Graduate Program Handbook

Department of Science and Technology Studies
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

May 2017

(Note: This version of the Graduate Handbook was revised by the graduate committee during AY2011-2012, revised in spring 2013, and circulated to the department faculty for approval September 2013. Updates were added, with faculty approval, in Spring 2015, Spring 2016, and Spring 2017.)

Table of Contents

QUICK REFERENCE PAGE

STS Graduate Program Web Page: http://www.sts.rpi.edu
Resources for STS Grad Students (internal program wiki): http://stsgradresources.wikispaces.com/

STS at Rensselaer

Science and Technology Studies (STS) was born of the realization that urgent social challenges are rooted in scientific worldviews and technological practices. It is a multidisciplinary social science and humanities field devoted to critical inquiry about the mutual shaping of science, technology, and society. Rensselaer established the first Ph.D.-granting STS Department in the United States. It is a world-class group of students and faculty, globally renowned for research on the cultural, historical, economic, political, and social dimensions of scientific and technological society.

Your Advisor

See your advisor first about almost everything. The Office of Graduate Education specifies that you meet with your advisor each Spring semester to review your progress, update your plan of study, and complete and file a Doctoral Student Yearly Review (DSYR) form.

The Graduate Program Director assigns all incoming students an interim adviser upon entering the program. In the case of students who enter the program funded under a specific research grant, the faculty member holding that grant will serve as their adviser. A student may later choose a different member of the faculty as her or his adviser. Since this process involves balancing multiple considerations, the student should consult with both their current and prospective advisers and the Graduate Program Director to ensure a smooth transition.

More information about advising and mentoring can be found in this Handbook.

Graduate Student Services Administrator

Jennifer Mumby, Sage 4305, x4784, email: mumbyj@rpi.edu.

See GSSA about forms and paperwork. GSSA submits all forms to the Office of Graduate Education electronically once they are signed. Please maintain your own file in electronic and/or paper form.

Graduate Program Director (2017-2020)

Atsushi Akera, Sage 5206, x2314, akeraa@rpi.edu

See GPD with questions about paperwork, course and program requirements, and other matters if your advisor cannot answer them. Please keep the GPD informed of all plans regarding your progress to degree, including when you intend to finish various requirements, when you need to go on leave, or other matters.

STS GRADUATE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

[adopted by the STS faculty in Spring 2017]

Vision and Mission of the STS PhD Program

Science and Technology Studies (STS) was born of the realization that urgent social challenges are rooted in scientific worldviews and technological practices. It is a multidisciplinary social science and humanities field devoted to critical inquiry about the mutual shaping of science, technology, and society.

The mission of the Rensselaer PhD program is to attract and mentor a diverse cohort of future STS scholars and to prepare them with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to pursue research-oriented professions in academic, government, and private institutions.

Graduates of our program are able to conduct cutting-edge research based in three interlocking practices:

1. Scholarly analysis of contemporary and historical cultures of research and innovation.
2. Critique of the public policies, social practices, and political-economic institutions that shape, and are shaped by, scientific discovery and technological design.
3. Direct participation in collaborative projects that bring about change in the domains of science, medicine, design, and engineering.

Our curriculum guides students to attend to social justice, to imagine alternatives (past, present, and future), and to address topical issues through "engaged STS." Our PhD students learn to see their scholarship as a vector for change in the world, both inside and outside academia.

Teaching and Learning Objectives

Graduates of the PhD program will demonstrate:

1) Conversant knowledge of the history and diverse branches of the field of STS. This includes demonstrating:
   a. Familiarity with basic concepts in STS.
   b. Conversance in the broader theoretical and scholarly traditions that inform and intersect with STS.
   c. Knowledge of faculty interests and expertise.
   d. Familiarity with significant and/or emerging areas within STS (example: disaster studies; design research; engineering studies; disabilities studies)
   e. Awareness of ongoing scholarly conversations in STS and cognate fields.
2) Deep understanding of at least one of the broad, constitutive disciplines of STS (such as history, anthropology, sociology, political science, ecological economics, and other disciplinary studies of science, technology, and medicine), or major theoretical traditions that are recognized in STS (feminist theory, postcolonial theory, posthumanism).
3) Interdisciplinary fluency in a chosen research area (including scholarly research and broader conversations). This includes the ability to identify literatures that are relevant to a research topic and write a literature review essay.
4) Capability to produce scholarly work that draws upon areas of departmental strength and that also pushes STS as a field, by, for example:

       a. Making valuable contributions to the body of knowledge
       b. Exploring connections with other disciplines
       c. Reaching multiple audiences
       d. Making compelling arguments
       e. Challenging the boundaries of the field
       f. Critiquing the biases and values of STS itself, constructively

5) Competence with multiple research methods (for example, archival research, interviews, participant observation, discourse analysis, case study research, comparative analysis, etc.).

6) Capability to develop research and funding proposals.

7) Recognition of the moral/political/normative/intersectional dimensions of research, including one's own.

8) Awareness of diverse pathways for academic and other research-oriented careers, and the professional orientation and skills necessary for entering those careers.

9) Strong teaching and mentoring skills.

10) Scholarly writing, presenting, and publishing skills.

11) Knowledge and skills for collaborative, participatory, and/or community based research and design.

OVERVIEW OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

[added to Handbook in Spring 2017]

MS+PhD Degree Requirements

MS in STS: 30 credit hours and a written capstone project (e.g. literature review)	
Required courses STSS 6010 (Concepts in STS) STSS 6200 (Science Studies) STSS 6100 (Science and Technology Policy) STSS 6040 (Technology Studies) STSS 6120 (Advanced Research Methods) or a suitable methods substitution	Elective courses 15 additional credits in 4000/6000-level course work/independent study, e.g.: *Second methods course* *Theory course* *STS topics course* *3 credits of practicum electives* *3 credits of Independent study*

PhD in STS: 42 additional credit hours and a portfolio, literature review, dissertation proposal, and dissertation	
Required courses (in addition to requirements for the MS) STSS 696X (Social Theory) or a suitable theory substitution	Elective courses 9 additional credits in 4000/6000-level course work/independent study, e.g.: *Second theory course* *Second STS topics course* *3 credits of practicum electives*
30 dissertation credits	

Year-by-Year Expectations

First Year

- Apply for graduate fellowships (e.g. NSF Graduate Research Fellowship)
- Take some required courses
- Design a Plan of Study
- Begin creating written work to include in your portfolio

Second Year

- For those wishing to apply for an MS degree, draft separate Plans of Study for the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees and submit Graduate Student Request Change of Status Form
- Assemble portfolio over summer

