

**PHARMACOLOGY GRADUATE GROUP**  
**Thesis Advisory Committee Appointment Form**

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prelim Exam Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prospective Thesis Committed Members (student list)**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

**Research Topic Title:**

**Research Description** (under 1000 characters):

**Please print name, sign and date:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Thesis Advisor)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Date)**

**Approved Thesis Committee Members (Academic Review Committee's list)**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

**Please print name, sign and date:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Chairman, ARC)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Date)**

**(Return completed form to Sarah Squire – 10-110 TRC; sasquire@mail.med.upenn.edu)**

## Thesis Advisory Committee

No more than 6 months after initiation of a research project, a Thesis Advisory Committee is appointed by the Academic Review Committee in consultation with the student and the thesis advisor. To this end, the student submits the names of prospective committee members to the Academic Review Committee together with a short paragraph describing the topic of the thesis research. Due to the wide range of research areas and expertise within the PGG faculty the choice of a faculty member without PGG membership is strongly discouraged. After notification, the student is responsible for contacting the members of the committee to arrange the meetings. Appointment is usually based on expertise in areas relating to the research project. The chair of the committee is chosen at the first meeting by the committee in consultation with the advisor and student. The chair of the thesis advisory committee must be a member of the PGG. Ultimately, the advisory committee consists of 4-5 faculty members, but may initially consist of 2-3 faculty in addition to the advisor. The thesis advisor is not an official member of the committee, although he or she will provide important input at all meetings. The student and advisor may additionally invite others (*e.g.*, collaborators) to attend advisory committee meetings on an informal basis.

The purpose of the advisory committee is to provide constructive input to the thesis project and to ensure that reasonable progress is maintained. The committee achieves this through semi-annual meetings with the student and advisor at which experimental data are presented and future directions are outlined. The student prepares a short (1-2 pages) written outline listing the goals and main hypotheses of the work, the experimental data obtained, the experiments proposed for the next 6 months, and the papers published, in press, or submitted. It is useful to provide graphs of experimental results to the committee, but extensive written descriptions are not necessary. Meetings must take place every 6-8 months. At the start of each thesis committee meeting, the committee should meet with the advisor for 5 minutes without the student present and then 5 minutes with the student without the advisor present. This allows both the student and the advisor to speak candidly to the committee about progress toward the thesis goals.

When the student and advisor feel that sufficient data have been gathered to constitute a thesis, they may request an additional advisory meeting followed at some time later by the exam itself. At this point, the advisory committee begins to make the transition to the Thesis Examination Committee. The transition is accomplished through the appointment of additional faculty if necessary following the same process as described above, so that the final committee totals 4-5 members. Appointments are made by the Academic Review Committee based on suggestions of the student, advisor, and committee chair. The added members, at the discretion of the student and advisor, may attend the last advisory committee meeting. The outline of the dissertation, usually in chapter form, is discussed at this meeting.