

Committee Composition Requirements for Doctoral Milestones

Stanford University and the Graduate School of Education require completion of various non-course milestones for the PhD, many of which involve faculty committees conducting a review of the student's progress, work, and academic abilities. Listed below are the committee composition requirements for the milestones that require the formation of faculty committees. The GSE Doctoral Handbook and Stanford Bulletin for a student's year of admission should be consulted for further details.

First-Year Reviews:

All doctoral First-Year Review committees at the GSE must have at least two members who are active GSE faculty and members of the Stanford Academic Council (AC). A third member of the committee may be a GSE faculty retiree (i.e., emeritus) or an active Academic Council member from another Stanford department or school. This does not require special approval.

Situations other than the above are exceptions and require approval by the Area Chair and the Associate Dean of Educational Affairs. Exceptions include having fewer than two members who are active GSE AC members or adding a member who is a Stanford lecturer, a faculty member at another university, or a PhD from outside the academy (i.e., not an active member of the Stanford AC). The student's advisor should email the Associate Dean of Educational Affairs and Area Chair requesting any exceptions to this policy and include a rationale statement (e.g., the non-AC member offers an area of expertise that is relevant to the review and that is not readily available from the current faculty).

Area-specific requirements may also apply. Students should review their Area's section of the Doctoral Handbook for more details.

Second-Year Reviews:

All doctoral Second-Year Review committees at the GSE must have at least three members. At least two members must be active GSE faculty and members of the Stanford Academic Council (AC). The third member of the committee may be a GSE faculty retiree (i.e., emeritus) or an active Academic Council member from another Stanford department or school. This does not require special approval.

Situations other than the above are exceptions and require approval by the Area Chair and the Associate Dean of Educational Affairs. Exceptions include having fewer than two members who are active GSE AC members or adding a member who is a Stanford lecturer, a faculty member at another university, or a PhD from outside the academy (i.e., not an active member of the Stanford AC). The student's advisor should email the Associate Dean of Educational Affairs and Area Chair requesting any exceptions to this policy and include a rationale statement (e.g., the non-AC member offers an area of expertise not readily available from the current faculty).

Area-specific requirements may also apply. Students should review their Area's section of the Doctoral Handbook for more details.

Dissertation Proposal and Hearing:

A dissertation proposal committee is comprised of three Stanford Academic Council (AC) faculty members, one of whom will serve as the dissertation advisor. Whether or not the student's doctoral program advisor serves on the dissertation proposal committee, and later the reading committee, will depend on the relevance of that faculty member's expertise to the topic of the dissertation and his or her availability. There is no requirement that a doctoral program advisor serve on the proposal committee, although very often he or she does. Members of the dissertation proposal committee may be drawn from other Area Committees within the GSE, from other departments in the University, or from emeriti faculty. At least one person serving on the proposal committee must be from the student's Area Committee (CTE, DAPS, SHIPS). All three members must be on the AC; if the student desires the expertise of a non-AC member, it may be possible to petition the Area Chair and Associate Dean of Educational Affairs for an exception.

To summarize, the Dissertation Proposal Committee should be comprised of:

- ✓ Three faculty in total who are members of the AC.
- ✓ A least one member must be faculty from the student's Area in the GSE.

Area-specific requirements may also apply. Students should review their Area's section of the Doctoral Handbook for more details.

Dissertation Reading Committee:

The Doctoral Dissertation Reading Committee consists of three faculty members (the principal dissertation advisor and two other readers) who agree to read a student's dissertation and serve on the orals committee. All members of an approved reading committee are expected to sign the signature page of the completed dissertation.

The rules governing the composition of the reading committee are as follows: at least one member of the committee must be from GSE; the principal dissertation advisor must be on the Stanford Academic Council (AC); and any member of the committee that is not a member of the AC must be approved by the Area Chair and the Associate Dean of Educational Affairs. In the last case, the Petition for Non-Academic Council Member to Serve on Doctoral Committee form (<http://registrar.stanford.edu/pdf/petdoccommem.pdf>) and a current CV of the proposed non-AC member are required. This person must be particularly well qualified to consult on the dissertation topic and hold a PhD or an equivalent foreign degree.

Non-AC members may not serve as primary dissertation advisors, but may serve as a co-advisor along with a member of the AC. At least two members of the reading committee must be members of the Stanford AC. You may only have one non-AC member on your reading committee. The only exception to this rule is if you have more than the three members required for the committee.

Faculty members agree to serve on the reading committee by signing the Dissertation Reading Committee Form. The reading committee formation, and any subsequent changes to the committee composition, are reviewed and approved by the Associate Dean of Educational Affairs. The student is responsible for obtaining a signature from the dissertation advisor and readers before submitting the Reading Committee form to the Doctoral Programs Officer for final processing (<http://registrar.stanford.edu/pdf/docrdngcomm.pdf>).

The reading committee normally serves on the oral exam committee, but not always. At the very least, the primary dissertation advisor and one reader from the reading committee serve on the oral exam committee.

The Stanford Bulletin and GSE Doctoral Handbook should be consulted for more details about the dissertation reading committee and its composition.

Oral Exam Committee:

The oral examining committee is composed of a minimum of five faculty members – four examiners plus the University chair selected by the advisor, in consultation with the student. The oral exam committee must include the dissertation advisor and at least one other member of the dissertation reading committee.

The oral exam and reading committees are separate and distinct bodies. The orals committee must include the dissertation advisor and at least one other member of the dissertation reading committee, although usually all three members of the dissertation reading committee serve on the orals examining committee. The fourth oral examiner should be from outside of the reading committee. A petition must be submitted and approved well in advance of the oral exam for a non-AC member to serve on the oral exam committee (<http://registrar.stanford.edu/pdf/petdoccommem.pdf>). This is reviewed and approved by the Associate Dean of Educational Affairs. The non-AC member's CV should be included with the petition.

The University chair of the oral exam committee must be an Academic Council (AC) member and from a department or school outside of GSE. Only in extremely unusual circumstances may the chair hold a courtesy or joint appointment in the GSE or be a GSE faculty member in a different area committee. The Stanford Bulletin outlines the specifics regarding the chair requirements. Professors emeriti from any department outside of the GSE may serve as oral exam chairs. Advisors are responsible for contacting and making arrangements with the chair, in consultation with the student. If locating a chair is problematic, the Area Chair, and/or the Associate Dean of Educational Affairs may be approached for assistance. The burden may not lie solely with the student.

The Stanford Bulletin and GSE Doctoral Handbook should be consulted for more details about the oral exam and its committee composition.