

DIVISION OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (DMS)
ACADEMIC RULES AND GUIDELINES
2008-2009

REGISTRATION

All Division of Medical Sciences students are required to register for the fall and spring semesters on the dates specified by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. If students miss the registration date, late fees are assessed (see 2008-2009 Academic Calendar for more details in the GSAS Graduate Student Handbook).

- **DMS Vacation Policy:** Graduate study in the Division of Medical Sciences is considered a full-time endeavor. Students are entitled to official holidays observed by the University or the institutions at which their dissertation laboratories are located. Graduate study is a year-round activity that continues between semesters and throughout the summer months. Students planning to be away at times other than official holidays may do so only with the approval of their Program Head, designated Program Advisor, or their Dissertation Advisor when they are in a dissertation research laboratory.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Courses:** DMS students must register for graduate level courses as required by their program. The particular courses that a student is required to take vary among programs. In addition to each program's core curriculum, programs require that students take additional courses to ensure a broad background in basic science. Taking courses outside the degree program of study must be approved by the Program Head and the Director of Graduate Studies. A dissertation advisor's approval is not sufficient.
- **Study Cards:** At the beginning of each semester, every DMS student in residence must submit a study card to the FAS Registrar. The study card must list at least four courses following approval by the student's academic advisor or dissertation advisor: these may include graduate level courses towards the Ph.D. degree; approved lab rotations; and/or dissertation research. Students working full-time on their dissertation list four courses/items - either the 300-level dissertation research course number of their dissertation advisor or "TIME-R". "Time-R" is used when there is no appropriate course number, such as when a student is doing research with someone who is not currently on the GSAS faculty. "Time T-Teaching" must be listed on a student's study card if he/she will be teaching during any given semester. Teaching

must be approved by your program and your dissertation advisor. "Time-C" is used when a student has been given permission by his advisor or program head for special study opportunities such as preparing for the preliminary/qualifying examination. A word or two describing Time-C work (such as studying for prelims) must be indicated on the study card. Any "Time" listing must be initialed by the appropriate faculty advisor and further approved by the Division of Medical Sciences. Each 300-level course, as well as any courses in the course catalog with an asterisk next to the title, must be signed by the appropriate instructor. If the study card is not submitted by the prescribed deadline, late fees are assessed.

- **M.D./Ph.D. Students:** All M.D./Ph.D. students working on their Ph.D. must file a GSAS study card each semester. The rules on completing the GSAS study card apply as above.

When, as part of the graduate work, an M.D./Ph.D. student takes HMS courses that do not have a matching GSAS course number, the student must check the cross registration box on the GSAS study card and file a separate GSAS cross registration form.

All M.D./Ph.D. students must successfully defend their Ph.D. dissertation and turn in one bound and one unbound copy of their dissertation to the FAS Office of the Registrar before returning to medical school to complete their clinical clerkships.

In some rare cases, which can only be approved by the M.D./Ph.D. Director, if an M.D./Ph.D. student returns to HMS before completing the Ph.D. requirements that student must complete an "application to study at another Harvard School" form for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. The student is not required to complete a GSAS study card. The "application to study at another Harvard School" is available in the Division of Medical Sciences office, TMEC 435 or on website: www.gsas.harvard.edu.

- **Cross Registration:** If a DMS student wishes to take a course at another Harvard School or at another institution, the student should complete a GSAS cross registration petition form which can be obtained from crossreg.harvard.edu. Students must have approval of their dissertation advisor and program head before doing so. If not yet in a dissertation lab, the student must have approval of the program advisor and the program head. The petition, bearing the instructor's signature (and any others required), must be completed and delivered by the student to the appropriate Dean's or Registrar's office of the other school/institution. A

copy of the cross registration petition form should be sent to the DMS office to keep on file. For exact dates by which these petitions are due at other schools, the student should consult the cross registration website: crossreg.harvard.edu. A student will not be considered officially enrolled in the courses taken at another school/institution unless this petition is filed.

A student must check the cross-registration box on the study card. Students must fill out a cross registration petition for Harvard Medical School courses which do not have a GSAS course number. They do not need to cross register for HMS courses listed in the "GSAS Courses of Instructions," because they have a GSAS course number.

