# Doctoral Dissertation Committee Approval Form

Please complete the following in sequential order.

### 1. Fill out basic information

Student Name:_____Email:_____

Committee Chair/Advisor:_____Program:

Chair rank:   Associate Professor     Professor     Other (will need OGS approval):_____

Dissertation Title:_____

### 2. Prepare additional submissions:

Include the following in separate documents: an abstract of the dissertation proposal (1 – 5 pages), a copy of relevant research assurance certifications, and a rationale for the inclusion of the proposed dissertation committee members (1 – 3 pages). Please refer to the instructions on subsequent pages for more details about each submission.

### 3. List Dissertation Committee Members and get their approvals

List each faculty member to indicate his/her agreement to be on the committee. All committee members must have agreed to serve on the committee before including them on the list.  If a member is a co-chair, please list them first and check the box as a co-chair.

Proposed Dissertation Committee – Excluding the Chair

1.  Member:_____ Co-chair     Dept/Institution(if not AU):_____

2.  Member:_____ Dept/Institution(if not AU):_____

3.  Member (recommended):_____ Dept/Institution(if not AU):_____

4.  Member (optional):_____ Dept/Institution(if not AU):_____

### 4. Get approval from the Graduate Program Director:
Get the signature from your program director:

> *I certify as Program Director that all faculty members listed above have agreed to serve as members of this student's Dissertation Committee, including the listed chair and possible co-chair.*

Doctoral Program Director Signature:_____

### 5. Submit this document electronically

Attach this completed document and all additional submissions in an email to gradstudies@american.edu for review by the Dissertation Council. You will notified by email within two weeks if your committee has been approved by email.

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FOR OGS USE ONLY - DO NOT SIGN!

**Office of Graduate Studies and Research Associate Dean Signature**

**Signature:**_____     **Date:** _____

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# American University Doctoral Dissertation Committee Approval Form Instructions

## Forming the Committee

American University's Graduate Academic Regulations state that doctoral students consult with their academic advisor or major professor to nominate a dissertation committee. Each committee member must agree to join the committee. The nominated doctoral committee is reviewed and approved by the Doctoral Program Director from the student's program. Proposed members of the doctoral committee are nominated to provide supervision and expertise in the implementation of the dissertation research project. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee Approval Form is used to formally designate the chair and members of a dissertation committee. Each committee must have a minimum of three committee members; however, most committees will consist of four members. The Graduate Academic Regulations provide extensive guidance on the composition of doctoral dissertation committees at http://www.american.edu/provost/grad/2015-Grad-Academic-Regs.cfm in Section 9.4. Doctoral students and their major professors should review relevant sections of the Graduate Academic Regulations prior to nominating a doctoral dissertation committee.

The review and approval of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee Approval Form by the Dissertation Council is intended to ensure that proposed dissertation committees contain members who are research active and have expertise in the proposed research topic, relevant methodologies and intended data analyses. In addition, the approval of proposed doctoral dissertation committees is intended to be a check of adherence to the current AU Graduate Academic Regulations.

## Additional Submissions

The doctoral student should work with their academic advisor or major professor to create the following additional submissions:

- An abstract of the dissertation proposal. The abstract should outline the research question(s) and how the doctoral student intends to pursue the answer(s). More specifically, the abstract of the dissertation proposal should include a concise summary of the following elements: (a) the scope and significance of the research topic; (b) a brief summary of current literature supporting the significance of the proposed research topic; (c) the proposed research question and hypothesis (as applicable); (d) the proposed research methodology for the evaluation of the research question; and (e) the analytic plan for proposed data collection. The abstract will likely be evaluated by faculty members who do not have expertise in the student's field. Therefore, the abstract should define terms and acronyms that are not known to those outside this research area. If the abstract uses terminology unfamiliar to the readers without definitions, it may be returned to be clarified before the application can be processed. The abstract must be no more than five (5) pages long but may be much shorter if the relevant information is provided.

- A copy of relevant research assurance certifications (e.g., from the IRB, IACUC or the IBC) and research training certifications (e.g., RCR, human subjects trainings)

- A rationale for the inclusion of the each of the proposed dissertation committee members. The rationale should explain how each committee member's expertise will help the doctoral student with the proposed research. More specifically, the narrative description should briefly summarize the proposed committee members' (a) areas of research expertise, (b) current research activities and (c) anticipated roles in the implementation and completion of the dissertation research project. The rationale must be no more than three (3) pages long, but may be much shorter as each proposed committee member may only warrant a paragraph of justification.

Additional submissions will be accepted as a pdf or Microsoft Word document.

**Getting approval and submitting the documents**

All forms are writable pdf documents. All text must be completed before obtaining the digital signature from the Graduate Program Director. Once a form is signed, none of the text can be changed. As a result, we strongly recommend getting agreements from the proposed committee members before asking the program director to sign the document. The program director must certify that the listed members have agreed to serve, so the doctoral student must provide the program director verification of the proposed members' interest. This could include forwarding emails or having the proposed member contact the program director.

When all documents are ready, email the approval form and the additional submissions to [gradstudies@american.edu](mailto:gradstudies@american.edu). The Dissertation Council will return a decision within two weeks regarding approval of the committee. Please allow at least two weeks for processing.

**Expected time for processing**

Typically, all requests will be processed within two weeks. However, more applications are submitted toward the end of each semester. As a result, you are more likely to get a faster response if you submit well before the end of the semester. For Fall 2019, applications must be submitted by **December 6, 2019** to be processed by the end of Fall 2019 semester classes. The committee will <u>not</u> read applications submitted during Winter Break. For Spring 2020, applications must be submitted by **April 27, 2020.** The committee will <u>not</u> read applications submitted during the month of May, 2020.

**Adding or changing committee members and adding external readers**

Every doctoral dissertation committee must have one external reader with no association with the student. The external reader may also be external to the university, as warranted. External readers do not need to be determined at the inception of the dissertation committee, but must be decided prior to the defense by the chair of the committee.

To add an external reader or to make a change to the committee membership, complete the Change in Doctoral Dissertation Committee Approval Form.

Questions regarding the Doctoral Dissertation Committee Approval Form and supporting materials can be sent directly to [gradstudies@american.edu](mailto:gradstudies@american.edu).