Welcome to the University of Utah’s Graduate program in Exercise and Sport Science. We pride ourselves on being a rigorous and scholarly program which provides a broad education in the numerous subdisciplines that comprise exercise and sport science. This handbook should provide answers to most questions about degree requirements, timely completion of your degree, and the procedures you should follow to successfully navigate your graduate experience. If you have other questions, check with your mentor, the Director of Graduate Studies, or the Administrative Assistant.

The department comprises five subdiscipline areas: Exercise Physiology and Coaching Wellness, Psychosocial Aspects of Sport, Special Physical Education, Sport Pedagogy, and Sports Medicine. Within general department wide criteria, the subdiscipline areas are responsible for admitting and terminating students, determining eligibility for funding, and establishing subdiscipline degree requirements. Students should fulfill both Departmental and subdiscipline requirements, as described in this Handbook and the subdiscipline curricula, as well as in concert with their mentor. In addition, students can shape their careers by taking advantage of a variety of specialized opportunities. Each student's educational program is developed with his/her mentor and Master's or Ph.D. committee.

Each student is responsible for his/her degree. As such, it is very important to become familiar with and refer often to the content in this Handbook. If you have a question please initially refer to FAQs on the Graduate Studies link. If the answer to your question is not provided on that link please see Andrea Moss (Graduate Studies Administrative Assistant) or Dr. Newton (Director of Graduate Studies).

Table of Contents:

✔ Academic Year Timeline and Orientation
✔ Registration Requirements
  - Continuous Registration
  - Transfer Credits
  - Eligible Course Numbers
  - Credits for Thesis and Dissertation Research
  - Residency Requirement
  - Time Limit
  - Grade Requirements
  - Graduate Seminar
✔ College Teaching
Forms

Suggestions for a Timely Completion of Your Graduate Degree
Timeline for MS Non-Thesis Completion
Timeline for MS Thesis Completion
Timeline for Doctoral Degree Completion

Graduate Student Advisory Committee (Grad SAC)

Graduate Supervisory Committee

Required Exams
Master’s Non-Thesis Comprehensive Exam
Master’s Thesis Comprehensive Exam
MS Form Completion
Doctoral Qualifying Exam

Doctoral Project Option:
Final Written Document
Form Completion

MS Non-Thesis Project Guidelines
MS Thesis Guidelines
Guidelines for Thesis and Dissertation Proposal Presentations
Dissertation Options
Conducting the Research
Formatting of Theses and Dissertations
Defending the Thesis or Dissertation
Day of Defense
Post Thesis or Dissertation Defense

Academic Year Timeline and Orientation

Fall Semester

- Begins on the first day of graduate student orientation OR August 16th, whichever comes first
- Contracts for students receiving departmental funding begin on the above date (except for athletic training students)

Spring Semester
• Ends on May 15th OR the weekday preceding the 15th, should it fall on a weekend
• Contracts for students receiving departmental funding end on the above date
• International students must request summer as a vacation semester if no courses will be taken

Summer Semester

• Summer semester is self-funded, tuition waivers are generally not available
• Tuition during summer semester is billed at in-state rates for all students
• Some students choose to teach in summer semester
• Teaching during summer semester may require completion of the College Teaching series

Orientation

• Orientation is only held at the beginning of fall semester, typically during the week prior to the first day of classes
• All graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend
• Students receiving departmental funding are required to attend
• First-time TAs are also required to attend the all-campus TA orientation
• International students awarded a TA must
  ▪ Pass the Versant test of spoken English
  ▪ Complete the International Teaching Assistant workshop

Registration Requirements

Continuous Registration

All students must maintain continuous registration

• This is met by registering for a minimum of 3 credit hours each fall and spring semester
• Registration during summer semester is not required
• Students who do not maintain continuous registration will be required to re-apply to the University

Transfer Credits

The University allows students to transfer a total of 6 **graduate credits** from another University. The following must be met for a student to transfer credits toward his/her degree requirements:
• Credits cannot have been used in the completion of a previous degree
• A grade of “B” or higher must have been earned in the transferred course(s)
• Credits must have been earned at an accredited college or university, as determined by the University
• The transferred credits must have been earned in the equivalent of a 5000-level course or higher at the University of Utah
• The student’s supervisory committee must approve of the transferred courses

**Eligible Course Numbers**

• All courses counted toward graduate degrees at the University must be at the 6000-level or higher
• Courses taken below the 6000-level may be taken, and may be required if deficiencies must be met
• 5000-level courses may be applied toward the degree upon supervisory committee approval
• Courses below the 5000-level may not be applied toward graduation
• Courses below the 5000-level will not be paid by the tuition benefit program

**Credits for Thesis and Dissertation Research**

**MS Students**

• Must register for a minimum of 6 credit hours of ESS 6970 Thesis Research
• Up to 10 credit hours of ESS 6970 may be applied toward graduation

**PhD Students**

• Must register for a minimum of 14 credit hours of ESS 7970 Dissertation Research
• There is no maximum number of ESS 7970 that may be applied toward graduation

When ESS 6970 OR ESS 7970 is taken alone, without any other courses, the tuition for these courses is charged at the in-state rate.

