Policy: 05-42-00

Dissertation / Thesis / Project Committees

OFFICE OF RECORD: Office of Graduate Studies and Research
ISSUED BY: Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
APPROVED BY: 05-42-00
EFFECTIVE DATE: 08-28-08

Policy

All dissertation / thesis / project committees for graduate degrees are ad hoc committees, acting on behalf of the Graduate Council. Committees are intended to oversee completion of capstone graduate activities, including completion of master's project, master's thesis, and doctoral dissertations. Dissertation / thesis / project committees are critical to good graduate education through their role in:

- Reviewing and approving the student's dissertation, thesis, or project proposal.
- Directing and guiding the student's research, development, and writing activities relative to their project, thesis, or dissertation.
- Evaluating and monitoring the student's progress towards completion of their project, thesis or dissertation.
- Providing the student with discipline expertise and guidance.
- Upholding the university's standards and policies relative to graduate education.

Committee Membership

All dissertation / thesis / project committees are comprised of a chair (or two co-chairs) and up to four additional members, as indicated below. The chair must be a member of the DSU graduate faculty and should possess expertise in the student's chosen topic. The chair, selected by the graduate student but subject to the
approval processes described below, is responsible for working with the graduate student to identify the other faculty members on the committee.

All committee members must have the terminal degree for their field. The committee membership and the committee chairmanship are approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, based on the recommendations of the student's academic advisor and the graduate program coordinator.

Dissertation / Thesis Committees: Dissertation / thesis committees must include at least two additional members, plus the chair or co-chairs:

- Program representative: the program representative is a DSU graduate faculty member or an affiliate graduate faculty member (as designated by the Graduate Council) in the student's program of study.

- Graduate Council representative: the Graduate Council representative is a DSU graduate faculty member who is outside the graduate student's program of study. The Graduate Council representative should possess sufficient familiarity with the student's research topic to review and comment on the manuscript. This committee member verifies that Graduate Council policies and procedures have been followed, ensures fair treatment of the graduate student, and ensures that the quality of the research is commensurate with the student's degree objectives.

At the request of the student, two additional members may be added but are not required:

- Graduate faculty members from the student's program of study who possess experience or expertise that will contribute to the committee's successful operation AND/OR

- Faculty member who is not a member of the DSU graduate faculty but who possesses experience or expertise that will contribute to the committee's successful operation. To be accepted as a member of the dissertation / thesis committee, the proposed member must submit a curriculum vitae and be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

Project Committees: Project committees must include at least one additional member plus the chair or co-chairs:

- Program representative: the program representative is a DSU graduate faculty member or an affiliate graduate faculty member (as designated by the Graduate Council) in the student's program of study.
At the request of the student, these additional members may be added but are not required:

- Graduate faculty member from the student's program of study who possesses experience or expertise that will contribute to the committee's successful operation OR
- Faculty member who is not a member of the DSU graduate faculty but who possesses experience or expertise that will contribute to the committee's successful operation. To be accepted as a member of the project committee, the proposed member must submit a curriculum vitae and be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

Summary of Committee Membership:

Master's Project Committee: Chair or Co-Chairs, plus minimum of one program representative.

Master's Thesis Committee: Chair or Co-Chairs, plus minimum of one program representative and one Graduate Council representative.

Doctoral Dissertation Committee: Chair or Co-Chairs, plus minimum of one program representative and one Graduate Council representative.

**Procedures**

As soon as feasible, the student and his/her academic advisor or supervisory committee will identify a graduate faculty member to serve as their dissertation / thesis / project committee chair. The student, working with their committee chair, will identify committee members as outlined above. The student's advisor will review the composition of the committee with the graduate program coordinator and will forward their recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research for approval. Once approved, the committee chair also assumes the role of the academic advisor.

If a committee vacancy should occur, or if the student wishes to change the composition of the committee, the student should discuss the changes with the committee chair. The chair forwards that recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research for approval.

In the special case where the student wishes to replace the chair of the committee, the student should discuss the changes with the graduate program coordinator. The graduate program coordinator may assist the student in addressing the issues with the current committee chair or identify an alternate committee chair. The
graduate program coordinator forwards that recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research for approval.