

**UC DAVIS GRADUATE COUNCIL POLICY**  
**Policy on Service on Advanced Degree Committees**

**GC1998-01 (rev. 06)**

Approved – March 5, 1998  
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All committees appointed to conduct the master's comprehensive or doctoral qualifying examination and to pass upon the merits of the master's thesis, Plan I master's project report, and doctoral dissertation are, in principle, *ad hoc* committees acting on behalf of, and reporting to, the Administrative Committee of the Graduate Council. In practice, the Graduate Council delegates the authority to appoint such committees to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who is in turn asked to ensure that such committees are constituted in accordance with Graduate Council policy. Notwithstanding the delegation of authority in committee appointments, the basic principle remains that the decisions made by these committees are decisions made on behalf of the Council, not the instructional unit in which the student is enrolled. Nevertheless, the criteria upon which the student's work is judged are established by the academic program.

### **I. Committee Membership**

Persons with the following qualifications are eligible to serve as members of advanced degree committees:

1. Any member of the Academic Senate of the University of California including:
  - Professors (UC APM 220, UCD APM 220)
  - Professors in Residence (UC APM 270)
  - Professors of Clinical “\_\_” (UC APM 275, UCD APM 275)
  - Acting Professor Series (UC APM 235)
  - Lecturers and Sr. Lectures with Security of Employment (APM 285)
2. Professors Emeritus/a and Research Professors (UC APM 120).
  - Graduate groups and departments determine the role of Emeriti faculty in the graduate program (Graduate Council Policy GC2011-02)
3. Members of the Academic Federation that hold one of the following appointments:
  - Health Sciences Clinical Professors (UC APM 278, **NOTE: This does not include Clinical Professors, Volunteer Series (UC APM 279)**).
  - Adjunct Professors (UC APM 280)
  - Supervisors of Physical Education UC (APM 300)
  - Unit 18 Lecturers, Unit 18 Supervisor of Teacher Education (Unit 18 MOU)

- Academic Administrators (UC APM 370, UCD APM 370; **NOTE: Does not include Academic Coordinators (APM 375)**)
4. Members of the Academic Federation in one of the two following titles **must hold a Lecturer Without Salary (WOS)** appointment (UC APM 283).
    - Specialists in Cooperative Extension (UC APM 334, UCD APM 334)
    - Professional Research series (UC APM 310)
  5. Appointees in the Visiting Professor series (UC APM 230). This does not include appointees in the visiting titles in other series including Astronomers, Agronomists in the Agricultural Experiment Station, Professional Researchers, Specialists in Cooperative Extension, Project Scientists, and Librarians.
  6. Individuals from outside the University of California or employees of other campuses or laboratories of the University of California who serve in categories not mentioned above with special expertise and qualifications. In this case, the Graduate Adviser should submit an External Committee Membership Application, a brief statement indicating the appointee's affiliation and title, what degree he/she holds how the prospective appointee has special expertise or qualifications that are not represented on the campus and a curriculum vitae. The proposed appointee must submit a brief letter indicating a willingness to serve to the Chair of Graduate Council for review and approval. All appointees must be advised by the graduate program that no stipend will be paid for such committee service. Individuals who hold postdoctoral scholar appointments or UC Davis nonacademic staff titles are not eligible to serve on advanced degree committees.

Committee members in this category are expected to serve on a one-time basis. Continuing service on advanced degree committees by external members requires an appropriate academic appointment (e.g. Adjunct Professor).

All appointees in categories 1 through 5 above are considered "Faculty", where faculty are defined as "an academic appointee in a School, College, Division, Department, or Program of Instruction and research who has independent responsibility for conducting regular University courses for campus credit."

(See [https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/local\\_resources/docs/Attributes\\_Chart.pdf](https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/local_resources/docs/Attributes_Chart.pdf))

At least one member of every advanced degree committee must be a member of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate. At least one committee member must be from the student's major program, although programs may establish higher limits in their degree requirements. Only two members from categories 3, 4, 5 and 6 may be appointed to serve on a single committee (but not to include more than 1 member from category 6). A member of an advanced graduate degree committee should hold a degree at least equal to, or equivalent to, the degree objective of the student. The Chair

of each committee must be a member of categories 1, 2, 3, or 4. Programs may establish more restrictive policies in their bylaws.