**Residency Requirement**

• All doctoral students must have two, back-to-back semesters of 9 credit hours of registration to demonstrate residency in Utah
• A minimum of 24 credit hours must be completed at the University of Utah by MS students
• Any graduate student who has completed 40 credit hours at the University should apply for residency in the State of Utah (most applicable to doctoral students)
• Applications for residency must be submitted to the Graduate Admissions Office and supported by evidence of living in Utah, such as
Utah driver’s license, utility bills with Utah address, Utah car registration, Utah bank account, etc.

**Time Limit**

- The time limit for completing the Ph.D. is seven consecutive calendar years from the date of matriculation into the program.
- All work for the master’s degree must be completed within four consecutive calendar years.

**Grade Requirements**

- The University requires all graduate students to maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. Students who do not maintain this GPA:
  - Cannot receive a tuition waiver
  - Will lose support from any type of assistantship
  - Will be placed on academic probation

A grade of D+ or lower cannot be counted toward the completion of a graduate degree.

MS students in the non-thesis option who earn any C grade in a required course for their academic program will be required to write a comprehensive exam question on that content area. Alternatively, the course may be re-taken.

**Graduate Seminar**

Graduate seminar (ESS 6850/ESS 7850) is the forum for ESS students to propose their theses and dissertations, as well as to provide a venue for non-thesis MS students to present their projects.

- MS non-thesis students register for ESS 6850, 3 credit hours, in the last semester of coursework
- MS thesis and PhD students register for ESS 7850, 1 credit hour, in the semester they are planning on proposing their thesis or dissertation
- One semester of Graduate Seminar is required of all students
- ESS 6850 students spend class time in Graduate Seminar preparing the final oral presentation of the non-thesis project
- Graduate Seminar meets every other Wednesday afternoon at 3:05 PM
- Faculty and guest lecturers may also provide presentations during Graduate Seminar

*Regardless of whether students are registered for Graduate Seminar, all ESS graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend thesis and dissertation proposal presentations and any other guest lectures provided during this time.*
**College Teaching**

Students wishing to teach courses in the undergraduate required curriculum must first complete the College Teaching series. The College Teaching series consists of:

- CTLE 6000 Teaching in Higher Education
- ESS 7953 College Teaching II
- Performing duties as recorder for the course to be taught
  - Recorders assist with the course, including holding review sessions, helping grade exams, keeping grade books, among other duties assigned by the faculty instructor.
  - Duties of a recorder count toward the TA responsibilities

Students interested in greater enhancement of their college teaching skills are encouraged to take advantage of the Higher Education Teaching Specialist designation through the Center of Teaching and Learning Excellence (http://ctle.utah.edu/).

**Forms**

All graduate students are required to complete Graduate School forms that demonstrate progress through the academic program. These forms vary by degree (MS, PhD) and by option (MS thesis or non-thesis).

For all forms, the following is true:

- Forms require signatures from the supervisory committee
- Forms sometimes require signature of the Director of Graduate Studies
- Forms must be submitted to the Graduate School on a specific timeline in order to ensure graduation by a certain date.
- Please see or email Andrea Moss for a copy of the appropriate form.

**Suggestions for a Timely Completion of Your Graduate Degree**

**Timeline for MS Non-Thesis Completion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 - Fall | *Identify &/or confirm mentor  
*Discuss curriculum/plan of study and complimentary experiences with mentor  
*Coursework |
| 2 - Spring | |

*Complete Request for Supervisory Committee form
*Committee meeting (may be done in group format) to propose/discuss remaining coursework & project/internship/independent study
*Coursework

*Complete Application for Admission to Candidacy form* ^

3 - Fall
*Plan and work on project
*Coursework

*ESS 6850 (3 cr.) Graduate Seminar
*Mentor signs Comprehensive Exam for the M.A. or M.S. Degree form
*Graduation^
*Coursework

For spring graduation, the Candidacy form is due by the beginning of November. See Andrea Moss.

^Students should confirm that all independent study (ESS 6951), internship (ESS 6910) or other arranged course grades have been assigned by the mentor faculty member before graduation.

