

Molecular and Cell Biology (MCB) Department at the University of California Berkeley

MCB Grad Network (MGN)

5th year event summary

In the Fall, 5th year and beyond students will be invited to a panel discussion followed by a mixer to discuss the intricacies of writing your thesis and leaving.

General topics covered during 5th year and beyond panel:

- How long does the thesis need to be?
- How long does it take to write it?
- How far in advance of submission did you send drafts to your committee?
- Did you your committee read it? Did they have corrections and comments?
- Had you published before writing your thesis? If yes, how much did you have to add to your papers to finish the chapter?
- Will you be able to graduate if you didn't get a paper? If so, then how does that work?
- What happens if you have fewer than 3 papers in writing? What makes up all the chapters?
- Do you include everything you did? Or do you limit it to useful information?
- What is supposed to go into the introduction? The discussion?
- Can you have a chapter of negative results?
- How do you and your PI decide when it is ready to send to your committee?
- What is the appropriate amount of time to give your committee to review your thesis?
- How do you get your PI to advocate for you with your committee? Or your committee to advocate for you with your PI?
- How do you navigate determining your exit date if your PI wants you to finish one more paper, but it's taking longer than you want to stay, without blowing up your relationship?
- What is a reasonable amount of time and money to spend packing up and moving out of the area?
- How do you keep in touch with classmates after you depart?
- What are some ways to make new friends at your job/postdoc in a new place that doesn't have the same kind of large instant-friends cohort?
- What are things that you have to think about or do as a non-grad student, that you didn't expect?
- What are the ways that you maintain self-care and supportive relationships in a new environment?