



COMMITTEE ON INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM

14-15 CIC 23
Wednesday, February 25, 2015

TO: The Committee on Instruction and Curriculum and the Executive Committee
FROM: The Graduate Programs Subcommittee and the Committee on Instruction and Curriculum (CIC)
SUBJECT: 14-15 CIC 23: Thesis Committee Requirements
PURPOSE: For Action by the Academic Senate

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

It has been identified that CSUEB has very minimal requirements for master's thesis committees, as compared to other CSU campuses (see attached spreadsheet). This has created problems for students when thesis committee members resign, are no longer employed at CSUEB, department chairs change and have different requirements for thesis committee members, etc. Therefore, the proposed thesis policy seeks to provide more consistency across graduate programs and provide clear guidelines for both students and faculty serving on thesis committees. Note that programs may have more stringent requirements than the University-wide requirements, provided that the program publishes the requirements for their students.

ACTION REQUESTED:

That the Academic Senate approve the attached policy for CSUEB Thesis Committee membership.

Policy on Master's Thesis Committees

The Master's Thesis Committee provides guidance to students in the planning and execution of the thesis. The committee should be comprised of individuals with expertise directly related to the thesis research. The following guidelines are intended to promote a commonly accepted set of academic standards regarding the composition of the committee for CSUEB thesis committees.

The term "Academic Unit" refers to either the academic department or the program in which the degree is offered.

(1) Composition and Approval of Thesis Committee

Committee membership will be established by the major professor, who will chair the committee, in consultation with the student and with approval from the Graduate Coordinator of the program.

- a. The thesis committee shall be comprised of two to three members, depending on the department, who agree to serve on the committee.
- b. The thesis committee chair must hold a full time tenured or tenure track faculty appointment in the academic unit in which the student's degree is offered.
- c. The second member of the thesis committee must also be a tenure-track, or tenured faculty member in the university. Faculty participants in the Early Retirement Program may serve as the second member of the thesis committee.
- d. The third member of the thesis committee may be a lecturer or come from outside the University. In either of these cases, he/she must have a strong background in the academic area of the thesis and commit to be available for the period required for the student to complete the thesis.
- e. The composition of the thesis committee is subject to exception through the process of petition and approval by the Graduate Coordinator.
- f. Academic units may institute additional guidelines concerning faculty eligibility and selection beyond those included here. Students and their major professor (committee chair) are responsible for complying with all guidelines.

(2) Terms of Service

- a. It is the student's responsibility to communicate to the committee members a reasonable timeline for the completion of his/her thesis research.
- b. It is the responsibility of both the student and each of the committee members to ensure that they will be available for the proposed timeline.
- c. Committee members are not expected to continue to serve if the student fails to complete his/her research beyond the identified time period.

(3) Replacement of Committee Members

Committee members may be replaced under circumstances such as:

- a. A faculty member resigns from the committee.
- b. The committee member can no longer fulfill the guideline requirements.
- c. The Graduate Coordinator determines that the committee has become dysfunctional such that the student's progress is obstructed.
- d. The Graduate Coordinator determines that there is evidence of unethical behavior on the part of a committee member.

It is the Committee Chair or Graduate Coordinator's responsibility to find a suitable replacement in consultation with the student. Any changes to the thesis committee must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator or department chair.

Thesis Committee Comparison across Campuses

College	Minimum committee	Approval of Thesis committee and/or Changes to Committee	Qualifications for committee chair	Qualifications for additional members	Comments about FERPS	Comments about adjuncts or Lecturers	Comments about outside members
Bakersfield							
Channel Islands							
Chico	2-3, depending on dept.	Graduate Coordinator must approve committee members that are from outside department or retired. Committee chair, graduate coordinator, and graduate dean must approve committee members who do not meet minimum criteria.	Strong Background in the appropriate academic area. Is able to communicate and work well with other faculty in the program, and have time to participate. Tenured or tenure-track faculty member who is from the program, including members participating in the early retirement program. Prohibited for people with conflicts of interest	Same as chair. In some departments, (1) may be associated with a program other than the one granting the degree. (2) may be fully retired from the program but willing to volunteer. Prohibited for people with conflicts of interest See next columns.	May be fully retired from the program but willing to volunteer his or her time to serve on the committee.	Not specified	An exception may be allowed for a person to serve as the third member when the person is qualified due to significant professional achievement in an area related to the subject of the thesis or project. This includes professionals working in the community.
Dominguez Hills	3	The full committee will be selected in consultation with the committee chair. Approval of requests for additional committee members should be obtained from the committee chair. Exceptions must be granted by the Graduate Dean in consultation with the Graduate Council	Faculty member in the department or program reviewing and approving the thesis.	Full –time faculty members or Emeritus Faculty See next columns.	Not specified	Not specified	Student may select one of three committee members from another CSUDH dept or program in order to secure special expertise relevant to thesis topic.
East Bay	3	Not specified	The chair of the committee must be a Cal State East Bay faculty member.	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
Fresno	3		Member of the <i>Master's Graduate Faculty Group</i> of student's degree program. Must have previously served as a second or third member of a thesis committee.	Two members on committee must be members of the Master's Graduate Faculty Group. See next columns.	May serve as second or third reader. Program must appoint FERP faculty serving on thesis committees as adjunct faculty during each of the academic terms in which they have inactive status.	Part-time and adjunct may serve as third readers	An individual with requisite expertise may serve as a third, fourth or fifth reader.

