

**DISSERTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DAC) POLICY**  
**FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PHD PROGRAMS IN THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

DAC meeting purpose:

- Evaluate student progress toward degree.
- Provide critical input and advice that will facilitate the student's completion of their PhD in a timely manner.
- Provide additional mentorship to the student as needed (including discussion of the student's career goals as appropriate)

DAC membership requires approval from the Graduate Program Director and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, and will include:

- At least four faculty members (including the student's advisor) with expertise in one or more aspects of the student's project and who are familiar with the requirements of the graduate program for completion of a PhD. Students (in consultation with their faculty advisor and program director) may request specific faculty to serve on their DAC.
- A majority of DAC members must be members of the Graduate Faculty. OHSU faculty from outside the Graduate Faculty may be included.
- One member may be from outside the university, but these require approval by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (the Program Director should include a brief cv and short explanation of non OHSU-faculty expertise on the committee to the Associate Dean)
- No more than two DAC members may lack any DAC experience and at least one member must have been on a DAC for a graduated student.
- DAC Chair: One DAC member, not the mentor, with significant experience in mentoring graduate students, and having served on a DAC before.
- DAC members may be added or removed with the approval of the Program Director and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. Following the change, the DAC composition will still adhere to the above requirements.

Typically, DAC members will be invited to serve as part of the student's Oral Exam Committee.

DAC meeting format:

- Prior to a DAC meeting, students will submit a written summary of their recent work and prior DAC meeting summaries, to the committee members using the Dissertation Advisory Committee Meeting Summary Form. For students who have just begun their PhD research, this summary can consist of an outline of proposed aims. For more advanced students, this summary should include the goals identified by the committee at their previous DAC meeting, and a description of the student's work to address these goals (including successes and problems). *Individual graduate programs have the option of requiring these summaries to be prepared in a specific format and according to a specific timeline, and might require additional elements to be included (students should check with their program director).*
- The mentor should be prepared to provide an evaluative summary of student progress at the start of the meeting. Individual graduate programs also have the option of requiring mentors to provide a brief written summary of their student's progress, prior to a DAC meeting. However, the mentor's evaluation of student progress will be discussed as part of the DAC meeting itself.

- For each DAC meeting, students should prepare an organized presentation of their recent progress (e.g. as a Powerpoint presentation), including a summary of the goals outlined by the DAC during their previous meeting; a discussion of their accomplishments and any problems encountered; and a summary of the directions they intend to pursue during the following six months.
- After each DAC meeting, a short report that summarizes the issues raised during the meeting should be prepared by the student in consultation with the mentor (with revisions by the DAC members), or by the DAC chair (with input from the other faculty members). DAC chairs are responsible for distributing revised copies of the DAC summary to the student, all members of the DAC, the Graduate Program Director, and sending a copy to the Graduate Studies office.

The summary should include:

- 1) Date, present participants, and absent members if necessary
- 2) Summarize the student's progress since the previous DAC meeting
- 3) Summarize any significant problems or issues that need to be addressed
- 4) Summarize what the student should attempt to accomplish in the next 6 months
- 5) When appropriate, summarize the student's future plans/career goals
- 6) Estimate of date of completion (this will be more precise as student advances)

Additional elements required by the student's graduate program may include:

- 7) Date when student completed the myIDP and description of career advice student received.
- 8) Date of ethics courses taken (note NIH requires regular exposure to ethics courses (at least every 4 years).
- 9) Date when DAC agreed that the student is ready to write their dissertation.

DAC meeting frequency:

*Note: individual programs might require the earlier formation of the DAC and more frequent meetings than the minimum outlined below.*

- Students are required to form their DAC within one term of passing their qualifying examination, but are encouraged to form advisory committees once they have joined a laboratory where they will carry out their dissertation research (generally at the end of their first year).
- Students must meet with their DAC in person at least every six months. Additional meetings may be scheduled by the student or by the members of a DAC to ensure the student's progress towards their PhD.
- Individual programs should establish a tracking mechanism to ensure that all students meet regularly with their DAC, and that DAC reports are completed in a timely manner.

Approved by Graduate Council: 10 June 2014