

**Subject/Title: Doctoral Student (PhD and DrPH) Dissertation Committee Composition Guideline**

After successful completion of the Departmental Preliminary Exam, doctoral students will form their Dissertation Committee.

The Dissertation Committee must include at least 3 UTHealth School of Public Health faculty members. These individually are generally full-time faculty. The committee members must represent the student's Major, Minor and Breadth (or second Minor) and include faculty from at least two Academic Departments. (Epidemiology and Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences count as separate Academic Departments.)

For students who have elected to pursue a Concentration, the committee must also include an UTHealth SPH faculty member who represents the Concentration. This may be a fourth UTHealth SPH faculty member or one of the three members discussed above.

- The faculty member representing the student's Major must be from the same Department as the student.
- The faculty member representing the Minor(s) must be trained in the minor field, but does not need to be in the corresponding Department. For example, a faculty member trained in Epidemiology who is in the Department of Management, Policy and Community Health may represent a student's epi minor.
- The faculty member representing the Concentration must be a member of the Concentration program.

The dissertation committee may include additional (optional) members who provide expertise that is not sufficiently covered by the required members described above. Optional committee members can be, but do not have to be, UTHealth SPH faculty.

All committee members must be trained with a terminal degree appropriate to their role on the committee and MAY NOT be a current UTHealth SPH student.

Within the committee one member must be designated as the Chair and one must be designated as the Dissertation Supervisor.

- The Chair must be an UTHealth SPH faculty member in the same Department as the student.
- The Dissertation Supervisor may be within or outside of UTHealth SPH, but must have training in the student's major area.

The same individual may serve as the Chair and Dissertation Supervisor, as long as they fulfill all of the qualifications for both positions.

Committee membership must be approved by the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Services. To request approval, students must submit the following materials to the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services:

- a completed [Doctoral Dissertation Committee Form](#) (DrPH Forms or PhD Forms tab)
- CVs for committee members who are not affiliated with UTHealth SPH and have not previously served on a UTHealth SPH thesis or dissertation committee

### **External Reviewers**

The doctoral committee will select at least one individual to review the student's dissertation proposal and participate in the proposal defense. The reviewer(s) for the proposal can be from within or outside of UTHealth SPH. However, they must be external to the committee. External reviewers provide critical feedback to the student and participate in discussions related to revisions and corrections required in the proposal.

The doctoral committee will also select at least one individual to review the student's completed dissertation and participate in the dissertation defense. The reviewer(s) for the completed dissertation can be from within or outside of UTHealth SPH. Further, the reviewer(s) can be the same individual(s) who reviewed the dissertation proposal or different reviewers can be selected. However, reviewers must be external to the committee. External reviewers provide critical feedback to the student and participate in discussions related to revisions and corrections required in the dissertation.

**Scope and Audience:** Doctoral students (DrPH and PhD)

**Related Policies, Forms and Information:**

[Doctoral Dissertation Committee Form](#) (DrPH Forms or PhD Forms tab)

[UTHealth SPH Policy 307, Preliminary Exam \(formerly Qualifying Exam\); Admission to Candidacy and Dissertation Defense](#) (Policies tab)

**History:** Created for clarification on 9.24.2015

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