

Roles and Responsibilities of Committee Members and Students

Below are the roles and expectations Mines has of faculty as members of thesis committees and of students engaged in research-based degree programs.

Thesis Advisor(s)

The thesis advisor has the overall responsibility for guiding the student through the process of the successful completion of a thesis that fulfills the expectations of scholarly work at the appropriate level as well as meets the requirements of the department or program and the school. The advisor shall:

- be able and willing to assume principal responsibility for advising the student.
- have adequate time for this work and be accessible to the student.
- provide adequate and timely feedback to both the student and the committee regarding student progress toward degree completion.
- guide and provide continuing feedback on the student's development of a research project by providing input on the intellectual appropriateness of the proposed activities, the reasonableness of project scope, acquisition of necessary resources and expertise, necessary laboratory or computer facilities, etc..
- establish key academic milestones and communicate these to the student and appropriately evaluate the student on meeting these milestones.

Regular Committee Member

With the exception of the student's advisor, all voting members of the thesis committee are considered regular committee members. The regular committee member shall:

- have adequate time to assume the responsibilities associated with serving on a student's thesis committee.
- be accessible to the student (at a minimum this implies availability for committee meetings and availability to participate in a student's qualifying/comprehensive examinations – as dictated by the practices employed by the degree program – and the thesis defense).
- ensure that the student's work conforms to the highest standards of scholarly performance within the discipline and within the expertise provided by the committee member.
- provide advice to both the student and the student's advisor(s) on the quality, suitability and timeliness of the work being undertaken.
- approve the student's degree plan (e.g., courses of study, compliance with program's qualifying process, thesis proposal, etc.), assuring that the plan not only meets the intellectual needs of the student, but also all institutional and program requirements.
- review dissertation drafts as provided by the student and the advisor and provide feedback in a timely fashion.
- participate in and independently evaluate student performance in the final thesis defense.

Minor Field Committee Representative

In addition to the responsibilities of a regular committee member, the minor field committee representative has the following added responsibilities:

- provide advice for and approval of coursework required as part of a student's minor degree program in a manner that is consistent with institutional and minor program requirements.
- as appropriate, participate in the student's qualifying and comprehensive examination process to certify completion of minor degree requirements.
- work individually with the student on the thesis aspects for which the minor committee member has expertise.

Thesis Committee Chairperson

In addition to the responsibilities of a regular committee member, the chairperson of committee has the following added responsibilities:

- chair all meetings of the thesis committee including the thesis defense.
- represent the broad interests of the institution with respect to high standards of scholarly performance.
- represent the Office of Graduate Studies by ensuring that all procedures are carried out fairly and in accordance with institutional guidelines and policies.
- ensure that any potential conflicts of interest between student, advisor, or any other committee member are effectively identified and managed.

Student Responsibilities

While it is expected that students receive guidance and support from their advisor and all members of the thesis committee, the student is responsible for actually defining and carrying out the program approved by the thesis committee and completing the thesis/dissertation. As such, it is expected that the student assumes a leadership role in defining and carrying out all aspects of their degree program and thesis/dissertation project. Within this context, students have the following responsibilities:

- to formally establish a thesis advisor and committee by the end of their first year of residence in their degree program.
- to call meetings of the thesis committee as needed.
- to actively inform and solicit feedback from the student's advisor and committee on progress made toward degree.
- to respond to, and act on feedback from the student's advisor and committee in a timely and constructive manner.
- to understand and then apply the institutional and programmatic standards related to the ethical conduct of research in the completion of the student's thesis/dissertation.
- to know, understand and follow deadlines defined by the institution and the degree program related to all aspects of the student's degree program.