

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT OEB GRAD REVIEW

The primary function of the GOC is to **provide support and program-wide mentorship for OEB students**. The OEB model is to provide mentorship in multiple ways: peer-to-peer, near-peer, and faculty-to-student. Advisors and committees provide important disciplinary-specific mentorship and should have regular contact with students. The GOC provides students with guidance about the program expectations, general career planning advice, and oversight of key milestones (e.g., qualifying exam, prospectus). We can also be a sounding board for students' concerns. **The GOC is available year-round** to serve these functions, not just during the spring grad review.

Who is on the GOC? Five OEB faculty compose the GOC, with at least 3 members present for each student's grad review meeting. The GOC chair is an elected position, voted on by the OEB Steering Committee. Other members are appointed to serve on the GOC by the Program Leader with the advice of the current GOC. Thus, members can rotate on/off from year to year. Currently, the committee includes Craig Albertson (Biology) as chair, Bethany Bradley (Environmental Conservation), Lynnette Leidy-Sievert (Anthropology), Steve McCormick (Conte Anadromous Fish Lab) as well as the current OEB Program Leader, Paige Warren (Environmental Conservation).

About the grad review: By "review," we are simply checking on student progress through the program - are you meeting your milestones like qualifying exams and prospectus submission? Are you having regular committee meetings? Have you met the program requirements (e.g. coursework, teaching requirement)? We do not conduct a formal performance evaluation of students. Instead, we try to get a general view of how all our students are doing so that we can provide guidance and support.

Why do we fill out that online form? The form asks you to summarize the state of your work in the program to date. It gives the GOC an opportunity to celebrate your accomplishments and to provide guidance on next steps. The CV is included so that we can provide feedback on areas that you might want to strengthen in order to position yourself for future opportunities in your field, whether that be postdocs, jobs, or fellowship applications. In many ways, the information you submit is similar to what faculty must submit every year for our annual reviews. We encourage you to use the form as an opportunity to take stock of the work you've done this year, and to think about your goals for next year and for the future. We also encourage you to share your submission with your advisor and to use it as an opportunity to align expectations between you and your advisor.

Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and Grad Review: For inspiration for thinking about your progress and plans for the future, we recommend investigating Individual Development Plans (IDPs), if you haven't done so already. The IDP website (<https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>) has a skills assessment test that can provide insights. You can also look at the Graduate School's IDP template for a UMass version (<https://www.umass.edu/graduate/form/individual-development-plan>). Many graduate students have found that filling out an IPD every year is helpful in finishing graduate school and preparing for their careers.

What to expect when you come in the room: The grad review is meant to be a **friendly conversation** about your progress in the program. It is also an opportunity for you to get advice from the GOC on any questions you have about upcoming milestones (e.g. qualifying exams, prospectus, defense). We

encourage you to come with questions for the committee. Some of the things students often ask include: How do I decide what conferences to go to? How can I develop certain skills - e.g. presenting, science writing for a broad audience? When should I begin looking for a postdoctoral position?

What happens afterwards: The committee works with Maggie and the other IDGP staff to generate a summary of the meeting. We share this with you so that you have a record of the major items we discussed and the recommendations of the committee for the coming year. It also gives the GOC a starting point for discussions the following year. Our goal is to send these out by the end of the summer. Again, we encourage you to discuss the memo with your advisor and to let us know if you have any questions. **You are ALWAYS welcome to seek out any member of the GOC for advice.**