
Degree Committee

OSR students build a “support system” to help them navigate through the program. The Degree Committee is a major part of this support system.

Purpose of the Committee

The Degree Committee ensures professional-level competency and master’s-level achievement in your specific Area of Focus and overall program requirements. It will serve as your own design team or consulting group. Your committee will challenge and support you in achieving your professional and academic goals. Committee members will also act as a sounding board for your ideas, share information about resources to support your learning goals, and engage with you in the creative process of your Degree Program.

In consultation with your Degree Committee, you will develop a Learning Contract, Theory Paper and a Consultation Project. The Degree Committee will evaluate your learning goals, your educational progress, and the synthesis of your overall Degree Program. Finally, as you near completion of the program, they will recommend you for Candidacy.

Membership

Your Degree Committee will include your Faculty Advisor, a peer from the OSR cohort, and two Field Advisors.

Field Advisors are often professional mentors who can provide personal support. You may choose to meet with them individually outside of official meetings to discuss concerns or to seek suggestions. OSR alumni are also great resources because they can share their own experience in the OSR program. An ideal combination is often one Field Advisor who is an OSR graduate and one who is not.



Choose Field Advisors Carefully

Before approaching potential Field Advisors, consult with your Faculty Advisor and remember these tips:

Therapists, spouses, partners, and intimate friends (past or present) may find the role of Degree Committee member to be in conflict with their relationship to you. For this reason, they are rarely approved as committee members. OSR graduates should have sufficient “distance” from their own programs to keep the focus on you.

Supervisors or clients could certainly attest to your learning, since much of what you learn will be applied on the job.

However, you may feel constrained in discussing your learning experiences or challenges openly when the committee includes a person to whom you report, or is a colleague in the same work group.

Expectations of Degree Committee Members

Degree Committee members are expected to take an active role in supporting and evaluating your academic progress. Their most visible role is preparation for and participation in committee meetings. They should be willing to focus on you, the OSR Program, and your Learning Contract while motivating you to deliver the best you have to give. Potential advisors should be aware that OSR is an applied graduate program, thus not requiring traditional social science research and thesis. Degree Committee members should expect and commit to the following:

- Four formal meetings (2 hours long) over 22 months
- At least two hours preparation for each meeting (to read your work and formulate questions for you)
- Availability for informal discussion as appropriate to support your Degree Process

Designing Your Committee

The best Degree Committees are supportive, challenging and provocative. Your committee should provide diverse perspectives, access to resources outside Seattle University, and a balance of experience, expertise and information. You will be asking them to “hold your feet to your fire.” As you consider your options, think about these questions:

- What are my expectations for this committee?
- What do I want each person to bring to the group?
- What types of organizations or backgrounds should be represented?
- How can I ensure diverse perspectives, particularly perspectives different than my own?
- How do I expect each person to support my learning?

Selecting Field Advisors

You will select your own Field Advisors, subject to approval by your Faculty Advisor. Field Advisors should be members of the community who can bring creative and systemic thought to the committee, who are knowledgeable in their fields of interest and who are comfortable crossing academic and professional boundaries. It is strongly recommended that you select one committee member who is an OSR graduate.

Not all Degree Committee members need to be involved in your particular Area of Focus. While it can be helpful to have subject-matter experts on your committee, it is also important to find people who are able to think in ways that will challenge you to explore new possibilities (divergence), focus on a particular Area of Focus (convergence) and complete your Degree Process.

In other words, when considering potential Field Advisors, pay attention to how they think as well as what they do professionally.

Recruiting Field Advisors

Networking is the best source of potential Field Advisors. Ask your friends for referrals. Contact businesses and professional organizations. Talk to your Advisor, other OSR faculty and Seattle University personnel. Don't be shy about asking well-known people or people from other universities. The OSR Community web site offers access to OSR alumni and previous Field Advisors as well as giving you an opportunity to "advertise" for your ideal Field Advisor. Being on a Degree Committee is typically a rich and broadening experience, so don't be hesitate about exploring the possibilities with a potential member. People will often be flattered that you asked!

Selecting Your Peer Advisor

Your Peer Advisor is as valuable to you as your Field Advisors. She or he has the advantage of watching you develop your goals and progress toward achieving them month-by-month. Throughout the program, your Peer Advisor will provide insights about your progress to the committee and can also provide helpful feedback related to your learning goals.