- Students should submit all completed forms to the graduate administrative assistant (Andrea Moss).
- The number of total credit hours required for graduation varies by program
  - 3-6 credit hours must be applied toward the project/internship/independent study
  - Students must register for a minimum of 3 credit hours per semester; students receiving a tuition waiver must register for 9-12 credit hours per semester
- Students may obtain tuition waiver, partial or full, for four semesters
- Degree must be completed within 4 years (preferably within 2 as outlined above)

Timeline for MS Thesis Completion

**Semester**  **Tasks**

1 - Fall
*Identify & confirm mentor
*Discuss curriculum/plan of study and complimentary experiences with mentor
*ESS 7102 Intro to Research Methods
*Coursework

*Complete Request for Supervisory Committee form

2 - Spring
*Committee meeting to propose/discuss remaining coursework & thesis
*Coursework

*ESS 7850 (1 cr.) Graduate Seminar—propose thesis
*Mentor signs Comprehensive Exam for the M.A. or M.S. Degree form upon successful proposal of the thesis

3 - Fall
*Complete Application for Admission to Candidacy form*
*Coursework
*Defend thesis: Copy of thesis to the committee AND to the Thesis Editor 2-3 weeks prior to the defense for preliminary formatting screen
*Thesis defense announced 2 weeks prior by email and written notice***
*Committee signs and completes Report of the Final Oral Examination and Thesis for the Master's Degree form immediately after the defense
*Committee signs Master Supervisory Committee Approval form when all required changes have been made to the thesis
*Department Chair reads thesis & signs Final Reading Approval form
*Thesis given to the Thesis Editor for format approval**
*Final draft of thesis + Final Reading Approval form and other required documents are turned into the Graduate School**
*Graduation^

4 - Spring

*For spring graduation, the Candidacy form is due by the beginning of November. For summer, in March and for fall, in June. IRB approval or exemption or IACUC approval must be included with this form.

**Students should follow A Handbook for Theses and Dissertations, available through the Graduate School, for formatting guidelines and for preparing final copies of the thesis.

***Announcement of defense is the joint responsibility of the committee and the student

^Students should confirm that all thesis research (ESS 6970), independent study (ESS 6951), internship (ESS 6910), or other arranged course grades have been assigned by the mentor faculty member before graduation.

- Students should submit all completed forms to the graduate administrative assistant (Andrea Moss), with the exception of the Master Supervisory Committee Approval and the Final Reading Approval forms.

- Work on the thesis must be directed and approved by the supervisory committee

- The total number of credit hours required for graduation will vary by program
  - A minimum of 6 and maximum of 10 credit hours of thesis research (ESS 6970) should be applied to the program of study
  - Students must register for a minimum of 3 credit hours per semester; students receiving a tuition waiver must register for a minimum of 9-12 credit hours per semester

- Students may obtain tuition waiver, partial or full, for four semesters

Degree must be completed within 4 years (preferably within 2 as outlined above)

**Timeline for Doctoral Degree Completion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 - Fall | *Encouraged to identify dissertation topic  
*Meet regularly with mentor |
| 2 - Spring | *Coursework |
*Meet regularly with mentor
*Work toward dissertation dissertation project

*Coursework
*Complete Request for Supervisory Committee form
*Committee meeting to propose/discuss remaining coursework & dissertation project as well as 2-3 subsequent dissertation studies

3 - Fall

*Coursework
*Propose doctoral project to Supervisory Committee or complete comprehensive exam (see dissertation options)

4 - Spring

*Committee meeting to propose/discuss remaining coursework & dissertation project as well as 2-3 subsequent dissertation studies

5 - Fall

*Coursework
*Defend doctoral project to Supervisory Committee
*Complete the Report of the Qualifying Examination for the Ph.D., M.Phil Degree and Recommendation for Admission to Candidacy form**
*Propose multiple manuscript dissertation (comprehensive exam students wish to propose in the semester 5)

6 - Spring

*ESS 7850 (1 cr.) Graduate Seminar
*Complete Program of Study form
*Non-resident, domestic students apply for in-state residency status

7 - Fall

*Complete dissertation studies

*Copy of dissertation to the committee AND to the Thesis Editor 2-3 weeks prior to the defense for preliminary formatting screen
*Dissertation defense announced 2 weeks prior by email and written notice***
*Committee signs and completes Report of the Final Oral Examination for the Ph.D., Ed.D or M.Phil Degree form immediately after the defense (don’t wait!)