College	Minimum committee	Approval of Thesis committee and/or Changes to Committee	Qualifications for committee chair	Qualifications for additional members	Comments about FERPS	Comments about adjuncts or Lecturers	Comments about outside members
Fullerton	3	Not specified	Not specified	See next columns	Not specified	Not specified	A qualified person who is not a regular Cal State University faculty member may serve as a visiting examiner and join in the approval of the thesis. This person serves as the fourth member of the committee.
Humboldt	3	Committee membership will be established by the student in consultation with the major professor who will chair the committee, and approved by the graduate coordinator and the Vice Provost.	With rare exceptions, the Chair is a Humboldt State University tenured or probationary faculty member in the student's primary discipline	Generally is a Humboldt State University faculty, or adjunct faculty, who holds an earned PhD or other terminal degree, and may be from a discipline secondary to the student's thesis or project. See next columns.	Fully retired faculty are not permitted to chair committees, but may volunteer to serve as members	Lecturers are not permitted to chair committees, but may volunteer to serve as members. Adjunct faculty must have earned a PhD or other terminal degree, and may be from a discipline secondary to the student's thesis or project.	Students and major professors who desire to name other persons to the committee not officially affiliated with the university, or who do not hold an earned Ph.D. or other terminal degree can add them as additional committee members.
Long Beach	3	Must be approved by appropriate department graduate advisor and the college associate dean or director of graduate studies. Any change in the composition of the committee requires justification and must be approved by the appropriate department graduate advisor and college associate dean or director of graduate studies.	Tenured or tenure-track member from a department authorized to offer a graduate degree. May serve as thesis director.	Full-time faculty member at CSULB. Must be a person qualified in the specific area of the thesis.	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
Los Angeles	3	A Request for Thesis committee form should be submitted to the college dean for approval	Full-time faculty member. May assist student in finding faculty for the committee or to replace existing members if they become unable or unwilling to serve	Full-time faculty member	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
Monterey Bay							

College	Minimum committee	Approval of Thesis committee and/or Changes to Committee	Qualifications for committee chair	Qualifications for additional members	Comments about FERPS	Comments about adjuncts or Lecturers	Comments about outside members
Northridge	3	A Curriculum vitae of a part time faculty or off-campus committee member must be attached to the Thesis/Project Planning Form for approval by the Committee Chair, department Graduate Coordinator and the Associate Vice President of Graduate Studies.	Full-time faculty from student's department	Two committee members must be full-time faculty from student's department. Third member may be full-time faculty from student's department or be part-time faculty or off-campus See next columns	Not specified	One of the committee members may be part-time faculty. Must meet one of the following minimal qualifications on the committee: a) Hold a M.A. in the field or in a related field or equivalent degree b) Have experience in the topic or area of the Thesis/Project c) Professional recognition through publications, reports, papers or membership in a national professional organization and/or working committees in their institution or agency	One of the committee members may be off-campus. Must meet one of the following minimal qualifications on the committee: a) Hold a M.A. in the field or in a related field or equivalent degree b) Have experience in the topic or area of the Thesis/Project c) Professional recognition through publications, reports, papers or membership in a national professional organization and/or working committees in their institution or agency
Pomona	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
Sacramento							
San Bernardino	3	Exceptions to the Graduate Council recommendations must be approved by the committee chair, graduate coordinator and Dean of Graduate Studies	Should have a strong background in the appropriate academic area, be able to communicate.	Recommended that all be CSUSB faculty. Should have a strong background in the appropriate academic area, be able to communicate. See next columns	Not specified	Adjunct faculty may be appointed to master's committees when their expertise is valuable to the instruction and evaluation associated with the development and defense of the thesis or project. Adjunct committee members will have the terminal degree or a significant scholarship record or a significant professional achievement record in an area related to the subject of student's thesis or project.	A fourth non-CSUSB faculty member may complete the committee.

