2017-2018 Graduate Council
Meeting Agenda: May 2, 2018 | 3:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m. | 102 Kern Graduate Building

1. Minutes of the April 11, 2018 Meeting (2 minutes)
2. Communications to Graduate Council (1 minutes)
3. Announcements/Remarks by the Chair – Regina Vasilatos-Younken, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School (5 minutes)
4. Reports of Standing Committees of Graduate Council (65 minutes)
   a) Committee on Committees and Procedures – Daniel Morgan, Chair (5 minutes)
      1. Election of new members for the 2018-19 Committee on Committees and Procedures
         (online balloting prior to the meeting)
   b) Committee on Academic Standards – Douglas Stairs reporting for L. Sam Finn, Chair
      (40 minutes)
      1. Informational Item - White Paper on Proposed Policy Revisions (Appendix A)
      2. Research Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) – Residency Requirement (Appendix B)
      3. Research Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) – Dissertation Committee Formation, Composition, and Review (Appendix C)
      4. Research Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) – Dissertation Committee Responsibilities (Appendix D)
   c) Committee on Programs and Courses – M. Kathleen Heid, Chair (5 minutes)
   d) Committee on Fellowships and Awards – Jose Mendez, Chair (5 minutes)
   e) Committee on Graduate Research – Siela Maximova, Chair (5 minutes)
   f) Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues – Sarah Ades, Chair (5 minutes)
5. Reports of Special Committees (5 minutes)
   a) Graduate School’s Graduate Exhibition Committee – Daniel Morgan, Chair (5 minutes)
6. Special Reports (5 minutes)
   a) Graduate and Professional Student Association (5 minutes)
7. Unfinished Business (2 minutes)
8. New Business (3 minutes)
9. Comments and Recommendations for the Good of the Graduate Community (2 minutes)
2017-2018 Graduate Council
Minutes of the Meeting: April 11, 2018

Graduate Council met on Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 3:30 p.m. in 102 Kern Graduate Building. Dr. Regina Vasilatos-Younken, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School, chaired the meeting. The minutes of the March 14, 2018 meeting were approved.

Communications to Graduate Council

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken welcomed Robert Kubat, Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Education and University Registrar, and Alan Rieck, Assistant Vice President and Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education, who presented an update on the University Bulletin project.

The Undergraduate Bulletin went live on March 15, and feedback has been positive. The Steering and Implementation committees have begun to work on the Graduate Bulletin and the Bulletins for the Law Schools and the College of Medicine. It is anticipated that these Bulletins will be implemented by late August. At that point, work on the related curriculum management system will begin, and the system should be fully implemented in Spring 2019. Any comments, questions, or ideas about the Bulletin project can be submitted by email to bulletins@psu.edu.

To ensure that the new Graduate Bulletin will have updated and accurate information, the Graduate School sent out a request last summer for updates from programs who have not made changes to their Bulletin listing since 2010. Dr. Vasilatos-Younken encouraged programs who were sent these requests to respond with their program updates by April 19, 2018, which is the agenda deadline for the last Joint Curricular Committee meeting this academic year.

Announcements/Remarks by the Chair – Regina Vasilatos-Younken, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken introduced Lori Anne Hawn, Director of Graduate Student Services, who announced that the LionPATH Development and Maintenance Organization (LDMO) will be hosting a listening session specifically for Graduate Faculty for one hour in late April. She asked any faculty interested in participating to contact her at laf13@psu.edu.

Reports of Standing Committees of Graduate Council

Committee on Committees and Procedures

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Daniel Morgan, Chair of the Committee on Committees and Procedures.

Dr. Morgan indicated the committee had not met and had nothing to report.

Committee on Academic Standards

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. L. Sam Finn, Chair of the Committee on Academic Standards.