- **Rotations:** Laboratory rotations are required to ensure some breadth of research experience and exposure to opportunities in the Division of Medical Sciences and to give the student a trial period before making a commitment for dissertation work. During rotations, students can work on a variety of scientific problems, using new or varied technical approaches. By studying with several faculty members, they can gain wider perspectives and experience contrasting research environments and groups. Students are expected to have completed satisfactory rotations in at least two labs prior to full-time research; many students complete three rotations, which is strongly recommended. Any student who begins his/her dissertation work in a new lab (one in which they have not done a rotation) must consider the first three months as a rotation. This allows for evaluation by both the student and the mentor. Taking informal rotations is not permitted. Students will not be granted credit for any rotations not approved by a program advisor, program head or the Director of Graduate Studies.

Students rotating in labs are required to complete a rotation registration form for each new rotation, have it signed by the lab head and or rotation supervisor and return to their respective program for approval before entering the rotation lab. Students are required to officially sign up on their study cards for each rotation. They are required to use the 300-level course number prescribed by their program. At the end of each rotation, the lab head or rotation supervisor must complete and sign a rotation evaluation form and submit it to the student's program administrator. Grades and credit for rotations will not be assigned unless approval was granted before the start of a rotation and a copy of the approved rotation registration form and evaluation forms are on file with your program. See your program administrator or go to the medical school eCommons website at ecommons.med.harvard.edu for a form. (Click the DMS button on the left, then Resources, then Student Forms).

- **Medical Sciences 300 - The Conduct of Science:** The Conduct of Science is a discussion forum on ethics and the proper conduct of science. It is designed to provide discussion among new and continuing students and faculty on matters of responsible scientific practice and ethics. Spanning a broad range of topics from issues in the laboratory, through the culture of scientific

investigation, to the impact on society and responsibilities of scientists, this series encourages exchange of information and opinions among small, but diverse, groups. Through the habit of discussing issues in the conduct of science, young investigators will learn to evolve a current consensus of responsible scientific conduct.

All students in the Division of Medical Sciences must register to take this course when it is offered in either their first or second year. Since this course must meet a minimum of eight hours in any one semester, each student should sign up for it as a fifth course on their study cards. More information will be forwarded to those students required to take this course.

- **Radiation Safety Course:** All incoming DMS graduate students are required to take the Harvard University Radiation Safety Course online before entering into any type of lab work at Harvard. Any students who have already completed the Harvard course will not be required to repeat it. The website is: www.uos.harvard.edu/cgi-bin/radsafety/training/training_enter.pl. When registering as a new user, choose "Bob Bridges" from the drop down list of Permit Holders. All students entering a dissertation lab not located at HMS must report to the Radiation Safety Office at that institution for additional information on training. In addition, DMS students who intend to do rotations or their dissertation work at Mass. General Hospital (MGH) must take the MGH radiation course. Please check with the Radiation Safety Officer at MGH before beginning your lab work. In some cases this requirement may be partially waived. Students who have completed a Radiation Safety course at another institution before entering DMS must contact the Harvard University Radiation Safety Office at 617-495-0841 to see whether they will need to have additional training.

- **Teaching:** DMS encourages students to gain meaningful teaching experience as part of their graduate training. While DMS does not have its own teaching requirement, several individual programs include a semester of teaching among the academic requirements. Students who have met their program's teaching requirement may undertake additional teaching or tutoring responsibilities, but only with permission of their dissertation research advisor and the Division of Medical Sciences. Applications to teach in a course must be submitted to the Division of Medical Sciences for approval. Students should not teach more than one quarter of time in any given semester.

If you plan to do any teaching during a semester you must list "Time-T" on your study card. Example, if you plan to teach one-quarter of your time, you must sign up for one "Time-T" on your study card, etc. Your dissertation advisor and program academic advisor or program head must sign your study card.

- **Getting Credit for Work Done Elsewhere:** The Programs may credit a student for some of the program course requirements with courses taken elsewhere. Only courses taken after the bachelor's degree would be given official GSAS credit toward the Ph.D. degree. Courses for official GSAS credit cannot appear on the student's undergraduate transcript.

To get official GSAS credit for courses taken elsewhere, a student fills out an "Application for Academic Credit for Graduate Work Done Elsewhere" after completing at least one year in a DMS program. A copy of this form can be obtained from the DMS office. The student must attach to the form an official transcript and a copy of the relevant pages of the course catalog (showing full descriptions of the courses for credit) from the university where the courses were taken. The form, official transcript(s) and course description(s) are then reviewed by the student's program head or designated faculty advisor and Director of Graduate Studies of the Division of Medical Sciences. If the application is approved, the form is signed, a copy is placed in the student's DMS file, and the original is sent to the FAS Registrar for final approval.

