

PhD Student Handbook

IOWA

**Communication Sciences
and Disorders**

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This handbook provides students with information about the policies and procedures governing the PhD program of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. It should be used as a supplement to the University General catalog (<https://catalog.registrar.uiowa.edu/>), and the Graduate College manual (<https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual>).

Although the goal is to cover departmental policies and procedures as completely as possible, these are subject to change as professional, university, and departmental policies evolve. Every attempt will be made to keep students informed of changes as they arise and to keep this handbook up to date. The application of policies may also vary with exceptional circumstances related to an individual student. Thus, students should seek clarification and additional information as needed from their Academic Advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), and the Department Executive Officer (DEO).

The Department

History

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) at the University of Iowa is one of the U.S.'s oldest and largest CSD programs. This discipline's beginnings are usually attributed to the pioneering work of Carl E. Seashore, who became head of the Dept. of Psychology in 1905 and Dean of the Graduate College at Iowa in 1908. Further, the field's governing body, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, was founded in Iowa City at the home of Dr. Lee Edward Travis. The importance of Iowa's program in the field of speech-language pathology and audiology and the new academic discipline it represented was recognized in 1956 when it became an independent department in the College of Liberal Arts (now Liberal Arts and Sciences). The department expanded in the next two decades. Its growth was facilitated by the Wendell Johnson Speech and Hearing Center building, dedicated in 1968.

Throughout its history, the department has maintained a commitment to the scientific exploration of normal and disordered speech, language, and hearing processes, which is critical to future progress in the assessment and treatment of speech, language, and hearing problems. Over the years, the CSD department at the University of Iowa has become well known and respected for training scientists, teachers, innovators, and leaders in the fields of Speech, Language, and Hearing. We are proud of our history, and we are excited to have you join us as we continue forward, including our move to a new facility in the Fall of 2025.

Departmental Organization

The department is led by a Department Executive Officer (DEO), also known informally as “the Chair.” The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) oversees the three graduate programs in the CSD department (PhD, AuD, MS-SLP). The Director of PhD Studies leads the PhD program specifically, and sometimes the DGS also fills this position. Other key people for PhD students to know are the Departmental Administrator (Admin), Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC), and Administrative Services Coordinator (ASC). The GPC assists with all components of the student system of record such as tracking progress, grades, and completion of program milestones. The following people currently fill these positions:

Departmental Executive Officer (DEO)	Eric Hunter	eric-hunter@uiowa.edu
Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)	Shawn Goodman	shawn-goodman@uiowa.edu
Departmental Administrator (Admin)	Lucie Hulse	lucie-hulse@uiowa.edu
Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC)	Mindy Miller	mindy-miller@uiowa.edu
Admin. Services Coordinator (ASC)	Rachel Miller	rachel-n-miller@uiowa.edu

Program Goals and Objectives

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is the highest scholarly degree awarded by the university. The primary goal of Iowa’s CSD PhD program is to prepare students for academic careers, specifically as high-impact professors in research-intensive universities. Graduates of the CSD program may also find career opportunities in other academic and industry environments. To achieve this goal, we focus on the following three main objectives:

- (1) Provide strong foundational knowledge and skills in basic and/or clinical research including:
 - a. Understanding the principles of scientific inquiry, ethics, and scholarly values.
 - b. I am proficient in research design, data collection, and analysis. This includes formulating questions and hypotheses to address research questions.
 - c. Practice communicating the results of research, including presentations at professional meetings and publication in peer-reviewed journals.
 - d. Understanding of methods for seeking / applying for research support and funding and experience writing grant applications.
- (2) Provide a rigorous foundation of knowledge. This is accomplished primarily through coursework, which will help build expertise in an area of specialization.
- (3) Provide experience in mentoring and teaching.

A variety of opportunities are available within the department and through interdepartmental collaborations that allow students to specialize in areas of particular interest and relevance to their career goals.

Expectations

Departmental Responsibilities

To ensure that the program goals and objectives are met, the department has certain obligations to graduate students. The department will strive to foster an environment that is supportive of excellence, mutual trust, respect for differences, and integrity. Specifically, the department will provide students:

- An environment that supports scholarly attainment and meritorious scientific research.
- Sensitivity and responsiveness to academic needs and desires, as well as cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Encouragement for creative, original study and research.
- An annual evaluation of the students' program and progress.
- Flexibility to make changes when needed, such that the program meets individual goals.
- Support and resources for a positive and productive graduate education experience.
- Access to department policies, including an avenue for input and representation.
- Reasonable accommodations for disabilities, both as students and graduate assistants

Student Responsibilities

To ensure that the program goals and objectives are met, students have certain obligations to the department and to themselves. Students are expected to meet the following goals and responsibilities during their programs:

- Demonstrate aptitude for, and sustained interest in the program by making consistent progress, as documented in the annual review. Requirements for the degree can typically be completed in 3.5 to 5 years (including summers).
- Produce research that is worthy of publication and presentation, recognizing that publication is an expectation and fulfillment of the responsibility to share information with the scientific community.
- Participate in departmental seminars and colloquia. This includes both regular attendance and periodic presentations.
- Participate in departmental teaching.