Dr. Finn presented a white paper and three drafts for policy revisions pertaining to the Research Doctoral Degree, concerning the Residency Requirement, Dissertation Committee Formation, Composition, and Review, and Dissertation Committee Responsibilities. These drafts are informational for Council at this meeting, and Council will be asked to vote on them at the May meeting.
In response to concerns raised during the discussion about the requirement to have the Dissertation Committee appointed no later than one calendar year after the student’s successful completion of the Qualifying Examination, the Academic Standards committee will consider revisions to the policy drafts. These proposed revisions will be distributed to Council in advance of the May meeting.

Committee on Programs and Courses
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Kathleen Heid, Chair of the Committee on Programs and Courses.

Dr. Heid presented the Graduate Council Curriculum Report, 4/4/2018 as an information item.

At its last meeting, the committee discussed a proposal to raise the semester credit limit for students in professional graduate degree programs. Under the current policy, all graduate students are limited to a maximum of 15 credits per semester; this limit was established at a time when most graduate programs led to research degrees (M.A., M.S., Ph.D.), and it was important to leave time in a student’s schedule for research activities outside of classroom time. Currently, if a student wishes to register for more than 15 credits, an exception to the normal maximum must be granted by a petition with the adviser’s approval to Graduate Enrollment Services. After robust discussion, the committee requested additional information, including semester credit limits at peer institutions, current standing exceptions for programs and the number of individual exceptions processed each semester, and possible budget implications for programs and financial implications for students. Discussion of this topic will continue at the committee’s next meeting.

Committee on Fellowships and Awards
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Jessica Hoffman on behalf of Dr. Jose Mendez, Chair of the Committee on Fellowships and Awards.

Ms. Hoffman presented the complete list of Student Recognition Award Recipients as an informational item. Programs are asked not to publish the list at this time, but can use it to internally announce and congratulate the 41 recipients. The committee will next consider nominations for the CGS/ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award. The 2018 categories are Mathematics, Physical Sciences, and Engineering, and Social Science. The committee requests nominations for this award in May, and the final two nominations will be submitted to CGS by the Graduate School before the end of June.

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken informed Council that the Graduate Student Awards Luncheon under the auspices of the President’s office will take place on April 25, 2018, with President Eric J. Barron and Executive Vice President and Provost Nicholas P. Jones participating.

Committee on Graduate Research
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Kevin Luhman, reporting on behalf of Dr. Siela Maximova, Chair of the Committee on Graduate Research.

Dr. Luhman indicated the committee had not met and had nothing to report.

Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues
Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Sarah Ades, Chair of the Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues.
Dr. Ades reported the group began discussing the Career Exploration Workshop held in October, and is considering offering two sessions on a Thursday afternoon instead of on a weekend day. The Alumni Board suggested focusing the workshop on critical thinking skills and applying them to career goals. The committee also continued discussion about individual assessment plans for students. The committee plans to develop a website for students with links and resources on developing an individual assessment plan.

**Reports of Special Committees**

**Graduate School's Graduate Exhibition Committee**

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Dr. Daniel Morgan, Chair of the Graduate School’s Graduate Exhibition Committee.

Dr. Morgan reported the committee reviewed 172 responses to the student survey about Graduate Exhibition. Overall the responses were very positive, but students still feel the event is too long. The committee may consider cutting the judging time by 30 minutes next year. The committee is also considering adding a new category for 3-D presentations.

**Special Reports**

**Graduate and Professional Student Association**

Dr. Vasilatos-Younken recognized Ms. Ling Yang reporting on behalf of the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA).

Ms. Yang reported GPSA held an election in March, and that four of the current Graduate Council GPSA representatives will continue next year. Ms. Yang will be replaced by Logan Rutten, College of Education. The Executive Board of GPSA will be Brianne Pragg, President; Stephanie Winkler, Vice President; Alex Zhao, Treasurer; and Nick Dietrich, Secretary. GPSA currently has open seats in Smeal College of Business, the College of Education, and Eberly College of Science. GPSA asked Council members to encourage students who may be interested to participate. The graduate student union election is being held at locations on the University Park campus from Tue. April 10 to Fri. April 13. Polls will be open at Penn State Hershey campus on Mon. April 16, and on Penn State Harrisburg campus on Tue. April 17. GPSA encourages all eligible graduate students to vote.

