

PMG Cover Sheet

Policy name and number: Graduate Faculty Status and Master's Thesis and Dissertation Committees

- AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis
- AP.6.9.4 Thesis Submission, Project, and Embargo
- AP.6.10.5 Dissertation Committee
- AP.6.10.6 Dissertation Registration
- AP.6.10.9 Dissertation Submission and Embargo
- AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty Status

Responsible office or committee: Graduate Division, Office of the Provost

Type of policy:

- University Catalog
- University Policy
- Faculty Handbook
- Code of Student Conduct
- Other policy or guidelines (e.g., graduate hiring guidelines, etc.)

University Policy Type (if a numbered University Policy)

- Academic Policies
- Computing
- Financial
- General Policies
- Human Resources
- Research
- Risk, Safety, & Resilience
- Student Policies

Policy proposal type:

- New policy
- Substantial revision
- Minor revision
- Renewal with no changes
- Rescind policy

Emergency approval requested:

- Yes (must include compelling reason in the "why" paragraph below)
- No

If you are submitting a revised policy, you should submit them with changes tracked in a Microsoft Word document.

Why is this policy or revision being proposed?

There are several reasons for the proposed changes to *AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis*; *AP.6.9.4 Thesis Submission, Project, and Embargo*; *AP.6.10.5 Dissertation Committee*; *AP.6.10.6 Dissertation Registration*; *AP.6.10.9 Dissertation Submission and Embargo*; and *AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty Status*, including a forthcoming change to the graduate grading scale and the need for clarification regarding Graduate Faculty Status.

- 1) Changes to the Graduate Grading scale, including the addition of a Satisfactory Withdrawal (SW) grade, require updates to *AP.6.9.3* and *AP.6.10.6*. The proposed revisions add the SW grading option for Master's Thesis courses and Dissertation courses (998, 999).
- 2) The current language surrounding Graduate Faculty Status (GFS) (*AP.6.9.3*, *AP.6.10.5*, *AP.6.13*) is confusing. The proposed revisions provided clearer definitions, including what is currently known as "legacy" status which does not exist administratively; that term has been replaced by a clearer and simpler process.
- 3) The remaining proposed revisions are intended to reduce duplication and communicate policy through clear, direct language.

In addition, *AP.6.9.4 Thesis Submission, Project, and Embargo* and *AP.6.10.9 Dissertation Submission and Embargo* have been updated to reflect new Academic Standards policy.

Who has been involved or consulted with in the creation/revision of this policy already?

Graduate Division, College/School Associate Deans (or equivalent), Office of University Registrar, Graduate Council, Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee, Policy Management Group.

Questions and feedback raised in and after PMG (to be added after PMG review):

Signature Routing Form

(to be created by PMG co-chairs for numbered University Policies only)

Reviewers & date of review:

- **Policy Management Group** 1/27/26
- **Graduate Council** On agenda — 2/25/26
- **Faculty Senate**
- **University Counsel** under review
- **Compliance and Ethics** 2/2/26

Senior approving officials- signatures and dates

- **Signature 1**
- **Signature 2**

GRADUATE FACULTY STATUS REVISIONS

FEBRUARY 2026

AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis

Students must register for a minimum of 3 credit hours in the first term of their Master's thesis research course and maintain continuous enrollment, excluding summer, each term until the thesis is complete and has been successfully submitted to the library with the exception of terms in which a student is on a Graduate Leave of Absence. Master's students enrolled for 1 credit of a Master's thesis research course may be considered in status (either full-time or half-time) if the following requirement is met: the student, advisor, and program director/chair must certify each semester that the student has completed 3 credits of Master's thesis work and is working full-time or half-time on the thesis using the process provided by the [Office of the University Registrar](#) prior to the first day of classes for the term. See AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Status Classification for more information.

Students who plan to complete their thesis in the summer term must register for at least 1 credit of the Master's thesis course in that term. Graduation candidates who miss the library deadline for thesis submission but do submit successfully before the next term begins do not have to register for the Master's thesis course in the next term. Such students must apply for graduation in order to have their degree conferred. Students completing a Master's thesis should obtain a copy of George Mason's *Thesis, Dissertation, or Project Guide*.

For further information on grading notations in Master's thesis courses, academic standing, and impact on program requirements, see AP.3.2.1 Graduate Grading Scales, AP.3.3 Additional Grade Notations, and AP.6.6 Graduate Academic Standing.

Committee Size and Composition

The Master's Thesis Committee provides guidance and oversight of the student's thesis research, writing, and defense. The Thesis Committee Chair is primarily responsible for directing the student's research and writing activities. The Thesis Committee is composed of at least 3 faculty, at least 1 of whom must be from the student's department or program, who hold Graduate Faculty Status (See AP.6.13) and possess expertise relevant to the student's field of study. The Thesis Committee Chair must also have a full-time appointment. Faculty who do not hold Graduate Faculty Status may serve as additional members, beyond the 3, provided they are Affiliate Faculty (See Faculty Handbook 2.1.7) and hold expertise relevant to the student's field or study. The student is responsible for keeping all committee members informed of the scope, plan, and progress of the research as well as the writing of the thesis.

