THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The academic experience is greatly enhanced if faculty members other than the direct advisor are readily and formally available for consultation and discussion with the graduate student. To provide this element of supervision, a dissertation committee should be put in place for the Ph.D. student early in the dissertation stage. The graduate group is responsible for monitoring the progress of the student through the dissertation committee, as follows:

- A dissertation committee should consist of at least three faculty members (including at least two members of the graduate group). While some graduate groups require all members of the dissertation committee be members of the graduate group or affiliated department, others encourage/require appointment of a faculty member from another department, to encourage an interdisciplinary perspective. Be sure to review the policy about the composition of dissertation committee (http://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd) as you are building your committee.
- It is required that the dissertation committee meet with the student, as a committee, at least once per year to assess the student’s progress in the program and to provide advice on future work.
- The committee submits a written report to the graduate group chair, at least once per year, detailing its observations of the student’s progress and its recommendations.
- The student must be given the opportunity to respond to the committee’s report/recommendation and to append a response to the committee’s report.
- Copies of the report shall be given to the student and filed with the graduate group office.

The Graduate Group is responsible for recording the membership of the dissertation committee in the Student Information System (SRS). The graduate division office at the home school will monitor compliance with this requirement through SRS reports and an annual audit of the official student file.