Third Year

- Turn in portfolio at start of fall semester
- Complete required coursework
- Choose dissertation advisor and committee; submit Nomination of Doctoral Committee form at least one month prior to the Candidacy Exam
- Register for dissertation credit to prepare proposal
- Complete CITI Responsible Conduct of Research training
- Write and defend literature review and dissertation proposal (Candidacy Exam); submit Record of Candidacy Exam form
- Submit MS Degree Application for May graduation

- Apply for HASS Fellowship
- Apply for external funding for dissertation project (e.g. NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant)
- If needed, submit Human Subjects Protocol to the Institutional Review Board for approval

Fourth Year

- Carry out dissertation research
- Prepare at least one article for publication
- Continue seeking research funding as needed

Fifth year

- Submit full draft of dissertation to committee at end of Fall semester (see Handbook for specific deadlines for May and August graduation)
- Schedule and announce a dissertation defense
- Complete revisions suggested by the committee and submit penultimate draft of dissertation one month in advance of the dissertation defense
- Complete items on the Doctoral Dissertation Checklist
- Submit Degree Application for the PhD by the Institute deadline
- Defend dissertation by the Institute deadline
- Submit dissertation to ProQuest and the Record of Dissertation Exam form by the Institute deadline

PhD-Only Degree Requirements

PhD in STS: 72 credit hours plus a portfolio, literature review, dissertation proposal, and dissertation	
Required courses	Elective courses
STSS 6200 (Science Studies) STSS 6100 (Science and Technology Policy) STSS 6040 (Technology Studies) STSS 6120 (Advanced Research Methods) or a suitable methods substitution STSS 6962 (Social Theory) or a suitable theory substitution	27 additional credits in 4000/6000-level course work/independent study, e.g.: *Concepts in STS* *Second methods course* *Second theory course* *Two STS topics courses* *6 credits of practicum electives* *6 credits of independent study*
30 dissertation credits	

Year-by-Year Expectations

First Year

- Apply for graduate fellowships (e.g. NSF Graduate Research Fellowship)
- Take some required courses
- Design a Plan of Study
- Begin creating written work to include in your portfolio
- Assemble portfolio over summer

Second Year

- Turn in portfolio at start of fall semester
- Choose dissertation advisor and committee; submit Nomination of Doctoral Committee form at least one month prior to the Candidacy Exam
- Register for dissertation credit to prepare proposal

- Complete CITI Responsible Conduct of Research training
- Write and defend literature review and dissertation proposal (Candidacy Exam); submit Record of Candidacy Exam form
- Submit MS Degree Application for May graduation
- Apply for HASS Fellowship
- Apply for external funding for dissertation project (e.g. NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant)
- If needed, submit Human Subjects Protocol to the Institutional Review Board for approval

Third Year
- Carry out dissertation research
- Prepare at least one article for publication
- Continue seeking research funding as needed

Fourth year
- Submit full draft of dissertation to committee at end of Fall semester (see Handbook for specific deadlines for May and August graduation)
- Schedule and announce a dissertation defense
- Complete revisions suggested by the committee and submit penultimate draft of dissertation one month in advance of the dissertation defense
- Complete items on the Doctoral Dissertation Checklist
- Submit Degree Application for the PhD by the Institute deadline
- Defend dissertation by the Institute deadline
- Submit dissertation to ProQuest and the Record of Dissertation Exam form by the Institute deadline

Co-Terminal MS Degree Requirements

The co-terminal master's degree program is designed for academically strong Rensselaer students pursuing an undergraduate degree in Science and Technology Studies, Sustainability Studies, or Design, Innovation, and Society, and who wish to continue their studies toward a master's degree. Students take graduate STS courses during their fourth and fifth years of study at Rensselaer. Completing the M.S. degree in STS requires a 6-credit-hour master's thesis or internship, which students complete by taking independent study credit with their graduate faculty advisor.

MS in STS: 30 credit hours, including a written capstone project	
Required courses	Elective courses
STSS 6010 (Concepts in STS) STSS 6200 (Science Studies) STSS 6100 (Science and Technology Policy) STSS 6040 (Technology Studies) STSS 6120 (Advanced Research Methods) or a suitable methods substitution	15 additional credits in course work/ independent study, e.g.: • *STS theory course* • *STS topics course* • *3 credits of practicum electives* • *6 credits of Independent Study*

PROCESS FOR ADVANCING TO CANDIDACY

The graduate program in STS has a multi-step process for qualifying to advance to the dissertation stage. First, toward the end of your second year (first year for PhD-only students) you begin to assemble a portfolio of your writing that demonstrates breadth in your early exploration of STS topics and literatures; this is called the comprehensive exam. Next, over the course of your third year (second year for PhD-only students), you draft both a literature review that demonstrates depth of understanding of the area(s) which will inform your dissertation research, and a dissertation research proposal. You circulate these documents in January to faculty members you would like to have as chair and members of your dissertation committee. Based on your new committee's feedback, you revise your literature review and dissertation research proposal throughout the spring semester. Finally, you submit and orally defend your combined literature review and dissertation research proposal at the end of the spring semester.

After successfully completing each of these steps you are qualified to write your dissertation, advanced to candidacy, and are considered ABD ("all but dissertation").

STS Portfolio (Comprehensive Exam)
[Revised by the Graduate Program Committee in Spring 2017]

Purpose of the Portfolio
Before students begin designing a dissertation project, they are expected to demonstrate familiarity with basic concepts in STS, knowledge of the major scholarly traditions that inform and intersect with STS, and awareness of ongoing scholarly conversations in STS. Student learning in these areas is evaluated with the portfolio review, which is intended to demonstrate broad (but not necessarily deep) familiarity with the interdisciplinary field of STS. Portfolio contents will mainly consist of papers written for STS courses, but may also include additional writing intended to convey the range of a student's exploration of the STS literature. Passing the portfolio review signals the achievement of the following criteria:

- The student has an emerging understanding of the breadth and diversity of the field of STS, and is starting to find his or her place in it.
- The student is building strength in at least two of the following areas: Science Studies, Technology Studies, Science and Technology Policy, and/or another broad area of STS scholarship, *to be agreed upon between the student and the chair of the portfolio review committee*.
- The student is able to accurately represent the work of diverse STS scholars.
- The student is able to compare, synthesize, apply, and critique an array of STS perspectives and ideas.

No other criteria shall be used to evaluate a student's portfolio.

Timing
PhD-only students submit a portfolio at the start of their second year in the STS program at Rensselaer. MS+PhD students submit a portfolio at the start of their third year in the STS program at Rensselaer.

