



Thesis and Dissertation Roles and Responsibilities of the Chair, Committee Members, and Candidates*

**If the academic department does not provide students with a program-specific handbook addressing these topics, these guidelines will apply.*

Roles and Responsibilities of the Chair

- The Chair is expected to be familiar with current policies and procedures in the program and The Graduate School.
- The Chair is responsible for guiding the candidate to produce graduate level, original scholarship in the proposed topic area. This typically involves meeting with the candidate to develop the idea for the project and reading drafts of the written proposal, guiding the candidate to set a realistic timeline for completion of the thesis/dissertation, setting expectations for draft submissions and turnaround times, and guiding the selection of committee members.
- The Chair submits the Appointment of Thesis/Dissertation Committee form to GradForms@uttyler.edu for Graduate School Approval.
- When the Chair is satisfied with the quality of the proposal, the candidate schedules a meeting of the Committee at which the proposed study is discussed. The proposal is given to committee members at least two weeks before the date of the proposal meeting. Unless otherwise directed by the Chair, committee members do not review drafts of the proposal.
- The Chair will guide the candidate in the selection of methods/procedures for data collection and analysis and assist the candidate in navigating the IRB approval process.
- The Chair will read the work in progress and suggest revisions and will regularly confer with the candidate to discuss the progress. The Chair can be expected to provide feedback on all aspects of the written documents including grammar and clarity of writing; organization of the literature review; thoroughness of studies presented; quality of the methodology proposed; appropriateness of proposed statistics; and formatting. The Chair approves both the abstract and final draft of the manuscript before it is circulated to the committee.
- The Chair will help prepare the candidate for the defense.
- The Chair schedules the oral defense with GradForms@uttyler.edu (mandatory for dissertation; optional but recommended for thesis). The Chair facilitates the defense (Guidelines for the Conduct of a Dissertation Defense; Guidelines for the Conduct of a Thesis Defense), checks the manuscript after its readers have suggested revisions, approves the final copies, and ensures all committee members have signed off on the final copy before the manuscript is submitted to GradForms@uttyler.edu for the final formatting check.
- The Chair is expected to always maintain a respectful and professional attitude.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee Members

All members of the candidate's committee share responsibility in ensuring that the candidate produces high-quality scholarship.

Committee members are responsible for reading manuscripts within the agreed-upon minimum time frame (per committee member), suggesting substantive editorial changes, and providing

rationale for their support and critiques. Committee members who perceive major flaws that are likely to result in a candidate's unsuccessful defense should discuss these concerns with the candidate and Chair immediately.

Committee members are expected to always maintain a respectful and professional attitude.

Committee member's responsibilities include:

- Committee Members are expected to be familiar with current policies and procedures in the program and The Graduate School.
- In cooperation with the Chair, advising the candidate from the proposal stage through the final defense.
- Provide subject matter expertise as requested by Chair or candidate.
- Reading drafts and providing meaningful feedback at each stage of the process.
- Guiding the candidate in the selection of methods/procedures for data collection and analysis.
- Corresponding with the Chair and candidate as needed for clarification/resolution of methodological issues during the process.
- Faculty who wish to resign from a committee should demonstrate courtesy by directly informing the candidate.
- Assist the Chair in conducting the thesis defense.
- After the candidate successfully completes the manuscript and defense, the members, as well as the Chair, sign the manuscript.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Candidate

The candidate is expected to engage in active preparation of the process from the onset of the program. Candidates are responsible for choosing a topic for approval, submitting proofread drafts of materials to the Chair, preparing adequately for meetings, thoroughly reviewing all policies and procedures, and communicating on a regular basis with the Chair via email, phone, or other communication modality.

Candidates are expected to maintain contact with the Chair throughout the process to ensure that the research and writing adhere to the agreed-upon plan. As the project is the candidate's responsibility, s/he must frequently keep the Chair informed of progress. The candidate should contact the Chair in the event of any significant changes in his/her personal or professional life which may interfere with program completion. To document face-to-face meetings as a part of this process, immediately following a face-to-face meeting (within 48 hours), the candidate should email the Chair with a summary of the discussion.

The candidate is expected to always maintain a respectful and professional attitude.

Candidate responsibilities include:

- Candidates are expected to be familiar with current policies and procedures in the program and The Graduate School.
- Candidates are required to maintain continuous enrollment while working on their thesis/dissertation and must be registered for credit hour(s) the semester they defend.

- In accordance with the Committee Composition/Dissertation Committee guidelines in the Catalog, candidates are expected to contact appropriate faculty to serve as chair and committee members.
- Candidates should be aware that some committee members (including chairs) may resign from a committee if the candidate does not make timely progress toward completion.
- Candidates are responsible for consulting with the Chair and listening to the Chair's advice.
- Candidates will confer with the Chair to set deadlines to make sure that they are working at a reasonable pace.
- Candidates and the Chair will develop a timeline for draft submission.
- Candidates should avoid consulting the full committee for feedback without prior approval of the Chair.
- Candidates who wish to change committee members should demonstrate courtesy by communicating about the change directly with the faculty involved.
- Candidates should expect to make multiple revisions to their draft throughout the entire process.
- The defense may only be scheduled once the manuscript has been given final approval by all committee members.
- It is the candidate's responsibility to be familiar with the Graduate School Calendar and the deadlines for filing for graduation, scheduling the defense and the final manuscript submission.

Conflict Resolution

Conflicts occasionally arise between candidates and their dissertation/thesis chairs or committee members. Sources of conflict may include but are not limited to disagreement about a timeline for completing the project, disagreement about the direction of the study or the interpretation of the results, and disagreement about the content, style, and editing of the dissertation or thesis manuscript.

If a conflict is disrupting the progress of the dissertation/thesis, the candidate should follow the procedures below.

1. The candidate must first make a documented attempt to resolve the issue with the chair or committee member who is involved in the conflict.
2. If unable to resolve the conflict, the candidate may follow up with the chair (except in those instances when the conflict is with the chair), followed by the program coordinator or the department chairperson.
3. If the conflict cannot be resolved within the department to the satisfaction of all parties, the chair or the candidate may forward the disagreement in writing to the dean of the College for further mediation.