

Department of STS/Public Policy
MS in Science, Technology, and Public Policy
Public Policy Program

Policy on Thesis Committee Structure
IMPLEMENTED: 12/2/2005

1. Committee Structure. A Master's student is expected to have three persons on his/her thesis committee. These three consist of:
 - A primary thesis advisor
 - Two committee members

2. Role of the Primary Advisor. The role of the primary advisor is to help guide the student through the entire thesis process. The student should meet regularly with the primary advisor and inform him/her on thesis progress. Ideally, the advisor should be someone with expertise in the "content domain" area of the thesis. The advisor provides direction, helps the student with thesis scope and scale, helps identify resources and data for the thesis, and is the first reader of the thesis. The advisor will also work with the student to identify an appropriate defense date and guide the student through the defense process.

3. Role of Other Committee Members. The role of the two committee members will vary. At least one of these committee members should be a person with expertise in the content area of the thesis. That person can provide additional resources and support for the student during the thesis development process. One of the committee members may take on the role of "reader." A reader is not as actively involved in the development of the thesis, but does provide comments on the final document in terms of format, argument logic, style, etc. Students should provide both committee members (in addition to the primary advisor) regular progress reports. Students should provide thesis drafts to the "reader" early enough in the process to receive and integrate "reader" comments.

4. Other Guidelines. Unless an exception is granted, the following should hold:
 - a. The primary advisor must be a full-time faculty member at RIT
 - b. One of the three committee members must be a faculty member from the Public Policy Program
 - c. At least two of the committee members must be full-time faculty at an accredited institution of higher learning