

**GUIDELINES FOR DEFENDING THE DISSERTATION
AND COMPLETING THE DOCTORAL DEGREE
Step-By-Step Instructions On
Preparing for a Dissertation Defense**

1. The Department has established the following deadlines on submission of drafts of the dissertation to the major professor and the advisory committee in order to make students aware of the timeframes necessary to complete their degree by one of the graduation dates.

For those who wish to graduate in May

January 15 For students who wish to graduate in May, a “next to final” copy of the Dissertation with all chapters, tables, figures, references, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, appendices and forward pages required by the Graduate School must be submitted to the chairperson of the student’s committee by **January 15 of the term of graduation**. The dissertation must be in **APA style** and have been edited carefully by the student. With this January 15 deadline, it is assumed that the student will have submitted several previous versions of the dissertation to his/her chairperson for approval and rewrite. It is also assumed that the student will have met frequently with his/her chairperson and have made all suggested changes. The student also may have met with other committee members to get their suggestions on topics to cover in the Review of Literature, and for data analysis or other suggestions.

Consequently, the student will need to keep in mind that it takes at least two weeks for faculty to read and respond to the student’s dissertation and its various versions.

February 17 The final copy of the dissertation, with all suggested changes and corrections made, must be submitted to the chairperson of the student’s committee by **February 17 of the term of graduation**.

February 26 The final copy of the dissertation must be distributed to committee members by February 26.

April 6 **The defense of the dissertation must be held before April 6.**

For those who wish to graduate in August

Because faculty members generally are not available in the summer, they discourage August graduation plans. However, if the student misses the deadlines for May graduation, the following dates apply for August graduation:

February 3 For students who wish to graduate in August, a “next to final” copy of the Dissertation with all chapters, tables, figures, references, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, appendices and forward pages required by the

Graduate School must be submitted to the student's committee chairperson By **February 3**. The dissertation must be in **APA style** and have been edited carefully by the student. With this February 3 deadline, it is assumed that the student will have submitted several previous versions of the dissertation to his/her chairperson and have made all suggested changes. The student also may have met with other committee members to get their suggestions on topics to cover in the Review of Literature, and for data analysis or other suggestions.

There will be no exceptions to this deadline. Consequently, the student will need to keep in mind that it takes at least two weeks for faculty to read and respond to the student's dissertation and its various versions.

March 3 The final copy of the dissertation, with all suggested changes and corrections made, must be submitted to the chairperson of the student's committee by **March 3**.

March 12 The final copy must be distributed to committee members.

April 16 **The final oral defense must be held before April 16 for August graduation.**

For those who wish to graduate in December

Sept. 10 For students who wish to graduate in December, a "next to final" copy of the dissertation with all chapters, tables, figures, references, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, appendices and forward pages required by the Graduate School must be submitted to the chairperson of the student's committee by **September 10 of the term of graduation**.

The dissertation must be in **APA style** and have been edited carefully by the student. With this September deadline, it is assumed that the student will have submitted several previous versions of the dissertation to the student's chairperson for approval and rewrite. It is also assumed that the student will have met frequently with his/her chairperson and have made all suggested changes. The student also may have met with other committee members to get their suggestions on topics to cover in the Review of Literature, and for data analysis or other suggestions.

There will be no exceptions to this deadline. Consequently, the student will need to keep in mind that it takes at least two weeks for faculty to read and respond to the student's dissertation and its various versions.

October 8 The final copy of the dissertation, with all suggested changes and corrections made, must be submitted to the chairperson of the student's committee by **October 8 of the term of graduation**.

October 22 The final copy must be distributed to committee members by **October 22**.

Nov. 19 **The defense of the dissertation must be held before November 19.**

2. Students should complete two “Application for Degree” cards. They are blue and can be picked up in 245 DH. These cards need to be signed by the DGS before they are turned in to the Graduate School. Students should assure that copies of these degree cards are turned in to 245 DH so that they can be placed in the student’s file.

*The deadline that the cards need to be turned in to the Graduate School for graduation is listed in the front of the UK Schedule of Classes book. It will vary from semester to semester but the approximate deadlines are early February for May graduates, early May for August graduates, and early September for December graduates. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.** If degree cards are not turned in before the deadline, students will not be able to graduate until the following semester.

The major/degree codes for the EDP department are as follows:

DEGREE CODES

Ph.D. PHD

MAJOR CODES

Counseling Psychology	ECPC
Educational Psychology	ECPE
School Psychology	ECPP

1. Students should obtain a copy of “Instructions for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations” in Room 351 Patterson Office Tower. This is the guide that the student or the student’s typist should use when preparing the dissertation. All references and tables are to be typed in APA format. Margins should be 1-inch top, bottom, and right; and 1½ inches, left.
3. Students should assure that the Department (and the Graduate School) has their **CURRENT** advisory committee listed and recorded. If the student has had any changes at all in his/her advisory committee, he/she should check with the secretary in DH 245 to be sure the Graduate School has been informed of the changes. This has to be done before the appropriate forms for the student’s defense can be submitted. The student should check with the DGS’s assistant in 245 DH to make sure the latest advisory committee information is accurate.