The maximum allowable credit for courses taken elsewhere is 8 half courses.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

Timeline to the Degree: Students are expected to work towards completing their degree requirements by the end of their 5th year of graduate school. A timeline to degree tool is provided at the end of this document.

Until attainment of the Ph.D. degree, satisfactory progress is required for Division of Medical Sciences students to continue enrollment in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Each program in the Division of Medical Sciences determines progress by considering the following: performance in courses, satisfactory performance on the preliminary examination, demonstration of adequate research ability and/or level of improvement, acceptable ethical conduct, participation in other scholarly activities of the student's program, completing work prescribed by the dissertation advisor, and required activities of the Division of Medical Sciences.

Ordinarily, students are expected to complete their dissertation by the end of their 5th year. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to register beyond the 10th year in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). Depending on progress, a student may be allowed to enroll in DMS between seven and ten years. No more than three years after withdrawal, a student may apply for readmission and completion of the Ph.D. if a satisfactory copy of the dissertation is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies of the Division of Medical Sciences.

- **Grades:** The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) states that the minimum standard for satisfactory work in the Graduate School is a "B" average in each academic year. A grade of "C" or "Incomplete" is offset by a grade of "A", and a "D" by two "A"s. Pluses and minuses are ignored for this calculation.

Dissertation research work (300-level courses) and lab rotations are given grades of satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

PRELIMINARY QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS (PQE)

Each student is required to pass a preliminary qualifying examination administered by the student's program. Each student should follow his/her program's examination timetable and procedures.

The preliminary qualifying examination varies somewhat from program to program. The common format consists of a written proposal that is defended orally. The student is then questioned by the examination committee. Preliminary examination results should be reported promptly to the Division by the student's program. Continued enrollment for any student who has not attained a clear pass after a second examination, if one had been approved, will be considered and determined by a committee of faculty from the student's program and from the Director of Graduate Studies of the Division of Medical Sciences.

A student is not allowed to register for the fourth year if he/she has not passed the qualifying examination.

ADVISING

Advising of students is multi-layered, distributed among advisors, committees, program heads, program administrators, DMS and GSAS. This varies in specific form for the individual programs in DMS. In general, first and second-year students are monitored by academic advisors or academic advisory committees. After a student selects a dissertation laboratory, a dissertation advisory committee is formed. In parallel with the dissertation advisor, it monitors the student's progress, offers assistance, and determines when the student can write and defend the dissertation.

- **First-Year Advising:** Each first-year student is assigned a faculty advisor or committee to assist him/her in course selection. Sometimes the advisor serves as the academic advisor to all first year students in that program. This process continues until each student has an individual dissertation advisory committee in place or, for some programs, until the student graduates.

- **Selecting a Dissertation Advisor:** Selection of a dissertation advisor is a multi-step process. Before a student may officially begin dissertation work in a laboratory, his or her selection of a dissertation advisor must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies for DMS. When a student selects a dissertation advisor, he or she initiates this process by obtaining a Dissertation Advisor Declaration Form (available from each Program Administrator). The Dissertation Declaration Form must be completed and signed by the student, the proposed dissertation advisor, and the student's Program Head (or designee) and then returned to the Program Administrator. The Program Administrator forwards the Form to DMS so that the required signatures may be obtained from the proposed dissertation advisor's division or department head. When all portions of the process have been successfully completed, a copy of the Dissertation Advisor Declaration Form signed by the Director of Graduate Studies is sent to the student, the dissertation advisor, and the Program Administrator to indicate that the dissertation advisor selection has been approved.

- **Dissertation Advisor:** The dissertation advisor is responsible for the daily supervision of the dissertation student. To meet this responsibility, the advisor may set specific times during the day for the student to be in the laboratory, thus allowing appropriate personal interaction and oversight by the advisor or a designated supervisor in the lab. Usually this is established by mutual agreement between the advisor and the student, and usually there is latitude to allow unusual hours. This responsibility exists for rotation students and for dissertation students. The advisor also approves any leaves from the laboratory for vacations, attendance at meetings or courses off campus, or collaboration of dissertation work elsewhere and should be notified of absences due to illness. It is the advisor's responsibility to inform the Program Head and/or the Division of Medical Sciences if a student is performing unsatisfactory work in the lab. Likewise, a student can check with the Program Head or the Division of Medical Sciences if there are questions about appropriate requirements for satisfactory progress.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure: Harvard Medical School's rules on avoiding conflicts of interest require that each dissertation advisor and advisee share a list of potential conflicts of interest and discuss them. Students should make sure that they understand these and how they may or may not have any impact on them and their work. The advisor will prepare a list which is signed by both the advisor and the student. Students should also disclose any potential conflicts of interest that they may have. The dissertation advisory committee (see below) must ensure that this information has been discussed. The intent is to make sure that extraneous activities and financial arrangements do not interfere with the timely progress to degree of each student. See your program administrator or go to the medical school eCommons website at

ecommons.med.harvard.edu for a form. (Click the DMS button on the left, then Resources, then Student Forms).