**Unfinished Business**

None.

**New Business**

None.

**Comments and Recommendations for the Good of the Graduate Community**

None.

**Next meeting:**

Wednesday, May 2, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., 102 Kern Graduate Building
Executive Summary
During the 2017/18 academic year, the Graduate Council’s Committee on Academic Standards began what will be a multi-year review and clarification of Graduate Faculty policies associated with graduate degrees. As part of this review the Committee has identified certain areas where it believes that new policy, or changes to existing policy, should be adopted by Council. The changes recommended to Council by the Committee are highlighted in the attached documents, which show the recommended changes in the context of the broader policies of which they are a part. Most of the work associated with this review – consolidation, organization, and development of a dictionary, and even certain clarifications – involves no change of existing policy. Where existing policy is not changed, no review by Council is necessary. Only the highlighted passages in the attached policies represent changes requiring Council approval. The remainder of this note describes the motivation for the policy review undertaken by the Committee and the rationale for the changes the Committee recommends Council to adopt.

Review Motivation
The motivations for this review are several:
1. Current policy exists only as statements scattered throughout the existing Graduate Bulletin. These policy statements are not named, indexed, cross-referenced, or otherwise collated. A goal of this review is to consolidate and organize existing policy, and provide an index that allows students, faculty, and staff, to readily identify and access policies that govern graduate education at Penn State.
2. Existing statements of policy sometimes do not address common eventualities to which they must be applied. Terms used in policies are sometimes used inconsistently, or inconsistently with usage standard in the broad academic community. A goal of this review is to clarify existing policy; commit that policy and the intent behind it to writing; and develop a dictionary of terminology that is consistent with standard usage.
3. The number and kind of graduate degrees offered by the University has expanded dramatically over the past decade, necessitating a clarification of which policies apply, or should apply, to the different graduate degrees offered by Penn State. A goal of this review is to make clear which policies apply to which degrees.
4. The Graduate Council adopted, in its 2015/16 session, a broad statement of Scholarly and Professional Goals for All Graduate Students, which identifies the principle objectives of graduate education at Penn State. A goal of this review is to ensure that existing policy aligns with Council’s statement of Scholarly and Professional Goals for All Graduate Students.

Policy 94-01: Research Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) - Residency Requirement
A copy of this policy is included for information and context. The Committee on Academic Standard recommends no changes to the existing policy.
Policy 94-02: Research Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) – Dissertation Committee Formation, Composition, and Review

General Remarks:
Current policy calls for the appointment of the Dissertation Committee “...soon after the student is admitted to candidacy.” The proposed revision clarifies what is meant by “soon”. The Committee also recommends that the Graduate Council adopt the more common terminology “Qualifying Examination” for what is currently referred to as “Candidacy Examination”. The terminology “Candidacy Examination” would be retired.

Rationale:
Following the Qualifying Examination, the next major summary evaluation of student progress is the Comprehensive Examination, which is administered by the student’s Dissertation Committee. A student’s Dissertation Committee also plays a vital role in advising the student and monitoring their progress throughout the rest of their degree program. It is thus crucial that programs and their faculty assist students in the timely identification of an adviser, a dissertation topic area, and a Dissertation Committee, in order to ensure that students make appropriate progress toward their degree. After reviewing comments from an earlier draft of this policy, the Committee on Academic Standards recommends that one calendar year be allowed for students to find adviser(s) and appropriate Dissertation Committee members.

