



# The University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Graduate Health Sciences College Policies

Document Name: Faculty Committee  
Effective Date: November 8, 2004  
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## Purpose

The student's Faculty Committee plays an essential role in helping to guide the student and to certify that the research is of the highest quality. This policy defines the composition and duties of the Faculty Committee

## Policy Details

### **Master's degree**

No later than the end of the first academic year of full-time graduate study, the student and Research Advisor are to select a Faculty Committee with the following composition:

- the Faculty Committee must have at least three members, including the Research Advisor;
- at least one member must be a full-time UTHSC faculty member;
- at least one member must come from outside the program/track;
- one outside member may be from another institution;
- with the exception of an outside member from another institution, all members must be credentialed by the College to serve on a student's faculty committee.

The members of the Faculty Committee should be chosen with the intent that they will be familiar with the type of research project being conducted. The purpose of the Faculty Committee is to advise and evaluate the student's scholarly activity and to certify that the student has defended a thesis or project that is worthy of the degree. The Chair of this committee is to be the student's Research Advisor, who must hold a regular appointment in the Graduate Faculty and must be approved to direct at least master's level research. The composition of the Faculty Committee will be submitted for approval by the Dean.

The Faculty Committee will, within the semester of appointment, submit to the Program Chair a general description of the direction of the research project.

It is the responsibility of the Research Advisor to convene the Faculty Committee at such times as may be helpful in advancing the student's progress. The Faculty



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Committee must meet at least once each academic year to monitor the student's progress and must prepare an annual report of progress for the Program Chair and the Dean.

#### **Ph.D. degree**

Usually during the second year of study toward the Ph.D. degree, the student and Research Advisor are to select a Faculty Committee with the following composition:

- the Faculty Committee must have at least five members;
- at least one member must be a full-time UTHSC faculty member;
- at least one member must come from outside the program/track, and this person may be from another institution;
- with the exception of an outside member(s) from another institution, all members must be credentialed by the College to serve on a student's faculty committee.

The members of the Faculty Committee should be chosen with the intent that they will be familiar with the type of research project being conducted. The purpose of the Faculty Committee is to advise and evaluate the student's scholarly activity and to certify that the student has defended a dissertation that is worthy of the degree. The Chair of this committee is to be the student's Research Advisor, who must hold a regular appointment in the Graduate Faculty and must be approved to direct doctoral research. The composition of the Faculty Committee will be submitted for approval by the Dean.

The Faculty Committee will, within the semester of appointment, submit to the Program Chair a general description of the direction of the research project.

The student keeps the Faculty Committee up to date on the progress of the research by written reports and/or oral presentations. These mechanisms allow the Faculty Committee to provide suggestions that might improve or help solve the research problem. In most programs, the Faculty Committee has the responsibility for administering the oral and/or written comprehensive examinations. These are graded on a pass/fail system. Comprehensive examinations are given to all Ph.D. students. Once the student has successfully completed the examination, an application is filed by the student in the Dean's office to officially admit the



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student to candidacy for the degree. Comprehensive examinations may be retaken once. A second failure may mean dismissal from the College or suggestion to pursue the master's degree only. Students pursuing the master's degree may not be required to take comprehensive examinations.

It is the responsibility of the Research Advisor to convene the committee at such time (not less than each academic year) as it may be helpful in advancing the student's progress, although the student's Research Advisor will be responsible for day-to-day direction of the student's research. The student's progress and development will be monitored and guided by the Faculty Committee. The committee will submit each academic year a written report (on an academic year basis) on the student's progress to the Program Chair and Dean.

## Policy Scope

Applies to all degree-seeking students.

## Related Policies

Academic Progress  
Admission to Degree Candidacy

## Definitions

Dean. The administrative head of the College, which may be an Associate Dean substituting during an absence of the Dean.

Program Chair. The listed chair of the student's academic program.

Program Director. The listed director of the student's academic program.

Research Advisor. The faculty member who has primary oversight responsibility for the student.



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## Document History

Approved November 8, 2004 by Graduate Studies Council.

Revised by Graduate Studies Council November 25, 2008.

Administratively revised November 14, 2011 to have the Program Director submit the Faculty Committee names.

Administratively reviewed by Graduate Studies Council November 24, 2015.

Administratively revised May 12, 2022 to clarify the approval process.