The Committee formation process requires the approval of the student, all committee members, and the department chair or program director and must be completed before the student registers for the Master's thesis research course. A committee is considered established only after all individuals have accepted their appointments through the approval process required by the student's degree program.

It is expected that all individuals serving on a student's thesis committee will be available, to the extent possible, throughout the student's thesis work until completion, including the summer term if a student is expected to graduate during that term.

AP.6.9.4 Thesis Submission, Project, and Embargo

Master's students may be required to complete a thesis. All theses must be successfully submitted to University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) for upload to ProQuest and the Mason Archival Repository Service (MARS). A Master's student who completes a Project may be required by their degree program to submit it to MARS.

UDTS facilitates completion of requirements and submission of dissertations and theses. All thesis submission procedures related to degree conferral in each semester and consistent with policy are defined by UDTS. This encompasses all stated deadlines including, but not limited to, any for the required format review and final submission. For further information, consult the [UDTS website](#).

Once a student has successfully submitted the final version of their thesis in accordance with UDTS requirements, subsequent edits will not be allowed except under the following circumstances:

1. A formatting error has been introduced into the document when converting from one document type to another during the UDTS submission process that substantively affects the meaning of the thesis. For example, if equations or special symbols or tables have been deleted or reconfigured in a way that the meaning has been substantively lost or altered, then those corrections alone are permitted.
2. [Academic Standards](#) violations are detected. The relevant college/school must conduct a review of the thesis and determine an appropriate course of action in accordance with the university catalog and approved by the Dean or designee of the college/school. The UDTS Coordinator must be informed in writing by the Dean or designee of the college/school of the approved course of action.

Under circumstances determined by the student's college/school, and/or program, a student may, in accordance with University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) procedures, submit a signed petition to embargo, i.e. delay, all or part of their thesis, preventing online and on-campus access to it for a period of time (2 years, 5 years, or 10

years). All petitions are subject to the policies of the student's college/school and/or program, and some may not permit a student to embargo their work. Both the student's thesis chair (or program designee) and the graduate associate dean of the college/school must approve the student's petition in writing in accordance with UDTs procedures. Each program and college/school shall publish on their respective university website whether they permit a student to embargo their work and, if so, the criteria used in their respective reviews. Initial embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the college/school's leadership unit.

All embargo petitions will be retained by UDTs. The student, as well as the college/school's associate dean, will be provided written confirmation of the new thesis release date by UDTs. Once the embargo period has passed, the thesis will be made available for online and on-campus access.

If the student wishes to extend the embargo past the thesis's initial release date, the student is required to secure the approval of the graduate associate dean of the student's college/school and the Graduate Division in the Office of the Provost at the time of the extension request. The student must submit a signed renewal request, in accordance with UDTs procedures, that may include a stated deadline. Students can request a renewal period of 2 years, 5 years, or 10 years. Each college/school and the Graduate Division shall publish on their respective university websites the process for initiating an embargo extension request and the criteria used in their respective reviews. UDTs will retain a copy of the student petition and confirm to the student and graduate associate dean the decision and any applicable new thesis release date. Renewal embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the Graduate Division.

Authors who wish to lift an embargo prior to the established termination date must notify the UDTs Coordinator. In the case of an author's death, incapacity, or other similar circumstance, the author's estate, power of attorney, or other appropriate designee assumes decision-making authority over the embargo.

AP.6.10.5 Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee provides guidance and oversight of the student's dissertation research, writing, and defense. This committee may also function as the program committee, facilitating the design and approval of the student's program of study, conducting required examinations, and/or regularly assessing the student's progress and accomplishments. It is encouraged for at least 1 member to come from outside the department or program faculty.

Committee selections are initiated by the student after consultation with their proposed Dissertation Committee Chair. The committee formation process requires approval of the student, all committee members, and the department chair or program director. A

committee is considered established only after all individuals have accepted their appointments through the approval process required by the student's degree program.

It is expected that all individuals serving on a student's committee will be available, to the extent possible, throughout the student's dissertation progress until completion, including the summer if a student is expected to graduate during that term. Individuals who become unable to serve in their roles must notify the Dissertation Committee Chair, the student, other committee members, and the relevant department chair or program director as soon as possible.

Committee Size and Composition

Committee Size: Doctoral candidates must have a Dissertation Committee made up of a Chair (Member #1) and at least 2 other members (Member #2; Member #3). Graduate Faculty Status (see AP.6.13) is required at the time of committee formation for any position requiring Graduate Faculty Status.

Committee Chairs: Faculty members at George Mason University may serve as Dissertation Committee Chairs (Member #1) as long as they hold Graduate Faculty Status, have a full-time appointment in the student's department or program, and possess expertise relevant to the student's field of study. If a Dissertation Committee Chair leaves the university, retires, or becomes otherwise unavailable to serve as Chair during the student's course of study (e.g., extended medical leave, unable to continue while on parental leave or study leave), a new Dissertation Committee Chair must be confirmed. It is expected that a new committee will be formed within one semester of a Dissertation Committee Chair becoming unavailable. The previous individual may continue their committee service as a Dissertation Committee Co-Chair if they hold the necessary status.

