APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION

• Students anticipating graduation must complete a diploma application card

• **Cards (survey form) are emailed to students in January and a meeting is held in February for students who plan to graduate in May**

• Doctoral degrees are awarded in May, October, and December

• **Formal commencement exercises are held in May**
PH.D. PROGRAM

• To receive the Ph.D.
  • Complete 32 hours of coursework
  • Pass qualifying exam

• Complete a dissertation and have it approved
  • Manual available to assist with content & format

• PUBLISH OR HAVE ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION, A FIRST AUTHORED MANUSCRIPT IN A PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL (Dissertation Research)

• Successfully defend the dissertation in a public seminar
PUBLIC DEFENSE

• The student must successfully defend the thesis research in a public seminar presented on a weekday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and it must be widely publicized.

• The student should allow at least one month for completing the steps involved in preparing for the public defense.
1. COI members are given at least two weeks to read the dissertation after the student in consultation with his/her preceptor has agreed upon an acceptable draft for review.

2. The preceptor then schedules a COI meeting for approval of the dissertation for defense by the student, and with information from the Graduate School Office and the student with regards to a tentative defense date and time.
3. The preceptor contacts the DGS **a minimum of two weeks in advance** of the proposed student’s defense date to:

   a. Inform the DGS that the student is ready to defend the dissertation by completing and submitting the *PhD Dissertation Defense Application Form* with signatures from all the COI members,
   
   i. The date, time and room for the defense
   
   ii. The title of the dissertation
   
   iii. Copy of the dissertation abstract
PhD Dissertation Defense Application Form
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE

TO: The School of Graduate Studies and Research
FROM: ____________________________
(Graduate Program)

Print Type (Student)

Is submitting a thesis entitled:

__________________________________________________________
(Pull Title of Thesis)

"Please attach abstract to this form"

In preparation to defend on:

__________________________________________________________
(Tentative Date of Defense)

__________________________________________________________
(Location and Time)

For receipt of a Doctorate of Philosophy in Biomedical Sciences on:

__________________________________________________________
(Date of Graduation)

The following Student and COI members agree that ________________________ is ready to publicly defend thesis.
Print Type (Student)

(Signature of Student) (Date)

(Signature of Chairperson) (Date)

(Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

(Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

(Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

(Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

(Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

(Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

(Signature of Thesis Committee Member) (Date)

The dissertation document has been checked by ______________________ on ____________ and is in an acceptable format to defend.
(Signature of Interim Associate Dean) (Date)

(Signature of Interim Dean) (Date)
4. The DGS writes a letter to the SOGSR requesting the student’s defense. The information in #3 is included in the letter, which must be received in the Dean’s Office at least two weeks prior to the student’s defense.

5. The SOGSR will confirm the availability of the date, time, and room for the defense with the DGS and the preceptor.
6. The Dean’s Office will prepare the flyers for advertisement of the defense and coordinate the distribution of the flyers on campus. This should be done at least one week before the scheduled defense date.

7. The student’s defense consists of a 35-45 minute presentation followed by questions from the COI first, and then the audience.

8. The COI evaluates the student’s defense.
9. The chair of the COI provides the DGS with the *Dissertation Defense Evaluation Form* signed by all members of the COI.

10. A student passes his/her dissertation defense and a dissertation or thesis is accepted only upon approval by at least two-thirds of the members of the COI. If the student fails the defense, he/she will be allowed a retake.

11. The vote of the COI is considered by the SOGSR to be final.
PhD Program
School of Graduate Studies & Research
Meharry Medical College
Dissertation Defense Evaluation Form

Name of Student: __________________________ Date: __________

Quality of Oral Thesis Defense

_____ Pass  _____ Fail

Committee Members: (Print and Sign names)

______________________________ (Chair)

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

Comments:

______________________________

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______________________________

______________________________

______________________________
12. After the defense, the DGS must notify the Graduate Dean in a letter and send a copy to the Department Chair stating that the defense was satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

a. The *Dissertation Defense Evaluation Form* is submitted with the letter to the SOGSR.
DISSERTATION DEFENSE & GRADUATION