Policy 94-03: Research Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) – Dissertation Committee Responsibilities

General Comments
The Committee on Academic Standards recommends that the Graduate Council amend existing policy to require that each student’s Dissertation Committee meet, as a Committee, with the student at least once annually throughout the student’s program. The Committee on Academic Standards further recommends that after each Dissertation Committee meeting a written report, briefly summarizing the Dissertation Committee’s findings and any recommendations, be prepared and made available to the student and the relevant Graduate Program Heads.

Rationale
The broad purpose of the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee is to ensure that each Ph.D. candidate receives, from a representative cross section of the Graduate Faculty, the attention, guidance, and mentoring necessary to successfully earn their degree and meet the Graduate Council’s Scholarly and Professional Goals for Penn State graduates. Current policy is silent on how, and how frequently, students should interact with their Dissertation Committees. This has led to a wide range of practices, including a complete absence of Dissertation Committee or Committee Member involvement in advising the student, or evaluating student progress between the Comprehensive Examination and the Final Oral Defense.
While each student should make it a point to meet regularly with each of the student’s Dissertation Committee members – keeping the members apprised of the student’s perception of their progress and, when appropriate, seeking committee member advice or guidance – the Dissertation Committee as a whole should meet regularly with the student for a more comprehensive and thorough review of student progress. The overarching goal of these regular
meetings should be to provide each student, and each student’s adviser, with regular feedback, and to assist in the identification of any areas of concern, allowing them to be addressed before they grow to become serious obstacles to the student’s successful completion of the degree program. Under ordinary circumstances, annual meetings should allow sufficient time for a student to make substantial progress in their work. At the same time, they are not so infrequent that looming obstacles, that may interfere with student progress, go undiscovered or unaddressed for too long.

A brief written summary of the outcome of these Dissertation Committee meetings serves to ensure the Committee Members and the student share a full and common understanding of the Committee’s assessment of the student’s progress, and any Committee recommendations for the student and the student’s adviser. Distributing the report to the relevant Graduate Program Heads makes the Committee assessment’s available to the Heads and alerts them to any concerns that may affect the program or student success in the program.
RESEARCH DOCTORAL DEGREE (Ph.D.) - RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

Contents:
- Purpose
- Academic Goal
- Scope
- Background
- Definitions
- Statement of Policy
- Process
- Forms
- Further Information

PURPOSE:

This policy describes and establishes a minimum residency requirement applicable to all Ph.D. degrees awarded by Penn State.

ACADEMIC GOAL

The Academic Goal of this policy is to ensure that for a period of time during their studies, all Ph.D. students are immersed in the scholarly life of their disciplinary community.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all students enrolled in any program of study leading to the Ph.D.

BACKGROUND

Completion of the Ph.D. degree requires demonstrated mastery of a body of knowledge, a set of skills, and evidence of embodying essential professional attributes. Only the most rudimentary of these can be learned or demonstrated through coursework or remote study. An important goal of this requirement is to ensure that students are inculcated with the full scope of knowledge, skills and professional attributes, including the values and ethical norms specific to their discipline. To acquire these essential characteristics requires concentrated study and dedicated time spent engaging in academic pursuits in the scholarly, research-intensive environment of the University in the close company of faculty members and other Ph.D. trainees. While essential for all disciplines, this requirement has special significance for disciplines in which the research is frequently conducted by individuals rather than teams, or where the bulk of the research might be conducted at remote field sites. An immersive experience interacting with diverse scholars with
Policy 94-01
Policy Steward:

diverse experiences and opinions is invaluable to the student’s development as a scholar and researcher.

The policy specifies that students must meet this requirement while enrolled in their Ph.D. program because master’s degree students are frequently focused on developing a more limited set of specific research skills and completing their project in 2-3 years. In contrast, Ph.D. students are expected to have a much broader perspective, and are expected to become leaders in whatever career path they choose.

DEFINITIONS:

**Head of a graduate program** – Member of the Graduate Faculty with ultimate responsibility and academic authority for a graduate degree program. For departmental graduate programs, this may be the Department Head; for Intercollege Graduate Degree Programs it is a faculty Chair. In all cases, the Head must be a tenure-line member of the Graduate Faculty.

