Policies for Dissertation Defense & Graduation
Application for Graduation

- A meeting is held in February for students who plan to graduate in May by the Office of Student Affairs/Records
- Doctoral degrees are awarded in May, June, October, and December
- Formal commencement exercises are held in May
To receive the Ph.D.

- Complete 40 hours of coursework (32 starting 2013)
- Pass qualifying exam
- Complete a dissertation and have it approved
  - Manual available to assist with content & format
- PUBLISH OR HAVE ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION, A FIRST AUTHORED MANUSCRIPT IN A PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL (Dissertation Research)
- Successfully defend the dissertation in a public seminar
Public Defense

- The student must successfully defend the thesis research in a public seminar presented on a weekday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and it must be widely publicized.

- The student should allow at least one month for completing the steps involved in preparing for the public defense.
Steps to Defending

1. COI members **MUST be given at least two-weeks** to read the dissertation after the student in consultation with his/her preceptor has agreed upon an acceptable draft for review.

2. The preceptor then schedules a COI meeting for approval of the dissertation for defense by the student, and with information from the Graduate School Office and the student with regards to a tentative defense date and time.
3. The preceptor contacts the DGS a minimum of two-weeks in advance of the proposed student’s defense date to:

   a. Inform the DGS that the student is ready to defend the dissertation by completing and submitting the PhD Dissertation Defense Application Form with signatures from all the COI members,
      i. The date, time and room for the defense
      ii. The title of the dissertation
      iii. Copy of the dissertation abstract
PhD Dissertation Defense Application Form
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE

TO: The School of Graduate Studies and Research DATE: _________________
FROM: ____________________________ (Graduate Program)

Print/Type (Student)
In submitting a thesis entitled:

______________________________ (Full Title of Thesis)

*Please attach abstract to this form*
In preparation to defend on:

______________________________ (Tentative Date of Defense)

______________________________ (Location and Time)

For receipt of a Doctorate of Philosophy in Biomedical Sciences on:

______________________________ (Date of Graduation)

The following Student and COI members agree that ________________________ is ready to publicly defend thesis.

Print/Type (Student)

______________________________ (Signature of Student) (Date)

______________________________ (Print/Signature of Chairperson) (Date)

______________________________ (Print/Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

______________________________ (Print/Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

______________________________ (Print/Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

______________________________ (Print/Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

______________________________ (Signature of Dean) (Date)
4. The DGS writes a letter to the SOGSR requesting the student’s defense. The information in #3 is included in the letter, which must be received in the Dean’s Office at least two-weeks prior to the student’s defense.

5. The SOGSR will confirm the availability of the date, time, and room for the defense with the DGS and the preceptor.
6. The Dean’s Office will prepare the flyers for advertisement of the defense and coordinate the distribution of the flyers on campus. This is done at least one-week before the scheduled defense date.

7. The student’s defense consists of a 35-45 minute presentation followed by questions from the COI first, and then the audience.

8. The COI evaluates the student’s defense.
9. The chair of the COI provides the DGS with the *Dissertation Defense Evaluation Form* signed by all members of the COI.

10. A student passes his/her dissertation defense and a dissertation or thesis is accepted only upon approval by at least two-thirds of the members of the COI. If the student fails the defense, he/she will be allowed a retake.

11. The vote of the COI is considered by the SOGSR to be final.
PhD Program
School of Graduate Studies & Research
Meharry Medical College
Dissertation Defense Evaluation Form

Name of Student ___________________________ Date: __________

Quality of Oral Thesis Defense

_____ Pass _____ Fail

Committee Members: (Print and Sign names)

__________________________________________ (Chair)

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Comments:

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________
12. After the defense, the DGS must notify the Graduate Dean in a letter and send a copy to the Department Chair stating that the defense was satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

a. The *Dissertation Defense Evaluation Form* is submitted with the letter to the SOGSR.
Dissertation Defense & Graduation

- Defend by **April 1\(^{st}\)** for May Commencement
  - **May 1\(^{st}\)** for June graduation*
  - **July 1\(^{st}\)** for October graduation
  - **October 1\(^{st}\)** for December graduation

*May participate in May Commencement (Graduation)
### Timeline for May graduation 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1, 2015</td>
<td>Submit draft of dissertation to COI</td>
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<td>March 15, 2015</td>
<td>COI meeting to clear student for defense</td>
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<td>Preceptor submits Intent to Graduate Form to DGS with all COI signatures</td>
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<td>April 1, 2015</td>
<td>Last day to defend</td>
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Participation in May Commencement for those who miss the April 1\textsuperscript{st} deadline

- Defend by May 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2015
  - Can participate in Graduation Ceremony
  - Your name will not be in the program
Dissertation Document

- Must meet formatting requirements of Graduate School (this takes time and can delay awarding of degree)

- Submit 5 copies of dissertation to Graduate School by April 30, May 31, July 31, and October 31 by 5 pm.

- The document must be on 100% cotton paper that is white and at least 20-pound weight.
  - The same brand of paper must be used throughout the document and all copies.
  - Copies must be clear and clean.
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<td>April 30, 2015</td>
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Date of Degree

If your final dissertation document on cotton paper is **NOT** submitted by April 30, May 31, July 31 or October 31

- Your degree will be dated the next graduation date after you submit the dissertation (May, June, October, December)
Graduation Clearance

- Submit letter from DGS to Dean and 5 copies of dissertation
- Complete Graduate Program Self-Assessment Student Questionnaire
- Complete National Research Council Survey of Earned Doctorates
- Complete Exit Survey
- Obtain Clearance Form from Dean’s Office and get appropriate signatures
Awarded Your PH.D. Degree!!!