

# Timeline for Ph.D. Students

## First Year

You should try to complete your course credit requirements during your first two years so that you can concentrate on research in later years. If you are a TA or GA, plan to take two courses per semester. Your most productive research time will be during the summer months.

- Meet with your advisor to select courses and to plan your initial research activity. If you are rotating through different labs, you may ask the Graduate Program Director for help.
- Determine who your dissertation advisor will be and finalize the designation of this faculty member as your graduate advisor and dissertation committee chair.
- Explore possibilities for external funding and fellowships.
- Each spring you will be asked to complete an electronic progress report. You may be asked to meet with your advisor, the Graduate Program Director and/or the Chair of the Academic Standards Committee to review progress and outline plans for the coming year depending on where you are in your program.

## Second Year

- **First semester:** Start to focus on your dissertation research topic; designate your dissertation committee in consultation with your advisor. Meet with your dissertation committee to discuss research plans.
  - After your committee is established, complete the committee composition form (available from the website) and obtain the Graduate Program Director's signature.
  - When the outside member of your committee has been decided upon, his or her name and professional address and affiliation must be submitted to the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate School for approval along with a copy of his or her CV.
- **Second semester:** Continue developing your research project and completing your course work. Hold your first committee meeting. You are required to submit minutes to your committee for approval with a final copy to the Graduate Program Director. Start thinking about when you want to take the written comprehensive exam for the qualifying exam.

**TO RECAP:** By the end of the second year you should have:

- Completed approximately 24 course credits.
- Established your dissertation committee and held a first committee meeting.
- Formed a clear idea of your dissertation research topic and begun collecting preliminary data.
- Thought about a time frame for completing the written comprehensive exam for the qualifying exam. This could be taken over the summer between your second and third years, or during your third year.

## Third Year

**This is the year that you should make significant progress on completing all components of your qualifying exam. You should first complete the written comprehensive exam. Next you should start working on your research proposal. Your goal should be to present your proposal to the department and your committee no later than the end of your third year. Remember, your**

**proposal forms the framework of your thesis work, which is subject to modification as the research progresses. THIS IS NOT YOUR DISSERTATION DEFENSE: you should not be defending your thesis proposal when most of the work has been completed!!**

- You should be working on your written proposal in close consultation with your advisor.
- Determine the date that you will present your departmental seminar and defend your research proposal to your committee. It is desirable that these two events take place on the same day with the seminar preceding the defense. To facilitate this, talk with the faculty coordinator of the Seminar in Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences series prior to the semester you anticipate presenting your proposal seminar so that it can be included on the schedule. If your proposal seminar cannot be part of the regular Friday Seminar series, ask the Program Assistant's help in scheduling a room for your proposal seminar and a room for your proposal defense with your committee.
- Prior to your proposal defense, get an "Application for Admission to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy" form from the GSNB website ([http://gsnb.rutgers.edu/forms/candidacy\\_form.doc](http://gsnb.rutgers.edu/forms/candidacy_form.doc)). Remember to obtain your committee members' signatures in the appropriate section while all are assembled.

#### **Fourth and Subsequent Years**

At this point, you will be concentrating your efforts on your dissertation research, in close consultation with your advisor and, as needed, other members of your committee. Obtain a copy of the current GSNB Checklist for Ph.D. Degree ([http://gsnb.rutgers.edu/checklist\\_phd.php3](http://gsnb.rutgers.edu/checklist_phd.php3)).

Complete your research, write your dissertation (according to GSNB style guidelines), present a dissertation seminar, defend your dissertation to your Committee, and submit your dissertation with any required revisions to the GSNB.

- Talk with the faculty coordinator of the Seminar in Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences prior to the semester you anticipate presenting your defense seminar so that it can be included on the schedule. If your defense seminar cannot be part of the regular Friday Seminar series, ask the Program Assistant's help in scheduling a room for your defense seminar and a room for your actual committee defense.
- Make all required revisions to your dissertation. If you send a PDF file of your thesis by e-mail to Barbara Sirman at the GSNB in advance she will review it for compliance with style guidelines. Upload and submit your dissertation electronically.
- Submit your completed candidacy form with signatures along with one original title page (with signatures in black ink) to the Graduate School, and **three extra copies of the title page and abstract (photocopies are acceptable) by the degree deadline**. Give the EAB Program Assistant a copy of your completed candidacy form for your graduate file.
- Submit required "Graduate Diploma Application" online to the Graduate Registrar.
- Complete additional items listed on the checklist.

**In most cases, students admitted with a B.A. or B.S. will complete their Ph.D. within 6 academic years. Students admitted with an M.S. degree may finish in a shorter period. The Graduate School-NB will allow 7 years after initial registration before they question your progress.**