

## **POLICY ON THE ADVISEMENT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH AND THE APPOINTMENT OF THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

### **Doctoral Theses**

There are two committees which function to advise, approve and conduct the final doctoral oral examination of the thesis and the student's knowledge of the field in which it lies.

The first committee is called the Thesis Advisory Committee or the Thesis Reading Committee and consists of at least three persons, one of whom is the Thesis Advisor. This committee approves the research topic, provides advice and guidance during the research and is charged with approving the thesis when the research is completed and presented as the doctoral thesis. When the Thesis Advisory Committee considers the thesis to be satisfactory, a recommendation is made to the Dean of the Graduate Division for the appointment of the second committee, which is called the Final Doctoral Examination Committee, and it consists of at least five individuals.

The Thesis Advisory Committee consists of at least three members satisfying the following: (1) the thesis advisor shall be a member of the Academic Faculty (with approval of the school or college Graduate Committee, an adjunct \* faculty member appointed for the specific purpose of advising graduate students may serve as the thesis advisor); (2) the majority of committee members shall be members of the Academic Faculty. The Committee is approved by the Graduate Committee in the School of College, recommended by the School Director through the College Dean, and appointed by the Dean of the Graduate Division.

The Final Doctoral Examination Committee, which consists of at least five persons, always contains the Thesis Advisory Committee members and others as appropriate, who are recommended by the school or college to the Dean of the Graduate Division for approval. At least one member of the Final Doctoral Examination Committee must be from the academic faculty of a School (or College) which is distinct from the unit in which the student is enrolled.

It is recognized that some Schools and Colleges may wish to appoint a Thesis Advisory Committee which consists of five or more persons and to recommend this committee to serve as the Final Doctoral Examination Committee. Where the constraints outlined above are met for both committees, this is permissible.

### **Master's Theses**

For Master's Thesis advisement, the Thesis Advisory Committee consists of at least three members, the majority of whom must be members of the Academic Faculty. The thesis advisor who serves as the Chairman of the Thesis Advisory Committee must be a member of the Academic Faculty (with approval of the school or college Graduate Committee, an adjunct \* faculty member appointed by the specific purpose of advising graduate students may serve as the thesis advisor.) The committee is recommended by the School Director through the College Dean and appointed by the Dean of the Graduate Division.

\* "adjunct" does not indicate formal appointment, but rather appointment as indicated in this policy statement.

### **Note On Joint Degrees And Departments**

For joint (inter-institutional) departments or degree programs, committees should have at least one faculty member from each institution, and a majority should be joint program faculty. Joint program faculty will have undergone a nomination and appointment process in the joint program in order to qualify for the right to advise students in the joint program.

## **POLICY ON PUBLICATION OF THESES**

A policy of the Georgia Institute of Technology is that Doctoral and Master's Theses are openly published. Extraordinary delays are not to be allowed to protect proprietary interests of sponsors.

It is anticipated that all Ph.D. theses and a significant fraction of master's theses be published in the open, refereed literature.

In all cases, doctoral research should meet the "Guidelines for Ph.D. Dissertation Research", and in no situation should these be compromised to allow for concealing important research results because of security classification or a sponsor's proprietary interest.

A student may routinely elect to have publication of his or her thesis withheld for a period of one year, if recommended by the student's thesis advisor. Requests for extensions beyond one year must be justified and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

A Georgia Tech doctoral dissertation in its final form may not be used or have been used to meet the requirements for a separate degree at another institution.

## **GUIDELINES FOR PH.D. DISSERTATION RESEARCH**

1. The research should provide a useful educational experience for the student emphasizing creativity, independent action and learning, research methodology, and scholarly approach.
2. The research must be relevant to the field in which the student is pursuing a degree.
3. The contributions to knowledge must be original and as such, should represent a substantial addition to the fundamental knowledge of the field or a new and better interpretation of facts already known. The research must demonstrate creativity. Dissertations based on well known principles, techniques, and models applied to situations only somewhat different from previous applications are not acceptable.
4. The dissertation should contain clear statements about (a) the relevance and importance of the problem and (b) the significance, originality, and generality of the research results. The relationship of the research to the literature of the field should be described.
5. The research should possess the major characteristics of the scientific method, namely objectivity and reproducibility. Assumptions should be clearly stated in both experimental and theoretical research.
6. The dissertation should reflect a level of competence indicative of significant achievement beyond the master's level. Thus, the research is expected to draw directly upon advanced learning in the student's major field and demonstrate mastery of that knowledge.
7. The dissertation must demonstrate understanding of the theory and methodology related to its main thrust. Further the dissertation should reflect knowledge of the application area.
8. The research should result in at least one paper publishable in a suitable refereed journal of engineering, science, management or architecture, as appropriate.
9. The dissertation should demonstrate a high degree of proficiency in written communication of research results. It should conform to the Institute's requirements as outlined in the Office of Graduate Studies and Research "Manual for the Preparation of Graduate Dissertations and Thesis".
10. The scope of the research should be such that it requires at least the time and effort equivalent to one year of full time graduate study.