Committee Membership Rules

The Graduate Division sets forth the following rules for constructing a dissertation committee, and defines what sorts of faculty members fit the roles laid out in its Doctoral Committee Membership Table.

A Doctoral Committee of five or more members shall be appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies under the authority of the Graduate Council. At least five of the committee members shall be officers of instruction and no fewer than four shall hold professorial titles (of any rank). The committee members shall be chosen from at least two departments, and at least two members shall represent academic specialties that differ from the student’s chosen specialty. In all cases, each committee must include one tenured or emeritus UCSD faculty member from outside the student’s major department.

We have worked with Graduate Division staff to further clarify how they interpret these rules when it comes to the dissertation committees for Political Science graduate students, and for students in the joint Political Science/GPS PhD program. Here are the general guidelines for students in the two programs, followed by the critical definitions of inside members and tenured outside members.

Political Science (PS75)

- Any eligible person from any department can chair or co-chair a POLI committee. This includes GPS faculty, faculty in other departments, whether senior or junior. However, the chair/co-chair cannot double as the outside tenured member. The outside tenured member has to be an entirely different member.
- Any faculty with an appointment in Political Science can serve on a POLI committee as an inside member, regardless of their appointment percentage, including GPS faculty who hold joint appointments with POLI.
- Tenured outside members are anyone without an appointment in Political Science. This includes many GPS faculty members, but note that outside member must hold tenure. Faculty with GPS as their only appointment count as 1 outside member. Their status as a “whole” member is not affected if other members on the committee have joint GPS/POLI appointments.

Committee configurations for PS75

3+2 Committee:
The doctoral committee consists of three members from the student's department and two from outside the department, including one tenured or emeritus outside member.

Note: Outside the program means outside POLI but within UC San Diego and the UC system. An outside member may not be outside the UC system (e.g. USC, Stanford, Cornell). If a student wants a faculty member on their committee that is outside the UC system, they may serve as a sixth member.
4+1 Committee:
The doctoral committee consists of four members from the student’s department and one member from outside the department including one tenured or emeritus member from outside the student’s department.

Note: Outside the program means outside POLI but within UC San Diego and the UC system. An outside member may not be outside the UC system (e.g. USC, Stanford, Cornell). If a student wants a faculty member on their committee that is outside the UC system, they may serve as a sixth member.

Political Science and International Affairs (PS76)
The doctoral committee overseeing the completion of the dissertation for a student in the joint PhD program in Political Science and International Affairs must consist of four faculty members from the Department of Political Science and the School of Global Policy and Strategy, with at least one member from each unit. The fifth member must be from outside both POLI and GPS.

Process to Establish a Committee

- A student must submit their committee members for approval to the Graduate Coordinator at least two weeks prior to their scheduled defense. The committee request must be submitted by the Graduate Coordinator to the Graduate Division for final approval. Failure to obtain Graduate Division approval prior to the defense may delay advancement, or may invalidate the defense completely. In the case that the defense is invalidated due to the committee not being approved, the student must defend again.
- The student should refer to the Dissertation Preparation and Submission Manual to ensure that they are following necessary steps to graduate.
- The student must pick up a Report of the Final Examination and Filing of the Dissertation for the Doctoral Degree form from the Graduate Coordinator prior to the scheduled Dissertation defense. All members of the committee and the Chair of the department must sign the form after the exam prior to submitting the form to Graduate Division.

Please contact the Graduate Coordinator if you have questions regarding any of the rules outlined in this document.