

Teaching and Teacher Education

Dissertation Proposal

Dissertation Committee

All Ph.D. programs require the completion of a dissertation which meets required standards of scholarship and demonstrates the candidate's ability to conduct original research.

After Advancement to Candidacy, students must file a Dissertation Committee Appointment form on GradPath. This form must be submitted as soon as requirements are met, but no later than six months before the Final Oral (dissertation) Defense Examination is scheduled.

Deadlines for the submission of paperwork pertaining to doctoral programs are available online at the Graduate College site.

<http://grad.arizona.edu/academics/degree-certification/deadlines-for-graduation>

Develop Your Dissertation Proposal

Candidates must be able to develop a proposal of sufficient academic merit on a topic which will satisfy their committee. The Graduate College requires a minimum of three members, all of whom must be University of Arizona tenured, tenure-track, or approved as equivalent. If a committee has only three members, all must approve the dissertation. In departments that require four or five members, there may be one dissenting vote. The fourth member may be tenured or tenure-track, or a special approved member. Special members must be pre-approved by the Dean of the Graduate College. Any members beyond the fourth can also be tenured or tenure-track, or special approved members. All dissertation committee members are expected to attend the final defense.

Dissertation Proposal Meeting

The dissertation proposal meeting can be held at any time after the comprehensive oral examination. You and your dissertation committee members will discuss your proposal.

Typically, proposals consist of a complete draft of the first three chapters of the dissertation: 1) Introduction (Questions/ Topic/Issue); 2) Literature Review; 3) Methodology. The timing of the proposal writing and its nature depend on the type of research you are conducting. It is important that you stay in close touch with your advisor during this time.

Obtain approval from your advisor to send your proposal to the other committee members. Set up a proposal meeting with the committee members. Check with your advisor about the length of the meeting. Obtain the Dissertation Proposal Approval form from the Graduate Coordinator and take it to the meeting for signatures. Return the form to the Graduate Coordinator along with a copy of the approved proposal.

Human Subjects Approval

Virtually all dissertations in our program require approval for conducting research with human subjects. Visit the UA Human Subjects Protection Program (<http://orcr.arizona.edu/hspp>) early in your program and complete the required Human Subjects CITI Training. As soon as your dissertation proposal is approved by your committee, you must submit your application (Project Review Form) for approval. Have your advisor approve the application and then give it to the TLS Graduate Coordinator.

You cannot conduct any research until you get approval. Any data you collect before getting formal, written approval cannot be used in your dissertation. You also cannot send out consent or minor assent forms for signatures until you get approval. In fact, those forms will be stamped as approved by the UA HSSP committee, and you will need to distribute copies with that stamp on them. The staff at the HSSP office are very helpful. You can contact them with questions about your research as you are completing the application.

If you will conduct research in schools, you will need approval from the school district as well. Larger districts have their own application procedures and review committees. Smaller districts generally have an administrator who reviews proposals. Plan ahead and allow for at least several weeks (or more) for the review. It must first go to our department committee and then to the university committee. You must have Human Subjects approval in your own name; your project is not covered under your director's approval. A copy of the Human Subjects approval letter along with the Human Subjects Research Statement and all consent forms must be in your file in the department office. The approval letter may be included in the appendix in your dissertation.

Prepare the Dissertation

Your committee will determine the organization of your dissertation. It is important, though, to follow university guidelines for such things as formatting. Read the UA Graduate College Manual for Theses and Dissertations carefully. It is available at the Graduate College website and covers electronic submission.