College	Minimum committee	Approval of Thesis committee and/or Changes to Committee	Qualifications for committee chair	Qualifications for additional members	Comments about FERPS	Comments about adjuncts or Lecturers	Comments about outside members
San Diego	3	<p>FERP faculty must be approved by the department.</p> <p>Final appointment of the membership of thesis committees rests with the Dean of the Graduate Division. If the dean does not approve of the thesis committee recommendation, the dean will confer with the department prior to making any final decision.</p>	<p>Normally, thesis committee chairs should also have specific expertise (theoretical, methodological, or topical) in the area of the proposed thesis. The chair should hold permanent (tenure or tenure track) faculty appointments. The chair should have a full-time or joint appointment in the department in which the thesis is written. Chair should hold a terminal degree or the equivalent in an appropriate discipline and be current in the field as determined by the department, and (b) regularly teach graduate-level courses.</p>	<p>Should hold a permanent (tenure or tenure track) faculty appointment. The second member should have a full-time or joint appointment in the department in which the thesis is written. Second reader should hold a terminal degree or the equivalent in an appropriate discipline and be current in the field as determined by the department, and (b) regularly teach graduate-level courses</p> <p>See next columns.</p>	<p>FERP or Emeritus faculty member may serve either as a chair or 2nd/3rd member of a committee for a thesis/project.</p>	<p>In special circumstances of direct benefit to the student, an adjunct faculty member or lecturer may serve as either a second or third member of a thesis committee who may be expected to be available for the period required for the student to complete the thesis. Such faculty must hold a terminal degree or equivalent in an appropriate discipline and be current in the field as determined by the department.</p>	<p>An individual who has special expertise directly related to the thesis research may serve as a fourth member of the committee or as a co-chair. Appointment as co-chair requires that the individual hold a terminal degree or the equivalent in an appropriate discipline and be current in the field as determined by the department</p>
San Francisco	2	<p>To change the composition of his/her committee, a student must submit a Petition for ATC Substitution or Committee Revision form to Graduate Studies.</p>	<p>The chair of the committee must hold tenured/tenure-track faculty appointments in the major department</p>	<p>The second reader of the committee must hold tenured/tenure-track faculty appointments in the major department. In circumstances where special expertise is available in another department, the graduate dean may authorize a designated tenured/tenure-track faculty member from a related department to serve as second reader.</p> <p>See next columns.</p>	<p>Faculty in the Early Retirement Program (FERP), or in very rare cases, Emeriti faculty, may serve as second or third readers on a Culminating Experience.</p>	<p>With special permission, some long-term lecturers with terminal degrees in their field or with special expertise may be approved as the second reviewer</p> <p>Lecturers may volunteer services as a third member of a student's committee if they have extensive expertise in the area under study.</p>	<p>The third member of a committee may be from outside the major department or University</p>
San Jose	3	<p>Not specified</p>	<p>The chairperson of the thesis committee shall hold a permanent (tenured or tenure track) faculty appointment and be on duty during the full academic year</p>	<p>The majority of committee members shall hold faculty appointments.</p> <p>See next columns.</p>	<p>Faculty on partial retirement may serve as 3rd member on committee</p>	<p>Part-time temporary faculty may serve as 3rd member on committee</p>	<p>Non-faculty with expertise related to the thesis topic may serve as 3rd member</p>

College	Minimum committee	Approval of Thesis committee and/or Changes to Committee	Qualifications for committee chair	Qualifications for additional members	Comments about FERPS	Comments about adjuncts or Lecturers	Comments about outside members
San Luis Obispo	3	Approval by graduate coordinator or department head	Thesis/project advisor be a permanent full-time faculty member from the student's program	Must be faculty member and from student's program	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
San Marcos	2	The thesis chair and the coordinator/director of the graduate program must approve the composition of the thesis committee. Individual programs may have more stringent guidelines for thesis and project committee membership, as approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.	The chair of the thesis committee must be a tenure line faculty member and must have knowledge and expertise in the field of study.	All members of the thesis or project committee will be individuals with advanced degrees and/or relevant professional experience. Second member must hold a graduate degree	Not specified	Non tenure track individual must have unique knowledge and expertise which will enhance the quality of the project.	Non tenure track individual must have unique knowledge and expertise which will enhance the quality of the project.
Sonoma	3	Not specified	Faculty member, tenured/tenure track members of the student's department	See next columns	Not specified	Not specified	In some cases, an off-campus expert may be appropriate as third reader.
Stanislaus	2-3, depending on dept.	The approval of master's committee appointments is the responsibility of the department Committee members who are not members of the faculty must be approved by the other members of the thesis or project committee of the student's major department and the College Dean	From the department in which the thesis or project is written. Full time instructional faculty, tenured or tenure track.	Second member is from the department in which the thesis or project is written. See next columns.	Under certain circumstances, a retired or emeritus faculty member with an academic specialization and/or qualifications that are not held by another department member may serve as a volunteer third committee member, but not as the committee chair	Not specified	When appropriate, the committee may add to the three-member master's committee one individual who is not a member of the University faculty.