**Unit Leader** – Individual to whom a University employee reports for their primary appointment.

STATEMENT OF POLICY:

1. Over a twelve-month period the Ph.D. student must spend at least two consecutive semesters, exclusive of summer sessions, as a registered full-time student engaged in academic work at the Penn State campus(es) offering the Ph.D. degree in the student’s graduate major program.
   a. SUBJECT 601 and SUBJECT 611 cannot be used to meet this requirement.

2. Full time University employees enrolled in a Ph.D. program must be registered for 6 credits or more in each semester in which residency is declared and must be certified as full time employees by their unit leader. In exceptional cases, the Head of the graduate program may certify to Graduate Enrollment Services that the student is devoting half time or more to graduate studies in lieu of registered credits.
   a. This requirement must be satisfied at a Penn State campus offering the Ph.D. degree in the student’s graduate major program.
   b. This requirement must be satisfied prior to the semester in which the final oral examination is administered.

3. Nothing in this policy shall preclude individual programs from establishing residency requirements more stringent than the minimum specified herein.
   a. Any additional degree requirements established by graduate programs must be approved through the Graduate Council curricular review process.
   b. Additional program specific requirements shall be published and made readily accessible to program students and faculty.
PURPOSE:
The purpose of this policy is to describe when and how a Ph.D. student’s dissertation committee is formed and maintained through the course of his/her degree program of study.

ACADEMIC GOAL:
The academic goal of this policy is to ensure that all research doctoral students benefit from the expert advice and assistance of multiple members of the Graduate Faculty.

SCOPE:
This policy applies to all students enrolled in programs of study leading to the Ph.D.

BACKGROUND:
Research is a complex enterprise, requiring both individual creative initiative and broad consultation with other research experts. Likewise, the education of a Ph.D. candidate – training in the broad methods of research generally, the specific methods appropriate to their discipline, and the values that define the research community - requires the active participation of a broad team of expert advisers at every step of the student’s program. Each Ph.D. student has a Dissertation Committee, whose purpose is to provide the attention, guidance, and mentoring necessary for the candidate to successfully earn their degree and meet the Graduate Council’s Scholarly and Professional Goals for Penn State graduates.
Policy 94-02
Policy Steward:

DEFINITIONS:

Dissertation Committee (co)Chair: Graduate Faculty member(s) responsible for assuring that all Graduate Council standards and requirements relative to the Ph.D. degree are met and that any conditions set by the student’s Dissertation Committee are fulfilled.

Dissertation (co)Adviser: Graduate Faculty member(s) principally responsible for day-to-day guidance of the student’s dissertation research and academic and professional development.

Outside Unit Member: Graduate Faculty member responsible for providing the student and the Dissertation Committee with a perspective on the dissertation research and other professional matters from outside the unit that offers the program or, in the case of intercollege graduate degree programs (IGDPs), outside the unit of the chair/adviser.

Outside Field Member: Graduate Faculty member responsible for broadening the disciplinary perspective available to the student and the Dissertation Committee; must have a disciplinary expertise different from the student’s primary field of study.

Minor Program Member: For students pursuing a minor, a Graduate Faculty member who is a member of and represents the minor program on the Dissertation Committee.

Special Member: A member of the student’s Dissertation Committee who is not a member of the Graduate Faculty of Penn State, but whose expertise and insights would provide substantial benefit to the student’s dissertation research and the Dissertation Committee.

Major Graduate Program: The graduate program within which the student is pursuing their degree.

Minor Graduate Program: For students pursuing a minor, the graduate program responsible for the graduate minor.