- **Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC):** Each graduate student must establish a dissertation advisory committee (DAC) to provide timely and consistent advising. The DAC helps set logical goals for the completion of the dissertation and monitors progress toward completion of degree requirements.

This method of dissertation advising works well, but only if the dissertation advisory committee meets and reports on a regular basis. Specific and stringent guidelines have been set forth to ensure that every student obtains maximum benefit from this system.

The student's dissertation advisory committee should be formed in consultation with the student, the student's advisor and the appropriate program advisor. The committee should have three members not including the advisor. The dissertation advisor is expected to attend all meetings. Each student bears primary responsibility for setting up the dissertation advisory committee and ensuring that it meets in a timely fashion. The student should meet with his/her committee as soon as possible after the preliminary examination; but in all cases, by the dates prescribed by the student program. Beginning with the fourth graduate year, students will not be allowed to register for the upcoming year unless their dissertation advisory committees have met and filed a formal report within the past twelve months.

The dissertation advisory committee will meet as a group and report annually. Telephone dissertation advisory committee conferences calls cannot be substituted for face to face meetings. When required, in unusual situations, the committee can meet with only the student or only the advisor. Or, it may plan for a portion of the meeting to include sessions for these separate discussions.

Beginning no later than the third year, the dissertation advisory committee will ask if the research project is heading towards a plausible dissertation. The dissertation advisory committee may decide to meet more than once a year for students in their 5th year and above, or in special circumstances.

The chair of the dissertation advisory committee is responsible for the preparation of the report, which should be signed by all committee members immediately upon conclusion of the meeting. The chair will submit the report to the program administrator who distributes copies to the student, to the program advisory committee, and to the office of the Division of Medical

Sciences. Immediate submission of the DAC report is important, not only so potential problems can be remedied quickly, but so the student registration status is not jeopardized.

- **Final DAC Meeting:** In preparation for the final dissertation advisory committee meeting, the student must submit to the committee the general outline and content of the dissertation. With the student, the committee will discuss the general outline and content of the dissertation. The final DAC report will specify what original writing the student must do. In some cases, all of the dissertation will be original writing. In other cases, when students use some collaborative, published work, the committee will define the additional required writing. (See Attributions to the Dissertation under The Dissertation Defense for detailed description of the use of reprints).

Students must have the final dissertation advisory committee report on file in the Division of Medical Sciences office stating that the student may begin writing the dissertation with approval of the general outline and content of dissertation prior to processing dissertation defense paperwork. (See your program administrator or go to the medical school eCommons website at ecommons.med.harvard.edu for a form. (Click the DMS button on the left, then resources, then student forms). After receiving approval and permission from the committee to write the dissertation, students should then defend their dissertation no later than 3-4 months from the date of permission to write.

THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE

- **The Dissertation:** The dissertation must show original treatment of a fitting subject, contain a scholarly review of the pertinent literature, give evidence of independent research, and be clearly, logically, and carefully written. Students are expected to give a public seminar on their dissertation research.
- **Attributions to the Dissertation:** The Ph.D. dissertation is expected to contain a substantial amount of independent research work of publishable quality. In addition to chapters of research, each dissertation must contain Introduction and Conclusion chapters that present the themes of the dissertation and summarize the accomplishments. In some cases, the student has done all of the work in the dissertation; more often portions of the dissertation result from collaborative research. In all dissertations containing collaborative results, the dissertation should indicate concisely who contributed the work.

For example, a chapter containing multi-authored, published work must include a complete reference and a brief description of the candidate's and the colleagues' contributions. For work

that is not published but which resulted from multiple researchers, the contributors must be named and respective attributions made clearly. This policy allows stylistic flexibility; depending on the amount of collaborative work in the dissertation and the status of publication(s), the attributions can be together at the end of either the Acknowledgments or Introduction sections of the dissertation or before each relevant chapter.

It is permissible for more than one student to include work from the same collaboration or publication as long as the required attributions are clear, justified, and complete.

