

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND DEFENSE PROCESS CHECKLIST

Step One: Select a Dissertation Advisor

- Deadline:** By the time **27** credit hours have been attempted
- Requirement:** Advisor must be a **full** member of the graduate faculty

Step Two: Form the Dissertation Committee

Deadline: Four weeks prior to scheduling Preliminary Examination

Requirements:

Committee must be composed of:

- Four members who are members of the graduate faculty (including chair/advisor)
- Three of the members must be **full** members of the graduate faculty
- Include no more than one member from another institutions, if applicable
- Approved by graduate coordinator or department chair
- Advisor/department chair submits [Report of Thesis/Dissertation Committee Composition Form](#) to the Graduate College for final approval at least three weeks prior to scheduling Preliminary Examination
- Graduate faculty representative appointed by Graduate College

Step Three: Preliminary Examination and Oral Defense of Proposal

Deadline: Four weeks prior to the proposed oral defense of proposal date

- Graduate Coordinator submits a [Request to Schedule Oral Defense of Proposal](#) form
- The results of the preliminary exam will be communicated by the department to the Graduate College using the [Oral Defense Results Form](#) within **24 hours** from the date of the exam.
- A student who has not passed the Preliminary Exam by the time he/she has attempted **45 credit hours** will be *dismissed* from the program.
- After successful completion of the oral defense of proposal, all students are required to submit for approval through the appropriate research compliance committee (IRB, IBC, IACUC). Approval is required from the appropriate research committee **prior to conducting research.**
- After approval from the appropriate research committee is received, students are required to complete the [Clearance for Graduate Research Form](#) and receive a clearance letter from the Office of Research Compliance and Ethics.

NOTE: ALL students completing a thesis or dissertation are required to be cleared through the Office of Research Compliance and Ethics to ensure the University's compliance with applicable laws governing research.

Step Four: Final Oral Defense of Dissertation

Deadline: After the dissertation has been completed and approved by the dissertation committee

- Advisor submits [Request to Schedule Final Dissertation Defense Form](#) to Graduate College **four weeks** prior to the defense.
- Copies of the dissertation presented to committee no later than **one week prior** to oral defense
- Defense results are to be communicated to the Graduate College using the [Oral Defense Results Form](#)

Step Five: Submission of the Dissertation

Deadline: By the deadline posted on the [academic calendar](#)

Requirements:

- Conform to the Graduate College's formatting guidelines for dissertations (see the template/handbook on our [webpage](#))
- Major Professor (Committee Chair) submits, by email, the following documents (*must be received by the deadline posted on the academic calendar*):
 - A PDF copy of the approved version of the thesis/dissertation
 - The Research Clearance Letter (must be requested as specified in Step Three above)
 - A scanned copy of the completed and signed [Thesis/Dissertation Submission Checklist](#)
- Complete the submission to the ProQuest Electronic Theses & Dissertations (ETD) system. A Non-Exclusive Distribution Agreement is part of the ProQuest submission. Instructions for this step will be provided upon receipt of the submission documents.

Step Six: Publishing the Dissertation

Deadline: After dissertation has been reviewed and approved by the Graduate College

- Final dissertation document published electronically to the ProQuest/UMI Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Database

**Note: Please see the thesis/dissertation website for further details regarding the dissertation completion process:

<https://www.ncat.edu/tgc/continuing-students/thesis/index.php>