STATEMENT OF POLICY:

1. Each Ph.D. student shall have an appointed Dissertation Committee to guide their research training.

2. Dissertation Committee Appointment: A student’s Dissertation Committee shall be nominated to the Graduate School by the student’s major Graduate Program Head as soon as possible after the student has secured an adviser, but in no event later than one calendar year following the date of the student’s successful completion of the Qualifying Examination.
Policy 94-02
Policy Steward:

unless an alternative timing is approved through the Graduate Council’s curricular review process.

a. The guiding principle for members of the Dissertation Committee is the success of the student.
b. While it is expected that the Graduate Program Head will consult with the student, the student’s adviser, and as appropriate the dual-title and/or minor Graduate Program Head, the Graduate Program Head is responsible for nominating members of the Dissertation Committee to the Graduate School, designating Dissertation Committee member roles, and ensuring appropriate Dissertation Committee composition that is in the best interests of the student and the completion of their dissertation. Dissertation Committees must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.
c. The Dean of the Graduate School may appoint one or more members to the Dissertation Committee in addition to those recommended by the Graduate Program Head.

3. Minimum Dissertation Committee Membership: A student’s Dissertation Committee shall consist at minimum of four members of the Graduate Faculty, each of whom shall be in a position to contribute substantially to the student’s education. At least two of these four members shall be from the student’s major graduate program.

4. Dissertation Committee Member Roles: Each Committee shall have a Dissertation Committee Chair, Outside Field Member, Outside Unit Member, and include the student’s Dissertation Adviser. The Dissertation Committee Chair and Dissertation Adviser may be one and the same. For students pursuing a graduate minor, the Dissertation Committee shall include a Minor Field Program Member representing each graduate minor. Dissertation Committees may also include other participants who are not members of the Graduate Faculty but are otherwise qualified and have particular expertise in the student’s research area. All Dissertation Committee Members are expected to participate fully in the affairs of the Dissertation Committee.

a. Dissertation Committee Chair: The Dissertation Committee Chair shall be a member of the Graduate Faculty and the student’s major Graduate Program. The Dissertation Committee Chair is responsible for arranging and conducting all Dissertation Committee Meetings, ensuring that all Graduate Program, Graduate Council, and Graduate School standards and requirements relative to the doctoral degree are met, and that any conditions set by the Dissertation Committee are fulfilled.
   i. For students pursuing dual-title degrees, either the Dissertation Committee Chair or a co-Chair must be a Graduate Faculty member of the dual-title program.
b. Dissertation Adviser: Each Committee shall include the student’s Dissertation Adviser. The Dissertation Adviser is responsible for the day-to-day guidance of the student’s dissertation research, and academic and professional development.
   i. Where day-to-day guidance is shared by two members of the Graduate Faculty, both may be appointed to the Dissertation Committee as co-Advisers.
   ii. Co-advisers are jointly and severally responsible for the day-to-day guidance of the student’s dissertation research, and academic and professional development.
   iii. A Dissertation Advisor may also serve as the Dissertation Committee Chair (or co-Chair).
c. Outside Field Member: Each Dissertation Committee shall have appointed at least one Outside Field Member. The Outside Field Member must have a disciplinary expertise different from the student’s primary field of study, and is responsible for broadening the
Policy 94-02
Policy Steward:

disciplinary perspective available to the student and the Dissertation Committee. The Outside Field Member may be from student’s graduate program, but may not also serve as a major program member. In cases where the candidate is also pursuing a dual-title program, any dual-title Graduate Faculty member of the Dissertation Committee may serve as the Outside Field Member.
d. Outside Unit Member(s): Each Dissertation Committee shall have appointed at least one Outside Unit Member. The Outside Unit Member is responsible for bringing to the attention of the student and the Dissertation Committee [non-academic] issues (including, for example, conflicts of interest) that may impact a student’s progress. Outside Unit Members must have their primary academic appointment in an administrative unit different than the Dissertation Committee Chair(s) and Dissertation Adviser(s).
e. Minor Program Member(s): Dissertation Committees assigned to students pursuing graduate minors shall include at least one Minor Program Member for each graduate minor. Each graduate minor pursued by a student shall be represented by at least one Minor Program Member who is a member of the Graduate Faculty and a member of that minor graduate program. Minor Program Members are responsible for providing the student and the Dissertation Committee with information, advice and perspective on student progress in fulfilling the graduate minor requirements in the graduate program they represent.
f. Special Members: Dissertation Committees may include Special Members who are not members of the Graduate Faculty but are otherwise qualified and have particular expertise in the student’s research area. Special Members do not have to be affiliated with Penn State.