Portfolios must be submitted to the portfolio review committee before the end of the second week of the Fall term.

Portfolio Contents

There is no fixed structure of the portfolio. This allows students to most effectively highlight their unique strengths. However, the portfolio can be no longer than 44,000 words, including references, and must include the following kinds of writing:

- A table of contents
- A detailed cover statement (1000-2000 words). This statement should briefly summarize the portfolio elements and explain how the portfolio demonstrates achievement of all four criteria listed above.
- Longer writings, including papers written for courses, article manuscripts, or research proposals. The number and content of these pieces are up to the student but must not exceed a combined total of 24,000 words,
- Shorter writings such as book reviews, analytical memos, reading annotations, blog posts, op-eds, course syllabi, short essays on topics in STS, or similar writings. The number and content of these pieces are up to the student but must not exceed a combined total of 18,000 words.

All portfolio contents should be combined into one PDF document and submitted via email to the portfolio review committee chair. The committee may also request a hard copy.

Portfolio Review Committee

Each spring, the Graduate Program Director, in consultation with the department head, will appoint a portfolio review committee consisting of at least five STS professors, representing the department's diversity of approaches and expertise. One member of the committee will serve as Chair. Committee membership will be determined each year; the general expectation is that faculty will serve 2 years and rotate off every third year.

Toward the end of the spring semester, the committee will meet with the students who are planning to submit a portfolio the following Fall. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the proposed content and to provide advice on the preparation of the portfolio over the summer. Soon after this meeting, the committee chair will assign each student to two committee members who will have primary responsibility for reviewing their portfolio. The committee chair will attempt to match students with readers who have expertise in their broad areas of interest.

The committee chair will distribute all of the portfolios to the full committee upon receiving them at the end of the second week of the Fall term. Within three weeks of receiving the portfolios, exam committee members will meet to evaluate the portfolios, using a rubric that reflects the four criteria listed in the Purpose section, above. For each student, one or two of the committee members will be assigned to write a letter summarizing the full committee's assessment of the portfolio.

Passing the Portfolio Review

Students are considered to be in good standing once they have passed the portfolio review process. In the case of serious deficiencies, the committee will require that the resubmit a revised/new portfolio based on the committee's feedback, giving a time frame in which this is to be completed (typically three months). If the revised portfolio has still not improved sufficiently, the portfolio review committee will recommend that the graduate program director and department head make a determination about standing.

Preparation Tips

- When selecting topics for seminar papers and other assignments, bear in mind that you are also writing for your STS portfolio. Choose a broad range of topics, and endeavor to demonstrate your familiarity with key thinkers and basic concepts in STS.
- Shorter writings, such as book reviews, reading annotations, or a syllabus (e.g. Introduction to Technology Studies), can be used to demonstrate familiarity with a greater range of theories and thinkers. It's a good idea to write short commentaries or annotations on texts that you read for classes, even if your professors do not require it.
- Consult with your advisor and with members of the portfolio review committee to identify gaps in your preparation. (For example, a student choosing Technology Studies as an area may recognize that s/he has not written anything about social construction of technology.) Make a plan for summer writing based on this self-assessment.
- It is a good idea to write short introductions to each of the longer writings in the portfolio, to contextualize them and situate the work in your intellectual trajectory. You may comment on how you would revise a paper to address its shortcomings.
- It is advisable to group your shorter writings together in meaningful ways, and write short introductions to those clusters.

Literature Review and Dissertation Proposal

In the year following the portfolio exam, students are expected to constitute a dissertation committee and write and revise both a *literature review* and a *dissertation research proposal*. There are no departmental requirements on length or format of these two documents; they should be tailored to the needs of the student and the committee. For each document, a reasonable length is 5,000 to 7,500 words, plus bibliographies.

The proposal should clearly state the problem or topic to be studied, indicate how it relates to the STS literature, describe the methods to be used, and lay out a projected schedule and plan of work. Chapter summaries, while clearly open to change, are strongly advised but ultimately up to the dissertation chair and committee. Some of the literature review can be condensed and included in the dissertation proposal.

Students should consider the year during which they prepare their literature review and their dissertation research proposal as time required to fully develop the theoretical perspectives and disciplinary and methodological competencies required to carry out their original research project. This may include the use of any remaining course credits towards this end through regular courses, independent readings courses, or research seminars.

Before the end of the spring semester following the submission of the portfolio exam, students should have a dissertation committee formally approved by the Office of Graduate Education. Students also should complete the literature review and dissertation research proposal, and defend both in a meeting with their full dissertation committee. This timing allows for revisions, if necessary, over the summer following the defense of the literature review and dissertation proposal. It also enables students to take two full years to research and write their dissertations.

Fall semester:
- Discuss ideas and plans with faculty who are likely to serve as committee members.

- With faculty guidance, review the literature(s) that will inform the dissertation research, write a draft literature review essay, and write a first draft of the dissertation research proposal.

Spring semester:
- Early in the semester, circulate drafts to potential dissertation committee members, including potential committee chair. Faculty members may request changes or additions to the dissertation proposal or project as a condition of their membership.
- Decide on committee membership. Submit committee formation form to OGE (with approval for external committee member, if relevant).
- Based on feedback from your committee chair and members, revise and extend both the review of the literature(s) and the dissertation research proposal.
- Schedule and carry out defense of literature review and proposal; submit appropriate form to OGE.

Dissertation Committee

Your committee should consist of your research advisor (the dissertation committee chair), two additional faculty members in the STS department, and one person outside the department (either a Rensselaer faculty member, or, preferably, someone from another institution). Details about the process of appointing a committee can be found in the Rensselaer Catalog.

The committee must be approved by the Office of Graduate Education prior to your dissertation proposal defense. The form for proposing the committee must be signed by the STS graduate program director and sent to OGE via the graduate student services administrator. If you have elected to include a committee member external to Rensselaer, the STS graduate program director must supply a statement justifying the inclusion of that committee member and the cv of the that individual. The student should prepare these materials for the graduate program director so that the rationale is clear.

Dissertation committees can be changed with approval from OGE. You should consult with the graduate program director before starting this process. When an advisor leaves Rensselaer, there is a six-month grace period during which s/he can continue as official advisor. After that time a new advisor must be appointed. The departing advisor may continue to serve as an external committee member, but this must be approved by OGE through the process detailed above. Again, consult with the graduate program director for relevant experience.

Candidacy Exam

The oral defense of the literature review and dissertation proposal has two objectives: (1) to determine that you have the ability to carry out the proposed research; (2) to determine that STS (and Rensselaer in the person of the outside committee member) has the faculty resources to properly supervise your dissertation. Failure in the defense can result in changing the proposal, or devising a new one, but not in your dismissal from the program. The dissertation proposal defense is an opportunity to present your research in progress in a collegial context, so it is considered public, although in the past most of these examinations have been attended only by the student and the dissertation committee.

