

Committee Appointment/Signature Form

Graduate Student Committee Procedures¹ and Doctoral Committee Appointment Signature Form

Office of Graduate Enrollment Services, The Pennsylvania State University, 114 Kern Graduate Building, University Park, PA 16802-3396; 814-865-1795; 814-863-4627 (fax)

(For a complete list of doctoral committee policies, please refer to the *University Bulletin* at www.psu.edu/bulletins/whitebook/.)

I. Justification

A graduate student's committee is responsible for approving a student's program of study; providing constructive input to help guide the student's research/scholarship; promoting effective communication among the graduate student, committee chair/adviser, and other members of the committee; and more generally, for helping to promote the successful completion of the student's program. The committee should be appointed as soon as possible in a master's program, and immediately after the doctoral student's admission to candidacy. The following ***Doctoral Committee Policies and Procedures*** are intended to help achieve these goals, to minimize misunderstandings, and to help foster a collegial relationship among the graduate student, the committee chair/adviser, and the members of the committee throughout the graduate student's program. **Each doctoral student, chair, and committee member should receive a copy of these policies and procedures.**

II. Policies and Procedures for Doctoral Students and Committees

1. The doctoral committee should meet with the student **at least once per year** to: (1) provide guidance; (2) finalize and approve the research proposal of the student so that there is a clear understanding of the research goals and objectives; (3) assess the quality and progress of the research; and (4) discuss programmatic issues (e.g., course requirements).
2. Both the chair and the student are responsible for providing a copy of the final draft of the dissertation to the committee **at least two weeks** prior to the scheduled date of the final oral examination. The chair should schedule a date for the examination with the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services **at least two weeks** prior to the examination.
3. Both the chair and the student are responsible for ensuring the completion of a final draft of the dissertation, and for adequate consultation with members of the doctoral committee, well in advance of the final oral examination. Major revisions of the dissertation should be completed before this examination. The dissertation should be complete and in its "final" form, with correct and polished content and style, appropriate notes, bibliography, tables, etc., at the time it is distributed to the committee members. **If committee members find that the draft submitted to them is not in this form, the chair is notified and postponement of the examination is considered.**
4. **If a committee member finds that the "final" draft is not correct and polished with respect to content and style, it is his/her responsibility to notify the committee chair (or adviser) at least one week in advance of the final oral examination date.** The committee member should indicate his/her concerns regarding the draft and recommend consideration of postponement of the examination to the committee chair (or adviser). The committee chair (or adviser), in consultation with committee members, is responsible for notifying the student and assessing whether the student can make the necessary revisions to the "final" draft before the examination date. If it is determined that revisions cannot be made in time, the examination should be postponed. If differences exist among committee members, the head of the graduate program should be consulted to hear the expressed concerns and determine whether the examination should be postponed.

¹ Although master's programs vary widely across the University and differ from doctoral programs, departments and programs are urged to follow the spirit of the ***Procedures for Doctoral Students*** (points 1-7 in section II above and below), as appropriate, for appointing graduate committees of master's students. These procedures (points 1-7) should be added to graduate program handbooks and/or websites of departments or programs.



5. **If the dissertation is deemed unsatisfactory at the time of the examination by at least two-thirds of the committee, the student will fail the examination.** If a student fails, it is the responsibility of the committee to determine whether another examination may be taken by the student.
6. The chair or at least one co-chair must be a member of the graduate faculty of the specific doctoral program in which the student is enrolled. A retired or emeritus faculty member may chair a doctoral committee if he/she was officially appointed and began chairing the committee prior to retirement, and has the continuing approval of the department head or program chair. The primary duties of the chair are to: (1) maintain the academic standards of the doctoral program and the Graduate School and to assure that all procedures are carried out fairly; (2) ensure that the comprehensive and final examinations are conducted in a timely fashion; (3) arrange and conduct all meetings; and (4) ensure that requirements set forth by the committee are implemented in the final version of the dissertation.
7. A doctoral committee must consist of four or more* active members of the graduate faculty, which includes at least two faculty members from the student's major field. The dissertation adviser must be a member of the doctoral committee. The dissertation adviser usually serves as chair but this is not required. If the student is also pursuing a dual-title field of study, a co-chair representing the dual-title field must be appointed. In most cases, the same individual (e.g., dissertation adviser) is a member of the graduate faculty in both the major and dual-title fields, and in such cases may serve as sole chair.

At least one regular member of the doctoral committee must represent a field outside the student's major field of study in order to provide a broader range of disciplinary perspectives and expertise within the committee. This committee member is referred to as the **"Outside Field Member."** In cases where the student is also pursuing a dual-title field of study, the dual-title representative to the committee may serve as the Outside Field Member.

Additionally, the primary appointment of at least one regular member of the doctoral committee must be in an administrative unit that is outside the unit in which the dissertation adviser's primary appointment is held (i.e., the adviser's administrative home; in the case of tenure-line faculty, this is the individual's tenure home), in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest. This committee member is referred to as the **"Outside Unit Member."** In the case of co-advisers, the Outside Unit Member must be from outside the administrative home(s) of both co-advisers. In some cases, an individual may have a primary appointment outside the administrative home of the student's dissertation adviser and also represent a field outside the student's major field of study; in such cases, the same individual may serve as both the Outside Field Member and the Outside Unit Member.

If the student has a minor, that field must be represented on the committee by a "Minor Field Member." (For additional information related to minors for D.Ed. students, see also **Major Program and Minor Field** under **D.Ed.-Additional Specific Requirements** in the *University Bulletin*, <http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/degree/requirements/degreeReq3>.)

A person who is not a member of the graduate faculty (and may not be affiliated with Penn State), but who is otherwise qualified and has particular expertise in the student's research area, may be added as a "Special Member," upon recommendation by the head of the graduate program and approval of the Graduate School dean (via the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services). A Special Member is expected to participate fully in the functions of the doctoral committee.

* For the D.N.P. degree, committee composition is as follows: The doctoral committee will consist of the student's academic adviser, the capstone course (NURS 835) instructor, and a third member of the graduate faculty, all from the graduate program in nursing. The academic adviser will be the chair of the committee.