Individual chapters can be reprints of published articles as long as there are comprehensive Introduction and Conclusion chapters written by the student. Decisions about the inclusion of reprints or a modified version of the text are made by the student, advisor and dissertation advisory committee at the committee's final meeting. Whether the actual reprint, a newly produced copy from a word processor, or a modified version of the text of the reprint is used, is at the discretion of the student's program's policy. Most programs leave this decision to the mentor and student. In any case, the dissertation must be easily readable and suitable for microfilming. Any dissertation that varies significantly from the Graduate School guidelines or is not neat and readable is subject to required stylistic revision before acceptance by the University. (See the Form of the PhD Dissertation handout, available through the DMS office or at www.gsas.harvard.edu/current_students/form_of_the_phd_dissertation.php.)

- **Preparation for the Dissertation Defense:** The FAS Registrar specifies deadlines by which the dissertation must be submitted and the dissertation examination passed to receive the Ph.D. diploma in November, March, or June of each academic year. A dissertation information packet is available in the Division office specifying the steps to be taken when the student is ready to apply for the Ph.D. degree and the various forms that need to be submitted. The information packet will be thoroughly reviewed with the student by a member of the Division staff. The first step is completion of two forms: the "application for degree" form and the "program approval" form. The deadline for submitting these forms can be more than three months before the student expects to receive the degree.

- **Examiners:** The student and the student's dissertation advisor must select at least four examining committee members: an examination chair, usually a member of the dissertation advisory committee, and three examiners. If an alternate examiner is requested, then the alternate must receive a copy of the dissertation and be available on the date of the defense.

The dissertation advisor, along with the student, arranges the date, time, and place of the examination and seminar after contacting the examination committee; some programs may have the program administrator make these arrangements. At least three weeks before the scheduled

date, after program approval, the student submits the Proposed Examiners form and Dissertation Information sheet to the Division of Medical Sciences along with a 3-5 page dissertation summary and title page.

The Director of Graduate Studies of the Division of Medical Sciences and the Head or designated faculty member of the candidate's program will approve the members from a list submitted by the candidate and his or her advisor (the Proposed Examiners form). All proposed examiners must be the rank of assistant professor or higher. The chair of the exam committee as well as at least one examiner must be faculty from the Division of Medical Sciences; the dissertation advisor is not eligible to be an examiner or the chair, but usually attends the exam *ex officio*. To broaden the examination and enhance its significance, one member of the examination committee must be from outside Harvard University. Candidates are required to have one, but not more than one, member of the advisory committee become a member of the examination committee in the role of committee chair. The examination committee chair, who is usually the chair or other member of the dissertation advisory committee, does not function as a voting examiner but may participate in the questioning of the candidate. An alternate examiner may be requested by the student, the dissertation advisor, the program, or the Division. If an alternate examiner is selected, the alternate must be available to attend the defense and must receive and read a copy of the dissertation.

Past collaborators and co-authors are usually not appropriate to be examiners. It is the student's responsibility to indicate any possible relationship of this kind. Faculty members who have collaborated with the student or the student's advisor on the student's area of research within the past five years may not serve on the exam committee. Faculty with whom the student has done a regular laboratory rotation in the process of selecting the dissertation laboratory are eligible if there are no other collaborations. Students may petition DMS to approve examiners whose collaboration with the student or advisor was not directly related to the dissertation research.

The exam committee should be assembled as follows:

Exam Chair: Dissertation Advisory Committee member *and* DMS faculty member.

Examiner 1: DMS faculty member.

Examiner 2: Non-Harvard-affiliated faculty member.

Examiner 3: Faculty member from any institution.

All of the above must have an academic appointment of assistant professor or higher. None of the members other than the chair may have served on the student's DAC.

Note:

1. Emeritus Faculty may not serve on a student's examining committee unless that student has been under the supervision of that faculty member, e.g. the dissertation advisory committee.

2. All exceptions to these rules must be approved by the Chair or Vice Chair of the Division of Medical Sciences.

3. Programs may have additional requirements for the composition of the defense committee. Please consult with your Program Administrator for more information.

Four unbound, loose-leaf copies of the dissertation should be submitted to the Division for approval, and then distributed by the student to the members of the dissertation examination committee not less than 14 days before the examination. The candidate should consult with the dissertation advisor concerning the need for additional copies. Should the dissertation be delivered late to the readers, the examination will be rescheduled unless other arrangements are agreed upon with the chair of the exam and examiners.

