

Advisor and Committee Selection

Ph.D. Environmental Design and Planning (Ph.D. EDP)

At the Ph.D. level, students are paired with a faculty champion who commits to serve as their advisor during the admissions process. The advisor and the student then work together to identify and recruit members of the advisory committee to support the student's choice of topic and research methods as their research develops.

In addition to the major advisor who serves as the committee chair, the Ph.D. EDP degree requires a minimum of three additional faculty to serve on the advisory committee. Students must obtain agreement of these additional faculty to serve on their advisory committee no later than the end of the third semester of study. All committee members indicate their formal commitment to serve via their signatures on the student's Plan of Study, which is due before the completion of the third semester of study.

Members of a Ph.D. student's Advisory Committee may be from the Department of Building Construction, the Myers-Lawson School of Construction, other academic departments at Virginia Tech, other universities, or industry. At least two of the faculty members on a student's committee must be BC faculty or Principal faculty in the MLSoC. Additional committee members from outside this faculty pool may serve on the committee or even co-chair the committee as long as a BC/MLSoC faculty member also serves as a co-chair. Members of the advisory committee should be selected to provide subject matter or methodological expertise to support the student's independent research and degree goals. The major advisor will work with each student to identify a strategy for choosing an advisory committee after defining the student's independent research project in greater detail.

The schedule for Advisory Committee meetings for a Ph.D. student in Environmental Design and Planning is determined by the student's progress and degree completion goals. Typically, committee meetings may be held to review a student's plan of study and statement of intent, to hear the proposal defense, to conduct the pre-defense, and to conduct the final defense/final examination. The Graduate School requires that the committee convene in real time for the final defense/final examination. All other meetings may be conducted asynchronously, with the student and/or faculty advisor coordinating activities and documenting outcomes. It is the student's responsibility to keep all committee members informed of progress, particularly any challenges or changes that occur as the research progresses. The means for reporting progress is at the discretion of the committee and may include written updates, individual meetings with committee members, or meetings of the entire committee together.

Additional limitations and requirements of faculty committees are described in the document Choosing an Advisor and Advisory Committee in the Common Academic Requirements section of the Graduate Guidebook.