ADMISSIONS AND FUNDING

Admissions Process

The Iowa CSD PhD program is mentor-driven, requiring applicants to first identify a faculty member who would serve as their primary mentor and advisor. The application process begins with the prospective mentor reviewing the applicant's materials to evaluate alignment with their research interests and expertise. Applicants who receive mentor support move on to a faculty-wide evaluation, where tenure-track faculty rate candidates based on academic merit, research potential, and fit with the mentor/program. The highest-rated applicants are then considered for acceptance based on available funding, with offers extended to top candidates and others placed on

A waitlist if necessary. A student who completes the MA or AuD degree, but who then decides to continue in a PhD program is considered a “new” applicant and will be evaluated with other new applicants. For typical application information, please see: <https://csd.uiowa.edu/graduate/admissions>

Once admitted, if a student’s enrollment is interrupted for any reason so that they are not enrolled for three consecutive academic sessions (including the spring, summer, and fall sessions but excluding the winter session) the student must apply for readmission. The readmission application form must be used. The form is available at this website <https://grad.admissions.uiowa.edu/new-students/returning-students>. The Graduate College does not require new letters of recommendation, a new Statement of Purpose, a written explanation of the reasons for the absence, or a plan for degree completion. However, the department may request any or all of these items.

Funding

PhD students typically receive funding support for four years (including some summer support), usually in the form of half-time assistantships (50%, 20-hours/week commitment). These are either teaching assistantships or research assistantships. Funding may also be received from other sources. Note that admission into the program does NOT guarantee funding. Funding is considered based on an assessment of the adequacy of the student’s progress, as well as available funds. Funding support beyond the fourth year of PhD studies must be applied for and approved by the DEO and DGS.

Assistantships

Assignment: Students funded by assistantships are given work assignments on a semester-by-semester basis. These are in the form of a teaching assistantship (TA) and/or research assistantship (RA). These assignments are made based on the needs of the department, along with input from the faculty and students.

Eligibility: Students must be on campus during their assistantships. Students are eligible for 5 working days of absence per semester (graduate student equivalent of vacation time) and 13.5 days (about 2 weeks) of sick time (this sick time allotment is for the entire academic year) and includes time for personal or mental health).

<https://grad.uiowa.edu/funding/graduate-student-employment-standards/paid-leaves-and-holiday>. If absence becomes an issue for any reason, please talk to the DGS or Admin right away. To be eligible for an assistantship, the student must be a full-time student (i.e., registered for a minimum of 9 semester hours during each regular semester, or at least 1 semester hour for post-comprehensive exam registrations. Note that international students may have additional requirements. Students on conditional or probationary status cannot get assistantships or financial appointments. Continued funding is also dependent on satisfactory performance of teaching, research, and other assigned activities.

Expectations: PhD assistantships are typically half-time (50%), offered each Fall and Spring semester, and come with a work expectation of 20 hours/week during the two regular semesters. This commitment is in addition to other commitments such as registered research credits and courses. The term of each semester assistantship

The appointment begins three full working days prior to the start of semester classes and concludes on the Tuesday after the Friday of finals week.

Payments: Stipend payments are received by the student on the first day of each month, beginning on September 1 for fall appointments and February 1 for spring appointments. Students are required to complete a direct deposit form to have their check automatically deposited. If an appointment includes the payment of tuition, such payment is credited directly to the student's tuition bill. Students may be eligible for resident status and in-state tuition depending on the source of their funding.

ADVISING AND GUIDANCE

Pre-Comps

Academic Advisor

Purpose: The role of the Academic Advisor is to guide and oversee the student's doctoral program on behalf of the department, including determination of coursework. The Academic Advisor fulfills this role until the student has successfully completed their comprehensive exam. In addition to helping the student plan their program of study, the advisor is also available to counsel the student regarding any problems related to the student's program of study, professional goals, etc. If the student has questions or concerns, the advisor may suggest that the student talk to the DGS or another faculty member; however, the student should initially consult the advisor.

Selection: The selection of the Academic Advisor is based on faculty members' expertise in research of interest to the student. Selection of the Academic Advisor usually arises from early communications between the prospective student and faculty members during the application and admission processes.

Timing: The student will typically have identified a permanent Academic Advisor prior to admission to the program, but the decision must be made no later than the end of the first semester in the program. The DEO department and the DGS must approve the appointment of the Academic Advisor. If needed, the Academic Advisor can be changed later in the program (e.g., if the faculty member leaves the University before the student has completed the program).

Pre-Dissertation Committee

Purpose: The committee helps the student draft a doctoral plan of study including (e.g., coursework, research, professional development), modifies the plan based on ongoing progress reviews, and supervises the student until completion of the comprehensive exam.