Selection and Approval

As you consider potential Degree Committee members, discuss your ideas with your Advisor before you actually ask them to be on your committee. This will help ensure that the people you are considering meet the necessary qualifications. After receiving tentative approval from your Advisor, invite the people you have chosen to be on your committee. Once they have agreed, obtain an electronic copy of their resume or curriculum vitae that can be shared with your Advisor and put on the OSR Community web site for future reference.

Rationale and Field Advisor Form

The final step in the process of building your Degree Committee is to provide your Advisor with written rationale for your selections and copies of the resumes for each of your committee members. You will do this by completing the Field Advisor Approval Form, located on page 4-15 of this section. After your Field Advisors are approved, you will give each Field Advisor an OSR Field Advisor Handbook.



Logistical Considerations

If you are tempted to select someone outside your local area, be aware that scheduling meetings can become quite difficult. You will need to be clear about expectations for attendance at meetings as well as travel and telecommunication costs. When you have selected your Field Advisors, submit the Field Advisor Approval Form to your Advisor.

Engaging Your Degree Committee

Once your committee is established, you are encouraged to utilize individual members fully. Involve them. Engage them. Ask questions. Build a relationship with each member by communicating with each outside of your Degree Committee meetings. Doing so will not only enhance your learning but theirs as well.

Degree Committee Logistics

Many students hold their committee meetings at Seattle University. Meetings can be scheduled in other locations that are acceptable to committee members. However, be respectful of the travel time for committee members. At-a-distance students should consult with their Advisor, take into account peer availability, and review OSR related policy (see page 4-14) when determining the location of their Degree Committee meetings.

Be aware of the environment when planning your meetings. Privacy and good acoustics are important. Create a pleasant and comfortable space. You might want to have light refreshments available. Meeting over meals is discouraged because it is frequently difficult to conduct an effective meeting in these conditions. You may find it helpful to have your Peer Advisor take notes or tape record the meeting so you will be free to participate fully.

Preparing for Meetings

It is important to be organized and clear about your goals for each committee meeting. You are responsible for planning the agenda, creating an appropriate environment, keeping track of time, and facilitating the meeting. You are also expected to provide your Degree Committee with the agenda, supporting information and documents for review at least one week in advance.

Remember that the design and facilitation of your meetings are major demonstrations of your learning development, skills and competence throughout the OSR Program.

After each meeting, you will create a high level set of Meeting Notes and share it with committee members. The notes will include a brief summary of the meeting in terms of topics discussed. The primary focus of the notes is to record recommendations that were agreed to by the committee as well as action steps. Meeting Notes should be sent out to the committee within two weeks of a meeting.

Demonstration of Learning

Committee meetings provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate your increasing skill at meeting design and facilitation. Managing the Degree Process effectively shows committee members that you can think systemically, operate wholistically, and design creatively.

Degree Committee Meetings

Your Degree Committee will meet formally four times. The first meeting will take place Winter Quarter 2006 and will mark the Divergence Phase of the OSR Degree Process.

Degree Committee Schedule

Each meeting of your Degree Committee marks a key milestone in the OSR degree process. To remain on schedule, your committee meetings should follow the schedule below:

Fall Quarter 2005	Select Committee
Winter Quarter 2006	1st Meeting: Divergence
Spring Quarter 2006	2nd Meeting: Convergence
Fall Quarter 2006	3rd Meeting: Progress
Spring Quarter 2007	4th Meeting: Candidacy

Meeting Preparation

All required materials to be presented at each meeting must be received by committee members and Advisor one week in advance. Consult with each committee member to determine whether they prefer to receive materials from you electronically or in printed form.

Meeting #1: Divergence

Learning Intentions

The Divergence phase of the Degree Process challenges you to expand beyond your current areas of experience or knowledge. The intention is for you to explore unfamiliar intellectual territory without pre-judging the utility or meaning of this new learning. You will be guided in this process by your own personal interests and passions, in consultation with Faculty and Degree Committee Advisors.

