

Graduate Advisory Committees – Chemistry Department Policy

Advisory Committee Functions

The function of the Advisory Committee is to provide advice and assess the student's progress and accomplishments. In Chemistry, students choose their Advisory Committees in close consultation with their Research Directors. Formally, the Advisory Committee members are appointed by the Graduate School on recommendation of the Graduate Program Director. Your Committee will be set up and approved at the time you submit your Plan of Study.

In the Chemistry Department, advisory committee members have specific responsibilities including but not limited to those listed below (* asterisk marks items for PhD committees only):

- Approval of the student's Plan of Study
- Participation in the student's Annual Evaluations as required by departmental policies
- Review of the student's Literature Review (if named as one of three Readers)*
- Participation in the student's Preliminary Examination*
- Review of the student's Original Research Proposal or ORP (all committee members)*
- Participation in the student's ORP Oral Exam*
- Participation in the student's Internal Graduate Seminar(s)
- Participation in the student's final thesis and / or dissertation exam(s)

Committee Size and Composition

Size. MS students must have at least three professors. PhD students must have at least four. (The number required for a PhD committee was changed from 5 to 4 in 2010.)

Chair. The Chair of your Advisory Committee must be a full-time tenure-track or research professor in the Chemistry Department. If you are joining a research group in a department other than Chemistry, you *must* have an Advisory Committee co-chair who is a Chemistry professor.

Other Members. The rest of your committee must be VT tenure-track professors. In Chemistry, at least **one** member of your committee must be *inside* your own specialty area (Analytical, Inorganic, etc.), and at least **one** must be *outside* your specialty area. These requirements were reaffirmed by the Graduate Education Committee in November 2008. An individual with whom a student has a personal or existing professional relationship (e.g., spouse, son, daughter, business associate, etc.) may not serve on that student's Advisory Committee.

Non-Tenure-Track Faculty. Instructors and Research Professors may serve as Committee members if they have appropriate qualifications and have been approved as Graduate Faculty by the Dean for Graduate Education. In Chemistry this list presently (Jan 12) includes Richard Turner and Carla Slebodnick.

Non-Chemistry Faculty. There is no limit to the number of non-Chemistry committee members as long as all the other requirements are met. Students will need to inform their non-Chemistry committee members of the graduate policies in the Chemistry Department so that those individuals can serve effectively. Having more than 2 committee members outside the department is allowable but not recommended.

Non-Faculty. Individuals at VT (and external to the university) who are not faculty members, but who have suitable academic training and research experience, may be recommended for inclusion on an Advisory Committee (but not as the Chair). This category includes VT administrative and professional (AP) faculty, instructors who are not already approved as Graduate Faculty members, adjunct or emeritus faculty members, and members of the VT staff, as well as personnel from outside VT. If the person is on a temporary appointment there should be reasonable assurance that he or she will be available throughout the student's degree program. These personnel may make up no more than one-third of the minimum committee membership, may share thesis/dissertation supervision responsibilities, and enjoy voting rights and privileges. Inclusion of committee members in these categories is requested by the student's Advisory Committee Chair and Graduate Program Director using a form for Non-Virginia Tech Program Faculty Committee Member Registration, available on the Graduate School's web site. The CV of the proposed committee member should be included with the form and the particular advantages of including this person on the committee should be cited. The Chemistry Department allows only one committee member in this category.

Procedure for Establishing Your Committee

Students establish their Advisory Committees when setting up the Plan of Study. The Chemistry Department uses a Plan of Study setup form that is available on the Chemistry Graduate Program web site. The last page of this form allows the student to list the professors they are nominating for their Advisory Committee. The Plan of Study form must be completely filled out *before* asking professors to sign, because their signature indicates their approval of that Plan.

Changes in a Student's Advisory Committee

Committee changes will be granted only on approval of all committee members, new and old, and on recommendation of the Graduate Program Director. Students must complete a Change of Committee/Advisor form available on the Graduate School's web site. In the case that one or more members does not approve the change in the membership of the Advisory Committee, an appeal may be made by either the student or a faculty member to the Chair of the Chemistry Department. If the Chair considers the appeal to have merit, he/she may then ask the Graduate School for an exception to all members signing the form.

Disclaimer

These requirements were excerpted from the Graduate School Policies manual and edited and supplemented for the Chemistry Department. This policy is subordinate to Graduate School policies and procedures. Students are advised to read the Graduate Catalog sections on Advisory Committees.