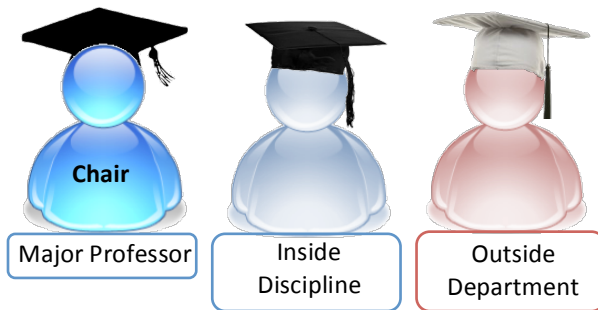


**URI Graduate Committee Composition – for CELS BES faculty and
MSc and PhD graduate students (Sept 2016)**

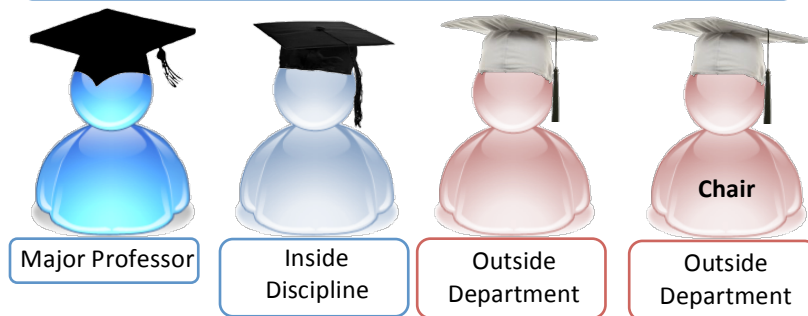
(see Pages 3-6 for written descriptions of the committee composition)

Master's Thesis Committee: Minimum 3



Note: Program of Study approved by only Student, Major Prof, BES Specialization Coordinator

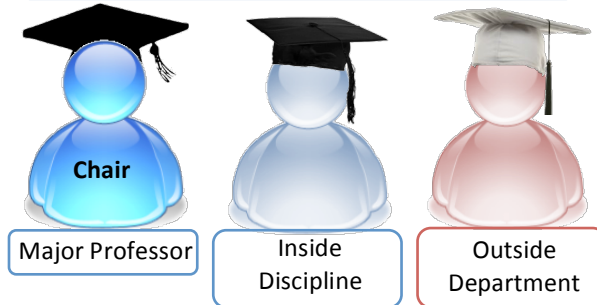
Master's Thesis Defense Committee: Minimum 4



Doctoral Qualifying Examination Committee



Doctoral Committee: Minimum 3



Note: Program of Study approved by only Student, Major Prof, BES Specialization Coordinator

Doctoral Written Comprehensive Examination Committee (usually same as Doctoral Committee)



Doctoral Oral Comprehensive Examination Committee (usually Doctoral Committee plus one)



Dissertation Defense Committee (usually Doctoral Committee plus one)



Definitions of what constitutes “inside” and “outside” committee members as it pertains specifically to CELS BES faculty and their graduate students (per URI Graduate Council votes on 23 February 2015 & April 2016):

Inside Discipline = inside major professor's or student's discipline (independent of their departmental affiliation)¹

Outside Department = outside major professor's department²

Defense Chair = outside major professor's department²

¹An inside (“Discipline”) member of a graduate committee is a member of the Graduate Faculty and from the same discipline as defined by the major advisor and/or student.

²An outside (“Department”) member of a graduate program or comprehensive examination committee is a member of the Graduate Faculty from any department different from the one in which the major advisor resides.

The rationale for the change to "inside" and "outside" committee members for BES graduate students that was voted on by URI Graduate Council on 23 February 2015:

Because the Biological & Environmental Graduate Program was developed as an interdepartmental graduate program with certain disciplinary specializations (i.e, the CMB, IEB, SAFS, EVES, and EES groups), the BES faculty want to allow graduate students to form committees that are most helpful in terms of disciplinary knowledge (the “inside” members) while providing some breadth of knowledge and academic traditions (the “outside” members).

A note about larger committees than those outlined above:

Students can elect to officially add more faculty to their committees than what is outlined above, although this is usually not advantageous because it means obtaining that many more signatures on forms, and coordinating the schedules of that many more committee members when it comes time to meet. Importantly, the Graduate School always requires PhD students to have one *additional* committee member for their Oral Comprehensive Exam as well as their Dissertation Defense. Thus, if the student has 4-5 members on their Doctoral Committee, then there must be 5-6 members on their Oral Comprehensive Exam as well as their Dissertation Defense committees. And all committee members must have Graduate Faculty status.

Below are the sections of the URI Graduate Manual that pertain to graduate student committees and from which the above cartoon is based. These sections of the URI Graduate Manual are current as of September 2016 and describe the general policy for MSc and PhD graduate student committees at URI.