Committee Co-Chairs: Some programs may permit a Dissertation Committee Co-Chair. The only requirements for service as Dissertation Committee Co-Chair are George Mason Graduate Faculty Status and expertise relevant to the student's field of study. A Co-Chair designee may count as Member #2 or Member #3 if they meet all Member requirements.

Committee Members: Member #2 of the dissertation committee is required to be full-time George Mason Faculty, hold Graduate Faculty Status, and have expertise relevant to the student's field of study. Member #3 of the Dissertation Committee is required to hold Graduate Faculty Status and have expertise relevant to the student's field of study. Member #4 and any additional Committee members, as required by the program or requested by the student, must have expertise relevant to the student's field of study and hold Affiliate Faculty Status (See Faculty Handbook 2.1.7) if external to the university.

Changes to Dissertation Committee: Students may request changes to the composition of their Dissertation Committee at any time. Changes involving the Dissertation Committee

Chair or Co-Chair require the approval of the Program Director and all committee members. Changes only involving committee members other than the Chair or Co-Chair require approval of the Dissertation Committee Chair and the Program Director.

Individual programs may have more restrictive policies. If so, those restrictions apply. Students are referred to their degree program for more information. If changes in faculty status result in a Dissertation Committee member who no longer meets the established minimum requirements for the university or program, no additional degree milestones may be completed or approved until the Dissertation Committee has been reformed or membership requirements have otherwise been met.

Committee Structure

Membership	Minimum Required Attributes
Chair (Member #1; required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Mason Faculty with a full-time appointment in the student's academic program • Graduate Faculty Status • Expertise related to student's field of study
Member #2 (required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Mason Faculty with a full-time appointment in any academic program • Graduate Faculty Status • Expertise related to student's field of study
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise related to student's field of study
Member #3 (required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Mason Graduate Faculty Status • Expertise related to student's field of study
Member #4 (if required by program or requested by student)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Mason Affiliate Faculty Status (if external)

Membership	Minimum Required Attributes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="760 338 1390 367">• Expertise related to student's field of study
Co-chair (if present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="760 430 1344 459">• George Mason Graduate Faculty Status <li data-bbox="760 527 1390 556">• Expertise related to student's field of study
Additional members (if present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="760 619 1230 648">• George Mason Affiliate Faculty <li data-bbox="760 753 1390 783">• Expertise related to student's field of study

AP.6.10.6 Dissertation Registration (998, 999)

All registration for doctoral dissertation research (999) must be planned with the Dissertation Chair and approved by the dean or director of the school, college, or institute. Dissertation research (999) is open only to doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy.

Students must register for a minimum of 3 credits of 999 in their first term of dissertation research. After that term, students must enroll for at least 1 credit of 999 per term (excluding summer), unless on a Graduate Leave of Absence, until they have completed the minimum number of credits of 998 and 999 required by the university and their degree program, the dissertation is complete, and the dissertation has been successfully submitted to the library. See AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Classification for more information.

Students must be registered for at least 1 credit of 999 in the term in which they defend their dissertation, including summer. Individual doctoral programs may require continuous registration beginning with doctoral dissertation proposal (998). Graduation candidates who miss the library deadline for dissertation submission but do submit successfully before the next term begins do not have to register for 999 in the next term but must apply for graduation in order to have their degree conferred.

It is the student's responsibility to complete registration for 998 or 999, as applicable, prior to the first day of classes for the term. If this date is missed, students must still enroll in these courses via Add or Late Schedule Adjustment procedures and are subject to Late

Registration fees. Failing to register on time in a particular term does not alter the requirement for continuous registration in 999.

For further information on grading notations in Master's thesis courses, academic standing, and impact on program requirements, see AP.3.2.1 Graduate Grading Scales, AP.3.3 Additional Grade Notations, and AP.6.6 Graduate Academic Standing.

AP.6.10.9 Dissertation Submission and Embargo

Doctoral students are required to submit their dissertations to University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) for upload to ProQuest and the Mason Archival Repository Service (MARS). Doctoral students must also complete a Survey of Earned Doctorates.

UDTS facilitates completion of requirements and submission of dissertations and theses. All dissertation submission procedures related to degree conferral in each semester and consistent with this policy are defined by UDTS. This encompasses all stated deadlines including, but not limited to, any for the required format review and final submission. For further information, consult the [UDTS website](#).

Once a student has successfully submitted the final version of their dissertation in accordance with UDTS requirements, subsequent edits will not be allowed except under the following circumstances:

1. A formatting error has been introduced into the document when converting from one document type to another during the UDTS submission process that substantively affects the meaning of the dissertation. For example, if equations or special symbols or tables have been deleted or reconfigured in a way that the meaning has been substantively lost or altered then those corrections alone are permitted.
2. [Academic Standards](#) violations are detected. The relevant college/school must conduct a review of the dissertation and determine an appropriate course of action in accordance with the university catalog and approved by the Dean or designee of the college/school. The UDTS Coordinator must be informed in writing by the Dean or designee of the college/school of the approved course of action.