5. Annual Review of Dissertation Committee Membership: It is crucial that all committee members remain actively engaged in the guidance of the student through the completion of their program. The Graduate Program Head of the student’s major program shall review annually each student’s Dissertation Committee to ensure that all Dissertation Committee members continue to qualify for service in their designated roles. The Graduate Program Head is responsible for promptly making any necessary changes and informing the Graduate School.

6. When Dissertation Committee Members Retire or Become Emeritus
a. Dissertation Committee Members who retire or become emeritus may continue to serve for the duration of the student’s program if they were appointed to the Dissertation Committee in this role prior to retirement, and they have the continuing approval of the student’s Graduate Program Head and the Graduate School. (In the case of students pursuing a dual-title degree, the dual-title Graduate Program Head must also approve.)
b. As specified in 5 (above) it is the responsibility of the Graduate Program Head to ensure that all Dissertation Committee members continue to qualify for service in their designated roles. The Graduate Program Head will review the committee membership whenever any committee member retires to ensure that students receive expert faculty guidance through their dissertation project.

7. When Dissertation Committee Members Leave the University: Dissertation Committee Members in any role who leave Penn State for reasons other than retiring or becoming emeritus may maintain their committee appointment for up to one year with the approval of the student's Graduate Program Head and the Dean of the Graduate School.
Policy 94-02
Policy Steward:

8. Other Changes in Dissertation Committee Membership: If the need for Dissertation Committee membership change is required, whether at the time of an annual review or otherwise, the student’s major Graduate Program Head will promptly make the necessary changes and notify the director of Graduate Enrollment Services.

CROSS REFERENCES TO OTHER POLICIES:

90-02  Graduate Program Learning Objectives
94-03  Research Doctoral Degree Dissertation Committees - Responsibilities
94-04  Research Doctoral Degree - Qualifying Examination
94-05  Research Doctoral Degree - English Competence
94-06  Research Doctoral Degree - Comprehensive Examination
94-07  Research Doctoral Degree - Dissertation
94-08  Research Doctoral Degree - Final Oral Examination
Graduate Minor Policy

HISTORY
RESEARCH DOCTORAL DEGREE (Ph.D.) - DISSERTATION COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Contents:
- Purpose
- Academic Goal
- Scope
- Background
- Definitions
- Policy Statement
- Process
- Forms
- Further Information
- Cross References/Other Policies

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to identify the duties and responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee in guiding the student in scholarly work toward their degree.

ACADEMIC GOAL:

The academic goal of this policy is to ensure that research doctoral students receive timely and comprehensive guidance from members of the Graduate Faculty that facilitates progress toward their degree, including meeting the Graduate Council’s Scholarly and Professional Goals for All Graduate Degree Students.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all students enrolled in programs of study leading to the Ph.D.

BACKGROUND:

The broad purpose of the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee is to ensure that each Ph.D. candidate receives the attention, guidance, and mentoring necessary to successfully earn their degree and meet the Graduate Council’s Scholarly and Professional Goals for Penn State graduates from a representative cross section of the Graduate Faculty. This policy describes the particular responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee.

Moreover, continuing communication on a regular basis among the student, the committee chair, the dissertation adviser, and the other members of the committee is strongly recommended, in
Policy 94-03
Policy Steward:

order to preclude misunderstandings and to develop a collegial relationship among the candidate and all members of the committee.

