

Graduate School—Texas Tech Univ.

Graduate Studies Responsibilities

Definition and Function of Graduate Coordinator

When an entering graduate student has not selected a Major Professor (Committee Chair), the units Graduate Coordinator from the department or academic unit will be temporarily assigned as the student's advisor or a member of the graduate faculty may be assigned these duties. In some programs at the MS level (usually non-thesis), a Major Professor may not be necessary. The Graduate Coordinator/temporary advisor serves to assist the student with course selections for the first semester of graduate work, to sign registration materials, and to be a familiar person to whom the new graduate student can come for counsel and advice. The Graduate Coordinator/temporary advisor-new student relationship does not imply a lasting advising arrangement. At any point, but generally during the first semester of graduate work, the student may ask a faculty member to serve as the major professor, and thus, their program advisor. In consultation with the major professor, the student will select the members of the advisory committee (see that section later). At the end of the first semester of graduate work or when a major professor is selected, the Graduate Coordinator/temporary advisor-advisee relationship ends. Students need not approach the Graduate Coordinator for "permission to change advisors," but they must, however, acquire consent from the faculty member who will serve as the major professor. A student is allowed to change their Major Professor at any time during their program, but as mentioned earlier, they must have the consent of the faculty member who will serve in that capacity. (Note: an Admissions Advisor from the Graduate School may be involved with some new students entering the university, but that person is no longer associated with advising the student once they are associated with an academic program.)

Graduate Coordinator's Responsibilities:

- Help students and graduate faculty members keep up to date with current University, Graduate School, College, and Department policies, procedures, requirements, and new developments or news pertaining to all aspects of their program.
- Maintain Graduate Faculty membership and be familiar with Graduate School organization, policies, and procedures.
- Coordinate recruitment and admission activities or maintain close contact with those who perform these functions.
- Provide advice and direction to students as they proceed into and through their program.
- Provide the students with a schedule of deadlines to ensure timely progress of their program (see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/Deadlines.htm>).
- Be aware of the standards to which a major paper, thesis, dissertation or creative project must conform and make the student aware of them as well.

- Provide the students with appropriate forms (or the web site for downloading the files) required by the Graduate School for submission to complete their program of study.
- Ensure that degree plans are filed before the end of the first year of study.
- Make satisfactory arrangements for supervision of the student during an extended absence from the program.
- When appropriate, direct the student to the office of Research Services for advice regarding Intellectual Property (see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/transferandintellectualproperty/>).
- Make sure all students understand the academic expectations of their graduate program, procedures, culture, etc.
- Encourage the student to attend conferences and meetings in their field of study and help find resources for travel (see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/gradschool/Forms.php>).
- Once a student has selected their Major Professor (Committee Chair), the Graduate Coordinator becomes supplementary to assisting the student, for advising changes over to the Major Professor (Committee Chair). The Graduate Coordinator can still be selected to serve on the Advisory Committee as per the students' desire.

Definition and Function of Major Professor

The major professor is the faculty member who oversees all aspects of the student's academic program as per the requirements set forth by the University and the department. Selecting a major professor represents a commitment on the part of the graduate student and the faculty member to work together intensively throughout their program of study. The faculty member should share with the graduate student their perspective and expectations. Graduate students should recognize the role of personalities in the working relationship between the faculty and student. The graduate student, in consultation with the Major Professor, will develop the program of study committee, with approval of the Graduate School, following the guidelines set forth by the University and the academic unit or department. This committee is responsible for approving the coursework in the student's program of study, with final approval set by the Graduate School.

Major Professor's Responsibilities:

- Advise the student in the selection of courses in accordance with the stated program direction to make sure core courses are taken and this meeting should take place before an advisory committee has been formed and establish a realistic timetable for the completion of the various requirements of the program of study.

- Assist the student in the selection of the advisory committee members and assume responsibility for clarifying their roles.
- Review and approve all necessary graduate forms, including the annual Ph.D. Program Evaluation form that must be submitted to the Graduate School.
- Advise the student in preparing a draft of the program of study for discussion and approval of the advisory committee.
- Chair the committee meetings for purposes of program planning (or preliminary examination), review the research proposal or creative activity, and chair (or Co-Chair where appropriate) the final oral examination in defense of the research and arbitrate decisions of the committee.
- Make every effort to minimize the time to degree.
- Advise the Master's student on their Final Comprehensive Evaluation in accordance to the Graduate Catalog (<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/catalog/GRADMasters.html>).
- Advise the student concerning program adjustments and assist in completing proper forms required by the Graduate School.
- Provide guidance in developing the student's research proposal, conducting the research, and preparing the dissertation.
- Thoroughly examine the work submitted by the student, make timely and constructive written comments for improvement, and inform the student of the approximate time for the work to be returned.
- Determine whether or not a draft of the major paper, thesis, dissertation, or creative project is ready for submission to the Advisory Committee. If a draft is not ready to be submitted, reasons should be provided to the student.
- Determine when the thesis/dissertation is satisfactory for distribution to the advisory committee for review preceding the final oral examination.
- Provide support and information to the student regarding Departmental, College, and University activities.
- Inform the student early on that the student is not a match or capable of completing the degree and then assist the student in finding an alternative program.

