

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

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

Role 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 student to produce graduate level, original scholarship in the proposed topic area. This typically involves meeting with the student to develop the idea for the project and reading drafts of the written proposal, guiding the student 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 student 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 student in the selection of methods/procedures for data collection and analysis and assist the student in navigating the IRB approval process.
- The Chair will read the work in progress and suggest revisions and will regularly confer with the student 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 thesis committee.
- The Chair will help prepare the student 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 maintain a respectful and professional attitude at all times.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee Members

All members of the student's committee share responsibility in ensuring that the student 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 student's unsuccessful defense should discuss these concerns with the student and Chair immediately.

Committee members are expected to maintain a respectful and professional attitude at all times.

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 student from the proposal stage through the final defense
- Provide subject matter expertise as requested by Chair or student
- Reading drafts and providing meaningful feedback at each stage of the process
- Guiding the student in the selection of methods/procedures for data collection and analysis
- Corresponding with the Chair and student 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 student.
- Assist the Chair in conducting the thesis defense.
- After the student successfully completes the manuscript and defense, the members, as well as the Chair, sign the manuscript.

Role and Responsibilities of the Student

The student 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 student's responsibility, s/he must frequently keep the Chair informed of progress. The student should contact the Chair in the event of any significant changes in his/her personal or professional life which may interfere with program completion. In order to document face-to-face meetings as a part of this process, immediately following a face-to-face meeting (within 48 hours), the student should email the Chair with a summary of the discussion.

The student is expected to maintain a respectful and professional attitude at all times.

Student responsibilities include:

- Students are expected to be familiar with current policies and procedures in the program and [The Graduate School](#)
- In accordance with the Committee Composition guidelines in the Catalog, students are expected to contact appropriate faculty to serve as chair and committee members.
- Students should be aware that some committee members (including chairs) may resign from a committee if the student does not make timely progress toward completion.
- Students are responsible for consulting with the Chair and listening to the Chair's advice.
- Students will confer with the Chair to set deadlines to make sure that they are working at a reasonable pace.
- Students and the Chair will develop a timeline for draft submission.
- Students should avoid consulting the full committee for feedback without prior approval of the Chair.
- Students who wish to change committee members should demonstrate courtesy by communicating about the change directly with the faculty involved.
- Students 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 student'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 students 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 student should follow the procedures below.

1. The student 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 student 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 student may forward the disagreement in writing to the dean of the College for further mediation.