Timing: Within the first semester of study, the student must form a Pre-Dissertation Committee. The Pre-Dissertation Committee must hold an initial planning meeting within the first two semesters of doctoral study. Thereafter, the committee is required to meet at least once every academic year until the student passes the comprehensive exam.

Composition: Committee members are selected in consultation with the Academic Advisor, who chairs the committee. The student is responsible for asking faculty if they

are willing to serve on this committee. The Pre-Dissertation Committee must have at least four members, of which at least three are regular University of Iowa tenure-track faculty. Additionally, two members must be tenure-track faculty from the CSD department. Permission for Emeritus faculty, clinical faculty, or members from other academic institutions may be included but require permission from the Dean of the Graduate College. Contact the DGS to initiate the approval process. The DGS must approve the membership of all committees. It is encouraged, though not required, that at least one member of the committee be from outside the CSD department. Committees comprised of more than seven members require prior approval from the Graduate College. See section “P” the following link for additional details: <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual/academic-program/section-xii-doctors-degrees>. The academic advisor and membership of the committee may be changed by the student at any time, in consultation with the academic advisor, the DGS, and/or the DEO. Any changes must be documented (see Official Paperwork, below).

Committee Reports:

- (1) The chair of the committee (the student’s Academic Advisor) must submit the Report of the Initial PhD Pre-Dissertation Committee Meeting form to the department. This form lists the student’s preliminary plan for achieving degree requirements, an initial plan of study with an approximate timeline for completion, and tentative information about the student’s predissertation and dissertation projects.
- (2) After each annual meeting, the *Annual Progress Report* form must be submitted to the department to document the student’s progress through the doctoral program.

Official Paperwork:

- (1) Students must submit the *Request for the Appointment of the Doctoral Pre-Dissertation Committee* form when they form their committee.
- (2) If there is a change in the Academic Advisor and/or membership of the Pre-Dissertation Committee, a *Request for Changes in the Doctoral Degree Program* form must be used to formally document and request such changes.
- (3) Prior to scheduling the comprehensive exam, the Graduate College must grant permission. This is done by submitting the formal plan of study that was guided and overseen by the Pre-Dissertation Committee.

Post-Comps

Dissertation Advisor

After students have completed their comprehensive exam and before starting their dissertation, students must select a Dissertation Advisor. Often, the Dissertation Advisor is the same person as the Academic Advisor. If a change is made, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the DGS and Academic Advisor affected by the change. The role of the Dissertation Advisor is to guide and oversee the student’s dissertation research.

Dissertation Committee

Purpose: Working with the student, the committee provides guidance during the dissertation of development (pre-prospectus meetings). The committee approves the

Dissertation project (prospectus meeting) and supervises the student until completion of the dissertation and defense and the granting of the PhD degree.

Timing: As soon as the comprehensive exam is finished, students are encouraged to choose their Dissertation Advisor and form the Dissertation Committee. This must be completed within one year of passing the comprehensive exam.

Composition: Committee members are selected in consultation with the Dissertation Advisor based on the student's intended dissertation research. The same rules for the makeup of the Pre-Dissertation Committee apply to the Dissertation Committee.

Annual Reviews

A student's progress toward their degree objective will be continuously monitored. Formal review by the Academic/Dissertation Advisor, in consultation with the appropriate committee and the entire didactic departmental faculty, will occur annually. The review will include student performance in (1) coursework, (2) teaching or research assistantships, and (3) research projects. Advisors will provide the students with a written summary of their annual review. The Annual Progress Report form will document this review.

PHD PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The PhD program provides comprehensive training for prospective scholars in speech, hearing, and language processes and their disorders. Although the program may include more intensive specialization in particular clinical problems, it is not designed as an advanced clinical degree. The primary requirements are 72 semester hours of coursework, a pre-dissertation project, the comprehensive examination, the dissertation prospectus, and the dissertation defense. These are detailed in the following sections.

Coursework

Credit Hours and Course Load

Overall: The PhD degree requires a minimum of 72 semester hours of graduate coursework, of which at least 39 must be earned after admission, while registered at the UI Graduate College. (see <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual/academic-program/section-xii-doctors-degrees>). Up to 33 semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred from previous institutions, with the consulting of the pre-dissertation committee, department, and the graduate college. Assuming a student is supported on a 50% assistantship and taking 12 SH each Fall and Spring semester, the 72-hour requirement can be completed in 4 regular semesters (assuming 24 transfer hours) or 6 regular semesters (assuming no transfer hours).

Pre-Comps: Prior to successfully passing their comprehensive exam, PhD students must maintain full-time registration (a minimum of 9 semester hours) each fall and spring semester. Registration should accurately reflect the amount and type of work undertaken, the use of university facilities, and the amount of consultation with faculty. Note that courses numbered 3000 or lower do not count towards degree requirements. Maximum registration in the fall and spring semesters is 15 SH. However, students with 50% assistantships (which have a 20 hour/week commitment) are not allowed to

register for more than 12 SH. (<https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual/academic-program/section-ii-registration>).

