

**The University of Akron
Graduate School**

PROCEDURES FOR THE COMPOSITION OF
DOCTORAL DISSERTATION COMMITTEES
AND THE APPOINTMENT OF OUTSIDE REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Effective May 15, 1992

1. At the time the doctoral committee is initially constituted by the doctoral advisor and student, an appropriate graduate faculty member outside the student's home department (i.e. having no appointment or cross-appointment in that department) should be identified and contacted by the student or advisor regarding his/her willingness to be a member of the committee. In the case of joint doctoral programs (e.g., Urban Studies, Sociology), a faculty member from the joint program at the other institution (e.g., CSU, KSU) shall not count as the outside member.
2. All doctoral committees shall have a minimum of five committee members, including the member from outside the home department. At the discretion of the doctoral advisor or the Graduate Dean, additional members may be appointed.
3. The member from outside the home department must have a status on the graduate faculty which allows him/her to direct doctoral dissertations (category II). This member ought to be selected so as to be maximally beneficial to the student in the design and conduct of the research, providing a perspective from a related discipline.
4. A majority of the committee membership must have a status on the graduate faculty which allows them to direct doctoral dissertations (i.e., three members if the committee has a minimum of five members or four members if the committee has six or seven members and so on).
5. At the time the doctoral committee, including the outside representative, is constituted, the doctoral advisor shall send the entire dissertation committee membership to the Graduate School for ratification and approval. This notification of entire committee membership should be received in the Graduate School at the time the committee is constituted, prior to the prospectus meeting, normally at least six months prior to the dissertation defense, and must be received in the Graduate School no later than a minimum of three months prior to the dissertation defense. In other words, the dissertation defense may not take place until at least three months after the form is filed. Failure to file the form three months prior will therefore result in delays in the students' commencements.
6. If there are any changes to the committee membership after initial approval by the Graduate School, the doctoral advisor shall send revised committee membership lists to the Graduate School for ratification and approval of any changes. Requests for changes in committee membership should include a reason for such change.
7. The outside member of the committee shall function as a regular member of the committee, attending all meetings and receiving preliminary drafts or chapters as do other committee members. The outside member of the committee is usually someone

who may provide additional expertise to the dissertation research from a related field, and is also someone who assures that the dissertation process is conducted fairly and that quality standards are maintained.

8. The schedules of all committee members, including the outside member, shall be considered when selecting a time for all committee meetings, including the final dissertation defense.
9. At the end of the final defense, all committee members will be polled for their vote on the defense and the dissertation (pass or fail). A minimum of one “fail” vote is allowed for the student to pass. More than one “fail” vote constitutes failure for the student. Departments may invoke more, but not less, rigorous standards to define “pass.” All committee members will affix their signatures to a single form signifying their vote. The form will be sent to the Graduate School as the single form indicating that the defense has been held, and that the student has passed or failed. This form must be on file in the Graduate School at the time the dissertation is officially submitted. If individual members of the committee, including the outside representative, wish to write separate memos to the Graduate School concerning the dissertation and/or the defense they are invited (but not required) to do so.
10. The student along with the dissertation advisor and the entire committee bear responsibility for the content and form of the dissertation being acceptable. The position of the “reader” shall be eliminated as unnecessary.
11. The Graduate School encourages all dissertation defenses to be publicized well in advance and to be open to all faculty and all graduate students, but allows definition of “open” to reside with the department.