

Bylaws Suggestions

1. **The Process.** When the Graduate School reviews your bylaws submissions we are looking predominantly for policies that are clearly in conflict with university and graduate school stated policies and procedures. We are also looking for ambiguities or inconsistencies within your documents. We will send you suggestions based on our unofficial review. These are meant to help facilitate and speed your passage through the more formal review provided by the Graduate Studies Committee and the Faculty Senate. You may revise your document as you see fit based on our suggestions/recommendations.

2. **Membership.**

- **Campus Participation:** If you are not sure which campuses have been approved by the HEC Board to offer a degree program, please contact the Graduate School.
- **Inactive Faculty:** The designation of faculty who no longer actively participate in a graduate program as “Inactive” was recommended by university attorneys as an alternative to discontinuing graduate faculty participation. This recommendation is made in consideration of legal precedent from graduate programs around the country. Some university faculty might protest the removal of their “rights” or “status” as graduate faculty. That is why we are being careful with wording in the bylaws documents. We are very careful not to imply that Graduate Faculty confers “status” for a faculty member; instead we are referring to eligibility to serve as Graduate Faculty “participants”.
- **Faculty Categories:** Please be sure that the faculty categories listed as eligible to participate in your Graduate Program (e.g. Tenured/tenure track; research; clinical; etc.) are consistent with faculty designations defined in the Faculty Senate Manual. This manual may be found at http://facsen.wsu.edu/faculty_manual/. Faculty Structure is defined on page 11. Titles and types of indefinite term faculty are defined on pages 109-110.
- **Adjunct Faculty:** It is up to each program to clarify the roles that adjunct faculty may fulfill within the program. For example, for some programs adjunct faculty who are USDA/ARS researchers will be given rights and responsibilities that are equal to those of any WSU tenured/tenure track faculty. If you wish other groups of adjunct faculty (for example, faculty from similar programs at the University of Idaho) to have distinct rights and responsibilities, include that information in your bylaws.
- If you include Emeritus Faculty in your bylaws, please be clear as to whether these faculty have voting rights in the program.
- **Individual Doctoral Committee Members** from outside your program faculty. Almost all programs wish to include a provision in their bylaws whereby individuals from outside the Graduate Faculty of that program may participate on individual student committees. This is encouraged. However, some of the processes described in submitted bylaws (and

in the sample bylaws) are a little confusing. We offer this suggestion for wording excerpted from a recent bylaws submission:

Individual Committee Member Internal to WSU: Individuals not officially participating as Graduate Faculty within XXX Program (for example, a faculty member from another WSU department or program) may serve on graduate committees as long as they are a member of the Graduate Faculty in their own program or discipline and their committee appointment is approved by the Program Director of XXX Program.

External Individual Committee Members: Individuals not officially participating as Graduate Faculty within any graduate program at WSU (for example, a faculty member from another university or research entity) may be approved to serve as a thesis/dissertation committee member for an individual student on a case-by-case basis. The committee chair for that student should forward the name and a curriculum vitae of the desired committee member to the XXX Program Director. With approval of the Program Director, the nomination (with accompanying CV or other documentation of expertise) is forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School for final approval.

3. It is OK to include a section describing the responsibilities of the Academic Coordinator within your bylaws. However it should be clearly noted that this is a non-faculty member who provides administrative support for the program. This individual will usually be a non-voting member of any committees in which they participate and a non-voting member for the program as a whole. This should be clarified in the bylaws if a section is included to describe the responsibilities of the Academic Coordinator.
4. Some additional duties that you might consider specifically assigning to an individual or committee in your program include:
 - responsibility for assuring that all students in the program receive timely written annual reviews
 - coordination of assessment documentation and activities
5. **Definition of a Quorum.** The sample bylaws were perhaps not the best example of how this section might be worded. Consider instead this more clearly worded section from a recently submitted bylaws:

Article IX. Quorum

- A. For all general graduate faculty meetings and votes unless otherwise indicated, a quorum shall be defined as a minimum of 50 percent of the Program membership.

- B. For programmatic committees to conduct a business meeting, a quorum shall be defined as a minimum of 50 percent of the committee membership.
- C. Unless otherwise indicated, a simple majority of the total number of ballots cast are required to pass a motion.
- D. In the event of a tie vote in which the entire graduate faculty is eligible to vote, the Program Director will decide the outcome of the vote. For tie votes that occur within programmatic committees, the committee chair will decide the outcome of the vote.