

# Doctoral Program Process

## Advancement Information

After you pass and complete all of the following:

- Required courses
- Mid-program Review
- Specialization Qualifying Exam
- Prepare and Complete Dissertation/ Treatise Proposal

you will be eligible for advancement into doctoral candidacy. Each graduate student would normally expect to reach this point by the end of the third year. Doctoral Candidacy will allow you to focus solely on research and register each semester for Dissertation coursework.

Advancement into candidacy requires an application and approval by the student's supervising professor, the departmental Graduate Advisor, and the UT Graduate Dean.

The first part of the application procedure is completing the departmental candidacy paper application. This consists of listing all graded courses, selecting the dissertation committee, and obtaining signatures of all faculty who will serve on the dissertation committee. The Advancement Kit can be obtained from the Graduate Coordinator in SZB 348.

After completion of the departmental application and approval by the Graduate Office, then the online UT doctoral candidacy application is undertaken. The name and rank of each person serving on the doctoral committee and an abstract of the doctoral research are submitted. The doctoral abstract can be broad and is changeable as the student progresses in the program. Once the on-line portion is submitted, it must be approved through UT Direct by the student's supervising professor, the Graduate Advisor, and the Graduate Dean.

PLEASE NOTE: The Graduate Advisor will not approve the on-line portion of the application unless the student completes all the paper forms in the application packet required by the Department. If you have questions about this process, please contact the Graduate Office.

## Assessment Stages

### Complete Written Mid-program Review

- Check with your advisor regarding your eligibility and method of completing this requirement. More information is available in the [Mid-Program Review Kit](#).

### Complete Specialization Qualifying Examination

- Administered by each program area: CSP, EPP, PHEL. Check with your faculty advisor to determine your eligibility and method of completing this requirement.

### Prepare Dissertation/Treatise proposal

- Select chair and members for the dissertation/treatise committee  
Information about the [composition of the dissertation committee can be found on the Graduate School website](#).  
To determine if a faculty member is on the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), which might impact their eligibility to be on your dissertation committee, talk to your advisor.
- Prepare your proposal (traditionally, this is the first 3 chapters of your dissertation/treatise; however, you should work with your dissertation chair to determine the contents of your proposal).
- Once your dissertation committee chair approves your proposal draft, schedule a meeting for the oral proposal presentation and distribute copies to committee members. (Your dissertation chair will assist you in determining the appropriate amount of time needed for your committee to read your proposal before making your presentation).
- Schedule a room in which to present your proposal (reservations for rooms in the Sanchez Building need to be made by you). Ask the Graduate Coordinator for assistance in scheduling a room.

### Apply for Advancement to Candidacy

- Complete Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy Application using the ELP Department packet (available from the Graduate Coordinator).
- Submit the above ELP packet to the Graduate Coordinator at least two weeks before the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) meeting (you will need to ask your dissertation chair, the Graduate Advisor or Graduate Coordinator when the GSC meets in order to meet the deadline).
  - 2020-21 GSC meeting dates (\*subject to change\*):
    - (2020): August 28, October 9, December 4
    - (2021): January 22, March 5, April 30
- Read all the information listed under "Human Subjects" (User Guide, Special Topics, Training, IRB Access, IRB members, IRB Policies & Procedures at UT, Forms and Templates, FAQs, and Contacts. Read the information entitled "About IRB" (including information on Researchers, What is Human Subjects Research? and Dates & Deadlines).
- Fill out the appropriate paperwork on Human Subjects Review and complete the [IRB Approval process](#).
- Complete the [online application to advance to doctoral candidacy](#).
- Take the [UT Copyright and Plagiarism Tutorial](#) and print out the certification for proof of completion. Include a copy of this certification when you submit your dissertation/treatise.

### Complete Dissertation/Treatise Research Activities

- Only AFTER you receive IRB Approval, you may register for your first dissertation course (either 399R, 699R or 999R).
- An advising bar on your registration record will be in place until you meet the IRB Approval Pre-requirement.
- Two dissertation/treatise courses are required to be taken in consecutive semesters. The first one is the dissertation research course (399W, 699W or 999W) followed by the dissertation writing course (399W, 699W or 999W). The treatise research course numbers are 399K, 699K or 999K and the writing course numbers are 399L, 699L or 999L.
- Work with your chair to determine your progress.
- Complete data collection and analysis (for peace of mind, be sure to back up your work).
- Write the final dissertation/treatise draft.
- Submit your draft to your chair for approval.

## Complete Final Oral Exam

- Submit the Degree Candidate Form (application to graduate) the first week of the semester in which you plan to graduate). [This form is available on the Graduate School's website.](#)
- Get your committee chair's approval of your final draft.
- Schedule your [Final Oral Examination](#) **two weeks** before the desired date using the "Request for Final Oral" (formally known as the 'pink form'), signed by each committee member and the graduate advisor (attach all the required documents), once the chair and committee members agree to meet. Their signature signifies that they approve of your request for the final oral exam and serves as a receipt that they received your dissertation/treatise draft.
  - To aid you in the signature collection process, you may submit the "Request for Final Oral" form to your committee members using DocuSign, a digital workflow software that allows faculty to electronically sign official university forms. For instructions on how to submit the form via DocuSign, please [download these "how to" instructions.](#)
- Work with your chair to determine the elements and presentation method needed for your final oral exam.
- Present your research results to your dissertation committee. Be sure to have the necessary forms for them to sign at your final oral exam.
  - Effective Fall 2020, the Graduate School will not schedule your final defense within **two weeks** of the last class day of the semester. Reference the [UT Academic Calendar](#) for deadline information.

