

**UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE
OF
THE GRADUATE COUNCIL
BYLAWS**

Initial Approval 10/2001

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The Credentials Committee is responsible for procedures that will ensure careful and competent supervision of dissertation research. The goal is to ensure good scholarship, competent management of the process, high academic standards, and completion of dissertations in a timely manner. To this end the Committee will conduct a review of the credentials of those who will be recommended to the Graduate Council for approval to direct doctoral dissertations. In making these recommendations the Committee will follow the procedures outlined below:

1. Tenure-track but untenured faculty members are eligible to direct dissertations subject to departmental approval as indicated by a vote of the tenured faculty, and a letter of support from the department head. The letter of support and the results of the vote should be forwarded to the Credentials Committee, which will make a recommendation to the Graduate Council. Based on the recommendation of the department head, the Credentials Committee may recommend approval for an unspecified number of students prior to the review for tenure or may limit approval to a specific dissertation project. It will be expected that department heads and senior faculty will mentor new faculty members as they master the art of working with students on their dissertations.
2. When a tenure-track faculty member is appointed or promoted to the rank of associate or full professor, approval to direct dissertations will automatically be granted for 10 years and will be reviewed every 10 years thereafter, for so long as approval is sought.
3. Application for continuing approval following promotion to professor should be submitted to the Credentials Committee in the year prior to expiration of approval and should consist of (a) a list of theses and dissertations supervised over the past 10 years; (b) a list of peer-reviewed publications for the past 10 years; (c) a list of grants and other external validation or support of creative and scholarly activity; (d) other evidence of scholarly activity that may be relevant to the approval to direct dissertations; and (e) a letter of support for continued approval from the department head placing the above items in the context of department standards. The primary criterion for approval will be evidence of externally reviewed and validated scholarly or creative activity.
4. Non-tenure track faculty may be considered for limited approval to direct dissertations. Where such approval is sought, departments should provide

evidence of scholarly activity along with a letter of support from the department head. The results of the vote of the tenured faculty vote should be provided. The evidence forwarded should consist of (a) a list of peer-reviewed publications; (b) a list of grants and other external validation or support of creative and scholarly activity; (c) other evidence that may be relevant to the approval to direct dissertations. Evidence of participation in graduate training should be provided. It will be expected that department heads and senior faculty will mentor non-tenure track faculty members as they master the art of working with students on their dissertations.

5. Faculty members who have not been granted approval for supervision may petition the Dean of Graduate Studies for limited approval to supervise individual dissertations if the department head and department faculty support the petition. Petitions should describe the accomplishments of the faculty member as described in the previous paragraph, as well as the special circumstances that would warrant one-time approval.
6. Automatic approval applies only to faculty members who participate in programs that award doctoral degrees. Faculty in other departments may petition for approval. Faculty members who have not completed their doctorates may not supervise dissertations.

From time to time, the committee may also consider other matters related to the process of dissertation supervision.

The committee will consist of seven members from those colleges that award doctoral degrees. At least one member will be from each of the following colleges: Arts & Sciences; Business; Education, Health, and Human Sciences; and Engineering. Membership on the committee is restricted to Graduate Council members who are already approved to direct dissertations. The committee elects a chair annually.

The agenda for each committee meeting will contain the requests for approval to direct dissertations as submitted by the academic department heads. Procedures and deadlines for submission of such requests are posted on the Graduate Council web page.