

# DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

## Doctoral Program Committee and Course Plan

A Doctoral Program Committee and Course Plan (<https://www.unomaha.edu/graduate-studies/current-students/graduate-forms-and-resources.php>) must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies no later than the end of your second semester in the doctoral program. This must include any language or research tool requirements (if applicable).

Generally, courses taken before admission to the doctoral program cannot be included in the Doctoral Requirements section of the program of study form. Please note that foundation courses and courses taken outside of the University of Nebraska Graduate College cannot be used to fulfill doctoral requirements. The program committee must include at least two members of graduate faculty from the student's program; this typically consists of the doctoral program chair and advisor. Any subsequent change in the program must be approved by the committee and the dean for Graduate Studies.

The minimum amount of graduate credit for the PhD is 90 semester hours, including a dissertation. Some programs require more hours. Please refer to the degree requirements for your individual degree.

The minimum amount of graduate credit for the EdD is 96 semester hours, including a dissertation. Please refer to the degree requirements for your individual degree.

## Admission to Candidacy

When the doctoral student has passed the comprehensive examination and established residency, according to the established policies of the doctoral program, the examination committee will recommend to the Office of Graduate Studies their admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree, noting in that recommendation the date(s) upon which the comprehensive examination was completed. As soon as possible after passing the examination, the examination committee convenes and reports to the Office of Graduate Studies the results of the examination by submitting the Application for Admission to Candidacy (<https://www.unomaha.edu/office-of-graduate-studies/forms-and-resources/forms-documents.php>) form. This form must be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies at least seven months prior to the final oral examination. If the term of candidacy is extended beyond three years (excluding summer terms), the candidate must pass another comprehensive examination. Following admission to candidacy, the student must register during each academic year semester (fall and spring) until they receive the PhD or EdD degree. Students not in residence may register for a minimum of one semester credit in dissertation. Failure to register during each academic year semester will result in termination of candidacy.

## Comprehensive Examination PhD

When a student has substantially completed studies in the program, they must pass a written comprehensive examination. The written comprehensive examination is not a repetition of course examinations; rather, it is an investigation of the student's breadth of understanding in the field of knowledge of which their special subject is a part. The student will also be required to pass an oral comprehensive examination.

The examination committee arranges for written or oral examinations. Should the student fail the comprehensive examination or a part thereof, they may be allowed to re-take it during the following academic term upon specific recommendation by the graduate program committee.

## EdD

When the applicant's program of study is substantially completed, comprehensive examinations that cover the appropriate field of study and

related subjects will be administered. These examinations will thoroughly test for an understanding of the field of knowledge designated by the student. If an applicant fails the comprehensive examination, another attempt to pass such examination may not be made in the same academic term.

## Residency Requirement

A residency requirement has been established for the purpose of ensuring that the doctoral program be reasonably compact, continuous, and coherent; and that a substantial portion be done at and under the close supervision of the university. The residency requirement is part of the student's approved program.

In exceptional circumstances, where it is clear that the purpose of residency is being fulfilled but the formal conditions are not met, the student's examination committee and/or doctoral program chair may, with the approval of the dean for Graduate Studies, designate an alternative procedure for satisfying the residency requirement.

## Requirements for the PhD in Biomechanics and Kinesiology, PhD in Biomedical Informatics, PhD in Criminology and Criminal Justice, PhD in Gerontology, PhD in Computing & Information Science, and PhD in Psychology

- For a student beginning a doctoral program in the University of Nebraska system with a bachelor's degree, the residency requirement for the PhD is 27 hours of graduate work within a consecutive 18-month period or less, with the further provision that 15 of these hours must be taken after receiving the master's degree or equivalent.
- For a student who transfers to the University of Nebraska system with a master's degree from another institution, or who takes a break in their graduate work between the time the master's degree is awarded and the time they start work on a doctoral program, the residency requirement for the PhD is 27 hours of graduate work in a consecutive 18-month period or less.
- For a member of the university staff who is engaged at least half-time in instruction or research in their major area, or a person employed in their major field, the residency requirement is 24 hours of graduate work within a consecutive two-year period with the further provision they take at least 12 of these hours after receiving the master's degree or its equivalent.
- Not more than one-third of the work for residency, or nine credit hours, may be taken during the summer sessions.

