

Doctoral Regulations and Procedures

Dissertation

The dissertation is required of every candidate for the doctoral degree. The dissertation is an original, critical treatment of a topic chosen by the candidate and approved by the Dissertation Advisory Committee, composed of individuals delegated by the appropriate department as detailed in the specific department guidelines. It is written in English.

If the doctoral candidate has collaborated with others in carrying out the research upon which the dissertation is based, the candidate's own contribution to the research must be specified and clearly stated in a separate section immediately preceding the text.

The dissertation, when completed, must be of publishable quality and able to be published, although publication is not required. It must not be restricted by any entity outside the University from being published. It is expected to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge of the discipline. If all or part of the dissertation is published, a statement that the publication is based upon the dissertation must be included in the publication. Other criteria may be imposed by the appropriate department.

When preparing the dissertation document, the doctoral candidate will follow the procedures detailed in the University's guidelines for the preparation of dissertations and theses, which are available through the office of the University Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, the doctoral department offices, or the University website.

An interruption in dissertation research registration requires written approval in advance from the Department Chair or designee.

Dissertation Advisory Committee

Each student will have a Dissertation Advisory Committee to assist in advising and guiding the student through the dissertation in all of its phases. This Advisory Committee will be formed either upon candidacy (or as soon thereafter as appropriate) or when the dissertation proposal is accepted, depending upon the particular doctoral program guidelines.

The composition of the Dissertation Advisory Committee should be of individuals of assistant professor rank or higher and will follow the guidelines of the particular doctoral program.

Dissertation Oral Committee

The role of the Oral Committee is to provide explicit final judgment of the quality of the work of scholarship submitted and defended by the doctoral candidate.

The voting members of the Oral Committee are appointed by the Department Chair in consultation with the office of the University Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. The Committee will consist of the members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee and one full-time faculty member with the rank of assistant professor or above who is a member of a department other than that of the candidate. Other department-specific criteria may apply to the membership of the Committee and are described in the Guidelines for the formation of the Dissertation Advisory Committee.

Additional guest members, with or without vote, may be appointed to the Oral Committee by the Department Chair in consultation with the office of the University Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. Such guest members are expected to be recognized experts in the field of the candidate's dissertation.

The Oral Committee will also have a member representing and appointed by the office of the University Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. This person will serve as an ex officio representative of the University in a parliamentary capacity to assure that each final oral examination follows procedures consistent with University expectations

and rules of order and to assure that all appropriate necessary documentation is in order and complete.

Dissertation Oral Examination

The purpose of the oral examination is to determine whether the candidate has satisfactorily presented a significant, original thesis in the dissertation and whether the candidate has adequately defended the dissertation.

The presentation and defense of a significant, original dissertation is the culmination of the work for the doctoral degree. Everything else is considered preliminary for this presentation. Prior coursework prepares the student for research work on the dissertation, and the Qualifying Examination is used to determine whether that preparation is adequate. In effect, the oral examination provides an explicit final judgment of the quality of the work of scholarship but also implicitly judges the quality of the entire graduate education of the candidate leading up to and culminating with the presentation and the defense of the dissertation.

The candidate is eligible to take the oral examination only after completing all other requirements for the degree. The oral examination will focus on the subject matter covered by the dissertation and in the specific field in which the dissertation is written.

At least six months must have elapsed since the candidate's admission to candidacy for the degree. The oral examination will be administered at locations specified in the Guidelines for each program.

The dissertation must have been registered with the office of the University Dean for Research and Graduate Studies at least two weeks prior to the oral examination. Oral examinations will be scheduled by the department chair but not less than five weeks prior to the Commencement ceremony elected for degree conferral.

The vote of the Oral Committee will be taken by the chair. More than one dissenting vote by the committee will signify that the candidate fails this exam. The candidate will be allowed one repeat examination if there is a failure of the examination unless a majority of the voting members of the Oral Committee vote against a repeat examination.

The copyright for the dissertation belongs to the candidate.

The candidate is required to supply a digital version of the dissertation to the library, which will be published through the University's subscription to UMI's ProQuest online dissertation services.