Post-Comps: After successfully passing the comprehensive exam, doctoral students may maintain full-time status by registering for Doctoral Continuous Registration (DCR), which requires a 1 semester hour tuition/fee payment. See section L of <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual/academic-program/section-xii-doctors-degrees>) for more information. Note that some student visas may require a hire registration requirement. Students are not required to register in the summer or winter terms unless they plan to graduate in that term.

Required Coursework

Principles of Scholarly Integrity: All PhD students are required to receive training in principles of scholarly integrity, usually completed in the first semester. This is a combination of online and in-person instruction and may have course credit associated. Successful completion of this course is also a requirement for funding that comes from federal grants.

Here is a link to all the options available to graduate students:

<https://grad.uiowa.edu/postdocs/training-rcr/approved-courses>

Introduction to Doctoral Research: During their first year of study, all PhD students are required to register for CSD:5511. Introduction to Doctoral Research (1 SH). The intent of this course is to provide each student with early introduction and feedback regarding their potential research.

Scientific Writing: All PhD students must register for CSD:5310 Scientific Writing (2 SH) at least once during their program, usually during their second year. This course helps students develop advanced scientific writing skills needed for generating publishable manuscripts. The course provides a space to critically engage with the writing process, offering opportunities to analyze and critique both their own writing and the writing of peers.

Grant Writing for Fellowship and Career: All PhD students must register for CSD:6540 Grant Writing (2 SH) at least once during their program, usually during their second year. This course is designed to guide students through the writing of a grant proposal, paper, or presentation. It equips students with the skills and knowledge necessary to develop competitive NIH pre-doctoral fellowship (F awards) and career development (K awards) applications.

Tools and Methods Coursework

Students must take at least two tools/methods courses (e.g., statistics, programming, signal processing, machine learning). The specific courses for this requirement should be chosen in consultation with the academic advisor and Pre-Dissertation Committee.

Focus Area Coursework

PhD students should make decisions about additional coursework in close consultation with their Academic Advisor and their Pre-Dissertation Committee. The specific courses included in the plan of study are chosen to meet the interests and background of the

student. Students are encouraged to take courses relevant to their areas of interest both inside and outside the department (e.g., Psychology and Brain Sciences, Neuroscience, Linguistics, or Education). The following is some general guidance about courses.

During the first two years, students usually enroll in at least 6 SH each semester of listed content courses and/or methods of courses. When a course does not exist, independent study credits can be arranged. Note that no more than 10 SH of independent study throughout the tenure of the program can be taken without DGS approval (see Request for Independent Study form). During most semesters, students should register for one or more SH of mentored research instruction (CSD:7590 Research, 1-9 SH, see Request for Mentored Research Study form). The number of SH mentored research instructions should be chosen in consultation with the Academic Advisor and Pre-Dissertation Committee. The number of mentored research hours taken each semester should reflect the amount of time spent directly working on mentored research (1 SH = 3 to 4 work hours/week). In the first two years, the total number of mentored research SH should be less than listed content/method course SH.

An example of 48 SH accumulated after two years of study (12 SH per semester) may look like this:

5 SH of required coursework (CSD:5511, 5310, 6540)

6 SH of methods classes (e.g., two statistics courses)

21 SH of content courses

10 SH of mentored research (CSD:7590)

6 SH of independent study

At this point, students with at least 20 SH of graduate transfer credit may have accumulated a sufficient number of credits to meet the 72 SH requirement for the PhD degree (48 earned + 20 transferred + 4 doctoral continuous registration = 72). After passing the comprehensive exam, such students would then typically register for 1 SH of Doctoral Continuous Registration each semester until the dissertation is completed, usually an additional 4 semesters.

At this point, students with no transferrable SH of graduate transfer credit will need to take an additional 20-24 SM of coursework in order to meet the 72 SH requirement for the PhD degree. Usually this will consist of mentored research (CSD:7590) taken during the third year, after which the student would register for 1 SH of Doctoral Continuous Registration each semester until the dissertation is completed (48 earned + 22 additional + 2 doctoral continuous registration = 72).

Whether or not a student has graduate transfer credit, they can reach the 72 SH requirement in 3-4 years of diligent work. Note that except for mentored research credits, or Doctoral Continuous Registration courses taken after the comprehensive exam must have prior approval from the DGS.

Registration Process

For the first semester, individual advising takes place during orientation week. Thereafter, during the latter part of each semester, students are assigned times for early registration for the upcoming semester. The Academic Advisor is responsible for

authorizing the student's registration. Students may proceed to register online at any time after meeting with their advisors and receiving approval of their plan of study for the next session.

Incomplete Grades, Academic Probation, and Termination

The Graduate College regulations specify that the grade of "I" (incomplete) is to be used only when a student's work during a session cannot be completed because of illness, accident, or other circumstances beyond the student's control. The department closely follows these regulations. The department also closely follows the Graduate College policies on academic standing, probation, and dismissal.

Pre-Dissertation Project

Purpose: Each doctoral student must complete a pre-dissertation research project. The project scope should be such that it could result in a peer reviewed publication.

