

Roles and Responsibilities of the Graduate Dean's Representative

The Graduate Dean's Representative (DR) represents the dean of the Graduate School at all doctoral dissertation defenses. The DR ensures the integrity of the defense procedures by serving as a third-party observer from outside the candidate's program/department. *A valid defense includes a public presentation of the research and an oral final examination; all members of the advisory committee and the DR must be present, in real time (remote access allowed, consistent with the rules of the program/department), for the entire duration of both components.*

The DR must be a current member of the graduate faculty of Texas Tech University and must be from a program/department other than that of the candidate's degree program/department. The DR is not required to have any knowledge of the student's field of research or to have an active role in the student's dissertation. Background experience related to the student's discipline and research is not a requirement to serve as DR.

The DR is appointed to the candidate's committee when the Defense Notification Form is filed. The candidate, in consultation with the major advisor (chair of the supervisory committee), is responsible for identifying a DR. The major advisor is responsible for submitting the Defense Notification Form.

The DR must receive all scheduling requests and materials pertaining to the dissertation defense in the same timely manner as the rest of the committee members (e.g., a minimum of three weeks prior to the scheduled defense).

The DR may contact the Thesis/Dissertation Unit in the Graduate School any time regarding their roles and responsibilities or to answer any questions.

Responsibilities

- Familiarize yourself with the dissertation in advance of the defense
- Attend the scheduled public presentation and oral defense, in real time, through to the conclusion, including the vote of the advisor committee to pass or not pass the candidate.
- *Contact the Graduate School immediately if not all members of the advisory committee are present in real time as this constitutes an invalid defense, **and the defense may not proceed.***
- Serve as an impartial observer to assure the defense is conducted in a fair and thorough manner as noted in the Doctoral Oral Defense Guidelines.
- The DR may participate in the defense by asking questions
- Complete and submit the Report of the Graduate Dean Representative to the Graduate School as soon after the defense as possible. (The DR has no vote on whether or not the candidate passes the defense.)
- Sign the Thesis-Dissertation Approval Form, typically, but not necessarily, at the conclusion of the defense.
- Be available to meet with Graduate School personnel to discuss any problems should such arise.

Time Commitment

- There is no set minimum for service to the scholarly community as a DR. Your own schedule and interests will determine whether you accept each invitation.
- Most defenses last 2 hours, inclusive of the presentation; however, actual times may vary.
- Be sure to note your activity on annual reports

Graduate Dean's Representative Frequently Asked Questions

Who can serve as a Dean's Representative (DR)?

The DR must be current member of the TTU Graduate Faculty and must be from outside the department where the student is seeking their degree

Who is responsible for finding a DR to serve on a committee?

The candidate, in consultation with the major advisor (chair of the supervisory committee), is responsible for identifying the DR. The student is responsible for communicating with the DR (e.g., scheduling, providing copy of dissertation) and ensuring that the DR attends the defense.

What do I do as a dean's rep if the appropriate procedures are not being followed?

- 1) At the outset of the defense, contact the Graduate School immediately if not all members of the advisory committee are present in real time. *Such a situation constitutes an invalid defense and the defense must **NOT** proceed.*
- 2) If during the course of the defense, the DR observes procedural errors or conflicts/biased/unfair treatment, the DR may, to the extent they are comfortable doing, ask for a recess and raise these issues with chair of the advisory committee. Whether or not the DR addresses the issues at the time of the defense, all issues should be noted in the Report of the Graduate Dean's representative.

Where can I find the Report of the Graduate Dean's Representative ?

A current copy of the Report of the Graduate Dean's Representative can be found here. (Note to me: redo form and include link – check to make sure this isn't changing with online forms updates)

Where do I turn in my Report of the Graduate Dean's Representative?

Please turn in this form to your departmental administrative assistant. This person has access to the enrollment services portal and will submit the report online on your behalf.

When does my report need to be turned in?

This report is time sensitive. Please submit the report as soon after the defense as possible. This required form is part of the student's final audit and must be processed before the degree can be awarded.