Procedure for External Committee Member
to PhD Examination Committee

An external committee member is an expert outside of the University of Minnesota (UMN), with or without faculty appointments elsewhere, who serves on an examination committee in any role except as advisor or chair. It is possible to add an expert from outside the UMN to a student’s examination committee if the new member offers specific expertise in a narrow range or specific research focus, which is not provided by other members of the committee or other UMN faculty.

Selecting an external committee member should not be a first step to committee assembly but should be done after a thorough search for UMN expertise. To find experts at the UMN, please visit experts.umn.edu. Committee representation needs to follow UMN guidelines, so adding external committee members may add to the number of committee members as a whole. The UMN policies on committee members can be found here: http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/APPOINTGRADCOMM.html

If a student, in consultation with his/her adviser and after a thorough UMN search, wish to add an outside committee member (limit is one per committee), they should write a letter to the DGS explaining what expertise this outside faculty member would bring to the committee that cannot be duplicated at the UMN. The letter should be one page or less and signed by the student and adviser(s). Email the letter and a CV of the potential external member to the DGS.

Once the documents are submitted, the request will be reviewed by the DGS, the Dean, and the appropriate cooperative unit chair. If the college approves the external expert, the department will prepare a ‘without pay’ appointment that will generate a UMN ID number and email address. The UMN ID number must be provided by the student at the time of committee assignment online. Note that in order to create a ‘without pay’ appointment the department will need a home address and date of birth for the new committee member. Please allow at least two weeks for the submitted documents to be reviewed and processed through human resources.