A key benefit of your Degree Committee is the opportunity for you to communicate clearly and concisely what the OSR Program is about and how you are learning and benefiting from the experience. It should be a “jargon-free” experience that will prepare you to communicate effectively with your Consultation Project client and with external parties during and after your OSR Program.



Degree Committee meetings mark key milestones in the OSR Degree Process. It is important to manage the timing and design of these meetings to optimize your learning and ensure successful completion of the program.



Preparing for Your First Degree Committee Meeting

Confer with your Advisor before the Divergence Meeting to review the agenda and finalize plans. Send a cover letter, agenda, Entry Statement, draft of Learning Contract goals and other supportive materials to Degree Committee members at least one week before the meeting.

Purpose of the Divergence Meeting

The Divergence Meeting is a time to familiarize Degree Committee members with you, with other committee members and with the OSR Program. It is also a time to gain ideas that will support your exploration during the Divergence process. This meeting's main objectives are:

- To establish your Degree Committee and give members a chance to get to know each other
- To clarify expectations, roles and responsibilities and form a working group
- To answer questions about the OSR Degree Process and Program
- To review your Entry Statement and articulate your background, values and initial ideas concerning your learning intentions and purposes
- To introduce your Learning Contract
- To obtain assistance in your process of divergence

Divergence Meeting Timeline

Fall Quarter 2005

- Begin forming your Degree Committee: Consider the qualities in your ideal Degree Committee member; identify potential candidates for Field Advisors; talk over your ideas with your Advisor, peers and other members of the OSR faculty; start networking with, interviewing and selecting potential Field Advisors, in consultation with your Faculty Advisor.
- Develop a baseline for planning and exploration: Assess your entry-level knowledge of OSR subject matter; consider potential areas of interest; evaluate life/work goals and reflect on your practice.
- Write Entry Statement.

Winter Quarter 2006

- Finalize Degree Committee: In consultation with your Faculty Advisor, select your Peer Advisor in the early part of the Winter Quarter. Submit rationale and resumes of Field Advisors with the Field Advisor Approval Form to your Faculty Advisor several weeks before your first meeting.

- Schedule and conduct first Degree Committee meeting: Conduct your first Committee meeting no later than the end of the Winter 2006 Quarter. Schedule the meeting a month in advance of holding it in order to have time to coordinate calendars of all committee members. Send the agenda and other supporting documents to your committee at least one week in advance.



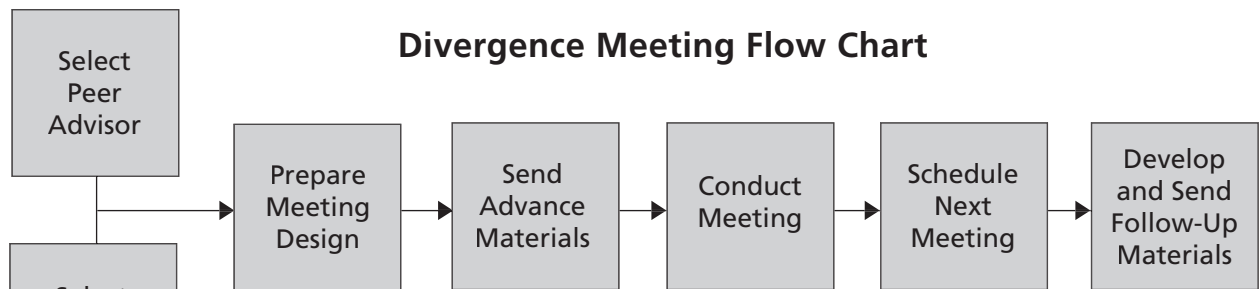
Manage Time Effectively

Planning ahead will help keep your Degree Committee meetings on schedule. Beginning and (especially) ending on time demonstrates professionalism and the ability to operate wholistically.