Timing: The project should be selected and developed in consultation with the Academic Advisor. Planning and executing the pre-dissertation project should begin the first semester before the student begins the PhD program. The student's Pre-Dissertation Committee must be recorded prior to scheduling the comprehensive examination. Both the pre-dissertation project and the comprehensive exam must be successfully completed before a PhD dissertation prospectus is considered.

Content: The project must be data-based, but the student can use existing data rather than generating new data. It is expected that students work on the project as part of CSD:7590 Research registrations.

Completion: All students are required to give a public presentation based on their predissertation project. This is typically a poster or talk given at a research conference. If such a presentation is not possible, a Proseminar talk may meet this requirement.

All students must write a complete manuscript reporting on their pre-dissertation project. Submission of this manuscript to a peer reviewed journal is strongly encouraged, though not required. Regardless of whether the manuscript is submitted to a journal, the manuscript will be submitted to the Pre-Dissertation Committee. At least two-thirds of the Pre-Dissertation Committee must approve the completion of the pre-dissertation project.

Official Paperwork: Upon approval, the Pre-Dissertation Project Completion form must be completed and submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Comprehensive Exam

Purpose: Each student pursuing a doctoral degree will complete a comprehensive examination by their committee as specified in the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College (<https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual/academic-program/section-xii-doctors-degrees#accordion-item-11171-15>). The intent of the examination is to assess the student's ability to create academic products and integrate previously obtained knowledge while critically evaluating and answering questions within their area of specialization.

Timing: The comprehensive exam should be taken at or near the end of the formal

preparation/coursework and prior to the dissertation prospectus. Typically, the comprehensive examination occurs at the beginning of the fall of a student's 3rd year of study. The comprehensive examination must be passed within 5 years of the student's first enrollment in the program. The written portion of the exam is taken over a two-week period. The written responses are submitted at least one week prior to the oral examination.

Requirements:

- (1) **A Comps Examination request must be filed with the Graduate Program Coordinator three weeks before the scheduled examination.**
- (2) A student must be registered at the Graduate College at the time of the comprehensive examination. To take the exam in the summer requires the student to register for course credit (summer tuition is not covered by the department).
- (3) The examination may be administered only on campus (i.e., the student must be attending the UI in person at the time).
- (4) The oral portion of the exam (but not the two-week writing period) must be held when classes are in session or during the final examination week.
- (5) With rare exceptions, the full exam should be done at or near the end of coursework. Except for mentored research credits, courses taken after the comprehensive exam must have prior approval from the DGS.

Description: The comprehensive examination consists of two parts: a written examination and an oral examination. The student is given two weeks to prepare written answers to the questions. The student is free to use written resources, such as books or journal articles, as references. An oral examination is then held with all committee members present. The student is questioned about their written responses. The oral examination provides an opportunity for the committee to explore the student's written responses in greater depth, and the committee may ask about additional topics that are relevant to the student's studies.

Process: When a student and their Academic Advisor decide that it is time to take the comprehensive examination, the student will meet (in-person or virtually) with the committee and discuss general areas to be included in the examination. The committee will meet privately to develop a set of exam questions – three questions are customary practice. The content of the questions should reflect the student's coursework, research experience and interests, and issues/topics important to the field. The committee works together to ask three questions.

The written exam period is two weeks in length. On the morning of the first day, the Academic Advisor gives the students questions. The student is given two weeks to write answers to the questions. There are no official page limits, but typically each answer is 15-20 pages long (double spaced). The answers to the questions should be the student's own work, produced without help from other people. The student may not ask the committee (or anyone else) questions about the content or their opinions on the question topics. Any communication with any committee members must be disclosed to all committee members at the time of the submission of the written responses.

The written responses are submitted to the Academic Advisor at least one week prior to the oral examination. The advisor ensures that copies of all questions and responses are distributed to each committee member. While the date of the oral examination may be previously scheduled, at least two-thirds (or 66%) of the committee must vote in favor of proceeding to the oral examination. The vote may be taken by email. Note that

this vote to proceed should NOT be considered an indication of passing the comprehensive exam, but only that there were not egregious enough problems with the written component to stop the student from proceeding to the oral examination.

An oral examination is held with all committee members present. The examination should be scheduled for 2 hours. If determined by the committee, the student may start the exam by providing a brief (less than 15-minute) overview of the responses to the examination questions. Questioning is based primarily on the student's written responses; however, the committee may ask about additional topics that are relevant to the student's studies.

Results: Each committee member will sign the examination report as "satisfactory," "with reservations," or "unsatisfactory." An exam is passed when at least two-thirds (or 66%) of the committee evaluates it as satisfactory. Students who satisfactorily complete the comprehensive examination will enter PhD Candidacy.

<https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual/academic-program/section-xii-doctors-degrees>. See sections below for procedures related to unsatisfactory performance.

