

## 3.2 Advisory Committees

The primary function of the committee is to advise the student in all aspects of the educational program and to monitor and evaluate progress toward and completion of the degree. Thus, the committee must be active throughout students' programs, beginning with helping students plan their degree coursework. The committee should provide an intellectually stimulating foundation for the student's professional as well as scholarly development and should be sensitive to any difficulties in the student's progress. The committee certifies whether the student has met NC State's standards for a graduate degree. Advising and guiding the student on how best to fulfill the degree requirements is a critical element of this responsibility.

It is the students' responsibility, in consultation with their graduate advisors, to select graduate advisory committees. The graduate advisor(s) serves as chair or co-chair of the committee. The Director of Graduate Programs approves the advisory committee via the MyPack portal.

### A. Advisory Committee Requirement and Composition

1. Committee administrative structure
  - a. Every committee shall have a chair or co-chairs.
  - b. The co-chair designation implies equally shared responsibilities in guiding the student through to degree completion.
2. Master's students
  - a. For master's students in all programs except Option B, the committee consists of a minimum of three graduate faculty members, inclusive of the committee chair. The Graduate School verifies the committee via the rules written into the student's Committee page in the MyPack portal.
  - b. If a minor has not been declared, it is up to the individual program whether to require external representation on the committee.
  - c. If a minor has been declared, one member of the committee must be from the minor field.
  - d. In a master's program in which the minor is classified as interdisciplinary, the minor must be represented by a committee member.
  - e. Option B master's students do not have a committee.
3. Doctoral students
  - a. Doctoral committees require a minimum of four graduate faculty members
  - b. If a doctoral graduate committee has no outside representation beyond the student's graduate program by a member of the graduate faculty, a Graduate School Representative is required. This representative is not a voting committee member.
  - c. If the student has declared a minor, one of the committee members must be from the minor field.
  - d. The committee membership is submitted for approval via the MyPack portal
  - e. After the committee is approved, the Graduate School will appoint the Graduate School Representative (see Section 1.6 (<http://catalog.ncsu.edu/graduate/graduate-handbook/representatives/>)) to serve on the doctoral committee, if required.

### B. Functions, Responsibilities and Requirements of the Advisory Committee

The chair/co-chair and the other members of the advisory committee are responsible for the following aspects of the thesis or dissertation and the associated research experience:

1. approval of the subject matter and methodology of the thesis or dissertation research;
2. approval of the organization, content, and format of the thesis or dissertation according to NC State required and optional formatting guidelines as provided in the Thesis and Dissertation Guide;
3. review of and comment on drafts of various sections of the thesis or dissertation, including:
  - a. the quality of data and evidence,
  - b. logical reasoning, and
  - c. the editorial, linguistic and bibliographic quality;
4. evaluation of the thesis or dissertation as a basis for certification that the student has fulfilled that portion of the degree requirements for which he or she is a candidate.

For non-thesis master's degrees that require a final examination, the advisory committee is responsible for administering that exam.

### C. Committee Members from Other Institutions

The selection of outside committee members will generally depend upon the student's major interest and research. If the program recommends the appointment of a committee member who is not an NC State graduate faculty member, it should be made clear to that person that he or she will be expected to participate as a full committee member.

There are three types of non-NC State faculty who may be appointed to a graduate committee: inter-institutional faculty, external (voting) members, and technical consultants.

1. Interinstitutional Graduate Faculty
  - a. Graduate Faculty from UNC-CH and Duke. A member of the graduate faculty from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill or Duke University may serve as one of the required committee members when appropriate. These are automatic appointments, although the members are vetted by the DGP of the program and the Dean of the Graduate School. Members of professional programs at these institutions, such as faculty at the School of Law or Medical School at UNC or Duke, cannot serve automatically unless their appointment at their respective institution explicitly states that they are on the graduate faculty. Should their appointment be for that professional school only, then they must follow the guidelines discussed for External Members and/or Technical Consultants (see below).
  - b. Cooperative Doctoral Program Graduate Faculty from UNC-System Institutions. In addition to the non-degree-specific interinstitutional arrangement of NC State, UNC, and Duke, NC State has established cooperative doctoral programs with other UNC-system institutions.
2. External Members. A faculty member from another university (who is not an interinstitutional graduate faculty member) or a professional from industry or government with credentials comparable to those required for membership on the graduate faculty, may serve as an external member, in addition to the number of committee members

normally required (four for doctoral degrees and three for master's degrees).

- a. Appointment. To appoint an external member, the student or department must submit a statement of potential contribution along with the proposed external member's curriculum vitae when submitting the committee for approval in the MyPack portal. The request will be routed to the Dean of the Graduate School for review and the DGP will have final approval..
  - b. Responsibilities. External members will have full voting privileges and are expected to participate in the student's preliminary and final examinations. They will also be consulted in the development of the student's coursework plan and will approve the thesis or dissertation.
3. Technical Consultants. A person from industry, a governmental agency, or a university may, upon recommendation of the committee and the DGP, serve as a technical consultant along with the required committee members.
- a. Appointment. To appoint a technical consultant, a statement of potential contribution along with the Technical Consultant's curriculum vitae must be included when submitting the committee for approval in the MyPack portal. The request will be routed to the Dean of the Graduate School for review and the DGP will have final approval.
  - b. Responsibilities. Technical consultants serve in an advisory capacity to students in the conduct of research for their dissertation, thesis or master's project. Technical consultants are expected to participate in the student's preliminary and final examinations and may sign the thesis. However, they will not vote on the outcome of the examinations.

as justification for the committee change. Approval by the Graduate School is required before holding any examinations.

## D. Substitution of Committee Members for Exams

Under extenuating circumstances, it may be necessary for a member of a graduate advisory committee to have a substitute at committee meetings or an exam. The substitution of a committee member on an oral examination must be requested in writing by the DGP and approved by the Graduate School in advance of the examination. It is extremely important to have clear communication between committee members and substitutes so that new expectations or concerns do not arise at the time of the final oral examination.

## E. Permanent Changes in Committee Members

1. Changes before Final Examinations for Master's Students and before the Preliminary Examination of PhD Students. Should students, in consultation with their advisors, wish to change any of the committee members, they must submit a revised committee in the MyPack portal with the new members. Disagreements within committees or between students and committee members over the quality of students' performance are not grounds for reconstituting the committee. If students believe that they have been unjustly or unfairly treated in efforts to resolve committee conflicts, they have the right to grieve this issue, according to the current University Grievance Procedures for Graduate Students.
2. Changes after the Preliminary Examination. Changes in doctoral committee membership after preliminary exams require completion of a Committee Modification form, which includes signatures of both outgoing and incoming committee members and the student, as well