Under circumstances determined by the student's college/school and/or program, a student may, in accordance with University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) procedures, submit a signed petition to embargo, i.e. delay, all or part of their dissertation, preventing online and on-campus access to it for a period of time (2 years, 5 years, or 10 years). All petitions are subject to the policies of the student's college/school and/or program, and some may not permit a student to embargo their work. Both the student's dissertation chair (or program designee) and the graduate associate dean of the

college/school must approve the student's petition in writing and in accordance with UDTS procedures. Each program and college/school shall publish on their respective university webpage whether they permit a student to embargo their work and, if so, the criteria used in their respective reviews. Initial embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the college/school's leadership unit.

All embargo petitions will be retained by UDTS. The student, as well as the college/school's associate dean, will be provided written confirmation of the new dissertation release date by UDTS. Once the embargo period has passed, dissertations will be made available for online and on-campus access.

If the student wishes to extend the embargo past the dissertation's initial release date, the student is required to secure the approval of the graduate associate dean of the student's college/school and the Graduate Division in the Office of the Provost at the time of the extension request. The student must submit a signed renewal request, in accordance with UDTS procedures that may include a stated deadline. Students can request a renewal period of 2 years, 5 years, or 10 years. Each college/school and the Graduate Division shall publish on their respective university website the process for initiating and embargo extension request and the criteria used in their respective reviews. UDTS will retain a copy of the student petition and confirm to the student and graduate associate dean the decision and any applicable new dissertation release date. Renewal embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the Graduate Division.

Authors who wish to lift an embargo prior to the established termination date must notify the UDTS Coordinator. In the case of an author's death, incapacity, or other similar circumstance, the author's estate, power of attorney, or other appropriate designee assumes decision-making authority over the embargo.

AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty Status

To serve in required positions on master's thesis (AP.6.9.3) or dissertation committees (AP.6.10.5), faculty must hold Graduate Faculty Status at George Mason. Individuals attain Graduate Faculty Status through their rank as tenured or tenure-track George Mason faculty members or through a nomination process. Graduate Faculty Status applies across the institution. The Office of the Provost coordinates nominations for Graduate Faculty Status and maintains the corresponding list of approved individuals.

George Mason tenured and tenure-track faculty are automatically granted Graduate Faculty Status upon employment. They maintain that status throughout their employment as tenure-line faculty unless explicitly designated otherwise. Administrative service does not affect the active Graduate Faculty Status of tenured or tenure-track faculty.

Each program or department that administers graduate degrees may, at its discretion and at any time, nominate individuals who hold a terminal degree and have suitable academic training and research experience for Graduate Faculty Status. These individuals may be

George Mason employees or individuals external to the university who hold Affiliate Faculty Status. Graduate Faculty Status will be granted for a term of three years unless explicitly designated for a shorter period of time.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty who leave the institution due to retirement or separation will continue to maintain Graduate Faculty Status for a period of 3 years unless it is rescinded. Term faculty with Graduate Faculty Status will retain that status until the end of the Graduate Faculty Status approval term. Faculty who leave the institution need Affiliate Faculty Status to serve on a thesis or dissertation committee. Individuals who are within a year of their Graduate Faculty Status expiring may be renewed.

Programs or departments, with approval of their Dean, may rescind Graduate Faculty Status for individuals they nominated. Individuals may resign from Graduate Faculty Status and such resignations are considered permanent.

PROPOSED GRADUATE FACULTY STATUS REVISIONS [TRACKED CHANGES] FEBRUARY 2026

AP.6.9.3 Master's Thesis

When a thesis proposal has been approved by the appropriate unit, the program director/chair sends the collegiate dean or director a copy of the thesis proposal, including the approval signatures of the master's thesis committee members. Students may enroll in thesis research (799) at the beginning of the next semester. Students must register for a minimum of three credit hours in their first semester of 799. After that semester, students must enroll for at least one credit of 799 per semester, unless on a Leave of Absence, until the thesis is complete and has been successfully submitted to the library. Such students enrolled for one credit of 799 may be considered in status (either full-time or half-time), if the following requirement is met: the student, advisor, and program director/chair must certify each semester that the student is working full-time or half-time on the thesis, using the form provided by the [Office of the University Registrar](#) prior to the first day of classes for the semester. See [AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Status Classification](#) for more information. **Please note: Master's students must maintain continuous enrollment in**

Students must register for a minimum of 3 credit hours in their first term of 799. Master's students must maintain continuous enrollment in 798 and 799, excluding summers, each term until the thesis is complete and has been successfully submitted to the library, with the exception of terms in which a student is on a **Leave of Absence. Students who are completing their thesis in the summer must be registered for at least 1 credit of 799 in the summer.** Graduate Leave of Absence. This includes any student not in attendance at Mason who wishes to take an exam or is preparing a thesis under the active supervision of a member of the faculty. Such students enrolled for 1 credit of 798 or 799 may be considered in status (either full-time or half-time) if the following requirement is met: the student, advisor, and program director/chair must certify each semester that the student has completed 3 credits of 798 or 799 and is working full-time or half-time on the thesis using the process provided by the Office of the University Registrar prior to the first day of classes for the term. See [AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Status Classification](#) for more information.

