

GRADUATE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEES

All students should consult the relevant portions of the Orientation Handbook for details about Supervisory Committees. Here are a few of the key points.

- Students should begin planning their supervisory committees by the second semester. The History Department requires that all committee members sign a form affirming their willingness to serve on the committee. These forms are available in the Graduate Office; copies are also available in the graduate lounge. Completed forms should be returned to the Graduate Office. (Once the form is submitted it is passed on to the department chair for approval and then sent on to the Dean of the College and then finally to the Dean of the Graduate School.)
- **For the M.A.**, the supervisory committee normally consists of three members: the major advisor and two other members of the graduate faculty. The department has no rules dictating the specialties of the three members. Students should consult with their major advisor about likely committee members.
- **For the Ph.D.**, the supervisory committee includes five members. These generally include: the major advisor; one historian representing the departmental minor; a faculty member from another department at UF, who serves as the external committee member; and two other historians. (Graduate School regulations require that at least two members of the supervisory committee, including the chair, represent the degree granting unit.)
- The **external committee member** represents the Graduate School on the committee. Faculty from other departments who have “affiliate status” in the History Department may serve as a member of the committee, but they may not play the role of external committee member.
- **Special appointments:** Individuals without Graduate Faculty status may be made official members of a student’s supervisory committee through the special appointment process. This could include members of the UF community without formal graduate faculty status or faculty from other institutions. The request for a special appointment is made by the chair of the supervisory committee to the Graduate School. The Department’s Graduate Office can help navigate this process, but the petition must come from the committee chair. Special appointments may not serve as the chair, external member, or minor field advisor. See the Graduate Catalogue for details.
- **Retired faculty** may continue to serve on committees for one year. After that point the faculty member may continue to serve with permission of the Graduate School. Faculty who have left UF may also continue to serve on committees, but this also requires special permission.

- Students should make every effort to arrange oral examinations when all committee members are available. When that is impossible, one member may serve by phone. The chair of the supervisory committee and the external member must be physically present.
- **Substitutes:** If a committee member is unavailable for a scheduled oral examination, a member of the Graduate Faculty from the same academic unit can serve as a substitute. The substitute should sign the form beside the name of the replaced faculty member, with a notation explaining the change. No substitutes are allowed for the chair or the external member.

The Supervisory Committees and Examinations

- **The Final Comprehensive Examination:** This is the examination that M.A. students take at the end of their coursework. The exam takes two different forms, depending on whether or not the student writes a thesis or a non-thesis paper. Non-thesis students take a two-hour written exam followed by an oral examination based on their written examination and their non-thesis paper. The written examination is prepared by the three committee members, based on the student's coursework. Thesis students take no written exam but have an oral defense of their thesis. The supervisory committees generally have quite a bit of latitude in how they organize the written examination. Students are generally examined on their coursework with the committee members.
- **Qualifying Examinations:** Doctoral students take a series of written examinations on their major and minor fields, followed by an oral examination (and a dissertation prospectus defense). Students should consult the Orientation Handbook for specific guidelines about these examinations. The major advisor orchestrates the preparation and grading of the major field written examination, in consultation with the committee members who are part of the major field. The departmental minor field advisor orchestrates the minor field written exam, in consultation with committee members from the minor field. If there is only one supervisory committee member from the minor field, the minor field advisor selects a second member of the department to serve as a second reader.
- EUH students will take a written qualifying examination comprised of four parts, covering the four subfields. This examination is prepared and graded by the members of the supervisory committee. See the Orientation Handbook for specific details.
- **Preliminary Written Examinations:** This is a three-part examination taken by AMH students in August before the start of their second year. Unlike the Qualifying Exams, the Preliminary Exams are not written by the supervisory committee. Instead, the AMH students are examined by the faculty members who taught the three foundation courses during the previous year. See the Orientation Handbook for more details.

- All written examinations must be graded by at least two members of the graduate faculty.
- All written examinations must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator.
- Students (and faculty) should consult the Orientation Handbook for details about the scheduling and grading of examinations.