The UW-Madison Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (GFEC), the governance body responsible for campus graduate education policy, approved changes to the rules that regulate doctoral dissertations at its February 2017 meeting. These changes are primarily related to doctoral dissertation committee membership and collaboration and represent minimums, which can be surpassed by higher requirements at the program level.

The changes, which go into effect September 1, 2017, are as follows.

- The minimum number of members serving on doctoral committees/final oral examination committees is reduced from five to four.
- The minimum requirement is that three committee members of all doctoral/final oral examination committees must be designated as readers.
- Doctoral degree recipients must acknowledge in the dissertation contributions received from other individuals, including co-authors of published work that appears in the document, such as in designing the research, executing the research, analyzing the data, interpreting the data/research, or writing, proofing, or copyediting the manuscript.
- The co-advisor/co-chair role is formalized by including the following statement in advisor policy: The co-advisor/co-chair will be designated on dissertation documentation.

As with all Graduate School policy, programs may choose to set higher standards. For example, although the minimum number of committee members is now four, a program may decide to continue requiring five. Due to expected variation by program, as many programs may have more rigorous requirements, we are calling on each program to communicate policy implications to their graduate students. Additionally, each program will include this policy in their graduate student handbook for fall 2017 and will be required to post their policy in the new graduate catalog (Guide) starting in fall 2018.

A webpage explaining the rational for these changes is available at grad.wisc.edu/gfec/dissertation2017 and an implementation FAQ is available at kb.wisc.edu/gsadminkb/page.php?id=71658.

Please direct any questions about this change to Michelle Holland, Director of Academic Services in the Graduate School, michelle.holland@wisc.edu.