The examination committee chair is responsible for:

- i. contacting all readers not less than 72 hours before the examination to determine whether they find the dissertation generally acceptable. If one or more readers feels that there are substantive deficiencies that must be remedied to make the dissertation acceptable, the chair must contact or meet with the readers, the dissertation advisor, and the candidate to discuss the situation and decide whether to proceed with the examination. The Director of Graduate Studies of the Division of Medical Sciences and the chair of the student's Ph.D. program should be contacted immediately and kept apprised of the committee's decisions.
- ii. making sure that corrections to the dissertation are clearly defined and are carried out and approved in a timely fashion. A specific deadline for completion of corrections must be given to the student.
- iii. getting the dissertation examiners to sign the acceptance certificate at the end of the examination if the student successfully completes the examination.
- iv. immediately notifying DMS whether the student has passed his/her dissertation defense examination and is thus eligible for the Ph.D.
- v. returning all student documents to the Division of Medical Sciences immediately following the examination.
- vi. if the defense is not successful, the chair of the exam must provide a thorough report to DMS and the student's program head detailing the areas of substantial deficiency of the dissertation.

For Dissertation Format: See The Form of the PhD Dissertation available in print from the DMS office and online at www.gsas.harvard.edu/current_students/form_of_the_phd_dissertation.php. **It is important to adhere to these formatting guidelines** rather than referring to previous dissertations, as the Graduate School may not accept a dissertation which does not follow the rules laid out in this handout.

Application for Degree: The three required forms can be obtained from the Division.

1. The *Program Approval Form* requests approval from the candidate's dissertation advisor and Program Head. The student must obtain the required signatures and return the completed form to the Division at least three weeks before the dissertation examination, or on the degree period deadline specified in the dissertation packet, whichever is earlier.
2. The *Proposed Dissertation Examiners* form is a list of examination committee members proposed by the candidate and the candidate's advisor. The form must be approved and signed by the candidate's Program Head or designate. After signature by the Program Head or designate, it should be submitted to the chair of the Division of Medical Sciences at least three weeks before the scheduled examination. (See the section "Examiners" for the rules regarding selection of the committee members.)
3. The *Application for Degree* form is to be completed by the candidate and submitted to the Chair of the Division for approval. The approved application is filed by the Division with the FAS Registrar in Cambridge, where it must be received approximately three months before degrees are awarded in November, March, and June. Each year the exact degree deadline dates may be obtained from the Division office.

Dissertation Summary and Seminar Announcement: Candidates should submit a dissertation summary and title page to the Division at least three weeks before the examination. The summary should be three to five pages in length, typed double-spaced, and written in language comprehensible to all faculty. A seminar announcement will be prepared by the Division office.

Announcing the Dissertation Examination and Seminar: The Division office will email an announcement of the examination and seminar to all Division faculty members and students at least two weeks before the scheduled date.

Conduct of the Examination: Immediately prior to the examination, it is customary for the candidate to present the dissertation work in a seminar attended by the examination committee and the public. The formal examination typically lasts 90-120 minutes.

Dissertation Acceptance Certificate and Record of Final Examination: The examination committee chair is provided with two forms that should be completed after the examination.

1. The *Dissertation Acceptance Certificate* must be signed by all readers if the candidate passes the examination. The certificate should be returned promptly to the Division for submission to the Registrar when any necessary changes to the dissertation are completed (see below). Ultimately, the certificate is pasted on the first sheet of the original bound dissertation copy (see below).
2. The *Record of Final Ph.D. Examination* indicates the outcome of the examination and is completed by the examination committee chair. It should be submitted to the Division, where it will be filed as the official record of the examination.

Finishing up after the Dissertation Defense: Following the examination, the candidate must, with the help of the dissertation advisor, make any necessary corrections to the dissertation. If corrections require review, those revisions should be approved by the examination committee chair or by a faculty member designated by the committee chair, who will then notify the Division in writing that all revisions are complete. If no corrections are required, the candidate is expected to turn in his/her dissertation to the FAS Registrar within one month of their defense.

Binding and Delivery of the Dissertation: It is the candidate's responsibility to submit four copies of the dissertation (three bound, and one unbound, boxed) and deliver as follows:

1. The original copy and one additional boxed copy should be submitted to the FAS Registrar in Cambridge by the specified deadline date for the term.
2. The third copy should be delivered to the candidate's program.
3. The fourth copy should be delivered to the candidate's advisor. The Division does not require a copy.
4. BBS students must submit a bound copy of the dissertation to their advisor's department. Please contact the BBS office to determine the appropriate department.
5. M.D./Ph.D. students must submit a bound copy of the dissertation to the M.D./Ph.D. office and H.S.T. students must submit an additional copy to the H.S.T. office.

