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# Thesis and Dissertation Information Sheet

# Advisory Committees

Advisory Committees are responsible for the overall direction of master’s thesis and doctoral dissertation research. Each committee must have a designated chair or co-chairs who will oversee the research process and ensure that Graduate School policies are met. The primary duties of advisory committees are to help the students achieve their goals and to uphold the academic standards of Texas Tech University.

## Responsibilities of the Chair of the Committee

* Guide the student on the selection of a research topic appropriate to the discipline, interests, and degree level
* Guide the student on the development of a research plan appropriate to the topic
* Assure that applicable research compliance requirements (e.g., human subjects, recombinant DNA, radiation safety, vertebrate animals, etc.) are met
* Advise the student on timelines for degree completion and ensure that annual activity reports and other requirements of the Graduate School are met
* Work with the student to schedule regular committee meetings to review degree and research progress (at least once per year)
* Assist the student with the development of professional presentations, publications, and other scholarly works
* Guide the student on professional and career development activities (e.g., assist the student in developing an individual development plan)
* Assign a grade for each semester the student is enrolled in thesis/dissertation hours (a grade of “credit” or “no credit” must be assigned for all semesters, except the semester of graduation, in which a letter grade must be assigned)
* Review thesis/dissertation drafts and provide constructive feedback to ensure that the work meets scholarly standards in the discipline
* Prepare the student for the defense process
* Work with the student to identify a graduate dean’s representative for dissertation defenses
* Work with the student to schedule a public presentation and defense of the thesis/dissertation; submit the master’s/doctoral defense notification form.
* Ensure that the student submits a draft of the thesis/dissertation to the committee at least THREE (3) WEEKS prior to the defense; communicate with the committee about the thesis/dissertation before proceeding with the defense
* Ensure that all members of the advisory committee and the graduate dean’s representative (for dissertation defenses) are present in real time (attendance may be remote, consistent with program guidelines). If not all members are present, including the dean’s representative, the defense is NOT valid and it must not proceed, but be rescheduled
* Introduce the student at the public presentation and chair the defense, ensuring that all members, including the dean’s representative, participate
* The defense must proceed in a fair, unbiased manner. The participation of the dean’s representative helps assure appropriate treatment of the doctoral candidate and that all procedures are followed. If the dean’s representative has concerns, they may ask for a recess to discuss these concerns with the chair privately. Instances of bias or unfair treatment will be reviewed by the Graduate School and the defense may be declared invalid by the Dean of the Graduate School.
* File the results of thesis/dissertation defense form with the Graduate School
* File the Final Document approval form with the Graduate School