



Department of Health Informatics  
**Guidelines for Dissertation Advisor/Committee Selection**  
September, 2004

Dissertation committee should be formed under the following guide lines as early as practical but at latest within several weeks of a student's successful completion of the Ph.D. qualifying exam.

1) The student should discuss his/her research interests with the faculty members during his/her didactic course work and select his/her research advisor for the Ph.D. dissertation after those discussions. The research advisor should be a member of the UMDNJ faculty holding unqualified rank (see 1b) except the situation described in 1a.

1a) Although it is customary to select the UMDNJ faculty holding unqualified rank as a research advisor or mentor, under special circumstances, a student may select his/her research advisor from outside the UMDNJ faculty. The advisor must hold a Ph.D. degree from the recognized higher education institutions in the appropriate fields for the dissertation topics and hold a permanent position in related industries or in non-profit organizations. If a student selects his/her advisor from outside the UMDNJ, it is recommended that he/she also have a co-advisor selected from the UMDNJ Faculty. Faculty from outside the UMDNJ may serve as a dissertation committee member or as a co-advisor but not as a sole research advisor or a mentor. The person who agrees to serve as a student's research advisor must submit to the chair of Department his/her full CV with a letter stating his/her commitment in terms of his/her time and resources to be provided towards the completion of the dissertation work. The chair may request additional information relevant for advising the student for Ph.D. dissertation research. The decision to accept an outside research advisor will be made based on his/her academic qualification as well as other practical considerations required for Ph.D. dissertation research. A dissertation research adviser from outside UMDNJ is expected to meet the same standards and fulfill the same responsibilities as the regular UMDNJ faculty who guide dissertation research. Although the department will provide necessary advice for the dissertation research, the final responsibility of the outcome of this arrangement rests on the student and the outside advisor and not on UMDNJ-SHRP. Thus it is urged that both the student and the advisor from outside UMDNJ should discuss carefully the details of this arrangement.

1b) Unqualified rank includes assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Clinical or adjunct faculty members are excluded at any rank.

2. The student and his/her research advisor select the dissertation committee members. Dissertation committees shall consist of a Chair (normally the research advisor) and at least two full-time UMDNJ faculty members holding unqualified rank. It is also recommended that the majority of committee should be affiliated with Department.

3. Selection of the candidate's dissertation committee must precede scheduling the proposal hearing/defense.

4. Provided that the majority of the committee is full-time UMDNJ faculty, non-UMDNJ faculty can serve on a dissertation committee; outside members must be approved by the dissertation committee Chair and a copy of the outside member's current CV must be filed with the Dean's Office. Adjunct status will be offered to colleagues serving as dissertation committee members.

5. Committee membership is documented via submission of the appropriate form to Enrollment Services. This form must be signed by all Committee members. Any changes of memberships must also be reported as soon as possible.