Once you have successfully defended your literature review and dissertation proposal, you will be considered to have advanced to candidacy. A form signed by all members of the dissertation committee must be sent to the Office of Graduate Education at this point, again via the graduate student services administrator. The advisor thus certifies that course work is completed, the comprehensive examination (portfolio review) passed, and dissertation proposal approved. OGE will respond with a memo and certificate of candidacy.

PH.D. DISSERTATION

The dissertation is an extended piece of original research within the field of Science and Technology Studies. While you will work most closely with your dissertation advisor, who will chair your dissertation committee, you should also work closely with the other members of your committee. All committee members should be given sufficient opportunity to express their views with regards to your work, your project, and your progress, and contribute to the development of your dissertation. (Reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of STS, in our PhD program dissertation committee members are not "readers" but expect to be active members of a dissertation committee.)

The detailed requirements for committee meetings, committee member input, and student presentation of interim research findings (i.e. field work reports) and early dissertation drafts are left to the chair of the dissertation committee, upon the consultation with the other committee members.

Formatting

Because your dissertation will be submitted electronically to ProQuest, and because it must go through a rigorous approval process at the Office of Graduate Education, it is strongly advised that you follow the formatting and submission guidelines here: http://gradoffice.rpi.edu/update.do?catcenterkey=31 from the beginning of your writing of the dissertation. It is also strongly advised that you choose a citation style (i.e. MLA, APA, or Chicago) that is represented on the website of the Purdue On-line Writing Library (OWL) http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/

Due Dates

When a May graduation is planned, the student must present a complete draft of the dissertation to his or her committee at least four months before the planned defense. For example, for a defense on April 1, the committee must have a complete draft of the full dissertation by December 1 of the previous year.

When an August or December graduation is planned, the student must present a complete draft of the dissertation to his or her committee at least six months before the planned defense. For example, for a defense on July 1, the committee must have a complete draft of the full dissertation by January 1. This ensures that committee members have adequate time to suggest revisions during the academic year and that students have adequate time to complete those revisions before the dissertation defense.

Committee members must supply detailed feedback within one month of receiving the draft. The student must then revise the dissertation draft and provide the version to be defended to the committee at least three weeks prior to the defense. Any departure from this schedule must be brought to the faculty by the committee chair for discussion and approval.

Dissertation Defense

When the dissertation is finished, a defense is scheduled, announced to the public, and conducted. It is imperative that you consult the OGE website for precise deadlines for this and all other important milestones in the process (e.g., filing a degree application with the Registrar at the beginning of the semester in which you will graduate). Note especially the deadline for electronic submission of your dissertation to the Office of Graduate Education. After arranging a date with your committee, you should work with the graduate student services administrator to reserve a room for your defense well in advance, and to send out a public

announcement. Flyers and electronic announcements of the time, date, and place of this presentation should be posted in the department at least a week ahead.

The dissertation advisor chairs this presentation. During the public portion of the meeting, the chair should allow time for questions from the dissertation committee, followed by general questions from those attending. As a general guideline, the meeting should last an hour and a half to two hours. After the question-and-answer period, the dissertation committee meets by itself to determine whether the candidate has passed.

On occasion, the defense is "passed" but the committee may require changes or additions to the written dissertation. The chair will work out a timeline and process for such revisions, which may necessitate a deferred graduation date. The full committee signs the cover sheet of the dissertation to indicate a satisfactory defense. In addition to requirements set by the Office of Graduate Education, a copy of the dissertation must be deposited with the graduate student services administrator, to be available to other students and advisors in the department.

MENTORING AND ADVISING

Explanation of Mentoring Roles

Mentoring refers to the various forms of guidance that students receive throughout their graduate studies. At each stage of the graduate program, the student, the student's advisor, and the graduate program (that is, the entire faculty under the leadership of the graduate program director) share joint responsibility for ensuring the student's satisfactory achievement.

The graduate program director (GPD) assigns incoming students to an academic advisor. Incoming students may indicate a preference for an academic advisor, or the GPD will seek to match students and advisors based on shared research interests. As students begin developing a dissertation project, they choose a faculty member to serve as a research advisor (dissertation chair). The research advisor may be the same person as the academic advisor or a different professor, and typically should be selected based on mutual research interests and compatible expectations for the advising relationship.

Students choose a dissertation committee during the time that they are writing their literature review and dissertation proposal. The committee should consist of the research advisor (the dissertation committee chair), two additional faculty members in the STS department, and one person outside the department (either a Rensselaer faculty member or someone from another institution). A second advisor may serve as a dissertation co-chair. Details about the process of appointing a committee can be found in the Rensselaer Catalog.

It is appropriate for a student to develop mentoring relationships with faculty mentors beyond the academic or research advisor. Students are encouraged to seek guidance from dissertation committee members and other professors.

Mentoring Guidelines and Responsibilities

This is an outline of the interconnected responsibilities of each of the parties at each stage of the graduate program. Clearly, every situation is different, and many mentoring practices cannot, or should not, be standardized. However, these guidelines provide a basis for graduate students, advisors, and the graduate program to discuss expectations and reflect on how best to meet our varied responsibilities.

General Responsibilities

PROGRAM (THE ENTIRE STS FACULTY, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE GPD):

- Make program guidelines, timelines, and procedures for completion of degree requirements explicit and available to all.
- Provide annual assessments of all full-time students in the program; set up mechanisms to provide feedback to students on their progress. Maintain records on attrition and time to degree.
- Supervise advising so that all students have an adviser who is aware of program requirements and available on campus.
- Recognize that students are apprentice scholars, teachers, and researchers, and support them accordingly; inform students of opportunities for research and professional development.

- Provide oversight (through the department head and graduate program committee) of new grant applications in order to maximize positive impacts on graduate training and research.
- Develop a community within the program and create opportunities for faculty and students to come together to discuss common issues—academic, ethical, pedagogical, professional—and to present their work to colleagues.
- Treat all students fairly. Work to make standards of funding equitable and all students aware of funding opportunities. Seek opportunities for external funding (e.g., training grants).