• Defend by April 1\textsuperscript{st} for May Commencement
  • May 1\textsuperscript{st} for June graduation*
  • July 1\textsuperscript{st} for October graduation
  • October 1\textsuperscript{st} for December graduation

*May participate in May Commencement (Graduation)
EXAMPLE TIMELINE FOR MAY GRADUATION

**March 1st**
Submit draft of dissertation to COI

**March 15th**
COI meeting to clear student for defense

**March 16th**
Preceptor submits to DGS
1) letter informing student is ready to defend and
2) Dissertation Defense Application Form with all COI signatures

**March 17th**
DGS submits letter + completed Dissertation Defense Form to SOGSR

**April 1st**
Last day to defend dissertation for May graduation
PARTICIPATION IN MAY COMMENCEMENT

• If you defend between April 2\textsuperscript{nd} and May 1\textsuperscript{st}:
  • Walk in Graduation Ceremony
  • Your name will not be in the program
ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR VIRTUAL DISSERTATION DEFENSES

1. Upon receipt and approval of the completed PhD Dissertation Defense Application Form, the SOGSR staff will set up the Zoom meeting. The Zoom meeting will be set up such that the faculty preceptor is the host and the student is listed as a co-host. The link to the Zoom meeting will be sent to the student and faculty preceptor, who will then distribute it to the members of the COI. The Graduate School Office will be responsible for sending out flyers containing the meeting link to the campus community.

2. On the day of the defense the faculty preceptor, but not the presenting student, will manage the meeting proceedings (e.g., monitoring questions through the Chat feature, moving COI members into breakout rooms during the defense for committee deliberations, etc.).

3. Students are encouraged to practice with the technology prior to the meeting to become familiar with different features (e.g., sharing your screen, use of the whiteboard feature, lighting in your room, remove clutter from the background, etc.).
ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR VIRTUAL DISSERTATION DEFENSES

4. Students, COI members and other participants should consider using a headset or headphones – the sound quality is better. Participants should also remember to speak slowly and clearly.

5. The student and COI members should have at least one agreed-upon backup system at their disposal (e.g., a phone-based conference call).

6. All COI members should consider signing-in to the meeting 10 minutes prior to the start time to ensure they are able to connect and participate constructively in the dissertation defense. COI members are asked to use their video to effectively interact and engage with the student.
ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR VIRTUAL DISSERTATION DEFENSES

7. Ask all participants to mute themselves at the beginning of the meeting/dissertation seminar presentation.

8. If you are part of the presentation audience, please activate your video (if bandwidth allows) and exaggerate your positive responses; it’s easier for the student to ‘read the crowd’ if they see smiling faces and nodding heads!

9. Due to COVID-related restrictions, we are unable to host in-person celebratory receptions. However, the preceptor in concert with the department chair can host a “virtual reception” 1-2 hours after the dissertation defense to celebrate the student’s accomplishments.
DISSERTATION DOCUMENT

- Must meet formatting requirements of Graduate School (this takes time and can delay awarding of degree)

- Submit 3 copies of dissertation to Graduate School by last Friday in April, July, and October

- The document must be on 100% cotton paper that is white and at least 20-pound weight.
  - The same brand of paper must be used throughout the document and all copies.
  - Copies must be clear and clean.
**EXAMPLE TIMELINE FOR MAY GRADUATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March 1(^{st})</th>
<th>March 15(^{th})</th>
<th>March 16(^{th})</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>April 30(^{th})</td>
<td>Last day to submit dissertation to SOGSR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
DATE OF DEGREE

If your final dissertation document on cotton paper is **NOT** submitted by the last Friday of April, May, July or October

- Your degree will be dated the next graduation date after you submit the dissertation (May, June, October, December)
GRADUATION CLEARANCE

• Submit letter from DGS to Dean and 3 copies of dissertation

• Complete Graduate Program Self-Assessment Student Questionnaire

• Complete National Research Council Survey of Earned Doctorates

• Complete Exit Survey

• Obtain Clearance Form from Dean’s Office and get appropriate signatures
AWARDED YOUR PH.D. DEGREE!!!