**Graduate Advisory Committees:** Students in degree programs requiring a thesis or dissertation have graduate advisory committees. Graduate advisory committees (i) provide advice and guidance to students to facilitate completion of their thesis/dissertation projects and (ii) ensure that students have designed and completed a research project suitable for a thesis/dissertation, exhibited mastery of the subject area and thesis/dissertation project, and have produced a suitable thesis/dissertation document.

**Master's Students:** Graduate advisory committees for Master’s students must have a minimum of 3 faculty members. One committee member is the advisor. At least one other committee member must be outside of the advisor's department or research area. A student’s advisor typically chairs the committee, although the final defense exam is chaired by a Dean’s representative. The advisor and at least one other committee member must hold graduate faculty status. A student's advisor typically chairs the committee, although the final defense exam is chaired by a Dean’s representative.

**Doctoral Students:** Graduate advisory committees for doctoral students must have a minimum of 4 faculty members, although having 5 faculty members is recommended. One committee member is the advisor. At least one other committee member must be outside of the advisor’s department or research area. A student’s advisor typically chairs the committee, although the oral candidacy exam is chaired by a Dean’s representative. The chair and at least two other committee members must hold VCU graduate faculty status.

Adapted in part from the VCU Bulletin. Students should see the VCU Bulletin for additional information.

Approved by the School of Medicine Graduate Programs Committee: pending