The student should also check with the DGS to make sure that he/she has no “I” or “S” grades and that his/her Graduate School record is clear in order to sit for the dissertation defense.

As soon as the student knows he/she is going to defend or no later than one month before the time of his/her defense, the student needs to:

Obtain and complete a “Notification of Intent to Schedule a Final Examination” form from DH 245. This form will be sent over to the Graduate School so that an outside examiner can be determined for the student’s committee. The student should inform the DGS’ assistant in DH 245 if he/she already has a date, time, etc., for the defense. This information will be

included on the form when it is sent over to the Graduate School. However, this does not guarantee that the outside examiner will be able to attend the defense on that date/time; it simply gives the Graduate School an idea of the time frame needed to locate an outside examiner for the student's committee. The Graduate School will contact the office of the DGS when an outside examiner is located. The DGS will then contact student.

Obtain a "Dissertation Approval Sheet" (see page 81) and have all of the committee members sign the sheet. Committee members usually feel free to do this after they have read a completed dissertation and agree that the student is ready to defend. This form can be left in the student's folder in 245 DH for faculty to sign at their convenience or the student may choose to hand-carry it to the advisory committee members personally. This form has to be signed and taken over to the Graduate School two weeks before the student's defense.

5. **TWO WEEKS** before the date of the student's exam he/she needs to:

Complete the "Request for Final Doctoral Examination" form (see Page 81). This form is to confirm the dissertation defense with the Graduate School. The defense date, time, and room should also be confirmed with all committee members (including the outside examiner). The student should contact the ITC (257-7967) to reserve Rooms 122 TEB or 109 DH/the Faculty Lounge. Any other rooms in TEB/DH should be reserved through Nancy Bowers in the Associate Dean's office (257-9795).

The student should take the following information to the Graduate School, 351 Patterson Office Tower, (POT):

- A. The final examination form which will be completed in the DGS' office by the secretary.
- B. The dissertation approval sheet (which should be signed by all members of the advisory committee).
- C. A copy of the completed dissertation.

The Graduate School will peruse the dissertation (looking only at content at this time) to make sure the student has a completed dissertation. This pre-exam copy is to be formatted as described in the instructions for the preparation of Dissertations. The Graduate School will not keep this copy of the student's dissertation. Therefore, the student may use this copy to give to his/her outside examiner. The student may also give the DGS a copy of the dissertation, as the DGS sometimes attends dissertation defenses, or the student may choose to wait until he/she has made the corrections after the defense meeting.

6. The student should call or e-mail all committee members about the defense about 2-3 days before the actual defense to remind them about the meeting.
7. After the student has completed his/her dissertation defense, generally the rule is that he/she has 60 days to make the final revisions and turn them back in to the Graduate School. Sometimes, according to when the student defends, **he/she may have less than 60 days**. The student should check the academic calendar of the UK Schedule of Classes book for the last day to submit a dissertation to the Graduate School in order to graduate during that semester.
8. After the student has completed the final revisions that need to be made, the student's major professor and the DGS should review the dissertation one last time. Then the

- student will need to run off two copies on 100% RAG PAPER (Kinko's and Laser Graphics should have this paper on hand). It is usually a good idea for the student to make a couple of extra copies of the signature pages. Also, the student should bring a black pen for the major professor and the DGS to use so that the dissertation will look nice.
9. The student should take two final copies (signed) on 100% RAG paper to The Graduate School, 351 POT. This copy will be checked for margins, references, page numbers, etc.

Procedures During the Final Defense

Once the committee members have gathered, the student's major professor will ask him/her to leave the room for a few minutes. While the student is out of the room, the committee members discuss any problems they have with the dissertation as well as they liked about the study. This usually requires 10 to 15 minutes. The major professor will then ask the student to come back into the room, to present his/her dissertation. The presentation should be about 20 minutes in length. The student may use transparencies or handouts, or simply describe the procedures, results, and the significance of the study. Once the student has finished his/her presentation, the committee will ask the student questions about the dissertation and they may ask for revisions. At the end of the questioning, the student will be asked to leave the room once again. At this time, the committee votes on whether or not the student passed the final oral. After the vote, the major professor calls the student back into the room and either congratulates him/her or informs him/her that the committee did not pass them. The entire defense usually lasts two hours. Some committee members return their copy of the dissertation to the student, and some members keep their copy. The student's major professor usually takes notes during the defense, but it is a good idea for the student, also, to take notes on suggested revisions.