ADVISOR (ACADEMIC OR RESEARCH):

- Know program and university guidelines and requirements.
- Be available for consultation. Initiate contact with students. Attend program colloquia and social events.
- Seek support for students through research grants; advise students on seeking and writing proposals for external fellowships and research support.
- Respect students' ideas and abilities. Encourage students to become intellectually independent.
- Transmit the skills, norms, and ethical values of the discipline to students; recognize that faculty members are often role models for graduate students.
- Assume responsibility and provide opportunities for students' intellectual and professional development. In particular, facilitate student publishing opportunities.
- Be mindful of the advisor's position of authority, and avoid entering into relationships with students (financial, romantic, etc.) that might interfere with professional judgment or responsibilities. See the Faculty Handbook and Employee Handbook for Institute rules on sexual harassment and romantic and sexual relationships between supervisors and subordinates.

STUDENT:

- Be committed to a high standard of excellence and integrity in all graduate work; follow the guidelines for academic integrity in the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- Know program guidelines and expectations.
- Learn independently when possible; seek guidance when needed. Respect faculty members' time.
- Learn to manage time so that all responsibilities are met.
- Seek funding to supplement institutional and faculty sources of support.
- Participate in program colloquia and other events.
- Respect the interpersonal boundaries set by the advisor and other professors.

Coursework

PROGRAM (THE ENTIRE STS FACULTY, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE GPD):

- Publish accurate course descriptions.
- Provide the courses needed to fulfill university and program requirements so that students are able to complete coursework in a timely manner.
- Work with the department head and deans to manage faculty leaves so that adequate course offerings are available.
- Periodically assess the content and workload of graduate courses.

ADVISOR OR COURSE INSTRUCTOR:
- Know the sequence of courses that students must take to progress through the program satisfactorily.
- Recognize that graduate students often look to faculty members as role models for their own teaching.
- Conduct classes in a way that encourages students to learn creatively, independently, and rigorously.
- Indicate clearly how all work will be evaluated.
- Return all graded work promptly.

STUDENT:
- Work closely with a faculty adviser to develop a Plan of Study that provides the necessary grounding in the field to allow timely progression to the dissertation stage.
- Attend classes regularly and work industriously.
- Complete all assignments honestly and in a timely fashion, working independently when expected or in teams when appropriate.

Examinations

PROGRAM (THE ENTIRE STS FACULTY, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE GPD):
- Provide broad general guidelines for exam preparation.
- Inform students early in their graduate careers of the number and kinds of examinations they will be expected to take.
- Ensure that the examinations are fair from year to year, both in developing and in evaluating them.
- Set up procedures so that examinations are evaluated and returned in a timely manner.

ADVISOR (ACADEMIC OR RESEARCH):
- Work closely with students to develop appropriate methods to prepare for examinations and help them draw up realistic reading lists as necessary.

STUDENT:
- Maintain acceptable progress toward the degree by taking the comprehensive (portfolio) exam and scheduling the qualifying examination (literature review and dissertation proposal defense), as soon as possible.
- Block out the necessary amount of time for sufficient preparation for examinations and stick to the schedule.
- Work with peer study groups to prepare for examinations or with individual faculty members to plan a course of reading as appropriate.

Dissertation/Research

PROGRAM (THE ENTIRE STS FACULTY, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE GPD):
- Help students to find a faculty member to chair their dissertation committee.

- See that committee members and students work together amicably so that students may complete degrees expeditiously.
- Treat students as apprentice researchers and teachers, whose efforts require guidance and supervision by qualified faculty.

RESEARCH ADVISOR:
- Help students create appropriate dissertation committees.
- Work with the student to develop a suitable topic on a problem that the student has participated in defining.
- Provide students with a full range of experiences to ensure that they will he prepared to succeed professionally.
- Teach students the research methodologies and the library and field skills that will enable them to become capable, independent scholars.
- Help students to understand the ethical implications of the research in which they are engaged, and provide them with the appropriate professional, federal, and university guidelines that govern its conduct.
- Discuss collaborative issues such as ownership and sharing of data and laboratory notebooks, attribution of contributions to the research, and policies on patents and copyrights. Acknowledge students' contributions fairly.
- View students as apprentice researchers, not as technicians.
- Recognize that providing fellowship or assistantship support to students does not entitle faculty members to ask students to perform personal or other nonacademic services.
- Read and comment on submitted proposals and chapters promptly.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:
- Attend committee meetings and defenses when scheduled.
- Provide guidance on the content and structure of the literature review and dissertation proposal.
- Read and comment on submitted proposals and chapters promptly.

STUDENT:
- Work independently when possible, with a team when appropriate, and seek assistance when necessary.
- Conduct research honestly and report it accurately. Acknowledge the contributions of others. Maintain accurate research records.
- Know and adhere to relevant professional research guidelines.
- Adhere to established timetables and work to complete the degree in a timely manner. Keep advisor and program director informed of results and progress toward the degree.
- Respect the adviser's desire for confidentiality concerning research that has not yet been reported.
- Acknowledge that faculty members have a responsibility to maintain high scholarly standards; be open to suggestions for revising or rethinking research issues.

Professional Development

PROGRAM (THE ENTIRE STS FACULTY, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE GPD):

- Keep records on placement of graduate students and continue to track students after graduation.
- Provide opportunities for students to prepare for job search, i.e. mock interviews, workshops on preparing a c.v., etc.
- Structure funding so that all qualified students who wish to teach have an opportunity to do so.
- Inform students of the wide range of nonacademic professional opportunities and how to prepare for such careers.

RESEARCH ADVISOR AND DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:

- Help students find positions when they complete their degrees.
- Maintain a positive attitude toward the broad range of career opportunities available for students and provide advice on how to prepare for such careers.
- Facilitate students' networking at conferences.
- When providing references for students, do so promptly and thoughtfully.
- Advise students on preparation of proposals for professional conferences and manuscripts for publication.
- Help students develop the necessary writing and analytic skills to enable them to publish their research results.

STUDENT:

- Participate actively in academic conferences.
- Prepare and submit articles for publication.
- Give faculty members adequate advance notice when requesting letters of recommendation.
- Take advantage of the workshops and services offered to assist in the job search.
- Maintain a teaching portfolio to document teaching activities.
- Join appropriate professional organizations.
- Be aware of and prepare for a broad range of career opportunities, both academic and non-academic.

If Things Do Not Work Out

When all members of a program take responsibility for the success of graduate students, minor difficulties should not grow into major ones. When problems do arise, the best hope for a solution lies in the honest and open discussion of the issue.

The first task is to discover where the difficulties lie.

- When two people are in conflict, is either party making unreasonable demands?
- Is someone neglecting his or her obligations?
- What reasonable solutions are there for the situation?

