**PhD Program – Mid-term Evaluation**

Graduate School  
for Cellular and  
Biomedical Sciences

**Aim of the mid-term evaluation**

1. to test the candidate’s knowledge of the research field and evaluate her/his capacity to succeed with a PhD
2. to discuss and evaluate the progress of the research project and its feasibility for publication in a peer-reviewed journal
3. to define the goals for the remaining period of doctoral studies

**Formal setting – Two part**

**Part One – Public Presentation**

1. 40-45-min public talk in the setting of an Institute or Department Seminar Series
2. Thesis committee (supervisor, co-advisor, mentor) is present
3. Session Chair is the Mentor
4. Public discussion of 15 to max. 60 min, during which supervisor, co-advisor, mentor and audience ask critical questions and involve the candidate in a scientific discourse

**Part Two – Closed Meeting**

1. The candidate and the thesis committee thoroughly discuss the state of the research project, its strengths, and weaknesses.
2. The candidate presents his/her outlook on the project, so that his/her conceptual understanding of the project can be assessed.
3. The closed discussion must include explicit advice on the further course of the project including the importance of being able to publish at least one original article as a first author prior to the PhD defense
4. The thesis committee and the student declare an external co-referee\* and provide the name (with title) and contact (email, affiliation, address) at the end of this form.  
   \*External co-referees are internationally recognized researchers in the research field of the candidate's thesis project; they must not be affiliated with the University of Bern, not be involved in active collaboration with the candidate's research group and not have had co-authorship with the supervisor or the candidate in the last five years.
5. More details can be found on the GCB website on: <https://www.gcb.unibe.ch/phd_program/external_thesis_assessment/index_eng.html>
6. Discussion of the remaining timeline for the PhD studies and plans for scheduling and completing the PhD defense within the guidelines set forth by the University of Bern and the GCB. **All sign the guidelines of the most important steps to be followed with respect to the PhD defense:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **ECTS complete:**   1. confirm mandatory ECT requirements are met 2. students in PhD Specialization programs **submit list** of courses taken and planned to fulfil specialization requirements. |
|  | The **thesis defense date** is communicated to the GCB no later than two months prior to the defense date |
|  | The thesis is sent to the supervisor, external co-referee and GCB no later than **two months prior to the thesis defense**, allowing the examiners sufficient time for a thorough review and written assessment of the thesis. The GCB needs the thesis electronically. For supervisor and external co-referee the form of the thesis to be sent has to be agreed with them. Information for the PhD Degree can be found here: <https://www.gcb.unibe.ch/phd_program/phd_degree/index_eng.html>   * Send thesis to GCB electronically * Send thesis to supervisor and external co-referee |
|  | All the documents are at the GCB the **very latest one month prior to the thesis defense**   * PhD Form – signed and filled out * Assessments – Supervisor, External co-referee * Payment confirmation for exam fee * Studienblatt from KSL |
|  | All Mandatory courses in the doctoral agreement are completed and ECTS achieved are credited in CTS/KSL.   * PhD students - 6 ECTS (includes 3 ECTS with a graded examination) * MD PhD students 31 ECTS (includes 3 ECTS with a graded examination) |
|  | At least one first-author research article is published. |
|  | The thesis defense takes place (at the latest) one year after the termination of the PhD employment contract. |

**Protocol form**

**Name:**

**Matriculation no.:**

**Supervisor:**

**Place, date:**

**Title of presentation:**

**Scientific evaluation: presentation/discussion and research progress**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **insufficient** | **sufficient** | **good** | **excellent** |
| **Quality of scientific work** |  |  |  |  |
| **Methodological knowledge** |  |  |  |  |
| **Knowledge of relevant literature** |  |  |  |  |
| **Data presentation / interpretation** |  |  |  |  |
| **Independence in the planning and execution of experiments** |  |  |  |  |
| **Creativity** |  |  |  |  |
| **Perseverance** |  |  |  |  |

**Conclusions and Outlook summarized by the mentor**

1. **Objectives for improvement (for insufficient points with deadline for reassessment):**
2. **Summary of main points of the discussion:***(state of research, strengths, weaknesses, advices on necessary changes,….)*
3. **Goals for the remaining period. Is a first author publication possible within the remaining time?**
4. **Assessment of Thesis Defense timeline – is the student on track to complete the defense on time. If yes, what is the estimated defense month and date? If no, where are the potential pitfalls?**

**Examiners**

**Name** **Signature Grade**

**Grading Scheme:** 6.0 = excellent; 5.5 = very good; 5.0 = good; 4.5 = satisfactory;  
4.0 = sufficient; below 4.0 = failed.  
**The highest mark should be reserved for extraordinary work (top 10%).**

[**External Co-referee**](file:///\\ispm.unibe.ch\FS\_ISPM\GHS-GCB\GCB\Vorlagen\Mid-term\(http:\www.gcb.unibe.ch\phd_program\external_thesis_assessment\index_eng.html)

In accordance with the GCB regulations, the members of the thesis committee should select and agree on a suitable, internationally recognized researcher for the external review of the candidate’s PhD thesis.

At the end of the second year, an external co-referee must be selected and approved by the members of the thesis committee. **Art. 13 2External examiners are independent research group leaders who have expertise in the research area of the doctoral candidate and have not published any research paper together with the doctoral candidate or the thesis supervisor during the last five years. An external examiner may be the same as the external co-referee of the written dissertation and is either present in person or connected via videoconference.**

The external co-referee is formally contacted by the supervisor to confirm acceptance of the role and the name is then forwarded to the GCB.

Name / Title:

Affiliation:

e-mail address:

**Modifications of the promotion regulations – what it means:**

**From February 1, 2020, a modification of the doctoral regulations will come into force that will affect all PhD students enrolled at the GCB in February 2020.**

**Summary of most important changes**

**1. PhD Title**

a. The title “PhD of Science in…” is modified to PhD in… (specialist area according to study rules)

f. PhD in Computational Biology - new title

**2. German translation of PhD title**

Now the diploma with the doctoral title will include a German translation: *doctor scientiae naturalis (Dr. sc. nat)* without discipline. This also holds for MD-PhDs.

**3 .Format of the thesis defense**:

These modifications were made to improve the quality of the PhD program. Therefore, an external co-referee is now included also during the thesis defense.

1. The thesis defense still consists of a public presentation of 40-45 minutes after which the public can ask questions, but the 60 minutes discussion part is now transformed into a closed discussion with the examiners only.
2. The oral presentation may be held on a separate day than the closed discussion if this is desirable or both parts can be held one after each other. In any case, all four examiners need to be present on both days.
3. The examiners are: the supervisor(s), the co-advisor and the mentor and now also an external co-referee. This external co-referee can be the same as the one for the written thesis or can be another external co-referee. Important, the external co-referee can be present either in person or by video conference. All four examiners will give one grade for the oral defense (regardless of whether the public and closed defense take place on different days).