Students who plan to complete their thesis in the summer must register for at least 1 credit of 799 in the term. Graduation candidates who miss the library deadline for thesis submission but do submit successfully before the next semester begins do not have to register for 799 in the next semester. Such students must apply for graduation in order to have their degree conferred. If satisfactory progress is being made, students registered in 799 are graded IP until work is complete; at that time they are graded S/NC. If progress is unsatisfactory in a semester, a grade of NC will be assigned. When the thesis is completed, a final grade of S or NC is assigned, and previous IP grades are updated by the Office of the University Registrar to reflect the final S or NC grade. If the student voluntarily resigns or is terminated due to time limit, the grade of NC will be assigned. NC credits do not count toward minimum program requirements for 799. Insufficient 799 progress in a semester may impact international student eligibility for Optional Practical Training.

Students should confirm their local academic unit's policy regarding the impact of an NC on eligibility for termination (See AP.6.6.2).

Students selecting the thesis option should obtain a copy of Mason's *Thesis, Dissertation, or Project Guide*. Students may register in 799 only after their thesis proposal has been submitted and approved as prescribed in the guide. **Any student not in attendance at Mason who is preparing a thesis under the active supervision of a member of the faculty or wishes to take an exam must maintain continuous registration in 799 for at least 1 credit per semester.**

If satisfactory progress is made in a term, students registered in 798 or 799 are graded IP until the work is complete. A final grade of S or SW counts toward minimum program requirements; a final grade of NC does not count toward minimum program requirements. For further information on grading notations for 798 and 799, see AP.3.2.1 Graduate Grading Scales and AP.3.3 Additional Undergraduate and Graduate Grade Notations.

Students completing a Master's Thesis should obtain a copy of George Mason's *Thesis, Dissertation, or Project Guide*.

Committee Size and Composition

The master's thesis committee ~~The Thesis Committee~~ provides guidance and oversight of the student's thesis research, writing, and defense. The Master's Thesis Committee is composed of at least three members of the graduate ~~3~~ faculty, who hold Graduate Faculty Status (See AP.6.13), at least ~~one~~ 1 of whom must be from the student's department or program. Faculty who ~~are do~~ not members of the graduate faculty or other appropriate persons ~~hold Graduate Faculty Status~~ may serve as additional members ~~beyond the 3~~ provided they are ~~affiliate faculty~~ Affiliate Faculty (See AP.2.1.7) and hold expertise relevant to the ~~student's~~ student's field or study.

Committee members are appointed by the chair or director of the academic unit or program, or designee, after consultation with the student's advisor and the student.

The committee

~~The Committee~~ formation process requires the approval of the student, all committee members, and ~~their~~ the department chair or program director ~~and must be completed before the student registers for 799~~. A committee is considered established only after all individuals have accepted their appointments through the approval workflow required by the student's degree program.

Only a member of the graduate faculty ~~Faculty members at George Mason University~~ with a full-time appointment ~~at George Mason University~~ may serve as the thesis chair. ~~Thesis Committee Chairs as long as they hold Graduate Faculty Status and possess expertise relevant to the student's field of study~~. The thesis committee chair ~~Thesis Committee Chair~~ is primarily responsible for directing the candidate's research and writing activities. The student is responsible for keeping all committee members informed of the scope, plan, and progress of the research as well as the writing of the thesis.

~~It is expected that all individuals serving on a student's thesis committee will be available, to the extent possible, throughout the student's thesis work until completion, including the summer term if a student is expected to graduate during that term.~~

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2. [Academic Standards](#) violations are detected. The relevant college/school must conduct a review of the thesis and determine an appropriate course of action in accordance with the university catalog and approved by the Dean or designee of the college/school. The UDTS Coordinator must be informed in writing by the Dean or designee of the college/school of the approved course of action.

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If the student wishes to extend the embargo past the thesis's initial release date, the student is required to secure the approval of the graduate associate dean of the student's college/school and the Graduate Division in the Office of the Provost at the time of the extension request. The student must submit a signed renewal request, in accordance with UDTS procedures, that may

include a stated deadline. Students can request a renewal period of 2 years, 5 years, or 10 years. Each college/school and the Graduate Division shall publish on their respective university websites the process for initiating an embargo extension request and the criteria used in their respective reviews. UDTs will retain a copy of the student petition and confirm to the student and graduate associate dean the decision and any applicable new thesis release date. Renewal embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the Graduate Division.

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AP.6.10.5 Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee provides guidance and oversight of the student's dissertation research, writing, and defense. This committee may also function as the program committee, facilitating the design and approval of the student's program of study, conducting required examinations, and/or regularly assessing the student's progress and accomplishments. It is encouraged for at least 1 member to come from outside the program faculty. ~~It is expected that all individuals serving on a student's committee will be available throughout the student's degree until completion. Individuals who become unable to serve in their roles should notify the Dissertation Committee Chair, the student, other committee members, and the relevant program director as soon as possible.~~

Committee selections are initiated by the student after consultation with their proposed Dissertation Committee Chair. The committee formation process requires ~~the~~ approval of the student, all committee members, and ~~their~~ department chair or program director. A committee is considered established only after all individuals have accepted their appointments through the approval workflow required by the student's degree program.