Whenever appropriate and possible, a meeting among the concerned parties should be arranged to try to resolve the difficulties. Students and faculty members may bring their concerns to the graduate program

director, who will aid in organizing an appropriate meeting. This may entail a meeting between a student and a faculty member (with or without a mediator, such as the graduate program director), a student and his or her dissertation committee, the graduate program director and a faculty member, etc. Sometimes it may be most effective for all members of the graduate program to get together to air problems and try to come up with a solution.

In situations where it is not appropriate to involve the graduate program director (e.g. there is a perceived conflict of interest), or when an attempted resolution at the department level is unsuccessful, the problem should be brought to the attention of the Office of the Dean of HASS. The primary contact in the Dean's Office is the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. If for any reason the concerned parties have a perceived conflict with the Associate Dean, the contact in the Dean's Office should be the Dean of HASS. Discussing the situation with a dean may help to identify the most promising options for solving the problem. When appropriate, the dean can also take action to help resolve the problem. Inquiries will be treated in a confidential manner, unless a formal complaint is filed.

Problems that are not resolvable within the STS graduate program or the HASS Dean's Office should be brought to the attention of the Office of Graduate Education. In some cases, students may wish to speak confidentially with someone outside of the department or HASS. In that is the case, they should contact the Associate Dean of Graduate Education & Ombudsman (Dennis Gornic), who will handle all conversations confidentially. The Ombudsman may refer issues to the Dean of Graduate Education (Stan Dunn) if action is required on matters of significant academic concern.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support for all Rensselaer graduate students is regulated by the [Graduate Tuition Policy](#). In general, STS graduate students are supported in one of six ways: 1. Rensselaer Fellowships; 2. teaching assistantships; 3. internal research assistantships; 4. HASS Fellowships; 5. external research grants secured by faculty members; and 6. external fellowships secured by the student. Students may not hold simultaneous appointments.

Rensselaer Fellowships

Rensselaer Fellowships are one-year fellowships awarded as part of the admissions process. They are intended to assist in enrolling exceptional women and minority students. They are not renewable, so RF students will be supported through another mechanism after their first year.

HAASS Fellowships

Each spring, students may apply for one of a limited number of HAASS (Humanities, Arts, Architecture, and Social Sciences) Fellowships. These are one year fellowships, but have generally been renewable for a second year after the first-year progress report has been filed. With graduate students from all HASS departments and the School of Architecture eligible for them, these are competitive awards. The ideal time to apply for a HAASS is in your third year, when it can potentially support your final two years of dissertation research, but students may apply in their second year as well. Announcement of the application requirements (generally, a seven-page narrative describing a research project structured according to a specific format) and the deadline is usually made in late February or early March.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are a typical part of a doctoral student's experience and their funding package, and most commonly occur in the form of a Teaching Assistantship (TA) or Research Assistantship (RA). The primary purpose of a TAship is to assist a faculty member in the preparation of a class and its successful execution during an academic semester; the primary purpose of most RAships is to assist a faculty member with their research, including work that the faculty member is contractually obligated to bring to completion under the terms of their research grant.

However, there are other components to both a TAship and RAship that need recognition. These include mentorship in the art of teaching in the case of TAs; and introduction to potentially exciting directions and methods of research that may provide a foundation for, and in some cases, serve as the basis of a dissertation. Faculty members accept graduate students as "junior colleagues." If you are a TA you will find that you are performing certain duties that are essentially the same as those of the faculty. Your opinions and contributions to the class will be valued by your students; they will also be sought by your faculty supervisor. When you are an RA, you will have a close and mutually dependent relationship with your research supervisor and other faculty and students working on the project.

To differing degrees, the student and the faculty member accept responsibility for the successful outcome of these efforts. Students and professors both have certain rights and responsibilities. Students should expect to work designated hours (usually twenty hours a week), and are advised to keep a record of their hours. Faculty should be sufficiently flexible in their expectations (especially with regard to timing of

responsibilities) to allow graduate students to progress with their own education and research. Recognizing the inherent asymmetry in the relationship between professors and students, it is especially important to protect the rights of graduate students. The rights with regards to the labor dimensions of the relationship, including the rights of both students and faculty to file a grievance if responsibilities are not being met or clearly conveyed, are addressed below.

TA Assignments

The most typical form of financial support is the teaching assistantship. TA assignments are made by the graduate program director, in consultation with the department head, relevant faculty, and the graduate students. When the courses that will need TAs are fairly well set (usually late in the preceding semester), provisional assignments are discussed in a meeting. The GPD can change assignments in response to changes in enrollment or other late-breaking developments. The GPD will make every effort to make assignments during the semester prior to the semester in question, keeping graduate student needs and interests in mind.

TAs always work under the direction of a faculty supervisor, who is expected to provide clearly defined expectations in writing. Some examples of TA tasks are: leading discussion sections, moderating online discussions, grading assignments and exams, holding office hours, and compiling instructional materials. Supervisors and graduate assistants should have at least three meetings during the semester to discuss TA progress and work expectations.

TA hours should, in no case, exceed 20 hours in any given week. According to RPI guidelines, appointment dates begin one week before the start of classes and end two days after the last day of final exams, with breaks for Institute holidays and Spring Break.

Appointment start and end dates can be modified by the department in special cases. For example, a student may wish to leave for winter break before the end of finals week, or a supervisor may wish to include TAs as collaborators on course design and preparation over the summer. Any changes to TA start and end dates must be requested at least one month before the proposed change. The proposed arrangement must be submitted in writing by the supervising faculty member and approved by both the student and the GPD.

RA Assignments

If an individual faculty member has a research assistantship available from a source of funds outside the department (e.g. the National Science Foundation), that faculty member is free to approach any student in the department to do the assignment on the basis of the faculty member's needs. Students are free to accept or decline these offers. Once accepted, however, students are obligated to fulfill the assignment, based on the understanding that failure to perform the work can jeopardize a faculty member's research project and contractual obligations. Supervisors of RAs should provide clearly defined expectations, in writing.

For academic year appointments, the RA start date is in mid-August and the end date is at the end of April, with breaks for Institute holidays, Winter Break, and Spring Break. Summer appointments begin in mid-May and end in mid-August. Start and end dates vary slightly each year with the payroll calendar.

Stipends on externally-funded research assistantships must equal or be greater than the Institute approved rate.

Preparation for TAs and RAs

Supervisors of graduate assistants should provide clearly defined expectations, in writing, to their TAs and RAs. TAs and RAs have the responsibility to prepare in advance for their assignments.

For RAs, the faculty member to whom you are assigned will discuss with you her or his needs and expectations. You should try to learn as much as possible about the questions posed, the methods employed, and the goals of the research in which you are employed.