DEFINITIONS:

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. Primary Responsibility: The Dissertation Committee bears primary responsibility for the broad scholarly development of the Ph.D. student, as well as direct responsibility for guidance and assessment of the student’s dissertation research and academic progress toward the Ph.D. degree. Dissertation Committee members are appointed based on their skills and expertise with these goals in mind. Specific responsibilities include (but are not limited to):
   a. The Dissertation Committee shall meet with the student no less than annually to assess student progress toward the degree (see below).
   b. The Dissertation Committee administers the student’s Comprehensive Examination.
   c. The Dissertation Committee assesses the student’s dissertation and recommends its approval to the Graduate School.
   d. The Dissertation Committee conducts the student’s Final Oral Examination.

2. Annual Committee Meetings: The Dissertation Committee will meet with the student no less than annually to assess student progress toward the degree and in meeting the Graduate Council’s Scholarly and Professional Goals for All Graduate Degree Students.
   a. The Dissertation Committee will meet with the student within one semester after its formation (excluding Summer Semester) to review the student’s dissertation research and the student’s understanding of the dissertation research goals, objectives, and methods. This is separate from the meetings for the administration of the Comprehensive Exam.
   b. If the student’s program has received approval through the Graduate Council’s curricular review process to establish the dissertation committee later than specified in Policy 94-02, then the program head or designated academic adviser is responsible for meeting with the student to review the student’s dissertation research and the student’s understanding of the dissertation research goals, objectives, and methods. This meeting will take place approximately one year after the qualifying examination was passed; the program head or designated academic adviser will meet with the student at least once annually after that until the student’s Dissertation Committee is formed.
   c. At subsequent meetings with the student, the Dissertation Committee shall:
      i. Assess the quality and progress of the student’s research;
      ii. Assess the student’s professional development;
      iii. Decide whether any interim meetings should take place and, if so, when.

3. Additional Committee Meetings: The Dissertation Committee shall meet additionally as necessary to advise the student and the student’s dissertation adviser.
   a. Additional meetings of the Dissertation Committee will be held upon request of the student, of the student’s Dissertation Adviser, or the Dissertation Committee Chair, or of any two members of the Dissertation Committee.

Commented [MV1]: This is a new policy provision regarding the frequency of Dissertation Committee meetings. The current policy has no provisions about the frequency of Dissertation Committee meetings.

Commented [MV2]: New provision added in response to the adjustment to 94-02 Policy Statement 2 that allows a delay to dissertation committee formation in some cases.
4. **Committee Meeting Reports.** The Dissertation Committee will review and approve a summary meeting report.
   a. Within the week following each meeting, the Dissertation Committee Chair will circulate a summary of the meeting to the Dissertation Committee and the student. The summary shall include:
      i. The Dissertation Committee’s assessment of the student’s research and professional development progress, along with any advice, recommendations for supplemental study, and/or remedial actions the Dissertation Committee may have for the student and the adviser.
      ii. The Dissertation Committee’s decision on whether any interim Committee meetings are to be scheduled.
   b. All members of the Dissertation Committee and the student must approve the meeting summary.
   c. The Dissertation Committee Chair shall submit the approved meeting summary to the major (and as appropriate, dual-title and/or minor) Graduate Program Head.

**PROCESS:**

The student is responsible for scheduling all Dissertation Committee meetings. In scheduling meetings, the student will be assisted by the Dissertation Committee Chair.

**FORMS:**

Summary of Dissertation Committee meeting

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

**CROSS REFERENCES / OTHER POLICIES:**

94-01 Research Doctoral Degree - Residency Requirement
94-02 Research Doctoral Degree - Dissertation Committee Formation and Composition
94-04 Research Doctoral Degree - Qualifying Examination
94-05 Research Doctoral Degree - English Competence
94-06 Research Doctoral Degree - Comprehensive Examination
94-07 Research Doctoral Degree - Dissertation
94-08 Research Doctoral Degree - Final Oral Examination