Official Paperwork: Prior to taking the comprehensive exam, a formal Plan of Study must accompany the departmental request to the Graduate College for permission to conduct the comprehensive examination. After the comprehensive exam, the results are reported on the Record of Comprehensive Exam form. The completion of the exam must be filed with the Graduate College within fourteen days after completion of the exam.

Unsatisfactory Performance on the Exam:

- (1) *Less than two-thirds of the committee are in favor of proceeding to the oral examination.* If the committee members determine that problems with the written portion were egregious enough to stop the student from proceeding to the oral examination, the committee will provide feedback about a plan for moving forward. The committee may specify additional learning experiences that the student must undertake before revising and resubmitting the written document. The timeline for this revision will be determined by the committee, though the overall revision process must be completed by the end of the semester following the initial submission of the written portion. The student will be given one opportunity to revise the written document in this fashion. If the student revises the document, the committee determines that the student still may not proceed to the oral examination; the committee will assign a grade of dissatisfaction to the comprehensive exam. The student will then be required to restart the comprehensive examination process from the beginning, with a new set of questions, after completing additional learning experiences over a period specified by the committee. This will count as one of the maximum two attempts allowed to complete the comprehensive examination.
- (2) *Two or more votes of "with reservations."* Per the requirements of the Graduate College, a vote of "with reservations" from the oral exam should only be used when a faculty member feels that the deficiencies displayed by the student were modest and can be readily rectified. In the event of a report with two or more votes of "with reservations," the remedial actions required of the student to correct the deficiencies must be recorded and submitted to the Graduate College. The written statement must describe the specific actions and must specify the time allowed for completion of the remediation plan. For instance, if additional coursework is required, a list of suitable courses must be presented. If the student satisfies the required actions in the specified period, the DGS will send a written report to the Graduate College

indicating the date for which the examining committee considers the actions to have been satisfied. Upon approval of the Graduate College, the comprehensive exam will be recorded as "Satisfactory" as of that date. If the actions are not satisfied on time, or if the actions are not of sufficient quality, the DGS will send a written report to the Graduate College indicating that fact. Upon approval of the Dean of the Graduate College, the comprehensive exam will be recorded as "Unsatisfactory" as of that date. The student cannot continue to the dissertation until a grade of "Satisfactory" has been recorded for the comprehensive exam.

- (3) *Unsatisfactory performance.* An "Unsatisfactory" report on the comprehensive examination will normally terminate the student program at the end of the current session of registration. However, to enroll for subsequent sessions, the student must do one of the following: a) Declare in writing to the DGS about the intent to be re-examined. In this case, the student will be permitted to register until the completion of the second evaluation. b) Be approved by the DGS for an alternate program of study, which would permit the student to pursue study in a non-PhD program (interdisciplinary MS degree).

For the student to be re-examined, the committee may require the student to repeat only the oral examination, make additional revisions to the written examination, or start the comprehensive examination process over again. The committee may also assign additional learning activities before the student proceeds with the examination. The examining committee will specify a date by which the second evaluation must occur. In accordance with the regulations of the Graduate College, the re-examination may not occur sooner than four months after the first unsatisfactory attempt; an unsatisfactory grade on the second attempt will result in the student's termination from the program with no recourse for continuing.

Dissertation Prospectus

Purpose: The prospectus is a comprehensive document describing the intended dissertation of research. The prospectus acts as a detailed map leading to the completed dissertation. Completing the prospectus helps ensure the dissertation project is of the appropriate size and scope.

Timing: The prospectus can only be approved after the exam has been passed. The prospectus must be approved prior to the dissertation of defense. The prospectus is completed within a year of the dissertation defense.

Requirements: The prospectus document includes material which eventually will constitute the Introduction and Procedures sections of the dissertation. The document should conform to the Thesis and Dissertation formatting requirements (<https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/thesis-and-dissertation>).

Description: The culmination of the PhD program is the dissertation and its successful defense. Dissertation research may involve experimental, quasi-experimental, descriptive, or other designs. The expectation is that the dissertation of research meets the scholarly research standards and practices of the discipline. The dissertation involves original research that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in the field. Although the student will receive input and guidance from their advisor and dissertation committee, the student should demonstrate reasonable independence in study design,

data collection, data analysis, and writing the results.

Process:

- (1) *Pre-Prospectus Meeting(s)*. After the initial planning of the research project has occurred, one or more pre-prospectus meetings of the student with the prospectus committee may be held. While not required, these meetings are helpful for developing the dissertation and are highly recommended. Pre-prospectus meetings ensure that the student is embarking on a project that the committee feels is appropriate for a doctoral dissertation and provides a means for the committee members to help the student develop the project. At pre-prospectus meetings, the student provides the committee with information about the background and rationale for the proposed project, an initial statement of the questions or hypotheses to be investigated, and the essential elements of the proposed research procedures. Written documentation is not required; however, it is helpful for a statement of the problem and a general outline of the proposed procedures to be available to the committee members. The purposes of these meetings are to acquaint the committee with the nature of the developing project and, more importantly, to hear their suggestions and comments about the further development of the project. The student or committee may request that additional pre-prospectus meetings be held before the project is fully developed and ready for the official Prospectus Meeting.
- (2) *Prospectus Meeting*. Each student is required to develop a written prospectus to be presented to the prospectus committee for approval, present the topic in an oral format with questions from the committee, and receive committee approval to continue with the dissertation research. Although the prospectus document will have been reviewed by the committee (multiple times), the prospectus meeting can be viewed as a working meeting, and the presentation from the student should be viewed as a penultimate draft of the proposed project, pending any final input from the committee prior to official approval. At least two-thirds (66%) of the dissertation committee, with no more than 1 dissenting, must approve the prospectus before the student can proceed with the dissertation.