For TAs, if you have or are eligible for a first-time teaching assistantship, you must go through the Office of Graduate Education's teaching orientation. All students who are TAs in their first year must go through this orientation, which requires registering for and satisfactorily completing the zero-credit ADMN course, Academic Orientation Seminar.

International students who are eligible to teach must pass a language examination administered by the Advising and Learning Assistance Center (ALAC).

The faculty member responsible for the course is responsible for supervising TA grading and teaching and for giving advice on both as frequently as possible.

Academic misconduct (cheating on examination and plagiarism) is a problem in higher education, and TAs may well encounter a suspected case. If a graduate assistant suspects wrongdoing, he or she should contact the professor responsible for the course. For official Rensselaer policy on academic dishonesty, see the relevant sections of The Rensselaer Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities.

There is an official Rensselaer policy on sexual harassment, which is found in the Rensselaer Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities. Graduate assistants should familiarize themselves with this policy.

Labor Disputes

To avoid misunderstandings and conflicts, supervisors of graduate assistants should provide clearly defined expectations, in writing, to their TAs and RAs. However, even when a job description is clearly communicated, disagreements sometimes arise about the work responsibilities and performance of TAs and RAs. When those problems do arise, the best hope for a solution lies in the honest and open discussion of the issue. Whenever appropriate and possible, a meeting among the concerned parties should be arranged to try to resolve the difficulties. Supervisors should be willing to consider the concerns raised by TAs or RAs, and graduate students should be open to feedback and concerns expressed by their supervisors.

Sometimes, a dispute cannot be resolved without assistance. In this case, the graduate assistant or the supervisor should bring their concerns to the Graduate Program Director in writing or in person. The GPD may request specific evidence or examples of the problem areas. The GPD will consult with the Department Head to judge the best method of arbitration (e.g. directly stepping in, group meeting, individual counseling, etc). If the labor conflict includes the Department Head, the GPD will work with the graduate program committee to seek a resolution. If the labor conflict includes the GPD, the initial grievance should be presented to the Department Head, who will work with the graduate program committee to find a resolution.

If a graduate assistant believes that it would be inappropriate to attempt to address a labor issue internally within the department, or when an attempted resolution at the department level is unsuccessful, the problem should be brought to the attention of the Office of the Dean of HASS. The primary contact in the Dean's Office is the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. If for any reason the concerned parties have a perceived conflict with the Associate Dean, the contact in the Dean's Office should be the Dean of HASS. Discussing the situation with a dean may help to identify the most promising options for solving the problem. When appropriate, the dean can also take action to help resolve the problem.

Problems that are not resolvable within the STS graduate program or the HASS Dean's Office should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Student Ombudsman. The Graduate Student Ombudsman offers a confidential service for graduate students who wish to discuss a policy, procedure, or personal matter affecting their ability to achieve academic and personal success while a student at Rensselaer. The Graduate Student Ombudsman holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so, except as required by law, or where, in the judgment of the Ombudsman, there appears to be imminent danger to self or others.

IMPORTANT DETAILS

Full-Time Status

Students taking 12 credit hours or more are considered full-time. Students on teaching Assistantships who are taking 9 credits are considered full-time. It is necessary to maintain these levels of registration continuously throughout the semester in order to be paid as a teaching or research assistant at Rensselaer.

Drops and Adds

Dropping or adding courses is done via Rensselaer's Web registration system. Detailed instructions are available in the class hour schedule.

A graduate student may add a course ONLY during the first two weeks of a semester and drop a course during the first eight weeks of a semester. Adding courses after the first two weeks is nearly impossible at this time, so it is better to register for more courses and drop one if necessary.

Responsibility for dropping or adding courses prior to the deadlines rests entirely with the student. Failure to fulfill the responsibility because of an oversight, ignorance, or possibility of low grades is not sufficient grounds to petition for permission to drop or add a course after the deadline. It is the policy of the Institute that there be no petitions for the retroactive dropping or adding of a course except under extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control.

No credit will be given for a course in which the student is not properly registered. Failure to attend a class for which a student is registered or unofficial notification to the instructor does not constitute dropping a course and will result in an Administrative "F" ("FA" grade).

Students withdrawing from school prior to the end of the fifth week of the term will be charged prorated tuition according to the schedule listed under Tuition and Fees in the Catalog.

When program adjustments are made, the student's Plan of Study should be updated accordingly.

During the summer sessions, courses may be added during the first week of each session. Courses may be dropped any time before the end of the third week of classes.

Exceptions to the drop/add rules can only be made by the Office of Graduate Education via documents conveyed by HASS Student Services. Students wishing exceptions must petition with supporting documents from parties involved, such as instructors, advisor, or medical director. Only in extraordinary circumstances are such exceptions granted.

Students who have the approval of the Graduate Services Office to drop a course after the eighth week of classes will be given a grade of "W" in the course, and will be charged full tuition.

Transfer Credit

You may transfer in six graduate credits toward your master's degree or fifteen toward a Ph.D., if you have not used those credits to earn a degree elsewhere. Fill out the transfer credit form, which is available from the graduate student services administrator, and have your advisor sign it. To transfer credits, there must be an official transcript from the other school on file in the Registrar's Office and you and your advisor will need to determine the equivalent courses in the Rensselaer curriculum. (The readings course number can be used

where we do not offer quite the same thing.) The form is returned to the registrar, and a copy goes in your department file.

Incompletes

Taking an "Incomplete" for a grade in a graduate course is strongly discouraged, and is likely to raise concerns from the Office of Graduate Education. If you feel you absolutely need to ask for an "incomplete," however, you should approach the instructor about it as soon as possible. If the instructor agrees to the request, you must arrange a date for completion of the work and file the appropriate form with the registrar. It is your responsibility—not your instructor's—to know when the work is due, and to hand it in.

You must give your instructor at least two weeks (or as negotiated in advance with the instructor) to read your incomplete work and get the grade in. Incompletes not finished by the agreed upon deadline become "administrative Fs" that cannot be removed from your record. (See also the statement below on Good Academic Standing.)

Travel Funds

Both the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences and the Office of Graduate Education make available some funding to defray travel costs available to any graduate student who has a paper accepted at a professional conference. You should consult with the GPD and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research in HASS concerning the amount of funding available to you, and the procedures for applying.

ACADEMIC STANDING AND ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID

Good Academic Standing

In order to maintain good standing in the program (and also to graduate), students are required to maintain a 3.0 (B) grade point average (GPA). Because of the way the Rensselaer Registrar works out GPAs, if students take an incomplete (I) for a course or courses, the GPA may temporarily fall below the 3.0 minimum and the Registrar will send the graduate secretary of the STS department a notice.

