

Committee Purpose

The role of the Thesis Committee (for Plan I MS students) and Dissertation Committee (for PhD students) is to advise the student on their research topic, methods, and interpretation of results. The Thesis or Dissertation Committee also reviews the final completed thesis for acceptance.

Committee Composition

The Thesis or Dissertation Committee is a three-member committee identified by the student, in consultation with the Major Professor. The chair of the Thesis or Dissertation Committee is the student's Major Professor, who must be a member of the Food Science Graduate Group (FSGG), and must be directly involved with the planning and execution of the experimental work that forms the foundation of the thesis or dissertation. The Major Professor's laboratory is the setting for most of the student's research activities, unless an alternative site and immediate supervisor are approved in advance by the FSGG Executive Committee. The other two Thesis or Dissertation Committee members need not be members of the FSGG. The student's Graduate Advisor must approve the nomination of a committee member who is not in the FSGG.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS THAT ARE NOT PART OF THE UC DAVIS ACADEMIC SENATE OR ACADEMIC FEDERATION

Thesis and Dissertation Committee members are typically members of the Academic Senate (e.g., Professors) or Academic Federation (e.g., Specialists in Cooperative Extension, Professional Researchers). If a nominee to the Thesis or Dissertation Committee is not a member of the Academic Senate or Academic Federation (e.g., a Visiting Professor), then a current curriculum vitae must be submitted to Graduate Studies with a memo explaining why that person is best suited to be on the committee.

Under certain circumstances, a committee member from outside the University of California who has special expertise and qualifications may be nominated to serve on a Thesis or Dissertation Committee. The graduate advisor must submit a brief statement to Graduate Studies indicating the appointee's affiliation and title, degrees held, and special expertise that cannot be duplicated on campus. A curriculum vitae and letter from the nominated person indicating willingness to serve must also be submitted.

Forming the Committee

The Thesis or Dissertation Committee is formed as part of the advancement to candidacy.

For **MS students**, the Thesis Committee is composed by the end of the student's *fourth quarter* of study following completion of all required coursework.

For **PhD students**, the Dissertation Committee is formed by the end of the student's *ninth quarter* of study following completion of required coursework and the qualifying examination (typically satisfied by the end of the seventh quarter of study).

While the Thesis or Dissertation Committee is being constituted, the Thesis or Dissertation Committee Chair should determine the expectations and willingness of the individual members regarding assistance with research and review of the thesis or dissertation.

The composition of the Thesis or Dissertation Committee is entered on the Advancement to Candidacy Form and submitted to Graduate Studies for formal appointment. Forms can be found at:

<https://grad.ucdavis.edu/financial-support/forms>

Meeting with the Committee

Students are expected to meet with the Chair of their Thesis or Dissertation Committee regularly. **MS candidates** shall convene the entire Thesis Committee *at least once* to discuss progress and the expected timeline to submission of the thesis. **PhD candidates** shall conduct *yearly meetings* with the entire Dissertation Committee. This is the minimum required meeting schedule; however, students are strongly encouraged to capitalize on the expertise of their committee and schedule additional meetings according to the needs of the student and research and the expectations of the committee.

Students should prepare a presentation for the Thesis or Dissertation Committee meeting that includes:

RECONSTITUTING THE COMMITTEE

Circumstances may require the Thesis or Dissertation Committee to be reconstituted. For example, a committee member may be on leave or retire. Reconstitution may also be appropriate if the thesis or dissertation research focus changes and the expertise of the Thesis or Dissertation Committee no longer permits adequate mentorship and evaluation of the work. In such cases, a Reconstitution of Committee Membership Request must be submitted to Graduate Studies. As part of the request, justification for the membership change must be given along with a supporting statement from the Graduate Advisor

<https://grad.ucdavis.edu/sites/default/files/upload/files/current-students/gs332-recon-committee-membership-request.pdf>

- An outline of the thesis or dissertation research project, including the central hypothesis and specific aims
- A clear summary of the progress to date for each aim, delineating between experiments that are complete, in progress, and pending
- An outline for how data under each aim will be organized into the thesis or dissertation chapters
- A timeline for completing pending experimentation, drafting thesis or dissertation chapters, and submission of the draft thesis or dissertation to the committee for review
- A description of challenges and questions that have arisen during the work, highlighting areas where the committee's guidance is needed
- Plans and activities that will help the committee mentor you towards your professional goals

The presentation slides should be shared at least 3 business days in advance of the meeting. The committee meetings are likely to take between 1 and 1.5 h and should be scheduled sufficiently in advance for all committee members to be present.

After a Thesis or Dissertation Committee meeting, the student should discuss committee feedback with the Major Professor. If additional experimentation is required, the implications for the thesis or dissertation timeline should be evaluated. Any substantial changes to the research or timeline should be communicated to the Thesis or Dissertation Committee.

Thesis or Dissertation Review

Informing members of the Thesis or Dissertation Committee about the progress of writing (via committee meetings and email updates) helps to ensure committee availability and timely review of the draft. At minimum, students shall provide notice to the Thesis or Dissertation Committee members one quarter before they intend to deliver a complete draft of the thesis or dissertation for their review and follow up regularly on their progress. To guide writing and scheduling, information about formatting the thesis or dissertation and filing deadlines can be found here:

REVIEW DURING SUMMER MONTHS

Many faculty have 9-month appointments, meaning they are not obligated to engage in university service during the summer months between spring and fall quarters. This includes review of thesis and dissertation drafts. Students should check the availability of Thesis or Dissertation Committee members if they intend to submit their thesis or dissertation draft for review over summer.

<https://grad.ucdavis.edu/academics/finishing-your-degree/filing-thesis-or-dissertation>

To view previously submitted theses and dissertations from UC Davis, the following site can be accessed while on-campus or while off-campus using the campus VPN:

<https://search.proquest.com/pqdt/advanced>

A complete draft of the thesis or dissertation should be submitted to each member of the Thesis or Dissertation Committee at least six weeks before the student expects to submit to Graduate Studies.

Committee members must provide feedback within four weeks of receipt of the thesis or dissertation. The Major Professor or Graduate Advisor should intervene in cases where committee members fail to meet the required timeline. Once returned, the student makes necessary revisions and returns the thesis or dissertation to the committee for approval or additional comments.