Dissertation Requirements

Each candidate must write a dissertation in their major field of study in accordance with directions specified by the Doctor of Philosophy Committee. Candidates must demonstrate the ability to research a thesis in relative independence and present their research in a clear and logical manner. The dissertation must make a contribution to the scholarly literature in its field. The dissertation should consist of one hundred fifty to two hundred pages in the main body. Variations from these numbers must receive prior approval from the Doctor of Philosophy Committee.

Each doctor of philosophy student is required to attend a dissertation orientation seminar, normally at the time of the oral defense of the prospectus. Students will follow the guidelines in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed., by Kate L. Turabian (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013). The Doctor of Philosophy Committee provides a Supplement which supersedes the manual by Turabian where the latter is not precise and which provides sample pages illustrating requirements for academic writing. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2003) is another required resource.

The topic of the dissertation must be approved by the Doctor of Philosophy Committee with the prior recommendation of the student’s major professor and his major department. A prospectus of the dissertation must be submitted in triplicate to the PhD office to be forwarded to the major department for its approval no later than April 1 (for students anticipating graduation in December) or no later than September 15 (for students anticipating graduation in May). The prospectus must be defended orally before the department before it is submitted to the PhD office for consideration by the Doctor of Philosophy Committee.

Within two weeks, the major department must submit the prospectus with its written approval to the PhD office for consideration by the Doctor of Philosophy Committee. The prospectus includes the title of the proposed dissertation, the thesis to be investigated, the methodology to be employed, the outline by which the research is to be organized, and a bibliography. The outline and the bibliography should correspond to the same standards of style and form as the dissertation. Any subsequent changes in the outline must be approved by the Doctor of Philosophy Committee.

The dissertation must contain the following parts in sequence: blank page; abstract (not to exceed two pages); title page; blank page; approval sheet; table of contents; introductory chapter; the body or text of the paper consisting of two or more chapters; concluding or summary chapter; selected bibliography; and blank page. The parts mentioned in Turabian A.2.1.7–A.2.1.11 may be included (all after the table of contents and before the introductory chapter); and appendix or appendices (between the concluding chapter and the bibliography).

Students are encouraged to work carefully with their advisor and their major department at each stage in the preparation of his dissertation. The completed dissertation on standard bond paper must be presented to the PhD office to forward
to the advisor no later than July 15 for December graduation or January 6 for May graduation. The advisor will read and evaluate it with regard to content and form prior to forwarding it with his approval to the PhD office for distribution to the major department. Should the advisor find that the dissertation is not acceptable with regard to content or form, it is his prerogative to return it to the student without submission to the department.

After the advisor approves the dissertation with regard to content and form, he will forward it along with his recommendation to the PhD office for distribution to the major department no later than August 1 (for students anticipating graduation in December) or no later than January 20 (for students anticipating graduation in May). Suggested corrections and/or changes may be made during the six weeks after submission to the department.

The dissertation must be submitted to the Doctor of Philosophy Committee along with the written approval of the major department before September 1 or February 3, respectively. A student who submits a dissertation to his or her major department is allowed no more than two opportunities for the dissertation to be approved. Upon receipt of the dissertation from the major department, the dean of the PhD program assigns an external reader (from outside the department) to evaluate the dissertation along with the major department. The dean of the PhD program will analyze all of the evaluation forms from the major department and the external readers and attach a summary evaluation statement to the dissertation, to be returned to the student by October 15 or March 17, respectively. It is the prerogative of the Doctor of Philosophy Committee to assign additional readers if the situation warrants it. In each case, there will be a minimum of three primary readers, including external readers. A dissertation is acceptable in form if it contains one hundred fifty or fewer errors in form, style, grammar and spelling. If errors number more than one hundred fifty, advisors may return dissertations to students for correction. Students may then resubmit their dissertation after correcting these errors. If advisors find more than one hundred new errors or uncorrected errors in the second edition, students will be notified that they cannot resubmit until the next graduation date. If the dissertation is acceptable, it will be returned to the student for final corrections. If the Doctor of Philosophy Committee determines that the dissertation is not acceptable, the document is then returned to the student with no more than one additional opportunity the student to resubmit his or her dissertation. If the dissertation is rejected as unsatisfactory for any cause, the Doctor of Philosophy Committee may, at its discretion, authorize the candidate to revise, correct, and resubmit the document after a period of at least three months but not later than one year from the time of the extension. No dissertation may be submitted twice for the same prospective graduation date. After the Doctor of Philosophy Committee approval, five corrected copies of the dissertation must be submitted, including four copies on one hundred percent cotton-content white paper and one copy on regular white bond paper. The corrected copies must be presented to the Doctor of Philosophy Committee by December 1 for a December graduation and May 1 for May graduation. Under no circumstances may any candidate receive his or her degree or graduate prior to his or her dissertation being submitted in final form with all copies ready for binding. (Refer to graduation requirement dates in the schedule of academic dates for the doctor of philosophy program.)