

## **Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC) Guidelines**

### **What is a GAC?**

Graduate Advisory Committees (GAC)s are mandatory for master's theses, professional doctoral projects, and doctoral dissertations. Programs with other culminating experiences may opt to require a GAC, and if so, this information must be in the Graduate Catalog and Program Handbook. The primary purpose of the GAC is to train, support, socialize, and educate graduate students via the mentorship model; promote excellence in research/scholarship/creative activity; ensure full compliance with the norms of the discipline and ethical conduct of research/scholarship and creative activity; elevate students to successful completion of their culminating experience in a timely manner; and to prepare graduate students for career success.

### **GAC Guidelines**

The following guidelines explain GAC requirements and ensure graduate program rigor and ongoing regional accreditation.

1. The GAC is always comprised of a minimum of four graduate faculty filling specific committee roles and responsibilities. These mandatory GAC positions are:
  - a. Chair: Chairs must have Graduate Faculty Status (GFS) with full privileges in the student's home Department/School. This person is the primary advisor and mentor for the student and guarantor of quality and excellence in the final document and defense. This includes but is not limited to:
    - i. maintaining high standards of disciplinary excellence;
    - ii. providing strategic advisement and mentorship to students to help them progress in a timely and successful manner through their graduate programs;
    - iii. overseeing high-quality, original, rigorous and ethical research;
    - iv. making sure that the student is aware of, prepared for, and meets all required program milestones and university requirements over his/her student lifecycle;
    - v. advising students on critical professional development skills and opportunities that align with their career goals and pathways;
    - vi. and preparing students to successfully defend a well-written and appropriately formatted final document.

- i. maintaining high standards of disciplinary excellence;
    - ii. supporting the GAC Chair to provide strategic advisement and mentorship to students to help them progress in a timely and successful manner through their graduate programs;
    - iii. overseeing high-quality, original, rigorous and ethical research;
    - iv. coordinating with the GAC Chair to make sure that the student is aware of, prepared for, and meets all required program milestones and university requirements over their student lifecycle;
    - v. advising students on critical professional development skills and opportunities that align with their career goals and pathways;
    - vi. and helping to prepare students to successfully defend a well-written and appropriately formatted final document.
  - c. Graduate College Representative (GCR): Must have GFS with approved GCR rights at UNLV. These faculty may not hold GFS in the student's home Department/School. See #7 below for additional guidelines regarding the role of the GCR.
2. In addition to the above, students may opt to add extra members to their GAC:
  - a. Co-Chair: Must have GFS somewhere at UNLV (either all privileges or committee member designation). This person shares

degree after successful defense of a rigorous, original, high-quality thesis, project, or dissertation. The GAC must ensure student compliance with university requirements and appropriate, ethical, disciplinary standards and practices. Final documents must be formatted correctly and consistently (using the accepted format -according to their respective disciplines --- APA, Chicago, etc.), and must reflect Graduate College thesis/dissertation formatting requirements.

7. Graduate College representatives (GCR) on the GAC must have GCR privileges in order to serve in this capacity.
  - a. GCR privileges require that the faculty member have a terminal degree in their field, be employed full-time on a multi-year contract, and hold GFS in a graduate degree granting department/school at UNLV.
  - b. The role of the GCR is to be a representative of the Graduate College on the committee, and fully up-to-date on all the policies, procedures, and best practices of student mentorship. The GCR represents the university on committees, and as such must:
    - i. mediate as necessary to ensure appropriate, fair, and equitable treatment of students and graduate faculty on the GAC;
    - ii. ensure appropriate standards of scholarly conduct and research ethics are upheld;
    - iii. attest, to the best of their ability, that the final document is:
      1. original;
      2. academically rigorous;
      3. publication quality, particularly if serving on a doctoral GAC;
      4. well-written;
      5. appropriately formatted (per both the applicable style guide, i.e. APA, and UNLV thesis/dissertation formatting requirements).
  - c. GCRs may have substantive expertise related to some or all of the student's project, but do not have