**Sample Agenda:
Divergence Meeting**

- Introductions
- Meeting Purpose and Agenda
- History and educational philosophy of the OSR program (Advisor)
- OSR Degree Process and program requirements: Overview and explanation by student and Advisor
- Degree Committee role and function, expectations of group members
- Discuss Entry Statement and first Quarterly Synthesis
- Present Learning Contract purpose, format and content
- Discuss Learning Contract goals, brainstorming for further divergence
- Date and time for Convergence meeting
- Summary of recommendations and next steps
- Closure

Divergence Meeting Flow Chart



Advance Materials:
 (Send at least one week in advance)
 Agenda
 Entry Statement
 Draft Learning Contract
 Fall 2005 Quarterly Synthesis
 Field Advisor Handbooks

Follow-Up Materials:
 Divergence Meeting Notes

Meeting #2: Convergence

Learning Intentions

During the Convergence Phase, you will bring your interests into focus and explore ways to deepen your theory base and application skills. This is the time to think about a topic to research for your Theory Paper. This paper will form a foundation for your Consultation Project later in the program. In preparation for the project, you will create a framing document that will help you explore the general type of application project that fits with your Learning Contract.

Purpose of the Convergence Meeting

The Convergence Meeting is a time to bring your Divergence Phase to a close as you think about how your Area of Focus and Learning Contract will inform your Theory Paper and Consultation Project. Meeting objectives include:

- Progress review for both OSR program requirements and individual Learning Contract
- Review Theory Paper topic, outline, and resources and gather committee feedback
- Review Consultation Project Framing Document in order to get feedback on the general qualities of the project you are seeking
- Formulate next steps and activities for learning

Convergence Meeting Timeline

Spring Quarter 2006

- Select Theory Paper topic and create outline
- Write Consultation Project Framing Document
- Schedule and conduct your second Degree Committee meeting no later than the end of Quarter #3 (June 2006)

Sample Agenda: Convergence Meeting

Agenda and goals

Review and discuss Learning Contract

Discuss academic progress, goals and strategies for learning; review Winter Quarterly Synthesis

Discuss topic and outline for your Theory Paper

Discuss possibilities for Consultation Project, based on Framing Document

Update committee on your current Design Team

Summarize meeting recommendations

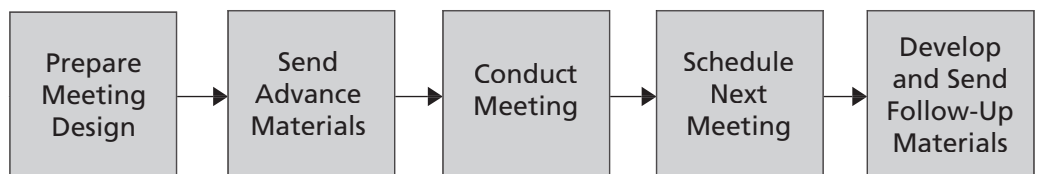
Set date and time for Progress Meeting

Next steps and closure

Preparing for the Convergence Meeting

Confer with your Faculty Advisor before the Convergence Meeting. Send a cover letter, agenda, and other supportive materials to Degree Committee members at least one week before the meeting.

Convergence Meeting Flow Chart



Advance Materials
(Send one week in advance)
Agenda
Theory Paper outline
Consultation Project Framing Document
Winter 2006 Quarterly Synthesis

Follow-Up Materials
Convergence Meeting Notes

**Plan Ahead!**

Your Progress Meeting will help ensure a smooth and successful Candidacy Meeting.

Meeting #3: Progress

Intention

During Summer 2006 you will write your Theory Paper and do some general exploration for Consultation Project possibilities. In the Fall 2006 Quarter you will select a project and create your Consultation Project design. The Progress Meeting is a key time to review your design with your committee before you begin work on your project. The Progress Meeting also helps ensure that expectations of all committee members – including you – will be met at the final Candidacy Meeting. The Progress Meeting is held in late November/December of 2006.

Purpose of the Progress Meeting

- Progress review for both OSR program requirements and individual Learning Contract
- Discuss learning from Theory Paper and how it will inform your Consultation Project
- Discuss Consultation Project, with an emphasis on getting committee feedback on project design considerations
- Clarify Degree Committee expectations for the Consultation Project and Candidacy Meeting
- Obtain advisory input and approval before proceeding

Progress Meeting Timeline:

Summer 2006:

- Write your Theory Paper
- Explore Consultation Project possibilities

Fall 2006:

- Select Consultation Project
- Write Consultation Project Design Document
- Schedule and conduct your Progress Meeting by the end of the Fall 2006 quarter

Sample Agenda: Progress Meeting

Agenda and goals

Review of Learning Contract progress

Discuss general academic progress

Discuss learning from Theory Paper and its relationship to the Consultation Project

Discuss Consultation Project Design:

- Project purposes

- Proposed approach, including theory base, models and methodologies

- Proposed work plan

- Proposed evaluation process and criteria

Date and time for Candidacy Meeting

Next steps and closure

Meeting #4 Candidacy

Learning Intentions

The Candidacy phase is a time for demonstrating your competency in designing and delivering whole systems change within an organization. During this phase, you will test your academic learning, your design abilities and your own unique models, concepts or methodologies through your Consultation Project. At the end of this phase, you will present your Consultation Project to your Degree Committee.

