

Bulletin Language Update: Forming a Research Committee (Ed.D.)

After admission to candidacy, the student must assemble a research committee. The doctoral research committee has the responsibility to guide the student through the dissertation process and to conduct the final oral defense.

For 90 credit hour and 60 credit hour Ed.D. programs, research committees must have at least three members. Two of these must be from the major field of study, of which one must be a tenure-line faculty from the [Bloomington](#) campus. The third member cannot be from the major field of study. One member may be from the faculty of a campus of Indiana University outside the [Bloomington](#) campus. At least two of the committee members must be tenure-line faculty members. The committee chair must be an associate or full professor in the student's major area of study. The dissertation director must be a regular or endorsed member of the University Graduate School faculty.

In some instances it is possible to include a committee member who is not an Indiana University faculty member, such as a faculty member at another university, on a doctoral committee. The full committee must still be composed from Indiana University faculty. Outside committee members are in addition to the full committee and are not counted as one of the three required members. To receive approval for such an addition, two conditions must be met:

1. the substitute member must have special expertise not available among University Graduate School faculty, either in the substantive area of the study or in the research methodology, and
2. the substitute member must supply evidence of published research.

The procedure for selecting a research committee chair and 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 the program of studies. 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.