Submit all paperwork to the Office of Graduate Studies (Graduate School, Main Building 101 in the Tower).

- Make the appropriate corrections to your dissertation/treatise as suggested by your committee.
- Submit all materials to the Office of Graduate Studies following the deadlines of the semester in which you wish to graduate.

Submit [IRB Protocol Closure Report](#) (Electronic Closure) to Office of Research of Support and Compliance.

## Attend Graduation and Celebrate!!!

Check the [Graduation Deadlines for Doctoral Candidates](#) for graduation information.

Check the [commencement website for ceremony information.](#)

## Dissertation Guidelines and Committee

The Ph.D. degree is designed for those who plan to become researchers and university faculty. The focus of a Ph.D. dissertation must be in-depth, original research that has the possibility of creating new knowledge and understanding of particular educational construct. In addition, the implications of Ph.D. dissertation research should be much wider than a specific problem in a specific context. Any accepted social science methodology, including quantitative, qualitative, or mixed, could be used for a Ph.D. dissertation in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy.

In most cases, the Ph.D. dissertation will include five chapters:

- Chapter I contains an introduction to the study and its context.
- Chapter II contains an examination of the relevant literature.
- Chapter III presents a thorough discussion of the methodology for the research.
- Chapter IV features a careful, insightful, and comprehensive coverage of the results of the research.
- Chapter V includes interpretation, discussion, and implications of the research results.

Of course, the focus of each chapter and the chapter order are only what is typical and thus do not necessarily apply to all dissertations. All decisions on these matters are completely in the hands of the dissertation chair and committee. (Committees are addressed below.)

It is expected that the writing, the use of citations, the review and understanding of the research literature, and the research skills would reflect the highest quality standards. In addition, the style guidelines are typically those of the APA format, those made available by the University, or any other legitimate style appropriate to the study and accepted by the dissertation committee.

The committee for the Ph.D. dissertation must be comprised of four individuals. The chair of the committee must be a faculty member with GSC status in the Department. The second and third committee members must be faculty or and/or senior lecturers with GSC status in the Department. The fourth member must be an outside member, who holds a doctorate degree, who is not a member of the student's GSC. The fourth member, if external to the University, will need to submit a curriculum vitae and a letter indicating his/her willingness to serve on the dissertation committee.

The process for completing a Ph.D. dissertation is fourfold.

1. A student will defend a dissertation proposal consisting of the first three chapters before all members of the dissertation committee, including the chair.
2. Once the proposal is approved by the committee, the student must complete the advancement to doctoral candidacy application process, including a one-page description of the proposal, and the IRB application.
3. Upon successful advancement, the student will conduct the research activities under the guidance of the dissertation chair and committee.
4. The student will defend the completed dissertation before the committee. After successfully defending and satisfactorily completing any required revisions, the student would earn the Ph.D.

# Extension of Candidacy Policy and Process

## Dissertation/Treatise Completion Requirements

1. According to the Graduate School guidelines (Graduate School Handbook), students who have been admitted to doctoral candidacy have two years to complete their degree. The candidacy of each student is reviewed after two years and annually thereafter. At the end of the second year, the Office of Graduate Studies informs the Department Graduate Advisor that a student's candidacy must be reviewed and a recommendation be made concerning an "Extension of Candidacy" or "Termination of Candidacy."
2. At the end of the second year of candidacy, an Extension of Candidacy for one last year may be requested and must be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) of the department according to the process outlined in this policy.
3. An extension of candidacy may be approved for up to one year (2 long semesters plus 1 summer semester) only. The student must be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.
4. Under extraordinary circumstances, candidates may request an additional extension of candidacy provided the dissertation/treatise committee chair and the program head support such a request.

## Extension of one last year

1. The department graduate advisor informs the dissertation/treatise committee chair and the program head of the need for an extension request.
2. The student, in collaboration with the chair of the dissertation/treatise committee and the program head, writes and submits a completion plan to the graduate advisor. This plan must include detailed activities and dates to complete and defend the dissertation or treatise, and a support statement from the dissertation/treatise committee chair.
3. The graduate advisor presents the request for Extension of Candidacy to the Graduate Studies Committee for approval.
4. The dissertation/treatise committee chair makes a brief report providing any additional information. The Graduate Studies Committee makes a decision regarding the extension request including any conditions, or termination of the student's program.
5. The graduate advisor informs the student of the decision including any conditions that might apply.
6. The Graduate Advisor submits the Extension of Candidacy Recommendation to the Office of the Graduate Studies.
7. This is the last extension of candidacy a student may request.

## Additional Extension

Only under exigent circumstances as verified by the Chair of the dissertation/treatise committee and the program chair, a student may request an additional extension.

DOWNLOAD FORM: [Extension of Candidacy Application Form](#) 