**Tips for a successful annual committee meeting**

1. **Hold your meeting within 12 months of your last annual meeting**. For first year (September intake) students, this should be before June 14th in the year following registration.
2. **Organize your meeting early** and make your best efforts to ensure all members can attend. This may mean an early morning or early evening meeting. If any member cannot attend, please email Dana ([ddevine@pathology.ubc.ca](mailto:ddevine@pathology.ubc.ca)) and we will check in with them. They will need to review your annual report and provide you with feedback with copies sent to me and the rest of your committee. Ensure you book the meeting room 30 minutes prior to the start time to allow for set-up.
3. **Download the template for the annual report from the website and start completing it early**. If this is your second time using the template, use the old one and add new information. Since this document replaces your CV, please ensure that you highlight new achievements /professional activities (papers, presentation, scholarships, GPS sessions, workshops, conferences, etc.) in a new color or equivalent
4. **Complete your progress report as though it was being sent to CIHR** for funding renewal.
   1. Ensure that the hypothesis and specific aims listed in the preliminary sections match those stated in the main document
   2. Include only 2-3 small figures in the progress report if needed. It is the written context and interpretation of the data that is important here. Detailed figures should be saved for the presentation.
   3. Ensure you spend sufficient time on your proposed experiments. This is where most students/supervisors do poorly. Details of proposed experiments/ experimental strategy should be comprehensive but within the space available. Not an easy task so start early!
5. **Ensure that you work with your supervisor at every stage**. It is their document as much as yours and this is a great opportunity for them to mentor you in writing progress reports and project descriptions.
6. **Complete the student-supervisor relationship documents** with your supervisor ahead of the meeting and provide the Chair with a copy (also email a copy to the Graduate Assistant at [heather.cheadle@pathology.ubc.ca](mailto:heather.cheadle@pathology.ubc.ca)).
7. **Prepare and distribute your presentation** ahead of the meeting as required.
   1. Make sure that you supervisor has reviewed your presentation with you before sending it out to the committee or presenting at the meeting.
   2. The presentation should aim at finishing in no more than 20-30 minutes without interrupts. However, interruptions from the committee is encouraged and expected. This means the research part of the meeting will last about 60 minutes.
   3. Prepare a preliminary slide that summarizes and outlines your achievements in the past year. Make reference to courses completed, conferences attended, posters and podium presentations, research papers published, scholarship funding received, professional advancement sessions/workshops attended, etc. You are expected to have completed approximately 10 GPS or other professional advancement workshops/lectures during the course of your degree so take this seriously. This information will also be contained in the annual report
   4. Review the work you have completed since the last meeting. Except for the first meeting, a detailed background is not necessarily needed.
   5. Provided a detailed description of work proposed for the next year. This should be comprehensive and outline a series of alternate strategies in anticipation of problems. Clearly identify where you believe you may experience difficulty and require assistance from committee members.
   6. Provide a timeline for the completion of your thesis. This can be general in nature for new students but should be detailed for MSc students who are completing a degree or PhD students after they have advanced to Candidacy.
8. **Ask specific questions you need answering** by the committee, e.g. “I request a transfer from the MSc program to the PhD Program”, or, “I request permission to write and defend my thesis”.

Remember, this is not an examination! We have other venues for that. It is a supportive meeting in which you can show what you have done well, get assistance with things you are struggling with, and receive input and approval for your proposed studies.

Good luck - and feel free to call on me if you need advice or help.

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