Purpose of the Candidacy Meeting

The ideal outcome of the Candidacy Meeting is for your Degree Committee to recommend your Faculty Advisor advance your status to that of a Candidate for a Master of Arts in Organizational Design and Renewal. This is done via a formal presentation of your Consultation Project, including the intended project outcomes, design, implementation, actual outcomes, client feedback, and assessment of your learning. In addition, you will present your progress toward achieving the learning goals contained within your Learning Contract.



Before the Candidacy Meeting...

Send an agenda and supporting documents to Degree Committee members so that they receive them at least one week in advance. Your Faculty Advisor should review all documentation before it is distributed to the whole committee.

The Candidacy Meeting is also a time to demonstrate your competency in designing and conducting a professional meeting presentation. As such, it is the most formal of the four Degree Committee meetings.

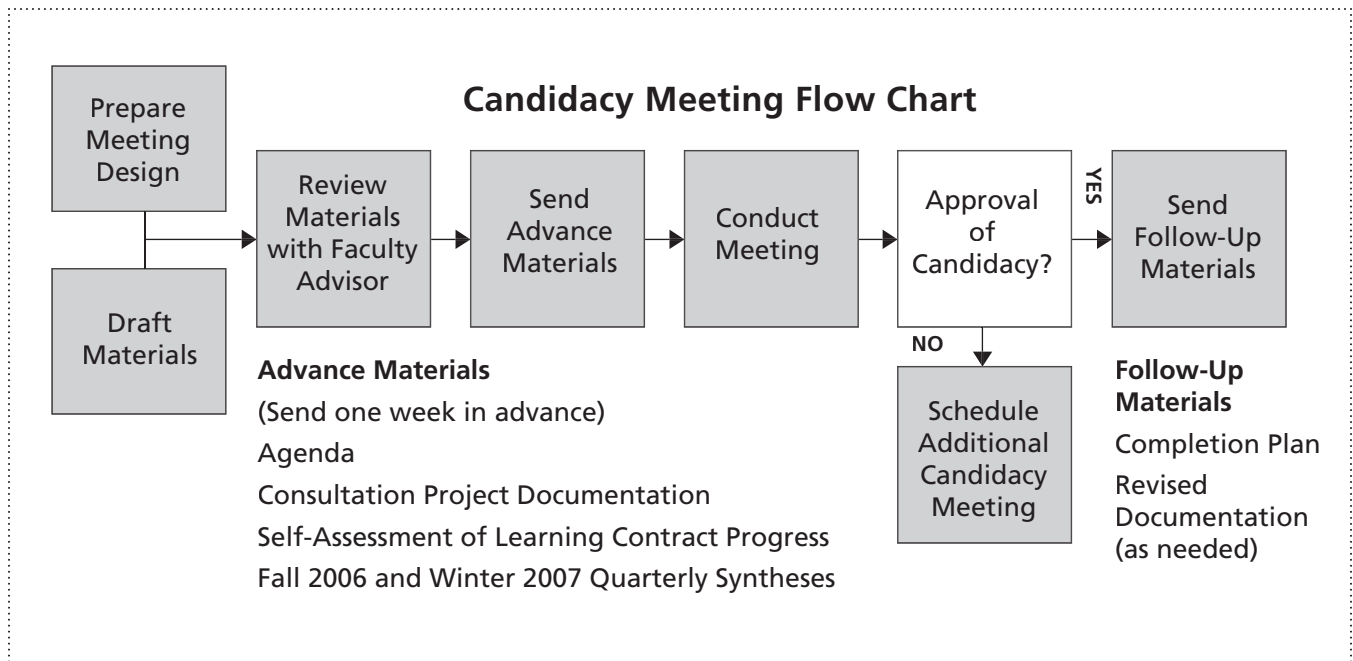
Candidacy Meeting Timeline

Winter Quarter 2007

- Conduct Consultation Project

Spring Quarter 2007

- Finalize Consultation Project work for Candidacy presentation
- Prepare Consultation Project documentation (Executive Summary, Project Design Document, Summary of Outcomes, and other supporting material if needed)
- Schedule and conduct Candidacy meeting (The Candidacy Meeting must occur on or before May 4, 2007 to allow for tasks outlined in the Completion Plan to be addressed and evaluation to occur in time for graduation)
- Outline Completion Plan: In consultation with your Degree Committee, develop a Completion Plan that lists any additional work to be completed before graduation



Sample Agenda: Candidacy Meeting

- Purpose of the Meeting and Agenda Review
- Consultation Project:
 - Formal presentation (including key project documentation such as the Executive Summary, Project Design Document, and Summary of Outcomes)
 - Committee discussion
- Learning Contract and Program Requirements Evaluation:
 - To what extent have Learning Goals been met?
 - What, if any, additional work is necessary to complete the Learning Contract? What additional program requirements remain? (This will be included in the Completion Plan)
 - Determine if/how the Degree Committee will be involved in reviewing any uncompleted work
- Learning Synthesis and Continuance:
 - Looking back over the entire program experience, what are the significant shifts in your personal and professional development? (This will be information to incorporate into your Exit Statement)
 - Looking back over your life/work goals exercise, your Learning Goals progress, and your developing new interests, what is your plan for continued personal and professional learning? (This will be information to incorporate into your Continuance Plan)
- Approval of Candidacy (or scheduling of an additional Candidacy meeting)
