Cellular and Molecular Biology
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Responsibilities of the Preliminary Exam Chair

General information on the CMB preliminary exam can be found here: https://cmb.wisc.edu/preliminary-exam/.

- The Preliminary Exam Chair should be selected prior to the meeting. The student, in consultation with their PI, should select a Chair from among their committee members and well in advance of the meeting, ask that committee member to serve as Chair.

- Prior to the meeting, the Chair should consult with the student to decide whether committee members can ask questions during the student's 20-minute presentation or whether the presentation will be uninterrupted by questions.

- At the meeting, the Chair should ensure that all committee members have an equal opportunity to ask questions. The student's PI should be present but not participate in the discussion.

- When the committee is finished asking questions, the Chair should ask the student to leave the room and lead a discussion of the student's performance on both the written proposal and the oral defense of the proposal. It is the responsibility of the committee to decide upon one of possible outcomes listed below.

- When the student returns to the room, the Chair should share the outcome and the rationale.

- The Chair should also complete the last section of the Preliminary Examination Form, providing the rationale for the outcome in response to the prompt "Describe the feedback provided to the student by the Thesis Committee", indicating the committee's decision on the prelim exam, listing the committee members, and signing the form.

Possible outcomes:

PASS:

- Sign the CMB preliminary exam form and the warrant.

WRITTEN REVISIONS:

- Outline what revisions are necessary and indicate the completion deadline for these revisions on the CMB preliminary exam form.
- Sign the form but not the warrant.
- After written revisions have been completed and approved by the Thesis Committee, sign the warrant.

WRITTEN REVISIONS AND REPEAT OF ORAL DEFENSE:

- Outline what revisions are necessary and indicate the completion deadline for these revisions on the CMB preliminary exam form.

- Sign the form but not the warrant.
- Repeat the preliminary exam using the same guidelines as the original exam.
- If the student passes the preliminary exam, complete and sign a new CMB preliminary exam form and sign the warrant.

FAIL

- Complete and sign the CMB preliminary exam form but not the warrant.
- Contact the CMB Program Chair to discuss the outcome of the preliminary exam.
- The CMB Program Chair, in consultation with the Thesis Advisor, will determine the end result for the student.