## II. Appointment of Committees

Final approval of the membership rests with the Dean of Graduate Studies on the doctoral qualifying examination and Master Plan I committee and other committees specified by Davis Division Regulations for Higher Degrees. For such committees, the Graduate Adviser, in consultation with the student, the major professor and program faculty, recommends appointment of faculty members to serve on examination committees and to review and pass upon the merits of each doctoral dissertation and master's thesis/project. Whenever possible, one member of the committee shall be chosen from a graduate program other than that of the major subject. Consistent with DDR500(C)3(b), a committee of a minimum of three shall be appointed by the Dean to pass finally upon the merits of the Master's thesis or project.

For all other committees (e.g. Preliminary Examination or Master's Comprehensive Examination), final approval of the membership lies with the Graduate Program.

## III. Examination Committees

For all examinations given in an oral format, it is the responsibility of all members of the committee to be in attendance for the entire examination. If there is an unanticipated and unavoidable absence, this will be explained in detail by the Chair in the report on the outcome of the examination, and a specific plan for completion of the examination within 72 hours by all members of the committee will be detailed. In the event that it is the Chair who is absent, the remaining members of the committee shall suspend the examination after waiting a reasonable time and after attempting to contact the Chair. In this case, the Chair shall report the result as "No Examination" and explain the circumstances in detail. The examination shall then be rescheduled and conducted in the same manner and format as intended for the original examination.

### Remote Participation by a Committee Member

All examination committee members must make all reasonable efforts to be physically present during the entire examination; however, it is **permissible for one member (not the Chair) to participate remotely** if he/she cannot be present, provided the following criteria are met:

- It must be reasonable within the discipline that an examiner can participate remotely;
- The student, the Chair of the examination committee, and the Graduate Adviser must all review and approve the written remote participation request;
- The examiner is not within commuting distance, and has made all reasonable efforts to be present as detailed in a written remote participation request;
- The Chair of the examination committee and the remote participant must ensure that:

1. The technology used for remote participation is available at the time of, and in the space reserved for the examination;
2. The technology is tested prior to the examination;
3. It is possible for the examination to meet the standards required by Graduate Council (see Policy on Doctoral Qualifying Examinations, i.e., the exam should be interactive and a group activity); and
4. The student is comfortable with the technology and understands how to successfully interact with a remote participant; and any costs associated with using the technology must not be absorbed by the student. Funding for remote participation is not available from Graduate Studies.

Remote participation is defined as one member of a committee who is not physically present, but who is present via appropriate interactive voice technology; video may also be required, appropriate to the discipline and exam format (if there are whiteboard sessions, etc.). The remote participant must be able to interact with the student and the other committee members, and vice versa, in real time. The remote participant must have access to all the same examination materials as other committee members. A student may negate their approval for remote participation at any time prior to the examination, leading to rescheduling of the exam or reconstitution of a committee. Remote participation by a member must be requested and approved in advance of the examination and noted on the report form provided to Graduate Studies.

#### **IV. Reading Committee Timelines**

In 1974, the Graduate Council adopted a policy stating that reading committee members are expected to read and comment on a thesis or dissertation **within four weeks**. Upon failure of a committee member to comply with the 4 week deadline, the Graduate Adviser may reconstitute the committee which will then be conveyed to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval. However, this policy does not apply to summer periods for faculty holding 9 month appointments. It is expected that the graduate student, with cooperation of the committee, will coordinate the time lines for presentation of the dissertation to the reading committee in a manner such that all members of the reading committee can fulfill their responsibilities within the prescribed 4 week limit. In the case of a student who returns to campus following a lapse in registration or extended period on filing fee status and wishes to complete a thesis or dissertation, the reading committee should meet with the student to review the status of the work and determine an appropriate time line for completion.

When revisions to the thesis or dissertation are requested, all members have the responsibility to give the students timely feedback, and the Chair in particular should ensure that all members comply with this. If any members request further changes subsequent to the first set of revisions accomplished by a student, it is expected that members will not ask for additional changes addressing issues that reasonably could have been identified for the first revision.