

## The context for Faculty Senate

- 1) Research faculty are defined in the Faculty Handbook  
[https://www.montana.edu/policy/faculty\\_handbook/appointment\\_employment.html#research](https://www.montana.edu/policy/faculty_handbook/appointment_employment.html#research)
- 2) The faculty handbook also describes how research faculty can serve as sole chairs of graduate committees.
  - a. “In addition to their research responsibilities, research faculty may have educational and service responsibilities, provided these activities comply with the regulations and restrictions of the agency funding their appointment and are consistent with Graduate School policies. These activities include, but are not limited to, supervising graduate students, chairing of graduate committees, serving on graduate student committees, teaching seminars and courses, and serving on departmental or college curriculum committees.”
- 3) The proposed policy aligns the graduate school’s handbook with the faculty handbook.
- 4) The goals are to
  - a. Provide graduate students the opportunity to be advised by some of MSU’s top research faculty.
  - b. Provide a career development path for these members of the MSU scholarly community.
- 5) Discussions in the 2021/22 graduate council and with departments with a large number of research faculty led to a few considerations.
  - a. Departments can elect not to participate in the program. Having this option means that faculty are not asked to make a case-by-case decision on individual research faculty.
  - b. For those departments that participate in the program, the current faculty will review and decide on each applicant.
  - c. Communication with graduate students is key. Graduate students who are interested in having a research faculty serve as their chair should be informed about the current term of appointment the person has.

# Research Faculty As Graduate Committee Chairs

## Goals

Provide graduate students the opportunity to be advised by some of MSU's top research faculty. Also, to provide a career development path for these members of the MSU scholarly community. An academic unit can elect to not participate in this program.

## Eligibility

Departments may nominate research faculty to be able to serve as sole chair of graduate committees. Research faculty are defined in the Faculty Handbook [https://www.montana.edu/policy/faculty\\_handbook/appointment\\_employment.html#research](https://www.montana.edu/policy/faculty_handbook/appointment_employment.html#research). Nominated research faculty must have demonstrated competence for pursuing creative work by completing a research doctorate or the highest degree appropriate to the discipline from an accredited or internationally recognized institution. For certain professional graduate degrees (e.g. DNP), being able to serve as chair a graduate committee may also be granted to faculty without research appointments.

Individuals pursuing a graduate degree at Montana State University are not eligible for this role.

## Rights and Responsibilities

Research faculty who are approved by this process may chair committees commensurate with their degree. A master's degree is needed to chair a master's committee, while faculty with a doctoral degree may chair both master's and doctoral committees.

## Procedure

Nominations for research faculty to be able to chair a graduate committee may be made by academic units at any time of the year.

The key steps are:

- A research faculty member submits a request to the academic unit head
- The research faculty member submits information to the academic unit head that the academic unit needs to make a decision; this could include a CV and a statement of interest.
- A review of the nominee by the tenure track faculty in the academic unit and an affirmative vote by these faculty.

- After an affirming vote, the academic unit head sends a letter of support to the Graduate School for the nominee including how the candidate's expertise will benefit graduate students in the academic unit and how student advising responsibilities fit within the candidate's duties. Workload and compensation issues are to be decided between the research faculty and the academic unit.

The nomination will be accepted or declined by the Dean of the Graduate School.

The permission to serve as a graduate committee chair is granted for a five-year term, renewal can be requested by the academic unit head sending a renewal request to the Graduate School, summarizing the activities related to graduate education in the previous term. If the renewal is not approved, the research faculty may continue to serve as committee chair for those graduate students they currently are chair for, but not take on new graduate students.

Graduate students who are interested in having a research faculty serve as their chair should be informed about the current term of appointment the person has. If the research faculty leaves MSU before the student graduates, the student must revise their committee to include a current MSU faculty member as chair or co-chair.

[https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html#forms\\_pos](https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html#forms_pos) . The Department Head and the Graduate Dean must approve all student committees.