- Summarize Next Steps and Bring Closure to the Degree Committee
- Celebrate!



Completion Plan

It is not uncommon for there to be a few “loose ends” that must be completed before graduation. These will be outlined in a “Completion Plan” at the Candidacy Meeting.

Next Steps

The Seattle University graduation ceremony is a time for all SU graduates to celebrate their achievements. As an OSR graduate, you will also attend a separate certification ceremony where you will receive a Diploma of Competency in Systems Renewal Consultation.

OSR 13 Degree Committee Travel Reimbursement Policy For Remote Students

January 2006 - June 2007

Introduction:

The OSR Program recognizes the benefits of making it possible for remote students (those outside WA and OR) to build a Degree Committee either locally or in Seattle. In addition, we also realize this creates additional travel requirements for remote students, Degree Committee peers and/or Faculty Advisors. This policy seeks to respect and balance the needs for choice, flexibility and the associated costs.

For remote students who hold Degree Committees meetings in their local city:

If a remote student elects to hold their meetings in their local city, the OSR Program will pay the costs of the student's Advisor for travel to all four meetings and for the OSR Peer Student to attend two meetings. It is assumed that the OSR Peer would participate in the other meetings via teleconference or would elect to attend by having their travel costs covered in some other manner.

For remote students who have Degree Committees based in Seattle:

If a remote student decides to have their Degree Committee based in Seattle, there are savings to be shared since neither Faculty nor Peers will be required to travel. For this reason the OSR Program will pay the travel costs for three of a remote student's Degree Committee meetings *even when they coincide with an OSR session*.

For local students with a remote peer on their Degree Committee:

If a student selects a remote student as their OSR Peer, the OSR Program requests that the student schedule their Degree Committee meetings to coincide with an OSR session. Ideally it is best to schedule Degree Committee meetings the evening before or morning after the session so both students are not exhausted from the session itself.

This precludes the remote student from incurring any additional travel costs unless they prefer to do so. We recommend that a student taking this route schedule ALL of their Degree Committee meetings at the time they confirm the participation of their members, since there is minimal flexibility around available meeting dates (please first confirm the dates with your Advisor).

OSR Field Advisor Approval Form

Student's name

Address

Peer Advisor's name

Address

Field Advisor's name

Address:

Phone (work)

(home)

e-mail

Rationale:

Field Advisor's name

Address:

Phone (work)

(home)

e-mail

Rationale:

Approved by: Faculty Advisor

Date

