

Forming the Research Committee

To initiate research for the dissertation, the student chooses a professor who will agree to direct the dissertation. The department shall then recommend to the dean for approval a research committee composed of at least four members, as follows:

1. The chosen director (who will also normally serve as chairperson of the committee)
2. A representative of each minor. If the dissertation research does not involve the area(s) of the minor(s), the minor member can be waived if approved by the minor representative. Another member outside of the student's major field of study who is more appropriate to the topic of the dissertation must then be added.
3. Three of the committee members must be from the School of Education with at least two from the program area. The dissertation chair must be an endorsed member of the University Graduate School faculty.

The committee should be selected from the members of the graduate faculty who are best qualified to assist the student in conducting the research for the dissertation. The committee has the responsibility of supervising the research, reading the dissertation, and conducting the final examination.

- All members of a research committee must be members of the graduate faculty. At least half of the members of the committee must be endorsed to direct doctoral dissertations; others may be regular members.
- All chairpersons of research committees and directors of research must be endorsed members of the graduate faculty. The endorsement is reserved for tenure-track faculty with a regular appointment at Indiana University and is granted separately from graduate faculty status. If, however, special expertise in an area is held by a member of the graduate faculty who does not have the endorsement, the departmental chairperson may request that the dean approve such an individual as research committee chairperson or director of the dissertation research.

The procedure for selecting research committee members varies considerably from student to student. Ideally, the research question that becomes the focus of the dissertation study stems naturally from research experiences, coursework, or graduate assistantship assignments that the student has had during their program. Often the advisory committee chair is the student's mentor and becomes the research committee chair. In such a case, the student and chair typically have had discussions about tentative dissertation topics prior to admission to candidacy and prior to the selection of other research committee members.

It is not required that the advisory committee chair be asked to chair the research committee, nor that the advisory committee chair agree to chair the research committee, if asked. Ultimately, the choice of a research chair involves a combination of personal compatibility and compatibility of the research interests of the student and the chair. The student and the committee chair typically confer regarding the selection of other research committee members.

An emeritus faculty member may remain on program committees and research committees formed prior to retirement and continue to serve as member, chair, co-chair, or director. An emeritus faculty member may not be appointed as chair of either an advisory committee or a research committee. However, an emeritus faculty member who continues to be actively engaged in research and in their professional field may serve as a member of a program committee, or serve as director, co-chair, or member of a research committee, with the recommendation of the chair of the committee and approval of the department chair. Appeals to this policy based upon extraordinary circumstances should be directed to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. Faculty preparing to leave the university should consult with the Graduate Studies Office regarding future committee service.

<https://bulletins.iu.edu/iu/educ-grad/2022-2023/policies/phd-policies.shtml>