THE PH.D. SUPERVISING COMMITTEE

The Ph.D. Dissertation is a substantial piece of original research that reflects a student's ability to select an important problem for investigation and address it via the use of appropriate research techniques. With primary responsibility borne by the Supervisory Committee Chair, the Supervisory Committee will guide the student in conducting the dissertation research and writing the dissertation.

The Ph.D. Committee supervises all phases of the student's dissertation work, and must approve the dissertation before the Ph.D. degree is granted. The Ph.D. Committee consists of at least four faculty members: a Chair, at least two additional Sociology faculty members, and a Graduate School Representative. The Chair and a majority of the members must hold appointments in Sociology and be members of the Graduate Faculty. If a student wishes to appoint a faculty member with no appointment in Sociology to the Ph.D. Committee, s/he may be added as an additional member of the committee (see details below).

THE PH.D. SUPERVISING COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Chair of the Ph.D. Committee is the student's primary academic advisor during the Ph.D. phase of the program. This faculty member guides the student's choice of areas for the required subject area examinations (major and minor area exams), works with the student to develop a dissertation project, and advises the student on the additional members of the Ph.D. Supervisory Committee. Ideally, the Chair of the Ph.D. Committee is appointed during the first quarter after advancement into the Ph.D. program.

The appointment of the Ph.D. committee chair is an internal departmental requirement and is distinct from petitioning the Graduate School for the appointment of the full Ph.D. Supervisory Committee. To appoint a faculty member as the Chair of the dissertation committee, the student should:

- Complete and print Petition to Appoint the Ph.D. Committee Chair
- Submit form to the Graduate Program Advisor for signature of the Graduate Program Coordinator

THE PH.D. SUPERVISING COMMITTEE

Each Ph.D. student must have a Supervisory Committee, recommended by the department and appointed by the Graduate School. This committee assists the student during the design and preparation of the dissertation, and evaluates the dissertation upon completion. The Graduate School requires that members of the Ph.D. Supervisory Committee are present at and sign the warrants for both the General Exam (prospectus defense) and the Final Exam (dissertation defense). A subset of the Supervisory Committee, called the Reading Committee, approves and signs the dissertation itself.

TIMING

A student is not considered to be a doctoral student by the Graduate School until a supervisory committee has been established officially. This committee will ordinarily be appointed after the student completes the major and minor subject area examination and no later than four months prior to the General Examination (Prospectus Defense).

COMPOSITION

The Sociology department requires that the supervisory committee consist of four faculty members:

- The committee chair, who must be a member of the graduate faculty in Sociology
- Two additional sociology faculty members, at least one of whom must be a member of the graduate faculty
The Graduate School Representative (GSR)

Students may request that additional faculty members (not necessarily from the sociology department) be appointed to the Supervisory Committee.

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE

The primary duties of the Graduate School Representative (GSR) are: (1) to protect the student against unfair treatment (2) to promote quality control in awarding the Ph.D. degree. The GSR is chosen by the student with the advice of the supervisory committee chair. The GSR must be a member of the Graduate Faculty in another department of the university, and cannot have a primary or joint appointment in a department in which either the student or chair also has an appointment. You can use this handy Faculty Locator to check faculty appointments and determine eligibility to serve as GSR.

See these Graduate School web pages for additional information about the GSR

- Doctoral Supervisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities
- Graduate School Memorandum No. 13: Supervisory Committee for Graduate Students
- Graduate School Representative (GSR Eligibility)

NON-UW SOCIOLOGY MEMBERS

In general, Ph.D. Supervisory Committees should be composed of UW Sociology graduate faculty whenever possible. In some cases, it may be appropriate to include a non-UW faculty member, or a UW faculty member from another department, on a supervisory committee. Such appointments will routinely be approved so long as:

- The non-UW faculty member or non-Sociology UW faculty member will bring something unique to the committee.
- The Chair of the committee endorses including the additional non-UW Sociology committee member.
- The non-UW Sociology member is in addition to, rather than in place of, a UW Sociology faculty member. For Ph.D. committees, this means that the committee will have at least 5 members (Chair from Sociology, 2 members from Sociology, GSR, and the additional member(s)).
- To appoint the additional committee member, there are spaces provided on the Petition for Appointment of the Ph.D. Committee form. Be sure to provide the additional information required for these additional members, and to get your Chair's approval. Obtain faculty signature(s). Submit to the Graduate Program Advisor.
- Please note:
  - Affiliate faculty are considered UW faculty for the purposes of graduate committees, though they do not normally have Graduate Faculty standing.
  - The student must provide the Graduate Program Advisor with the necessary additional information of the additional non-Sociology member(s) of the committee: full name, email address, organization they are employed by, address of organization. There is a space for this on the Petition for Appointment of the Ph.D. Committee form.
  - It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the composition of the committee conforms to the Graduate School's guidelines, and to the Department of Sociology guidelines above.

LINKS TO GRADUATE SCHOOL INFORMATION

- Doctoral Supervisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities
- Graduate School Memorandum No. 13: Supervisory Committee for Graduate Students
- Doctoral Degree Policies and Requirements
- Doctoral Student Resources and Overview

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