

Dissertation Committee

By the beginning of their fourth year, after advancing to candidacy, students form a Dissertation Committee that takes over all advising functions and provides guidance during the completion of the dissertation project.

The Dissertation Committee cannot be formally declared until after advancement to candidacy. The Graduate School requires that there be a period of at least six-months between the time the Dissertation Committee is formally declared and the earliest date the Final Oral Defense can be held (please contact the Graduate Secretary for further information).

Membership of the Dissertation Committee must include:

- Chair
- Two Core Members
- Institutional Representative

The Chair and at least one Core Member must be tenure-related Psychology faculty members. For clinical students, the Dissertation Committee must include at least one tenure-related Clinical Psychology faculty member.

Under certain circumstances, the second Core Member may be: (a) A faculty member from another college or university; or (b) a qualified practicing professional or community member with demonstrated expertise related to the dissertation topic. This requires prior approval at several levels. The steps to request such a Core Member in Psychology are as follows:

- a) The dissertating student writes the GEC Chair (with a copy to the psychology graduate secretary) to request the addition of the Core Member. This written letter should include information about why the additional member is needed on the committee (e.g., specific expertise, familiarity with a particular project or dataset).
- b) The dissertating student's advisor writes a similar request to the GEC Chair (with a copy to the psychology graduate secretary) to request the addition of the Core Member, including the faculty perspective on why the additional member is needed.
- c) The GEC Chair will solicit input from additional GEC members and/or faculty in the student's area (generally 2 faculty members) and forward a recommendation about adding the Core Member to the Psychology Department Head.
- d) Using the [Dissertation Committee Service Nomination Form](#) (found on the Graduate School [website](#)), the Psychology Department Head forwards a recommendation to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, who will forward a recommendation for final approval to the Graduate School.

It would be helpful to contact the Graduate Secretary for help with this process.

The Institutional Representative (previously referred to as the Outside Member) must be tenure-related UO faculty with an affiliation outside of Psychology but also may be someone with relevant expertise for the dissertation project.

Additional members can be added in an advisory (non-voting) capacity.

If a student would like to change the composition of his or her dissertation committee after the proposal meeting, s/he must notify the following people in writing that the change is to occur:

- Any committee member(s) being removed or added to the committee.
- All other committee members
- The GEC
- The Graduate Secretary (who then notifies the Graduate School)

If any of the committee members have concerns about changes in the committee, these concerns should be brought to the GEC. Please also note that the Graduate School does not allow changing the chair of the dissertation committee less than 6 months before the defense date.

Dissertation Proposal

All students in psychology have to complete a dissertation proposal requirement that consists of a written proposal draft and a subsequent meeting with the dissertation committee. (In case the student has not yet formed a dissertation committee, the student's advising committee forms a plan with the student to form a dissertation committee and arrive at a dissertation proposal within a reasonable time frame.) The specific format of the proposal draft (e.g., short memo or longer document) and the format of the committee meeting (e.g., formal defense or open discussion) can be negotiated between the student and the committee. However, the meeting must result in a document that is a minimum of two pages ("Dissertation Proposal") that defines the plan formulated by the student and the committee regarding (at least) the topic and scope of the dissertation, method and scope of data collection, and analysis strategies.

The Dissertation Proposal has several functions: First, it encourages the student to think through details of hypothesis formation, design, and analysis strategies in advance of data collection. Second, the student and the dissertation committee arrive at shared expectations regarding the scope of the dissertation and details in design, data collection, and analysis. That way, unwelcome surprises for both parties (e.g., an advisor's request for more studies or a student's failure to provide certain analyses) are made less likely. Third, when new faculty are added to a dissertation committee at a time when data collection has already been completed (which may be true for the outside member), the newly added member can consult a document that specifies the goals of the dissertation and can thus more fairly assess the success of the completed dissertation in meeting these goals.

The Dissertation Proposal must be submitted to the graduate secretary for filing and can be consulted by the student, by current members or new members of the student's dissertation committee, and by the GEC (e.g., for evaluation purposes). Updates or changes to the Proposal should be made in writing to the graduate secretary after communication among all dissertation committee members.

The Dissertation Proposal is due no later than the end of the winter term of the student's fourth year. The student's dissertation committee or advising committee can request an extension by notifying the Graduate Education Committee Chair or Graduate Secretary. This request must be accompanied by a proposed timeline in order to be approved.

Clinical students must have a formally accepted Dissertation Proposal prior to going on internship. The Proposal must be approved by November 1 to permit faculty to write letters of recommendation. All

program requirements must also be completed by this time, or a reasonable plan must be proposed for their completion by the departure date for internship.

Dissertation Proposal Approval Form

Name:

Has completed a dissertation proposal consisting of a written document including the background, method, and plans for data analysis. This document has been reviewed by the entire committee.

A meeting of all committee members was held on: _____

The decision was:

_____ Proposal approved as is (attach proposal)

_____ Proposal approved with specified changes; another meeting not required (attach updated proposal)

_____ Proposal not approved; a second meeting required

_____ Other (specify)

Dissertation Title:

Dissertation Committee Members

Print Faculty Names

Faculty Signatures

Chair,

Student Signature _____

Date of Committee Approval _____

GEC Approval _____ Date _____

Documentation of Research Compliance Approval

University policy requires that students who expect to engage in research involving human or animal subjects receive approval of their research procedures prior to the collection of data. Please see the websites below if you have any questions about human/animal subjects approval:

<http://rcs.uoregon.edu/content/human-subjects-applications-forms>

<https://aws.uoregon.edu/>

After receiving approval, please fill out the following and return this form to the Graduate Secretary. This form must be on file **before** you apply for your Oral Defense.

Did you include **human subjects** in your research for this degree? ___Yes ___No
 If yes, enter your protocol number from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects: _____.

Did you include **animal subjects** in your research for this degree? ___Yes ___No
 If yes, enter your protocol number from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee: _____.

Print Names

Signatures

Date

Student:

Advisor*:

*Your signature certifies your approval of this student's research project and the validity of the protocol number noted above.