

Steps for committee meeting preparation

1. Book meetings well in advance, it can be difficult to get committee members together. Generally, you want to obtain a few 2 to 4 options of time availabilities from Margaret, keeping in mind the other responsibilities and availability of committee members. Send out our request to committee members with these options. Repeat iteratively as needed to secure a date. The earlier you do this in advance the more likely you will be successful in obtaining a consensus time
2. Send any documents that the committee is expected to discuss ahead of the meeting. One week may be enough for small documents or updates on previous manuscripts. Two weeks is preferable for manuscripts.
3. Provide an agenda, Either at the meeting or prior to the meeting. Please use the form provided for that purpose.
4. Send documentation of your progress prior to the meeting including your updated training plan and self-evaluation of your competency using the forms provided. This will make discussion of these more efficient at the meeting.
5. Complete the University committee meeting form and print or send an electronic version prior to the meeting. Your supervisor will complete their portion about your progress at the meeting in front of you. Advisors sign after those elements are completed. You may do this in paper or electronic version. The electronic version saves paper, but you must send your completed portion to the supervisor to do online at the meeting if you wish to submit an electronic version. In the electronic version your supervisor must sign last as that locks the form.
6. During the meeting record committee recommendations, discussion items and define specific next steps including what dates these will be completed. Record these on the agenda form which will become your minutes of the meeting.
7. Circulate the minutes of the meeting to the committee with a request for any errors or omissions to be clarified.
8. Once the process is complete provide the graduate student office with your committee form, progress update, and the minutes that include action items/minutes as completed. You may append the competency evaluation completed by you and your supervisor.

Best practices for committee meetings-

1. for a first meeting a PowerPoint presentation is expected that includes some background about yourself, your courses plan, your research interest and general direction of a thesis (or more specific plan if known). Your committee is there to advise you and you should give them critical information that will help them give you good advice. If you have a specific career goal, it is helpful to let people know so they can make sure your development is not only aligned with completion of the program, but also your future career goals.
2. Progress meetings may require a PowerPoint presentation if you have results to share. If there are not specific results you may wish to use the agenda provided in a print or electronic version to organize the meeting.

3. Meetings are required at least annually usually occurring between January and May each year. Additional meetings can be scheduled at the recommendation of the trainee or the committee. Additional meetings are suggested for key milestones or challenges in moving the research forward.
4. Any items that the trainee expects feedback on should be circulated at least one week prior to the meeting-major documents should be circulated two weeks prior to the meeting.
5. A meeting agenda should be provided prior to or at the meeting to all attendees. Use the template provided and a complete summary of the key recommendations and tasks arising from the committee meeting during the meeting. This document that summarizes the meeting can be circulated to the committee after the meeting. This will serve as their record of what deliverables you will be working on, but also what expectations there will be from them to provide additional instruction or feedback to assist you in your progress.
6. Trainees should think about what they want to get out of meetings and lead the meeting appropriately to achieve those goals. What are the key issues that need to be raised to move the work forward? Time with your advisors is valuable and you should use it to your advantage.
7. A clear update of progress since the last committee meeting should be provided.
8. Any delays or limitations in progress should be acknowledged by the trainee and what plans are in place to remediate those.
9. Lead a professional meeting. It does not make a good impression on committee members if you come to meetings unprepared, do not have a focus for the meeting or do not take ownership of your work by leading the meeting. Lead the meeting in a professional manner showing that you have command of your research project and personal development.
10. Come to the meeting with all forms necessary including the University committee form that must to be passed in, with all information completed. Additional forms that Dr. MacDermid requires to assist students in development and progress on meeting timelines include: the agenda and form for committee meeting minutes, your updated training plan and the competency evaluation document. While these are not required by the University, they should be attached to the University form to ensure that the student's record is complete. It is advised that the updated training plan be provided to advisors prior to the meeting to facilitate a timely discussion.
11. Remember that committee meetings are a requirement and the place where your committee evaluates your progress. Advisors can perform more advisory roles in between meetings on an individual basis. Expect to get feedback on your progress and advice to improve the quality of your work or the timeliness of completion of the program. If you need additional feedback request it.
12. The supplemental forms assist you in organizing your work and having a clear agreement with your supervisor and committee about expectations and deliverables. Any changes to the manuscripts you plan to include in your thesis, your enrolment targets are the scope of work should be discussed with the committee, and reflected on a revised tracking document.