It is expected that all individuals serving on a student's committee will be available, to the extent possible, throughout the student's dissertation progress until completion, including the summer term if a student is expected to graduate during that term. Individuals who become unable to serve in their roles should notify the Dissertation Committee Chair, the student, other committee members, and the relevant program director as soon as possible.

Committee Size and Composition

Committee Size: Doctoral candidates must have a Dissertation Committee made up of a Chair (Member #1) and at least ~~two~~2 other members (Member #1,2; Member #2; Active 3). Graduate Faculty ~~status~~Status is required at the time of appointment for any position requiring Graduate Faculty ~~status~~.Status (see AP.6.13).

Committee Chairs: Full-time facultyFaculty members at George Mason University may serve as Dissertation Committee Chairs (Member #1) as long as they ~~are members of the hold~~ Graduate Faculty; ~~they are members of the core faculty for Status, have full-time appointments in~~ the student's ~~degree~~academic program, and ~~they~~ possess expertise relevant to the student's field of study. Full-time

term or administrative / professional faculty members at George Mason University may serve as Dissertation Committee Chairs as long as they are members of the Mason Graduate Faculty. Graduate Faculty status is detailed in AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty.

If the Chair of a Dissertation Committee [Chair](#) leaves the university, retires, [goes on leave \(that removes them from full-time status\)](#), or becomes otherwise unavailable during the student's course of study, [\(e.g., administrative leave, extended medical leave, unable to continue while on parental leave or study leave\)](#), a new [Dissertation Committee](#) Chair must be appointed. It is expected that a new committee will be formed within one semester of a [Dissertation Committee](#) Chair becoming unavailable. The previous individual may continue their committee service as a [Dissertation Committee](#) Co-~~chair~~[Chair](#) if they hold the necessary status.

Committee Co-~~chairs~~[Chairs](#): Some programs may permit a [committee](#)[Dissertation Committee](#) Co-~~chair~~[Chair](#). The only requirement for service as [Dissertation Committee](#) Co-Chair is [George Mason Graduate Faculty Status](#) [and expertise relevant to the student's field of study](#). The Co-~~chair~~[Chair](#) designee may count as Member #12 or Member #2 [if they meet all requirements](#)3.

Committee Members [on Dissertation Committees](#): Member #12 of the dissertation committee is required to be full-time [George Mason Faculty](#), [a member of Mason's hold](#) Graduate Faculty [Status](#), and [hold have](#) expertise and credentials relevant to the student's field of study.

Member #23 of the [dissertation committee](#)[Dissertation Committee](#) is required to [be a member of Mason's hold](#) Graduate Faculty [Status](#) and [hold have](#) expertise and appropriate credentials relevant to the student's field of study.

Member #3, ~~if~~4 and any additional Committee members, as required by the program [or requested by the student](#), must [be a member of Mason's Graduate Faculty](#), and [hold expertise relevant to the student's field of study](#). It is encouraged for this member to come from outside the program's core faculty:

[Additional members may be added to the committee, provided they are affiliate faculty and hold have](#) expertise relevant to the student's field of study [and hold Affiliate Faculty Status if external to the university](#). See AP.2.1.7 for further information.

All committee members are required to hold suitable academic training and research experience as well as an appropriate terminal degree. This credentialing is established through the attainment of Graduate Faculty status, detailed in AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty. Only individuals that hold Graduate Faculty status are eligible to approve degree milestones, such as the comprehensive exam, advancement to candidacy, and the final dissertation defense.

Changes to Dissertation Committee: Students may request changes to the composition of their Dissertation Committee at any time. Changes involving the [chair or co-chair, including moving a committee member into or out of a chair or co-chair role](#), [Dissertation Committee Chair or Co-Chair](#) require the approval of the Program Director and all committee members. Changes only involving committee members other than the Chair or Co-Chair require [at least the](#) approval of the [committee chair](#)[Dissertation Committee Chair](#) and the Program Director.

If changes in faculty status result in a [committee that](#)[Dissertation Committee member who](#) no longer meets the established minimum requirements for the university or program, no additional degree milestones may be completed or approved until the [Dissertation](#) Committee has been reformed or membership requirements have otherwise been met.

Additional Requirements

Individual programs may have more restrictive policies. If so, those restrictions apply. Students are referred to their degree program for more information.

