All GRD Committee policies and procedures are governed and superseded by the University of Houston’s and College of Education policies and procedures.

This document can be modified by a majority vote of the GRD committee membership. The SOP document will be formally reviewed on a yearly basis.

Committee Membership Criteria

Over-arching policy statement: A faculty member eligible for GRD membership must not only demonstrate the ability to independently direct doctoral research but also be actively involved in the HHP graduate research programs administered by the GRD committee.

In order to obtain initial membership on the GRD committee, the faculty member must satisfy the following criteria:

A) the faculty member must have an ongoing, focused research agenda as evidenced by refereed journal articles, grant writing, research presentations.

B) the faculty member has Dissertation/Thesis experience as evidenced by having served as Chair or Co-Chair of doctoral dissertations or Master’s thesis committees at UH or other academic/research institutions.

In order to maintain membership on the GRD committee, the faculty member must demonstrate not only the continued ability to independently direct doctoral research (as defined above in Section A) but also satisfy the following criteria:

C) the faculty member is required to serve as the primary advisor to at least one graduate student in either the M.S. or Ph.D. programs.

D) the faculty member is required to attend at least two thirds (2/3) of all regularly scheduled GRD committee meeting in any one academic year – excluding ad hoc meeting - with the only exceptions being made for regularly scheduled teaching assignments

The sitting GRD committee will begin an ongoing review process of its own membership in order for an individual member to maintain GRD status. This review will be on a two year basis after initial membership is granted and will consist of an administrative review by the Chair of the GRD Committee of supporting materials submitted by the committee member.

If the sitting Chair of the GRD committee is being reviewed, the Chair of the Department will perform the review and report their findings to the GRD committee as a whole. This review process will occur on a two year cycle at the beginning of the calendar year as determined by date of initial membership.

Supporting materials that are to be supplied by the committee member for review are a current CV listing refereed journal articles, grant writing and research presentations and a list of graduate students to whom the faculty members serves as primary advisor.

If a sitting GRD committee member fails to satisfy any of the criteria for maintaining membership on the GRD committee, the faculty member may immediately reapply for membership on the committee upon fulfilling the criteria listed above in Sections A – C.
In the case of a GRD committee member who loses their membership on the committee while serving as an advisor to a graduate student, the rights and responsibilities laid out in the Loss of Committee Membership section below will remain in effect.

**Committee Voting Procedures**

A GRD Committee vote will be decided by the number of votes cast by the members of the Committee present at time of voting, provided that 50% of the committee membership is present with a simple majority of those votes cast being sufficient for a motion to pass.

**Term of GRD Chair**

Two years.

**Loss of Committee Membership**

In the case of a GRD committee member who loses his/her membership on the GRD committee while still advising students in a HHP graduate research program, this individual will continue to serve as the student’s dissertation/thesis committee chair. The rights and responsibilities associated with GRD membership as they pertain to serving as a Chair of a dissertation/thesis committee will continue for this individual until the particular student has graduated.
Administration of Research Degrees

General Information

Due to the very nature of graduate and post-baccalaureate professional education, students admitted to graduate and professional studies at the University of Houston should expect the coursework to be at a more advanced level. In addition, students are expected to display a greater level of maturity and self-learning skills.

The University of Houston does not accept experiential learning for graduate or professional transfer credit. In addition, the University of Houston does not accept non-credit work for transfer credit.

Student Applications to Graduate Research Programs

Entrance to all HHP graduate research programs (i.e. Ph.D., M.Sc. and Ed.D.) is by vote of the GRD committee. The GRD committee is responsible for final determination of a graduate application for entry to the M.Sc., Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs in HHP.

A student applicant is required to have a member of the GRD committee committed to serving as his/her advisor prior to formal application to the GRD committee.

Admittance to the program will be based on a series of criteria that will include GPA, GRE scores, letter of research interests/goals, writing sample and personal interview.

A member of the GRD committee has the right to advocate for a student who does not meet the COE minimum guidelines with regard to GRE and GPA. If a GRD committee member so wishes to exercise this right, that member will be responsible for generating an “exception letter” addressing the strengths of the candidate as they relate to the specific area(s) in which the student is deficient employing the guidelines supplied by the COE graduate Studies Office. Contingent on a GRD committee vote to grant entrance to the graduate program, this letter will then be formatted by the GRD Chair, recorded and then forwarded to the Graduate Deans Office on behalf of the GRD Committee as a whole.

General Petitions

All petitions for students enrolled in the M.Sc. (Ex. Sci.), Ed.D. (Health) and Ph.D. (Kinesiology) programs will be sent to the Chair of the GRD Committee, where general administrative issues will be dealt with by the Chair and any substantive degree changes will be circulated to the GRD membership for consideration by the committee as a whole.

All students wishing to transfer to the Ph.D. program prior to graduation from the MS program via General Petition must not only satisfy the entrance criteria required for entry to the Ph.D. program but must have successfully defended their thesis proposal. Successful completion of the final defense of the thesis project must be completed within 18 months of entering the Ph.D. (Kinesiology) program. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in immediate dismissal from the Ph.D. program. However, once a student has successfully completed the final defense of the thesis project, they will be eligible to reapply to the Ph.D. program.
Candidacy Paper Requirements

A student’s advisor (i.e. GRD committee member who will serve as the student Committee Chair) will be responsible for identifying Readers for their student’s candidacy paper. If the Reader/Readers are not members of the GRD committee, the advisor will require approval from the GRD Committee for non-GRD members to serve as Candidacy Paper Readers.

