**Committee Meeting Checklist for PhD students:**

1. Form an advisory committee. With the advice of their mentors, students should form an Advisory Committee, which should consist of at least five graduate faculty members, including at least three members from the department (or program) and at least one external member.
2. Contact members of the Advisory Committee to set up the meeting time and reserve a meeting place at least one month prior to the meeting.
3. Complete a Self-Evaluation and a Committee Meeting Document and submit these documents **no later than one week before the meeting to** all committee members.
4. Prepare the Committee Meeting Document using the following standard format:
   1. The text portion should have at least six single-spaced typewritten pages with one-inch margins on all sides and 12pt font. This page requirement is for the project description itself and does not include title page, project summary, figure legends, figures, and references.
   2. The document must include the following sections:
      1. **Title Page:** include project title, name of student, meeting time and place, and the names of the committee members and chair.
      2. **Project Summary** (200-400 words).
      3. **Project Description with the following information:**

**Objectives** should include a precise statement of the research problem and a list of specific aims.

**Background** should include a review of current status of the research area and how the proposed investigations relate to other work.

**Significance** should show how this research would contribute to the understanding of the field of the biological problem.

**Hypothesis/research questions** should be clearly identified.

**Preliminary data**: Except the first-time committee meeting, **the preliminary data** should include a brief summary of research progress reported at the previous committee meeting plus new research done since the last committee meeting.

**Research plan** should address the specific strategies and methodologies to be used in addressing the questions being asked and the rationales behind the proposed experiments. This section should also include a discussion of potential results as well as any perceived challenges and possible alternatives. The research plan section should use about half of the total page number.

**Conclusion/summary**

**iv. References**: include names of all authors and full titles of articles.

1. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation based on the Committee Meeting Document to be presented during the meeting. This should not only report research progress but also lay out plans for future experiments. If there are any questions and problems encountered during the research or anticipated in future experiments, the student should bring them up to seek advice and input. Members of Advisory Committee are usually experts in various research areas. The student should take advantage of their expertise during the committee meeting in order to help with his/her own research. Following the presentation, the committee will meet briefly in private to discuss the student’ progress, make suggestions for areas to improve, recommend remediation if any problems arise, and/or decide whether or not the student is ready to defend his/her thesis in the near future. This discussion will be documented in writing in the student’s folder and be communicated to the student at the conclusion of the meeting.
2. Meet with the research mentor after the committee meeting to discuss the committee’s recommendations and make a plan to advance the PhD research project.
3. Hold Advisory Committee at least once a year.