Principles of Academic Integrity and Professionalism

Both the Graduate Coordinator and the Major Professor should:

- Not withdraw monetary support without reason and due notice.
- Acknowledge contribution of the student in published material.
- Withdraw from supervising a student when it is felt, with reason and with due notice, that continued supervision will not lead to the satisfactory completion of degree requirements by the student.
- Be aware of situations of potential conflict of interest and deal with them according to official University guidelines regarding conflict of interest.
- Maintain appropriate standards of academic and personal professionalism in all relations with graduate students, with graduate advisees, and in matters relating to colleagues, advisees, and other graduate students.

Role of the Graduate Student

Graduate study demands advanced intellectual ability and the capacity for independent thought and investigation. The graduate student should, therefore, be characterized by maturity of intellect and character, and should be one whose approach to learning is distinguished by a spirit of inquiry and the desire to increase human knowledge. The graduate student should be an individual who can assume responsibility for their direction of study and research and for the ultimate success of their degree program.

Graduate Student's Responsibilities:

- Be familiar with all Graduate School, College, and University policies and procedures.
- Be familiar with Departmental or Program policies and procedures, especially those that directly affect the student's degree plan and course of study.
- Make a committed and dedicated effort to gain the background knowledge and skills needed to pursue the research or creative project successfully.
- Be familiar with Department faculty and carefully choose a Major Professor to assist and guide the student's progress through the degree process.
- Develop, in conjunction with the Major Professor, a plan and timetable for completion of all stages of the degree program, and to work studiously to adhere to a schedule and to meet appropriate deadlines.

- Be thoughtful and reasonably frugal in using resources provided by the supervisor and by the University.
- Regularly and frequently meet with and consult with the Major Professor on any and all matters of concern and importance to the student and the student's degree plan and progress.
- Recognize that the Major Professor and the Advisory Committee members may have other teaching, research, and service obligations which may preclude immediate responses.
- With the advice of the Major Professor, choose an Advisory Committee to guide the student through their degree program and research or creative activity requirements.
- Be aware of all deadlines and other matters related to completing all degree requirements.
- Pay due attention to the need to maintain a workplace which is tidy, safe, and healthy and where each individual shows tolerance and respect for the rights of others.
- Conform to professional standards of honesty in order to assure academic integrity and professionalism and acknowledge assistance, materials, etc., provided by others.
- Terminate the work and clean up the workspace in order to leave the place to another student when program requirements have been met.
- Return borrowed materials to the Major Professor, any Advisory Committee member, academic unit, library, or other resource when the academic work has been concluded.

Definition and Function of Advisory Committee

The advisory committee is composed of the major professor plus other faculty members with relevant areas of expertise. It is highly advisable that at least one committee member come from outside the students' academic department. For Master's students, the Advisory Committee consists of at least three faculty members. Each area listed on the program of study should be represented on the Advisory Committee (i.e., major and minor areas). The Advisory Committee for doctoral students must have at least four members, which includes faculty from the major and minor areas of their program of study with one member coming from outside the students' academic department. If a faculty member of the committee leaves, they may remain on the committee until the student completes their program upon written approval by the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School reserves the right to appoint additional members to the Advisory Committee and to approve all members of the advisory committee.

Advisory Committee's Responsibilities:

- Be familiar with the policies and procedures of the University and the Graduate School.
- Oversee the program of study for the student.
- Administer and evaluate the various examinations as required by the department, college, and Graduate School policies and procedures.
- Ensure that the student is aware of normal expectations concerning the volume, quality, style, and standard presentation of the paper, thesis, dissertation, or creative project.
- Guide the student in the implementation of the work plan and evaluate the progress of the students work.
- Provide periodic feedback to the student on progress of the student's program.
- Aid in the arbitration of problems which arise between the student and the other committee members.
- Evaluate the penultimate and final drafts or copy of the paper, thesis, dissertation, or creative project.
- Aid in the development of the proposals for the paper, thesis, dissertation, or creative project.
- Supervise and evaluate the dissertation (for doctoral students) and conduct the oral defense of that thesis/dissertation.