Please refer to the pamphlet, The Form of the PhD Dissertation, for instructions on binding.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A student will be granted a leave of absence for only one year. Only in unusual circumstances will an extension be considered.

To take a leave of absence a student must have the approval of their program head, their dissertation advisor (if in a dissertation lab), and the Director of Graduate studies of the Division of Medical Sciences. If leave is approved, the calendar of requirements is pushed ahead a year.

A student taking leave must submit a letter, signed by the student and his/her advisor (if in a dissertation lab), to the chair of their program with a copy to the Division of Medical Sciences and must fill out an "application for leave", a form obtainable in the DMS office. The letter should state that the advisor is willing to have the student return to the lab after the leave ends. After the student, his/her advisor, and program head have signed the form, it must be returned to DMS for processing and forwarding to GSAS. The deadline for requesting leave is August 1 for the fall term (or for the full academic year) and January 1 for those going on leave only for the spring term.

Foreign Students Considering a Leave of Absence:

Foreign students are not granted leave of absence unless they can show proof that Immigration and Naturalization Services has granted them stay under another visa category to remain in the U.S. Only then will the Division of Medical Sciences and the GSAS Students Affairs office grant a leave of absence.

MOVING TO ANOTHER INSTITUTION OR CHANGING DISSERTATION ADVISOR

a. Completing the dissertation elsewhere:

When a student's dissertation advisor moves to another institution, a student who is well along on his/her dissertation work may be given special permission to complete his/her dissertation at the advisor's new institution. Such a student is considered to be still enrolled at Harvard on a non-resident (traveling scholar) basis and receives his/her degree from Harvard. Before a student is allowed to complete his/her dissertation work at another institution, he/she must:

- i. complete his/her program's course requirements;
- ii. pass the preliminary examination and have met the University's two year residency requirement;

- iii. obtain a letter from his/her dissertation advisor indicating that the student can move with him/her and stating plans for tuition/stipend support, travel funds to attend dissertation advisory committee meetings and the dissertation examination;
- iv. present a report from his/her dissertation advisory committee, reporting the progress the student has made, indicating approval for the student's proposed move to another institution to complete the dissertation, and outlining steps to be taken to ensure periodic meetings of the student with the dissertation advisory committee;
- v. fill out, sign, get dissertation advisor and program head signatures on the traveling scholar application form each year the student is working on the dissertation elsewhere. The form must be returned to DMS for approval and signature in time to get it processed by the August 1 deadline for the fall term (or for the entire year) or by the January 1 deadline for the spring term. Forms can be obtained from DMS or on the GSAS website at www.gsas.harvard.edu under the 'forms' link. Late fees are imposed if these deadlines are not met;
- vi. maintain satisfactory progress in order for the Division to continue to approve non-resident (traveling scholar) status requests forms. The Division and/or program must have a current dissertation advisory committee report (see dissertation advisory committee requirements above) before traveling scholar applications can be approved for upcoming academic years. Traveling scholar applications will not be processed if any program or DMS requirements are outstanding.
- vii. hold dissertation advisory committee meetings as a group within every 12-month period. Telephone conference calls will not be accepted as official advisory committee meetings.

If a student's advisor leaves when the student is only in the second year of graduate work, the student is encouraged to find another dissertation advisor and to remain at Harvard to do his/her dissertation work.

b. Transferring to another institution:

A student wishing to move to another institution in the early years of his/her graduate work must transfer (withdraw) to that institution and receive his/her degree from that institution. To transfer, a student should take the following steps:

- i. Discuss plans with the program head of his/her program.
- ii. Write a letter to the Division of Medical Sciences, indicating the institution to which the student plans to transfer, the date of the proposed transfer, and a brief explanation of

- the reason for the proposed transfer. The original of this memo should go to the office of the Division of Medical Sciences and another copy to the Head of the student's program.
- iii. Make an appointment to discuss plans with the Director of Graduate Studies or the Director of Academic Administration of the Division of Medical Sciences.
 - iv. Obtain a withdrawal form from the Division of Medical Sciences office, TMEC 435. The original of the completed form will be sent to Student Affairs, GSAS, Holyoke Center in Cambridge for final approval.

c. Transferring to another Harvard program outside the Division of Medical Sciences:

A student wishing to transfer to another Harvard program outside the Division of Medical Sciences should take the following steps:

