Proposal Instructions

- The candidate’s director names the committee and chooses the date and time of the Oral and completes the BIOE PhD Proposal Committee Form.
- The committee Chair receives a packet containing these instructions, the two grading rubrics, and the BIOE PhD Proposal Results Form.
- The candidate provides the written proposal to the committee at least two weeks before the Oral.
- The candidate makes a 30-45-minute presentation at the Oral and is examined by the committee.
- All committee members assess the written proposal and the oral presentation using the grading rubrics: BIOE PhD Written Proposal Rubric and BIOE PhD Oral Presentation of Research (Proposal and Dissertation) Rubric.
- The committee Chair completes the BIOE PhD Proposal Results Form and returns it to the department.

Composition of the Committee

The Committee for dissertation proposal consists of four individuals.

- A minimum of two members, including the chair of the committee must be graduate faculty in the Department of Bioengineering.
- One member must be graduate faculty from outside the department.
- The chair of the committee is responsible for ensuring the correct forms are completed and procedures are followed.
- The dissertation director is the main scientist guiding the student’s research.
- The dissertation director cannot be chair of the committee.

Written Proposal

The proposal should at a minimum clearly state the research question and the specific aims of the research, provide a critical review of the literature, present the hypotheses, the rationale and the significance of the research in addressing a gap in scientific knowledge, describe the research methods and study design in sufficient detail and present preliminary results demonstrating the feasibility of the research. The proposal should be 20-30 pages in length. Additional guidelines are provided in the BIOE PhD Written Proposal Rubric.

The proposal must be made available to the committee at least two weeks in advance of the presentation. The committee determines whether the proposal has merit and can lead to significant original contributions to the area.
Oral Presentation

The candidate must present the proposal to committee in a venue open to the public. Additional guidelines for preparing the presentation are provided in the BIOE PhD Oral Presentation of Research (Proposal and Dissertation) Rubric. Following the research presentation, the dissertation committee will ask the students a number of questions to evaluate the students' understanding of the relevant literature and methods that are broadly related to the chosen area of research, and whether the student has the knowledge and skills to complete the proposed work successfully and in a timely manner.

Grading

The written proposal and oral presentation are graded according to rubrics and the results are reported on the BIOE PhD Proposal Results Form. If the dissertation committee feels that the student is not adequately prepared, they may recommend remedial measures, including additional coursework to address any gaps in knowledge, or modification of the aims of the proposal. The proposal may be repeated once.