

Special Membership Privileges Policy

Special Membership (SM) status within the University of Oklahoma Graduate Faculty can be extended to individuals who do not hold regular faculty status (ranked renewable term, tenure-track, or tenured) at the discretion of the department. This includes unranked renewable term lecturers, research professors, retirees, professionals who are otherwise employed at the University of Oklahoma, and experts outside the University. The possible privileges that can be extended to someone with SM status include: teach graduate classes, serve on master's committees (thesis and non-thesis), serve on doctoral committees, chair master's committees (thesis and non-thesis)*, chair doctoral committees*, and count toward departmental majority on graduate committees*. Those privileges with an asterisk require a petition from the department and review by the Graduate Faculty Membership Committee of the Graduate Council, who will make a recommendation to the Graduate Dean, whose decision is final.

Per the Graduate College Bulletin (Section 8.3.1.3), in order to be considered to chair committees or count toward departmental majority, the faculty member with SM status, at minimum, must a) have a close association with the department requesting the status, which includes working on the campus and being invested in the department; b) have an expectation of permanence of their position for the duration of the degree of any student's committee they join; c) have the same level of expertise and continuing scholarly contribution to the discipline as any regular faculty member in the department

The following distinctions are made in determining privileges associated with SM status in the Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability:

Experts employed outside the University: May be granted permission to serve on master's committees, serve on doctoral committees, and teach graduate classes. Individuals employed outside OU **do not** count towards the required departmental majority on committees and **may not** chair committees. All privileges granted with SM status will be for two years and can be renewed.

Unranked Renewable Term Lecturers - May be granted permission to serve on master's committees, serve on doctoral committees, and teach graduate classes. Unranked renewable term lecturers **do not** count towards the required departmental majority on committees and **may not** chair committees. All privileges granted with SM status will be for two years or the length of their contract, whichever is shorter, and can be renewed.

Recent Retirees - Per OU Graduate School Policy (see Section 8.4.1.1), for a retiring faculty member to remain on a student's committee, they must request SM status before

retirement. The student must have completed a majority of their degree (defined as at least one year of a master's; or passed general examinations and completed three years of a doctorate). Further, the retiree must be willing to consult regularly with the student, read the thesis or dissertation, and attend the oral defense or non-thesis exam at no cost to the University. Retirees **cannot** join new committees but may continue on the committees they were already a member of at the time of retirement. The department **will** petition for permission for them to count toward the required departmental majority on committees, but they **may not** chair committees. These privileges will be extended no longer than 2 years after retirement.

Professionals who are substantially involved with DGES and have an expectation of permanence at their position but hold positions elsewhere in the University - May be granted permission to serve on master's committees, serve on doctoral committees, and teach graduate classes. Non-regular faculty with substantial involvement with DGES and an expectation of permanence at their position **may** request permission to count towards the required departmental majority on committees but **may not** chair committees. The privilege to count toward departmental majority can be granted for up to 5 years and can be renewed based on permanence of position and depth of association with DGES. All other privileges granted with SM status will be for two years and can be renewed.

Research Faculty - Research faculty, who are not ranked renewable term, tenure-track, or tenured, **may** be granted SM status with all privileges granted to regular faculty, including the ability to chair master's (thesis and non-thesis) committees, chair doctoral committees, and count toward departmental majority. The privileges will be extended for up to 5 years or the length of their contract, whichever is shorter, and can be renewed.

Graduate Committee Composition Policy

For all DGES master's (thesis and non-thesis) and doctoral committees, regular faculty (including the Graduate College Representative on a doctoral committee), **must** make up the majority of a committee. Therefore, a committee of 3 or 4 can have a maximum of 1 member with SM status (even if they count toward department majority) and a committee of 5 can have a maximum of 2 members with SM status.