- i. Complete a transfer form from the GSAS Student Affairs office in Holyoke Center, Cambridge and submit it to the desired program.
- ii. Make an appointment to discuss plans with the Director of Graduate Studies or the Director of Academic Administration of the Division of Medical Sciences.
- iii. Write a memo to the Division of Medical Sciences, indicating the program to which the student plans to transfer, the date of the proposed transfer, and a brief explanation of the reason for the proposed transfer. The original of this memo should go to the office of the Division of Medical Sciences and another copy to the chair of the student's current program.

d. Transferring to another DMS program:

A student wishing to transfer to another program within DMS will undergo the following process:

- i. The student should discuss the proposed transfer with the Director of Graduate Studies or Director of Academic Administration of the Division of Medical Sciences, and send a letter requesting the transfer to the Director.
- ii. DMS will contact the student's current program head to inform him or her that the student intends to transfer to another program.
- iii. The student's record will then be forwarded to the new program of choice for evaluation.

- iv. If the application for transfer is approved, DMS/Program will send a joint letter to the student approving the transfer.
- v. An "Application for Change of Subject" will be sent to the student along with the DMS approval letter. The student should complete the change form and return it immediately to the Division of Medical Sciences for the Director of Graduate Studies signature. DMS will then send the original to the FAS Registrar, send copies to the student's new and old programs, and place a copy in the student's file.

e. Changing Dissertation Advisor within DMS:

Note: Any student who wants to begin dissertation work in a new lab must consider the first three months as a rotation. This allows for evaluation by both the student and the mentor. A student wishing to change his/her dissertation advisor must:

- i. Discuss the change of advisor with their program head and the Director of Graduate Studies in DMS.
- ii. If the request to change lab is approved by the Program Head and DMS, the student must complete a new rotation registration form before starting the rotation and submit the form to their program office.
- iii. Obtain written permission from the proposed new dissertation advisor and provide a copy of this to both DMS and the program head of the student's program. In addition, the student must complete a new Dissertation Advisor Declaration Form if change is approved. (See Selection of a Dissertation Advisor Section in this handout.)
- iv. Discuss the proposed transfer with his/her current dissertation advisory committee.

f. Withdrawal from Harvard:

A student wishing to withdraw should take the following steps:

- i. Discuss plans with the graduate student advisor or program head of his/her program.
- ii. Make an appointment to discuss plans with the Director of Graduate Studies or the Director of Academic Administration of the Division of Medical Sciences.
- iii. Write a letter to the Director of Graduate Studies Division of Medical Sciences stating your intention to withdraw from the Division.
- iv. Fill out a withdrawal form, obtainable from the DMS office, TMEC 435. The original of the completed form will be sent by DMS to the Student Affairs office, GSAS, with copies to DMS and to the student's program.

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE DEGREE

Expectations for DMS Programs: BBS, Immunology, Neuroscience, Virology

First Year (G1) - Courses and Lab Rotations

Most or all required courses and lab rotations completed.
Student meets at least twice during year with academic advisor(s).

G2 - Lab Declaration

Dissertation laboratory declared by the end of September.
Or student meets, by the end of September, with program head or designate for an approved plan.

G2 - Preliminary Qualifying Examination (PQE)

Take and pass PQE by the program deadline:
BBS – Either September, November or January of the G2 year
Immunology – By the end of December of the G2 year
Neuroscience – Prelim/First DAC by March 31 of the G2 year
Virology – By the end of December of the G2 year

G2 - First Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC) Meeting

No later than six months after passing the PQE or by the end of June at the latest:
Neuroscience student has second DAC meeting no more than nine months after Prelim/DAC.

G3 - DAC Meeting - by the end of August of Third Year

Within 9-12 months after DAC in G2 and no later than the end of third year: **Research progress should compel the DAC to confirm in the report that project can plausibly lead to a dissertation.** Students should adhere to their programs timetable as some programs may have a different timeline.

G4 - DAC Meeting - by the end of May in Fourth Year

Within 12 months of DAC in G3:
DAC confirms research direction and/or progress likely leads to dissertation within 18 months.

G5 - DAC Meeting - by the end of December in Fifth Year

Or within 6 months or less since the previous DAC:
DAC confirms strong indication of progress towards completion.

Final DAC Meeting

Any year, but typically four to five years total enrollment and no more than six to seven:
The DAC decides when sufficient scientific development and data call for writing and completing the dissertation and tells student when to begin writing. DAC states clearly the scope of the content and the approximate date for the defense.