If the dissertation committee does not approve the prospectus, the student should collaborate with the committee to revise the prospectus before initiating the project. The committee must approve the prospectus before the student can proceed.

Official Paperwork: When the committee has agreed that the project can proceed, they will sign the Acceptance of Dissertation Prospectus form.

Dissertation Defense

Purpose: The program for the PhD culminates with a written dissertation and a public oral examination in defense of the dissertation. After successfully writing and defending the dissertation, the degree is awarded.

Timing: The oral defense of the dissertation must be completed within 8 years of the student's first enrollment in the program and may not be conducted in the same term as the comprehensive exam. The public oral examination must occur at least six weeks prior to the thesis deposit deadline in each semester. No exceptions to this timeline are allowed.

Official Paperwork.

- (6) ***A Request for Oral Dissertation Examination must be filed with the***

Graduate Program Coordinator for three weeks before the scheduled examination.

- a. Your request must have the following
 - Date, time, and location of the defense
 - Title of Thesis
 - Thesis abstract
 - Committee Chair and committee members
 - Headshot
- (7) Following the oral defense, the Final Examination Committee will assign a grade of “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” to both the written dissertation document and the oral defense, individually, using the Results of the Written Dissertation Paper and Oral Dissertation Defense form.

Requirements: The Final Examination Committee consists of at least four members of the Graduate Faculty (see <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual/academic-program/section-xii-doctors-degrees>, section P). Typically, this committee will have the same members as the dissertation committee. Committees comprised of more than 7 members require prior approval from the Graduate College. The committee and its composition are subject to the approval of the DGS and the Dean of the Graduate College, both of whom have the prerogative of adding members to the committee.

Process: The dissertation final exam has two parts: a written dissertation and an oral exam. When the Dissertation Advisor and student determine the dissertation is ready for consideration by the Final Examination Committee, the student submits the dissertation to the committee. The committee has 2 weeks to review the dissertation to determine whether the document is sufficient to proceed to the oral defense. During this time, the committee may request additional information or revisions to the document prior to voting to proceed to the oral defense. The committee will consider factors such as the clarity of the writing, the presentation of rationale, methods, data, results, and interpretation. The student’s responses to questions about the dissertation may also be considered. At least 75% of the committee must agree that the document is satisfactory before the oral dissertation defense can be scheduled. Note that this does not mean that further revisions may not be requested by the committee after the oral defense; it simply means that the committee judges the document to be sufficient for the student to proceed to the oral defense.

The oral examination should be scheduled for 2.5 hours, though the student should plan additional time for discussion with the committee after the defense has been completed. The initial portion of the exam is open; that is, faculty, members of the academic community, and members of the public may attend the student presentation. Only the Final Examination Committee, the DGS, and the DEO may be present during the closed portion and voting period. A typical oral dissertation examination format is:

- (1) 20–35-minute presentation (open presentation)
- (2) 10–25-minute period for questions from the public (open meeting)
- (3) 60-75 minutes of in-depth questioning from the committee (Closed portion).
- (4) 15 minutes of final deliberations during which the student will be asked to leave the room.

Defense Outcomes: Following the oral defense, the Final Examination Committee will

assign a grade of “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” to both the written dissertation document and the oral defense, individually, using the Results of the Written Dissertation Paper and Oral Dissertation Defense form. The report of the oral defense (called “Final Examination” by the Graduate College) is due in the Graduate College office not later than 48 hours (about 4 days) after the defense. The Final Examination will be evaluated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. An exam is passed when at least two-thirds (or 66%) of the committee evaluates it as satisfactory. In case of a report of dissatisfaction in the Final Examination, the candidate may not attempt a reexamination until the next session. The oral defense may be repeated only once.

An unsatisfactory grade on the oral defense will require the student to repeat an oral defense, following additional learning activities determined by the committee. The examination committee will specify a date by which the second evaluation must occur, which cannot occur in the same term.

An unsatisfactory grade on the written document will require the student to complete additional work on the written document to address concerns raised by the committee. It is common for a committee to ask for substantial revisions to the document while still giving it a satisfactory grade. An Unsatisfactory grade on the written document is given in situations where major work is needed.

Graduation Procedures: PhD degrees will be awarded upon favorable recommendation of the final examination committee and completion of all requirements specified for the degree by the Graduate College. These requirements include.

