**The Thesis/Dissertation Committee**

**Committee Members**

The thesis or dissertation committee consists of a minimum of three members (including the advisor) who hold appropriate graduate faculty status for their committee role. The committee shares expertise and provides guidance for the thesis/dissertation and is responsible for approving the quality of the scholarly work including the defense, adherence to the particular style manual, and the quality, syntax, spelling, and punctuation used in the thesis or dissertation. While the written thesis or dissertation is one outcome of the committee and student’s work, the ultimate outcome of the thesis and dissertation process is a competent and confident scholar/researcher.

**Advisor** – the primary member directing the thesis or dissertation (sometimes referred to as the committee chairperson, or thesis/dissertation supervisor) who works closely with the student/candidate and fellow committee members to fulfill the committee’s responsibilities.

The advisor plays a key role in approving and often in helping the student to identify or define a topic of inquiry. The advisor should offer to the graduate student substantive expertise on the topic of the thesis/dissertation and provide the student with formative feedback, not just editorial comments, throughout the entire process The following expectations are not offered as an all-encompassing list, or to limit what an advisor can do, but rather these expectations are offered to clarify the role and responsibility of the thesis/dissertation advisor. They are offered with the thought that the processes of writing about and defending one’s scholarly work is best when there are clear and known expectations.

**It is expected that the thesis/dissertation advisor will:**

Ensure that approval for research involving human subjects and or animals is submitted for approval to appropriate committees and that written approval has been received before proceeding with research or data collection.

Ensure that the study undertaken is appropriate to the student’s discipline or degree program and of depth, breadth and quality consistent with the field of inquiry.

Work with the student to establish a realistic schedule that sets target dates to milestones for key steps in the process, for example define the problem, complete chapter 1, complete review of the literature, describe research methodology, submit research protocol for IRB approval, data collection, defense, etc. The advisor will update the schedule when changes are necessary and communicate the revised schedule in written form.

Meet regularly with the student to keep communication clear and open. More frequent meetings might be helpful at the beginning and near the defense, or post defense. While the frequency of such meetings is best left to the advisor and student, meeting at least twice each semester seems appropriate. Meetings can take place in-person or through the use of various technology.

Provide sound and helpful guidance and advice in all matters related to the problem or topic being explored.

Provide professional, constructive and timely feedback and communication, including that offered in repose to students’ questions or requests. This is essential to keep things running smoothly and on schedule. A response within two working days is expected to questions or requests, while some may require additional time. The maximum time for a reply should be no more than seven working days. On complex matters, or those requiring more than seven working days to provide a meaningful response, or when other circumstances exist that require additional time, the advisor is expected to communicate this to the student within seven working days and provide a date by which a substantive response will be provided.

Ensure that a public, written invitation (including the name of the presenter, title of thesis/dissertation, date, time and location (or access information – if presented remotely) of the thesis/dissertation defense is provided within the college and to the College of Graduate Studies.

The advisor and student verify the authenticity of the thesis or dissertation, that resources utilized in the thesis or dissertation are indicated by proper citations and that iThenticate was utilized as part of the verification process.

Complete all university forms related to the graduate student’s thesis/dissertation progress.

While the entire committee will play a role in evaluating the thesis/dissertation and the performance of the student, the advisor is responsible for assigning grades for the thesis and dissertation course(s).

The advisor at the completion of the defense should notify the Graduate Program Director and Department Chair, whether or not the thesis/dissertation has been successfully defended and provide to them the following information: Student name, title of thesis, date of defense, assigned grade, and the names of all committee members.