## Requirements for the PhD in Public Administration and EdD degree

- The residency requirement for doctoral students in Educational Administration and Public Administration is 24 hours in 24 consecutive months. The student's examination committee and/or doctoral program chair may determine how many of the required residency hours may be taken during the summer sessions.

## Dissertation Committee

In order to assure that students are under careful advisement and mentoring, a dissertation committee must be established no later than the end of the semester that a student has completed their comprehensive examination.

The student must submit the Appointment of Dissertation Committee (<https://www.unomaha.edu/graduate-studies/current-students/graduate-forms-and-resources.php>) form consisting of at least four University of Nebraska graduate faculty members, one of whom must be from outside the student's academic department/school in which the doctorate is to be granted. The chair of the dissertation committee must be a member of the graduate faculty. The outside representative must hold graduate faculty status within the NU system. In addition to the minimum requirement

of four University of Nebraska graduate faculty members, other eligible persons may be recommended by the graduate program committee for appointment by the dean to the dissertation committee, provided at least two-thirds of the membership of each committee is graduate faculty. The establishment of a dissertation committee is based on the student's demonstrated ability in the fundamental subject matter of the student's major field and professional promise.

### Changes to the Dissertation Committee

Any changes to the dissertation committee after initial approval must be submitted via a new Appointment of Dissertation Committee (<https://www.unomaha.edu/graduate-studies/current-students/graduate-forms-and-resources.php>) form to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval by the dean for Graduate Studies.

If the chair of a dissertation committee leaves the employ of the university, or retires, the Office of Graduate Studies must be notified immediately and a change in the committee must be made as follows:

- If the student has already achieved candidacy, the former chair who has left the employ of the university may be permitted to continue as co-chair of the dissertation committee, with the agreement of the departmental/school graduate program committee and the dean for Graduate Studies. A second co-chair must be appointed who is a resident graduate faculty member.
- If the student has not yet achieved candidacy, a new chair of the dissertation committee who is a resident graduate faculty member must be appointed immediately, with the agreement of the departmental/school graduate program committee and the dean for Graduate Studies.
- If a member of the dissertation committee, other than the chair, leaves the employ of the university, or retires, a replacement should normally be appointed who is a resident graduate faculty member. In certain circumstances where a special and needed continuing expertise is involved and the staff member is willing to continue serving, they may continue as a member of the dissertation committee, with the approval of the departmental/school graduate program committee and the dean for Graduate Studies.

## Leave of Absence

Doctoral students who are forced to interrupt their studies may request a leave of absence from the University for up to one year. In consultation with their department/school and their doctoral program chair, students should define the program modifications the leave of absence requires. Requests should indicate a reason for leaving and the expected date of return to the University. If approval is granted, the time limits on the granting of the doctoral degree will be frozen for the time specified (up to one year). Students should file a request with their chair who will forward it to the dean for Graduate Studies. Approval of the dean for Graduate Studies is required prior to taking the leave of absence.

## Time Limit for Completion of Degree

A minimum of three full years of graduate study is normally required to complete a program for the degrees Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Education. The time limit on granting the PhD or EdD degree is 10 years from the beginning of the doctoral coursework. Individual programs may have other deadlines for completion. Neither the courses taken nor the time spent in study determines the granting of the degree.

## Final Examination

The final examination is oral. It is given by the dissertation committee after the candidate's studies have been completed and the dissertation has been accepted for examination. The committee also determines its character and length. The examination may be devoted to the special field of the

dissertation or to the candidate's general knowledge, or it may be designed to test judgment and critical powers.

The final oral examination will not be scheduled unless the chair of the dissertation committee and at least two other members of the committee are available for the examination. Exceptions may be made only by permission of the dean for Graduate Studies. In any event, the chair/co-chair and readers of the dissertation must have seen and approved the completed dissertation before the final oral examination will be scheduled. The first and second readers are two dissertation committee members, excluding the committee chair/co-chair. Upon approval by the chair/co-chair and readers, the Application for Final Examination (<https://www.unomaha.edu/graduate-studies/current-students/graduate-forms-and-resources.php>) must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies prior to your examination date.

The final oral examination over the dissertation may be waived only with the unanimous consent of the dissertation committee and only in extremely unusual circumstances. The committee reports the results of the final oral examination and the reason for its waiver to the Office of Graduate Studies by using the Report on Completion of Degree (<https://www.unomaha.edu/graduate-studies/current-students/graduate-forms-and-resources.php>).