Committee Structure

Membership	Minimum Required Attributes
Chair (Member #1 ; required member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full-time George Mason Faculty with a full-time appointment in the student's academic program• Mason Graduate Faculty Status
•	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member of the program's core faculty• Expertise related to student's field of study
Member #12 (required member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full-time George Mason Faculty with a full-time appointment in any Mason LAU academic program1. Mason Graduate Faculty Status
•	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expertise related to student's field of study
Member #2 (required member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mason Graduate Faculty1. Expertise related to student's field of study
Member #3 (if required by program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. George Mason Graduate Faculty Status1. Expertise related to student's field of study
Co-chair (if present) Member #4 (if required by program or requested by student)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Mason Graduate faculty George Mason Affiliate Faculty Status (if external)• Expertise related to student's field of study

Membership	Minimum Required Attributes
Additional members Co-chair (if present)	1. • George Mason Affiliate Graduate Faculty Status
2.	1. • Expertise related to student's field of study
Committee Structure Additional members (if present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Mason Affiliate Faculty • Expertise related to student's field of study

Inserted Cells

AP.6.10.6 Dissertation Registration (998, 999)

Students must register for a minimum of 3 credits of 999 in their first semester (excluding summers) of dissertation research. After that semester, students must enroll for at least one credit of 999 per semester, unless on a Leave of Absence, until they have completed the minimum number of credits of 998 and 999 required by the university and their degree program, and the dissertation is complete and has been successfully submitted to the library. See [AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Classification](#) for more information. If satisfactory progress is being made, students registered in 998 or 999 are graded IP until work in 998 or 999, respectively, is complete; at that time they are graded S/NC. If progress is unsatisfactory in a semester, a grade of NC will be assigned. When the dissertation is completed, a final grade of S or NC is assigned, and previous IP grades are updated by the Office of the University Registrar to reflect the final S or NC grade. If the student voluntarily resigns or is terminated due to time limit, the grade of NC will be assigned. NC credits do not count toward minimum program requirements for 999. Insufficient 999 progress in a semester may impact international student eligibility for Optional Practical Training. Students should confirm their local academic unit's policy regarding the impact of an NC on eligibility for termination (see [AP.6.6.2](#)).

All registration for doctoral dissertation research (999) must be planned with the [dissertation director](#) [Dissertation Chair](#) and approved by the dean or director of the school, college, or institute. Dissertation research (999) is open only to doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy. Once enrolled in 999, students must maintain continuous registration in 999 each semester until the dissertation is complete and has been successfully submitted to the library, excluding summers and terms in which the student is on a Leave of Absence. Students who defend in the summer must be registered for at least 1 credit of 999 in the summer. Individual doctoral programs may require continuous registration beginning with 998. Graduation candidates who miss the library deadline for dissertation submission, but do submit successfully before the next semester begins, do not have to register for 999 in that next semester, but must apply for graduation in order to have their degree conferred.

Students must register for a minimum of 3 credits of 999 in their first term of dissertation research. After that term, students must enroll for at least 1 credit of 999 per term (excluding summer), unless on a Graduate Leave of Absence, until they have completed the minimum number of credits of 998 and 999 required by the university and their degree program, the dissertation is complete, and the dissertation has been successfully submitted to the library. See AP.6.2 Full-time and Half-time Classification for more information.

Students must be registered for at least 1 credit of 999 in the term in which they defend their dissertation. Individual doctoral programs may require continuous registration beginning with doctoral dissertation proposal (998). Graduation candidates who miss the library deadline for dissertation submission but do submit successfully before the next semester begins do not have to register for 999 in the next term but must apply for graduation in order to have their degree conferred.

It is the student's responsibility to complete registration for ~~dissertation proposal (998)~~998 or research (999), as applicable, prior to the first day of classes for the semester term. If this date is missed, students must still enroll in these courses via Add or Late Schedule Adjustment procedures and are subject to Late Registration fees. Failing to register on time in a particular semester term does not alter the requirement for continuous registration in 999.

If satisfactory progress is made in a term, students registered in 998 or 999 are graded IP until the work is complete. A final grade of S or SW counts toward minimum program requirements; a final grade of NC does not count toward minimum program requirements. For further information on grading notations for 998 and 999, see AP.3.2.1 Graduate Grading Scales and AP.3.3 Additional Undergraduate and Graduate Grade Notations.

AP.6.10.9 Dissertation Submission and Embargo

Doctoral students are required to submit their dissertations to University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) for upload to ProQuest and the Mason Archival Repository Service (MARS). Doctoral students must also complete a Survey of Earned Doctorates.

UDTS facilitates completion of requirements and submission of dissertations and theses. All dissertation submission procedures related to degree conferral in each semester and consistent with this policy are defined by UDTS. This encompasses all stated deadlines including, but not limited to, any for the required format review and final submission. For further information, consult the UDTS website.

Once a student has successfully submitted the final version of their dissertation in accordance with UDTS requirements, subsequent edits will not be allowed except under the following circumstances:

1. A formatting error has been introduced into the document when converting from one document type to another during the UDTS submission process that substantively affects the meaning of the dissertation. For example, if equations or special symbols

or tables have been deleted or reconfigured in a way that the meaning has been substantively lost or altered then those corrections alone are permitted.

2. [Academic Standards](#) violations are detected. The relevant college/school must conduct a review of the dissertation and determine an appropriate course of action in accordance with the university catalog and approved by the Dean or designee of the college/school. The UDTS Coordinator must be informed in writing by the Dean or designee of the college/school of the approved course of action.