- (1) The filing of an application for the degree
- (2) Completion (or modification) of the filed plan of study
- (3) The final deposit of the dissertation and dissertation abstract in the Graduate College along with the appropriate certificates of committee approval.

The oral examination should be scheduled for 2.5 hours, though the student should plan additional time for discussion with the committee after the defense has been completed. The initial portion of the exam is open; that is, faculty, members of the academic community, and members of the public may attend the student presentation. Only the Final Examination Committee, the DGS, and the DEO may be present during the closed portion and voting period. A typical oral dissertation examination format is:

- (5) 20–35-minute presentation (open presentation)
- (6) 10–25-minute period for questions from the public (open meeting)
- (7) 60-75 minutes of in-depth questioning from the committee (Closed portion).
- (8) 15 minutes of final deliberations during which the student will be asked to leave the room.

Defense Outcomes: Following the oral defense, the Final Examination Committee will assign a grade of “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” to both the written dissertation document and the oral defense, individually, using the Results of the Written Dissertation Paper and Oral Dissertation Defense form. The report of the oral defense (called “Final Examination” by the Graduate College) is due in the Graduate College office not later than 48 hours (about 4 days) after the defense. The Final Examination will be evaluated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. An exam is passed when at least two-thirds (or 66%) of the committee evaluates it as satisfactory. In case of a report of dissatisfaction in the Final Examination, the candidate may not attempt a reexamination until the next session. The oral defense may be repeated only once.

An unsatisfactory grade on the oral defense will require the student to repeat an oral defense, following additional learning activities determined by the committee. The examination committee will specify a date by which the second evaluation must occur, which cannot occur in the same term.

An unsatisfactory grade on the written document will require the student to complete additional work on the written document to address concerns raised by the committee. It is common for a committee to ask for substantial revisions to the document while still giving it a satisfactory grade. An Unsatisfactory grade on the written document is given in situations where major work is needed.

Graduation Procedures: PhD degrees will be awarded upon favorable recommendation of the final examination committee and completion of all requirements specified for the degree by the Graduate College. These requirements include.

- (4) The filing of an application for the degree
 - (5) Completion (or modification) of the filed plan of study
 - (6) The final deposit of the dissertation and dissertation abstract in the Graduate College along with the appropriate certificates of committee approval.
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Common Forms by Year (assuming a 4-year program)

Year	Description
Year 1	• Request for the Appointment of the Doctoral Pre-Dissertation Committee • Report of the Initial Doctoral Pre-Dissertation Committee Meeting
Year 2	• Pre-Dissertation Project Completion Form • Request for Comprehensive Examination
Year 3	• Record of Comprehensive Examination • Request for Dissertation Prospectus Meeting • Acceptance of Dissertation Prospectus
Year 4	• Request for Oral Dissertation Examination • Results of the Written Dissertation Paper and Oral Dissertation Defense
General Or Recurring	• Annual Progress Report • Request for the Change in the Doctoral Degree Program • Request for Mentored Research Study (CSD:7590) • Request for Independent Study • Graduate Research Assistant Responsibilities and Semester Plan

RESOURCES

Academic & Professional Development

- Center for Teaching <https://teaching.uiowa.edu/>
- Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/>
- Grad Success Center: <https://grad.uiowa.edu/grad-success>
- Grad Plan: <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/my-grad-plan>
- Thesis and Dissertation: <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/thesis-and-dissertation>
- Office of the Ombudsperson: <https://ombudsperson.org.uiowa.edu/about-us>

Research & Funding Support (Enhancements)

- Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR): <https://research.uiowa.edu/>
- Proposal & Grant Support (DSP): <https://dsp.research.uiowa.edu/>
- University Libraries: <https://www.lib.uiowa.edu/>
- Funding: <https://grad.uiowa.edu/funding>

Technology & Student Tools

- ITS Help Desk: <https://its.uiowa.edu/help>
- ICON (course platform): <https://icon.uiowa.edu/>
- MyUI (student portal): <https://myui.uiowa.edu/>

Community & Belonging

- Graduate & Professional Student Government (GPSG): <https://gpsg.uiowa.edu/>

Life & General Support

- Student Health: <https://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/>
- University Counseling Services: <https://counseling.uiowa.edu/>
- Student Wellness: <https://studentwellness.uiowa.edu/>
- CLAS Health and Wellness: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/mental-health-wellness>
- Mental Health: <https://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/services/mental-health>
- Basic Needs: <https://basicneeds.uiowa.edu/>
- Hawkeye Meal Share: <https://dos.uiowa.edu/assistance/meal-share/>
- Student Emergency Fund: <https://dos.uiowa.edu/assistance/student-supportinitiatives/>
- Food Pantry: <https://imu.uiowa.edu/imu-services/food-pantry-iowa>
- Clothing Closet: <https://imu.uiowa.edu/imu-services/clothing-closet>
- Dean of Students Resource Guide: <https://dos.uiowa.edu/resource-guide>