

Curriculum in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Thesis Committee Guidelines

The following FAQ's will address some common questions about forming a BCB thesis committee. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact: Tim Elston - Director of Graduate Studies, Will Valdar - Director of Student Progression or John Cornett – Curriculum Administrator.

1. Who can serve on my thesis committee?

Faculty members on the thesis committee should be chosen by each student in consultation with his or her advisor. Each committee must include an “experimental” faculty advisor and a “computational” faculty advisor. The additional members include faculty with research interests or technical knowledge that overlaps your proposed project.

The UNC Graduate School rules indicate that you must have a committee of at least five faculty, but you can have up to six. The majority of your committee must be members of the BCB Curriculum so 3/5 or 4/6 depending on the size. Others outside the Curriculum (or the University) are permissible, but they must be full members of the Graduate Faculty or appointed as “Fixed Term Appointees” by the Graduate School.

The chair is selected by the student and should be someone other than the student's PI.

2. When should I form my thesis committee?

After you have passed the written qualifying exam and before the start of your third year. You must provide the name and title (ie: Professor, Assistant Professor, etc.) of each faculty member who agrees to serve on your thesis committee to the Curriculum Administrator. They will prepare a form that you will take to have signed by the Curriculum Director. Your committee must be approved/acknowledged by the Director prior to holding your first committee meeting.

3. How often should the committee meet?

You are required to plan a meeting with your committee at least once per year in order to keep everyone updated on the progress of your project. Forms for each meeting may be found on the BCB website.

4. What should I do to prepare for each meeting?

Prior to your meeting you should consult the BCB website for the appropriate forms at least 2 weeks in advance of your meeting, as some of these forms require submission to the chair and to the Curriculum 1 week prior to meeting. In some cases you will need additional documents from the BCB Curriculum Administrator. There are different forms pending the type of meeting you are having with your committee. After the meeting, you should immediately (within 48 hours) turn in all forms to the Curriculum Administrator to keep in your permanent file.