Under circumstances determined by the student's college/school and/or program, a student may, in accordance with University Dissertation and Thesis Services (UDTS) procedures, submit a signed petition to embargo, i.e. delay, all or part of their dissertation, preventing online and on-campus access to it for a period of time (2 years, 5 years, or 10 years). All petitions are subject to the policies of the student's college/school and/or program, and some may not permit a student to embargo their work. Both the student's dissertation chair (or program designee) and the graduate associate dean of the college/school must approve the student's petition in writing and in accordance with UDTS procedures. Each program and college/school shall publish on their respective university webpage whether they permit a student to embargo their work and, if so, the criteria used in their respective reviews. Initial embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the college/school's leadership unit.

All embargo petitions will be retained by UDTS. The student, as well as the college/school's associate dean, will be provided written confirmation of the new dissertation release date by UDTS. Once the embargo period has passed, dissertations will be made available for online and on-campus access.

If the student wishes to extend the embargo past the dissertation's initial release date, the student is required to secure the approval of the graduate associate dean of the student's college/school and the Graduate Division in the Office of the Provost at the time of the extension request. The student must submit a signed renewal request, in accordance with UDTS procedures that may include a stated deadline. Students can request a renewal period of 2 years, 5 years, or 10 years. Each college/school and the Graduate Division shall publish on their respective university website the process for initiating and embargo extension request and the criteria used in their respective reviews. UDTS will retain a copy of the student petition and confirm to the student and graduate associate dean the decision and any applicable new dissertation release date. Renewal embargo request decisions are not reviewed beyond the Graduate Division.

Authors who wish to lift an embargo prior to the established termination date must notify the UDTS Coordinator. In the case of an author's death, incapacity, or other similar circumstance, the author's estate, power of attorney, or other appropriate designee assumes decision-making authority over the embargo.

AP.6.13 Graduate Faculty [Status](#)

[There are two types of graduateTo serve in required positions on thesis \(AP.6.9.3\) or dissertation committees \(AP.6.10.5\), faculty must hold Graduate Faculty Status at George Mason University; active and legacy, graduate faculty.](#) Individuals attain [active graduate statusGraduate Faculty Status](#) through their rank as tenured or tenure-track [George](#) Mason faculty members or through a

nomination process. ~~Once active, graduate faculty status~~ [Graduate Faculty Status](#) applies across the institution. ~~A~~ [The process to nominate individuals for Graduate Faculty Status is coordinated through the Office of the Provost and a list of active graduate faculty individuals with Graduate Faculty Status](#) will be maintained by the Office of the Provost.

Mason tenured and tenure-track faculty are automatically granted ~~active graduate faculty status~~ [Graduate Faculty Status](#) upon employment. They maintain that status throughout their employment as tenure-line faculty, unless explicitly designated otherwise. Administrative service does not affect the active ~~graduate faculty status~~ [Graduate Faculty Status](#) of tenured or tenure-track faculty.

Each local academic unit that administers graduate degrees may, at its discretion and at any time, nominate individuals ~~that~~ [who](#) hold a terminal degree ~~and have suitable academic training and research experience~~ for ~~active graduate faculty status-~~ [Graduate Faculty Status](#). These individuals may be [George Mason](#) employees or individuals external to the university. ~~Through this process, active graduate faculty status who hold Affiliate Faculty Status. Graduate Faculty Status~~ will be granted for a term of three years unless explicitly designated ~~for a shorter-~~ [The process to nominate individuals for active graduate faculty status is coordinated through the Office period of the Provost. Individuals, who are within a year or less of their active graduate faculty status expiring, may be renewed through the same process. Local academic units, with approval of their Dean, may rescind graduate faculty status for individuals that they nominated.](#) [time.](#)

~~If active graduate faculty status lapses due to retirement, separation, or expiration of a term of active graduate faculty status, the individual may move into legacy graduate faculty status. As a legacy graduate faculty member, the individual maintains their ability to serve on student committees on which they are already a member, but they may not be added to new committees (or re-added to existing committees if removed). In cases of separation of tenured and tenure-track faculty, the terms of the separation will indicate if the individual receives legacy graduate faculty status. In cases of individuals nominated for graduate faculty status, the nominating local academic unit determines their eligibility for legacy graduate faculty status at the time of nomination. Local academic units may impose additional restrictions on eligibility for legacy graduate faculty status.~~

~~Individuals may, at any time;~~

~~Tenured and tenure-track faculty who leave the institution due to retirement or separation will continue to maintain Graduate Faculty Status for a period of 3 years unless it is rescinded. Term faculty with Graduate Faculty Status will retain that status until the end of the Graduate Faculty Status approval term. Faculty who leave the institution need Affiliate Faculty Status to serve on a thesis or dissertation committee. Individuals who are within a year of their Graduate Faculty Status expiring may be renewed.~~

~~Local academic units, with approval of their Dean, may rescind Graduate Faculty Status for individuals they nominated. Individuals may resign from graduate faculty status, active or legacy, Graduate Faculty Status and such resignations are considered permanent. Individuals in legacy graduate faculty status are removed from status once the students whose committees they serve on have either (i) graduated, (ii) resigned, (iii) been terminated, (iv) become inactive, or (v) have reformed their committees without the individual in question.~~