A Ph.D. candidate will have the option to author and present a peer-reviewed article (submitted, published or accepted for publication) in lieu of a traditional candidacy paper to the GRD committee for consideration as completing the candidacy paper requirements. The advisor and two independent readers will examine the candidacy paper.

An Ed.D. (Health) candidate will have the option to complete the above requirements, complete a comprehensive review of literature in an area approved by the candidacy paper advisor, or, submit a Masters thesis for review.

Fulfillment of candidacy paper requirements are ultimately the decision of the GRD who will vote on the issue once a recommendation has been communicated to the committee by the student’s advisor.

Doctoral Comprehensive Examinations

A student’s advisor and two independent readers will examine the comprehensive examination responses.

A student’s advisor (i.e. the GRD committee member who will serve as the student’s Committee Chair) will be responsible for identifying Readers for their student’s comprehensive exam questions. If the Reader/Readers are not members of the GRD committee, the advisor will require approval from the GRD Committee for non-GRD members to serve as comprehensive exam question readers.

A student’s advisor (i.e. the GRD committee member who will serve as the student’s Committee Chair) will be responsible for the process of collecting questions from each faculty member tasked with writing comprehensive examination questions, collecting the graded examination, compiling the final grade for the examination and communicating this grade to GRD committee. The GRD committee (based on the information supplied by the Advisor) will have final authority to recommend a pass or fail grade on the exam.

Pass/Fail decisions on all comprehensive exams (MS, Ed.D. and Ph.D.) are ultimately the decision of the GRD who will vote on the issue once a grade has been communicated to the committee by the student’s advisor.

Once the GRD committee has reviewed and accepted the results of the comprehensive exam, a student can approach the Chair of the GRD who can indicate whether the student has passed or failed, with a clear statement by the Chair of GRD that final notification from COE Graduate Studies Office is required before the result of the exams are official.

A student can also speak with their advisor, who may indicate to the student that the GRD Committee voted a “pass” or “fail” but that official communication of the result will be generated by the COE Graduate Studies Office.

If a student fails the comprehensive doctoral examination the advisor, with the approval from the GRD committee will recommend a remediation plan for that student. The
contents of this plan are the responsibility of the advisor. Once approved, the advisor must document that the student has reviewed and understood the remedial course of action.

**Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Procedures and Proctoring**

All doctoral students will be required to use a computer in order to take doctoral comprehensive examinations in HHP unless a request to use pen and pencil means (in the form of a general petition from the student to the GRD committee) is reviewed and accepted by the GRD committee.

The GRD committee will be responsible for proctoring doctoral comprehensive exams within the physical location of HHP (e.g. use of conference rooms for 1 to 2 students, use of computer laboratory for more than 2 students).

Each academic advisor will be responsible for proctoring their doctoral students during the doctoral comprehensive exam period. Each advisor may make alternate arrangements with other HHP faculty members to serve as proctor but the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that doctoral comprehensive examinations are proctored is that of the academic advisor of the students sitting the doctoral comprehensive examination.

**Graduate Student Thesis/Dissertation Committee Make-up**

A student’s advisor (i.e. GRD committee member who will serve as the student Committee Chair) will be responsible for identifying Committee members for their student’s dissertation/thesis committee. If the dissertation/thesis committee members are not faculty members of the University of Houston, the advisor will require approval from the GRD Committee for these individuals to serve as dissertation/thesis committee members.

**Graduate Student Annual Review Process**

A student’s advisor (i.e. GRD committee member who will serve as the student Committee Chair) will be responsible for carrying out an annual review on each of their graduate students (i.e. M.Sc., Ed.D and Ph.D. students) in order to assess the progress of the student towards completion of their degree. This process will be carried out on a yearly basis at the end of every spring semester. The culmination of this review will be a report presented to the GRD committee that details the academic classes the student has completed/enrolled in, research projects in which the student has been involved, where in the degree process the student is (i.e. candidacy paper, advancement to candidacy, degree plan filed, comprehensive exams, dissertation proposal, etc.), advisor’s assessment of the students progress to date and feedback from the student on their perception of their own progress towards completion of their degree.

On completion of the annual review process a student will be deemed in one of three categories: (a) making adequate progress towards the degree; (b) probationary status; (c) terminated from the graduate program. The advisor will be responsible for determining if the student is making adequate progress towards completion of their degree. If an advisor deems a student should be placed in either probationary status or terminated from the graduate program they will provide a rationale to the GRD Committee for their decision, including those steps deemed necessary by the advisor to have a student removed from probationary status in order to return to good standing within the graduate program. As
the GRD Committee is ultimately responsible for all student admissions to the MSc and PhD programs, the final decision on a student’s status within the program will be the subject of a committee discussion and vote.

Graduate Student Advisor Change

A student wishing to transfer advisors within the graduate program must submit a “change of advisor” form requesting said change to the GRD committee for approval.

Ancillary Functions of the GRD Committee

Adjunct Faculty Status

As part of its function as the body responsible for overseeing and administering graduate research programs within the Department of Health and Human Performance, the GRD committee may recommend to the Chair of the Department certain individuals for Adjunct Faculty status in the Department. These individuals will play a significant role in graduate research and education within HHP, such as serving as dissertation/thesis committee members, serving as Readers on doctoral comprehensive examinations or expanding the research opportunities available for our graduate students.

Selection of Graduate Student Teaching Fellowships

The GRD Chair will work in conjunction with the PEB coordinator and HHP Department Chair to recommend graduate students for available Teach Fellowships after the application deadline for Teaching Fellowships has expired.

Students applying for doctoral programs will have precedence for available fellowships, followed by M.Sc. students and then M.Ed. students.