

1.6 Graduate School Representatives

The Graduate School Representative has a unique role on the doctoral examination committee. The Representative protects the interests of the student, the advisory committee, and the Graduate School. The Graduate School Representative is also an “unbiased person” to whom the Dean may turn for judgment and counsel. [Recommended by the Administrative Board of the Graduate School and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School on 10/27/86.]

A. Appointment Process

If a doctoral graduate committee has no representation outside of the student’s graduate program, a Graduate School Representative is required. Co-chairs can never be considered unbiased, even if they are from outside the student’s graduate program, and would therefore never be able to substitute for the Graduate School Representative.

The Dean of the Graduate School chooses Representatives at random from the Graduate Faculty. Each member of the Graduate Faculty is expected to serve in this capacity. The Dean appoints the Graduate School Representative after the doctoral student’s Plan of Graduate Work is approved. An effort is also made to make no more than two such assignments to a faculty member at any one time. It is the responsibility of the student to schedule preliminary and final examinations that are satisfactory to the Graduate School Representative and to provide the Representative with a copy of the dissertation one week before the final oral.

B. Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the Graduate School Representative is that of an observer. Consequently, the Representative should be invited to participate in both the preliminary and final oral examinations, but should never take a dominant role in the exams. The Representative is expected to contribute to the scholarly atmosphere of the examination. Moreover, the experiences of faculty members who serve as Graduate School Representatives should improve the overall quality of graduate education.

The Graduate School Representative also signs the official examination form and may include comments. The Representative is expected to express concerns (if they exist) and encouraged to note any exceptional strengths of the examination. The Graduate School Representative should:

1. Sign the form without comment;
2. Sign the form and note any specific comments; or
3. Sign the form and note that a letter to the Graduate School Dean will follow (with copies to the committee).

The Representative may wish to comment on:

1. the appropriateness of the committee;
2. the adequacy of the Plan of Graduate Work;
3. the appropriateness of the examination questions and procedures;
4. the quality of the student’s performance; and/or
5. reservations about the dissertation.

A signature with no comments indicates that the Representative believes that the examination was properly conducted and does not take

exception to the findings of the committee. The signature does not imply the Representative’s approval of the substance of the examination or dissertation. In the event the Graduate School Representative indicates any substantive reservation, the Dean of the Graduate School will investigate and decide the course of action.

Note: Serving as a Graduate School Representative is a requirement of Graduate Faculty status. Exceptions are made only on an individual basis and in cases of emergency.