The department also requires the following as part of its definition of good standing:
- Students who have incompletes for the spring semester should complete them by September 1, for the summer semester by November 1, and for the fall semester by February 1.
- Students must complete their comprehensive exams by September 1, the beginning of the second year (for PhD students) and third year (for MS/PhD students).
- Students must complete their dissertation proposal by June 30, the end of their second year (for PhD students) and third year (for MS/PhD students).

Eligibility for Financial Aid

Financial aid includes tuition stipends, fellowships, TAships, or RAships, or some combination. In order to be eligible for financial aid:
- A student must maintain good academic standing.
- A full-time student must complete the required number of course credits per semester as determined by the graduate school (currently 9 credits for a student who has a TAship and 12 credits for a student who has an RAship or fellowship).
- Students who are receiving TAships or RAships must complete their responsibilities in a satisfactory manner, as determined by a written evaluation of the faculty supervisor. Students who disagree with the evaluation may provide a written reply that will be reviewed by the chair, graduate director, and department.

The Process for Determining Good Standing and Eligibility for Financial Aid

Every semester, each student must meet with his/her advisor to review progress toward degree completion, teaching evaluations, grades in courses, and fulfillment of TA/RA responsibilities. This review will allow the advisor and student to pinpoint problems and to modify the student's plan of study. The review that takes place in the Spring semester will be preparatory for the general review by the faculty.

At the end of the Spring semester, the faculty as a whole will meet to review the progress of each student toward degree completion. The faculty will discuss all graduate students using the criteria for good academic standing and eligibility for financial aid described above. For students who meet the criteria, there is no further review. If there is consensus that a student does not meet the criteria, the faculty will recommend that the student be placed on conditional continuance for the summer and fall semester. (A student may be placed on academic conditional continuance, financial aid conditional continuance, or both.) If there is no consensus, then the faculty who have had interactions with the student during the past academic year (as advisor, comprehensive exam or dissertation committee member, instructor in a course, plenary instructor with student TA, or RA supervisor) may vote on the student's recommended status with regards to academic and/or financial aid conditional continuance.

The faculty's negative recommendation is then reviewed by a committee on standing (the graduate program director, the advisor, and department head as ex-officio member) to determine conditional continuance. The graduate program director and advisor will make a recommendation to the department head.

Academic Conditional Continuance

Academic conditional continuance is based on failure to maintain good academic standing. Based on the recommendation of the faculty, the recommendation of the committee on standing, and the decision by the department head, a letter from the graduate director will describe the reasons for conditional continuance, the actions that the student needs to take to return to good standing, and the deadlines for achieving the actions. The deadlines may vary by item (such as exams or incompletes), but they will generally be set for the end of the summer and in any case by December 1. During the month of December, the committee on standing for each student who is on academic conditional continuance will meet to evaluate the student who is on conditional continuance. The advisor and graduate director may recommend that the student be taken off conditional continuance, that the student be dismissed from the program immediately, or that the student be allowed to continue for a set period of time, usually so that the student may complete requirements for a terminal master's degree. The recommendation is reviewed by the department head.

Financial Aid Conditional Continuance

Financial aid conditional continuance is based on failure to meet the criteria for eligibility for financial aid. Based on the recommendation of the faculty, the recommendation of the committee on standing, the decision of the department head, and review by the graduate school, a letter from the graduate director will describe the reasons for conditional continuance, the actions that the student needs to take to return to good standing, and the deadlines for achieving the actions. The deadlines may vary by item (such as exams or incompletes), but they will generally be set for the end of the summer and in any case by December 1. During the month of December, each committee on standing for each student who is on conditional continuance will meet to evaluate the student who is on conditional continuance. The advisor and graduate director may recommend that the student be taken off conditional continuance, that the student's financial aid be ended for the spring semester, or that aid be continued through the end of the spring semester, usually so that the student may complete requirements for a terminal master's degree. The recommendation is reviewed by the department head, whose decision is reviewed by the graduate school.

Non-Academic Dismissals

In some cases, there may be non-academic reasons for dismissal from the department. The types of conduct requiring disciplinary action and the specific repercussions for such actions are determined by Rensselaer. In accordance with Rensselaer's regulations, "any invasion of private rights, or activity that causes suffering or extreme physical exhaustion, or grave personal offense, or that interferes with scholastic work, or that constitutes any danger to person or property is strictly forbidden." Disciplinary action can take place up to and including conditional continuance, suspension and expulsion.

Authority for the administration of student disciplinary and judicial processes at Rensselaer is vested exclusively in the Office of the Dean of Students, by delegation from the President. An elaboration of these rules and regulations, along with a comprehensive listing of grounds for action can be found in the Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

Graduate Program Director, Science and Technology Studies

The Director of Graduate Studies in Science and Technology Studies is appointed by the Dean of HASS and is responsible for carrying out and/or interpreting department and Institute policies, managing the graduate program, and developing, in conjunction with the graduate committee, policies to make it more effective.

The specific responsibilities of the director include assigning advisors to entering graduate students, ensuring the offering of sufficient courses for the graduate program, and appointing field examination and faculty graduate committee members.

Graduate Student Services Administrator

The graduate student services administrator is often a good source of information on deadlines for Office of Graduate Education paperwork, including Plans of Study, the Doctoral Student Yearly review form, and other matters, students should go to their advisors and the graduate director with most inquiries concerning their status, program, or financial aid.

Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee is charged with setting general policy directions for the graduate program. The committee consists of the graduate director (chair), three faculty members and three graduate student representatives elected by the students. The department head is always an ex officio member. The term of office is one year.

Admissions and Awards Committee

The Admissions and Awards Committee consists of the graduate program director and two other faculty members, with the department head as an ex officio member. Each year one of the other two members rotates off, generally the one with the longest tenure. This committee makes all admissions and awards decisions.

Portfolio Review Committee

Each spring, the graduate program director, in consultation with the department head, will appoint an examination committee consisting of at least five (5) faculty drawn from a pool of self-identified faculty, representing the department's diversity of approaches and expertise. Committee membership will be determined each year; the general expectation is that faculty will serve 2 years and rotate off every third year. The responsibility of the exam committee is to evaluate student portfolios to assess whether or not the student is broadly conversant with STS literatures in several selected areas.

Committee on Academic Standing

This committee rules on extraordinary matters involving the academic performance of a student, and is the only body permitted to communicate officially with students about problems with academic standing. It consists of the student's advisor, the Department Head, and the graduate director of the degree program in which the student is enrolled. The Institute's time requirements for completion of master's and doctoral degrees are that the master's degree must be completed in five (5) years and the doctoral degree in seven (7) years from the start of each program.