

Prospectus:

The Prospectus is a brief document in which the student describes the work that they plan to do to complete their dissertation. Preliminary data may be included if available.

The purpose of the prospectus is to allow a student's committee to give feedback on the research plan and ascertain that the student understands what it is he or she is proposing. From the student's perspective, approval of the Prospectus provides an indication that if they complete the proposed work their committee will find sufficient for their dissertation.

The Prospectus should be prepared similar to the research narrative portion of grant proposal. The format involves specific aims, a research strategy, which includes the significance of the proposed research, as well as potential innovations, the approach to be used, preliminary data and references. The prospectus is to be completed within six months of passing candidacy exams. One does not need "more data" to write a prospectus. Research plans can always change in the face of the first experiments done, and the student should keep their committee up to date about major deviations from the plan in the prospectus.

The student's guidance committee is expanded at the time of the Prospectus, to include an addition faculty member who is not faculty in the student's program area. For example, the added member may come from Neuroscience, if the student is in the Pharmacology program area. Faculty from non-BMS departments at Kent State can also serve as outside members. Alternatively, an accomplished scientist from outside the school's faculty may be appointed by giving temporary graduate faculty status in order to act as the outside member of the committee.

This committee evaluates the written Prospectus and convenes for the oral prospectus defense. This is not an exam like the candidacy exam – this is an opportunity for the committee to evaluate the student's knowledge of their research plan and for the student to get feedback. The committee may pass the prospectus defense or may require the student to make additional changes to the plan. The approved Prospectus acts as a contract that describes the research to be completed by the student. A major change to the student's research requires the approval of a majority of the Committee and the Director of the School.