Preparing Doctoral Dissertations 6-12 months before planning to defend and submit the dissertation:

https://registrar.stanford.edu/students/dissertation-and-thesis-submission

Once the oral examination is passed and the written dissertation is completed, the dissertation must be filed with the university along with copyright paperwork. The dissertation and accompanying paperwork must be submitted by strictly enforced deadlines posted in the university calendar.

All deadlines, instructions and resources for submitting the dissertation can be found at:

https://registrar.stanford.edu/students/dissertation-and-thesis-submission

https://registrar.stanford.edu/preparing-dissertations-electronic-submission

Practically, you need to

- have the green light from your thesis committee to proceed with the defense.
- identify a chair for your defense. The chair cannot be the program directors or a faculty member in the same department as your PhD advisor. The chair is responsible for signing the university's Orals form, which must be returned to Grace after the defense.
- schedule your defense ~6 months ahead of time and book a room for the oral defense (with Grace's help if needed – e.g., Munzer Auditorium, Clark Center Auditorium, Clark S360, M-106/M-104, LKSC).
- design the flyer advertising your defense talk so Grace and Patty can post it and email it.
- submit your thesis draft to your committee 2 weeks before the date of the oral defense.

The chair of your thesis committee will receive an orals packet which will contain the following: 1) the university's orals form, 2) a 1-2-page abstract of your dissertation, 3) a copy of your flyer, and 4) the ballot form that indicates whether you Pass or Fail your defense. Grace and Patty will put the folder together with your input and email it to your defense chair.

## OVERALL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

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**Advancing to candidacy**
**One or more retreat talks (and posters all the other years, starting in the 2nd year)**
**One or more Pizza Talks**
**One first-author paper submitted**
**Written dissertation submitted to the university and oral defense**

**Conferral of Degrees and Spring Commencement:** Please check the academic calendar for submission dates of your final thesis to the Registrar, Graduate Degree Progress Office.

https://registrar.stanford.edu/academic-calendar

Submission of your Ph.D. thesis to the Registrar is your last graduate student milestone. Students must apply to graduate online via Axess for degree conferral. In Axess, select the "Student Center" tab, select "Apply to Graduate." Follow the directions given, being careful to complete your application accurately. You must save your application once completed. Please note that your advisor (or someone on your reading committee you designate) must approve the document before the thesis can be accepted. Please verify that they can do so before the submission deadline.

Commencement ceremonies are held each June for students who have received degrees in the previous Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters. Students who wish to receive their diplomas in-person at June commencement must designate this in Axess when applying to graduate. Information about commencement activities and distribution of diplomas is posted online:

http://commencement.stanford.edu/.

Information about the departmental ceremony will be sent to students by the Student Services Office (Shelly Rasnick, srasnick@stanford.edu). In addition, students who will graduate during Summer Quarter or the following Autumn Quarter are also eligible to attend the June ceremony. Students who are interested in attending need to contact student services to be listed in the ceremony program.

An important note: Hotel rooms are booked for commencement, often months in advance. April is a good time to place your reservations with local hotels. When you make reservations, please make sure you ask for the Stanford discount.

| Recommended Timetable | December | June |
|---|---|---|
| 2nd year | Qualifying Exam | |
| 3rd year | Thesis Committee Meeting | |
| 4th year | Thesis Committee Meeting | Thesis Committee Meeting |
| **5th year** | **Thesis Committee Meeting*** | **Thesis Committee Meeting*** |

* Or thesis defense

## FOR MENTORS

**New Policy for Mentor and Chair to accept Student responsibility:**

- Programs are expected to inform their entering cohorts that every new mentor arrangement must be approved by their Director of Graduate Studies/Program Manager *and* that those new mentor arrangements cannot be finalized until your program (and the OGE) has received confirmation that the new mentor and the chair of their department of primary appointment have acknowledged the responsibilities associated with taking on this new role.

- Once a student has secured the approval of their DGS/PD for a new mentoring arrangement (as a reminder: including any of those listed above), the home program SSO will enter the relevant information in the linked form.

- That entry triggers the delivery of one of the attached messages via Smartsheet to the new mentor (or co-mentor) and the chair of their department of primary appointment, who are prompted to review and acknowledge their understanding of the content of those messages. Once those acknowledgments have been received, we'll alert you that the student in question can be informed that their new mentor/mentee relationship has been finalized (and, at your convenience, the student's PeopleSoft record can be updated).

This updated process provides much more comprehensive guidance to new mentors, keeps all involved apprised of the associated funding commitment, *and* ensures that all new mentor/mentee relationships are approved by the DGS/PD of that student's home program.

**New Mentor Training Requirement**
The NIH now requires T32 funded training programs to meet specific Mentor Training requirements.

*"NIH Funded training programs are expected to support effective mentorship by ensuring all program faculty complete formal mentor training and periodic refreshers."*

Funded training programs are expected to support effective mentorship by ensuring all program faculty complete formal mentor training and periodic refreshers. Programs should consider the following as potential mentor training components, and are encouraged to adapt to program and trainee needs:

- Aligning expectations.
- Maintaining effective communication.
- Fostering independence.
- Assessing understanding.
- Enhancing professional development.
- Articulating a mentoring philosophy and plan.

Given this, we now require all faculty to show completion of at least three hours of mentorship training every three years. Evidence of training should be provided when joining or renewing membership to the Cancer Biology Graduate Program, selected from the following approved trainings:

- Team for Inclusive Lab Environments (TILE) Optimal Mentoring Workshop
    - Sessions (2 sessions each 2.5 hours) will include brief, evidence-based mentoring practices that NIH is looking for, **but most of the time will be spent with faculty in each program talking with one another about challenges they may have experienced and what they have found most helpful in addressing them.** In other words, this will be "peer-to-peer" mentoring by and of our own faculty, not an outside consultant telling faculty how to do their jobs. John Boothroyd, who recently left Stanford to work for Schmidt Science Fellows on precisely this topic, is helping to guide and lead this content.

- The Office of Faculty Development & Engagement offers multiple self-paced mentor training workshop series.
    - **Building Effective Mentoring Relationships (for mentors, mentees and Chairs)**

      Providing effective mentorship to one's students and to faculty colleagues is an essential part of the faculty role. Effective mentorship of doctoral students and trainees is considered part of one's teaching portfolio in evaluation for tenure and promotion. ***Building Effective Mentoring Relationships*** is a new self-paced course for mentors of doctoral students, mentors of faculty, department chairs and others who oversee mentorship structures, as well as for faculty mentees themselves. This course provides a wealth of tools, resources, and research-based best practices to enable effective mentoring relationships. The course has been designed to take approximately three hours and may be broken up into multiple short segments to suit your own schedule. The course site includes a valuable set of resources that you may return to repeatedly. **Click here for self-registration link**.

- **Mentoring, Advising, and Starting a Lab (for Early Career Faculty)**

  John Boothroyd, Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Burt and Marion Avery Professor of Immunology provides a series of video modules to help you start your lab and mentor and advise students and trainees. Even if you are not a lab scientist, these modules contain helpful information about mentoring and advising students, including how to set expectations and tips for one-on-one mentoring and establishing yourself as an early career faculty member. **Click here for the self-registration link**.

- **Mentorship is Scholarship**

  Dr. Carolyn Bertozzi, world-renowned chemist, Nobel Laureate, recipient of the AAAS Lifetime Mentor Award, and leader in advancing diversity in the sciences discusses how mentorship catalyzes innovation, accelerates knowledge transfer, and fosters the next generation of trailblazing researchers. Recorded session, **Click here for the self-registration link**. (1.5 hours; self-paced)