+++++

8.40 Graduate Student Committees

8.42. Committees for Master's Degree Students.

8.42.2. Thesis Committee: Each student enrolled in a master's degree program that requires a thesis must have a thesis committee. **This committee is usually composed of at least three members of the Graduate Faculty. The major professor serves as chair. The second member of the thesis committee will be in the same discipline and/or department as the major professor, or from a closely related department. The third member of the committee is from an outside area unless specifically approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.**

8.42.3. Thesis Defense Committee: For master's degree students, the thesis defense committee is composed of the thesis committee and **an additional fourth member appointed by the Graduate School to be chair of the committee and to represent the Graduate Faculty.** *The fourth member of the thesis defense committee must be a member of the Graduate Faculty and is usually from a department other than that in which the student is enrolled.*

*Responsibilities: The thesis defense committee is responsible for conducting the oral defense of the thesis. The committee determines whether the thesis is properly written, whether the student completed the research independently, whether the thesis meets all of the requirements of the University, and whether the student has demonstrated sufficient command of the subject material to pass the examination successfully. Unanimous approval of the committee is required for passing. The committee must also specify any changes in the thesis that must be made before it can be approved, and the date by which those changes must be completed. The chair of the committee is responsible for ensuring that the form reporting the results of the defense includes all required signatures, including the acknowledgement of the department Chair. **The final duty of the thesis defense committee is to sign the thesis approval sheet after making certain that all necessary changes and corrections have been made.** The chair of the thesis defense committee, or any members(s) of the defense committee so designated by the defense committee chair, is/are responsible for verifying that the stipulated changes have been made.*

8.43. Committees for Doctoral Students

8.43.1. Qualifying Examination Committee: Since the qualifying examination is the responsibility of the department, the procedure for conducting the examination is entirely within the jurisdiction of the

department. The department Chair, in conjunction with a departmental committee designated for this purpose, or with the major professor, has the responsibility for preparing and administering the examination, and for reporting the results to the Dean of the Graduate School. The examination procedures shall be included in the descriptions of departmental procedures given to each new graduate student and filed with the Dean of the Graduate School.

8.43.2. Doctoral Program Committee: The doctoral committee guides and supervises a student's progress in the Program of Study from the time the major professor is selected until the dissertation is defended. Additional members are added for the oral comprehensive examination and for the dissertation defense, but the doctoral committee has the major responsibility throughout the student's training and should be selected to provide the best possible support for the student in their particular area of research. The doctoral committee is composed of **the major professor as chair and two additional members of the Graduate Faculty**. The second member of the committee is usually a member of the same department, in the same discipline, or in one closely related to it. The third member is from an outside area unless specifically approved otherwise by the Dean of the Graduate School. **Potential members of this committee are selected by the major professor in consultation with the student, and after acknowledgment by the department Chair the recommendations are sent to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval.**

8.43.3. Oral and Written Comprehensive Examination Committee: The written comprehensive examination is prepared and administered by the doctoral committee under the direction of the major professor. The oral comprehensive examination is given by a larger committee composed of the doctoral program committee and one additional member of the Graduate Faculty appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. The additional member will be from a different department, but one that is allied to the student's area of study. The major professor will serve as chair of the oral comprehensive examination committee. A unanimous vote of all members of the committee is required for passing.

8.43.4. Dissertation Defense Committee: The dissertation defense committee for doctoral students consists of the doctoral committee plus one additional member appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. The fourth member is appointed chair of the defense committee and is the representative of the Graduate Faculty. This member is from a department other than the one in which the student is enrolled and may be from an unrelated area. Unanimous approval of all members of the committee is required for passing the oral dissertation defense.

Responsibilities: The dissertation defense committee is responsible for conducting the oral defense of the dissertation. The committee determines whether the dissertation is properly written, whether the student completed the research independently, whether the dissertation meets all of the requirements of the University, and whether the student has demonstrated sufficient command of the subject material to pass the examination successfully. Unanimous approval of the committee is required for passing. The committee must also specify any changes in the dissertation that must be made before it can be

approved, and the date by which those changes must be completed. The chair of the committee is responsible for ensuring that the form reporting the results of the defense includes all required signatures, including the acknowledgement of the department Chair. The final duty of the dissertation defense committee is to sign the dissertation approval sheet after making certain that all necessary changes and corrections have been made. The chair of the dissertation defense committee, or any members(s) of the defense committee so designated by the defense committee chair, is/are responsible for verifying that the stipulated changes have been made.

**A committee member external to the University may be appointed to serve on a graduate student's committee in one of two ways: (1) as an adjunct faculty in a certain Department and thus as an inside or outside member of the thesis/dissertation or defense committee as described above, OR (2) specifically to serve as an additional member of the thesis/dissertation or defense committee for a specific, named graduate student. Such an external committee member does not serve as a replacement for any of the required committee members, but is an additional member of the committee. Appointment of the members of the various committees is made by the Dean of the Graduate School. This appointment automatically terminates once the graduate student's committee is no longer needed.*