In the event that members of an oral examining committee are not unanimous regarding the passing of a candidate, the student is to be approved for the degree only if one examiner dissents. However, in each case, the dissenting member of the committee will be expected to file a letter of explanation to the Office of Graduate Studies.

## Exit Requirement

The doctoral dissertation should make a creative contribution to knowledge in your field while also demonstrating mastery of relevant resources and methods. It is expected the dissertation will have a single topic, however broadly defined, and all parts of the dissertation will be interrelated. This, however, does not prevent sections of the dissertation from being discrete units.

The dissertation should also demonstrate your potential to make future, original contributions to knowledge, understanding, or methodologies in your discipline. For example, the originality of a dissertation may involve the discovery of significant new information or principles of organization, the achievement of a new synthesis, the development of new methods or theories, or the application of established methods to new materials or procedures.

Given the diverse nature of the fields in which dissertations are written and the wide variety of topics that are explored, it is impossible to designate an ideal length for the dissertation. A long dissertation is not necessarily better than a shorter one since the value and scale of the dissertation topic ultimately depends on the quality of its thought and the clarity of its exposition. Your dissertation committee will determine the appropriateness of these and other issues.

Grades for a doctoral dissertation are recorded on the permanent record after completion and approval by the department/school and the Office of Graduate Studies. Grades will be either "S" for Satisfactory or "U" for Unsatisfactory.

The dissertation is not considered to be a publication; thus it may be published, in whole or in part, and either quoted or paraphrased by giving appropriate credit to the relevant department/school, the Graduate College, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

NOTE: The doctoral dissertation committee guides your progress toward the completion of the dissertation, but it is your responsibility to follow instructions on the preparation of the document and to observe filing deadlines.

## Dissertation Submission Procedures

The doctoral dissertation committee guides the student in the conduct and development of the dissertation and approves the final product. Typically, final recommendations from the dissertation committee, or dissertation committee chair, are provided to the student at the time of the final oral examination, although details vary among department/schools and individual faculty. Final approval of the dissertation is contingent upon approval by the dissertation committee and the Office of Graduate Studies.

### Procedures:

At least three weeks prior to the last published date for holding oral exams, submit the Application for Final Examination (<https://www.unomaha.edu/office-of-graduate-studies/forms-and-resources/forms-documents.php>) form to the Office of Graduate Studies. If the final examination is waived, the dissertation committee must attach a statement of justification to the Application for Final Oral Examination or Waiver of Examination form; all members of the dissertation committee must indicate their approval of the waiver.

When the final dissertation has been approved by the dissertation committee, the student must submit the following to the Office of Graduate Studies for the final administrative steps in the approval process: Report on Completion of Degree (<https://www.unomaha.edu/graduate-studies/current-students/graduate-forms-and-resources.php>) form signed by the dissertation committee, upload your document to ProQuest (<https://www.unomaha.edu/office-of-graduate-studies/current-students/thesis-dissertation-support.php>), and complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates (<https://sed-ncses.org/login.aspx>) if you are a PhD student.

**NOTE:** If the dissertation is to be held pending patent issuance, etc., the student must specify this at the time the PDF file is submitted to ProQuest (UMI).

An electronic version of the dissertation (collectively referred to as ETDs) is required. An ETD is a document expressed in a format simultaneously suitable for machine archives and worldwide retrieval. Preparation of the ETD may be done using most word processor or document preparation systems that incorporate relevant multimedia objects.

As part of the ETD submission, students' abstracts are published in UMI's Dissertations Abstracts publications. Upon submission, the student authorizes ProQuest to produce copies of their work on demand for a fee. However, the student may request that UMI not distribute (or embargo) their ETD until further notice (up to two years). Some reasons for this include patent pending, the student's employer requires a review of the work, or a publishing agreement requires initial publication.

**PLEASE NOTE:** There may be a fee to submit the ETD through ProQuest; the amounts are noted on their website.

After successfully uploading the dissertation, the Office of Graduate Studies will be notified electronically by ProQuest of the submission and asked to provide final approval. Final approval of the dissertation will not be granted if the Report on Completion of Degree form is not on file with the Office of Graduate Studies.

Formatting and Submission Instructions (<https://www.unomaha.edu/office-of-graduate-studies/current-students/thesis-dissertation-support.php>)