8 - Spring

*Committee signs Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Approval form when all required changes have been made to the dissertation
*Department Chair reads dissertation & signs Final Reading Approval form
*Dissertation given to the Thesis Editor for format approval****
*Final copy of dissertation + Final Reading Approval form and other required documents are turned into the Graduate School****

*May overlap with summer semester, as long as one portion of the exam is taken in either spring or fall (i.e., written exam in spring, oral in summer; written in summer, oral in fall). If both portions of the exam are taken in summer, then the student must register for 3 credit hours in summer semester.

**For spring graduation, the Candidacy form is due by the beginning of November. For summer, in March and for fall, in June. IRB approval or exemption or IACUC approval must be included with this form.

***Announcement of defense is the joint responsibility of the committee and the student

**** Students should follow A Handbook for Theses and Dissertations, available through the Graduate School, for formatting guidelines and for preparing final copies of the dissertation.
• Students should submit all completed forms to the ESS administrative assistant (Andrea Moss) with the exception of the Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Approval and the Final Reading Approval forms

• Work on the dissertation must be directed and approved by the supervisory committee

• There is no minimum number of total credit hours required for graduation
  ▪ A minimum of 14 credit hours of dissertation research (ESS 7970) should be applied to the program of study
  ▪ Dissertation research credit hours should be saved for the last two years of the program (they are billed at the in-state rate and save money for the tuition benefit program)
  ▪ Students must register for a minimum of 3 credit hours per semester; students receiving a tuition waiver must register for a minimum of 9-12 credit hours per semester
  ▪ Students must register for a minimum of 9 credit hours in two consecutive semesters
  ▪ Students must complete a minimum of 10-12 credit hours of research methods, design & statistics to satisfy the departmental research tool requirement
  ▪ Non-resident, domestic students receiving a tuition waiver must apply for in-state residency status after accumulating 40 credit hours, typically by the end of the 5th semester

• Students may obtain tuition waiver for eight semesters, so long as the master’s degree was obtained elsewhere

• Degree must be completed within 7 years (preferably within 4 as outlined above)

• Students may request a leave of absence under circumstances outlined by the Graduate School; time away from the program during a leave of absence does not count toward the 7 year time limit

• Students who have achieved candidacy and who are away from campus but working toward their degree may register for ESS 7990, Continuous Registration; only four semesters of ESS 7990 are allowed

---

**Graduate Student Advisory Committee (Grad SAC)**

Each semester, a collection of graduate students will be asked to serve on the graduate student advisory committee (Grad SAC). The Grad SAC provides input to the faculty on several levels. The GSAC

• evaluates faculty for tenure and/or promotion consideration

• has input for the ESS Awards Celebration held at the end of spring semester

• assists with graduate student orientation at the beginning of fall semester

• provides the ESS leadership committee with graduate student input

• assists with social functions of the graduate program
Graduate Supervisory Committee

The chair of a graduate student’s supervisory committee is considered that student’s advisor and mentor. Students accepted to the MS Thesis and PhD degree options must have a designated mentor at the time of admission. MS students in the Non-Thesis option are strongly recommended to secure an advisor soon after arriving on campus.

The supervisory committee should consist of a chair who conducts research (thesis/doctoral students) or teaches (non-thesis) in the student’s area of interest.

Master’s students should have a total of 3 committee members. The Chair must be tenure-track. A majority of committee members must be tenure-track and from ESS. All 3 committee members may be from ESS.

Doctoral students must have a total of 5 committee members. The Chair must be tenure-track. A majority of the committee members must be tenure-track and from ESS. At least 1 member must be from outside of ESS. Committee members not from ESS may be employed at a different university. For students pursuing research, the committee should support the student’s interest in research and at least one person should be very well versed in research methods and design and statistics.

Required Exams

All students must be registered for a minimum of 3 credit hours during any semester that a required exam is taken. Otherwise, the Graduate School will not recognize completion of the exam.

Master’s Non-Thesis Comprehensive Exam

- Any student who receives a C grade in a required course must complete a comprehensive exam question on that topic
  - Any remedial, written comprehensive exams must be completed during (ESS 6850)
- Alternatively, in the event a C grade is earned in a required course, a student may elect to re-take the course to replace the C with a B- or better
- The primary MS non-thesis comprehensive exam consists of a final oral presentation
- The final oral presentation is essentially a defense of the non-thesis project during Graduate Seminar (ESS 6850)
- In the early stages of Graduate Seminar, the Director of Graduate Studies provides students with feedback on their oral presentations
- Prior to the final presentation, the student must obtain final approval to give the presentation from the supervisory committee

Master’s Thesis Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam for master’s students in the thesis option is the thesis research
proposal, which is given during Graduate Seminar (ESS 7850). The exam is graded on a pass/fail basis by the supervisory committee. A grade of 80% or higher is required to pass the exam.

**MS Form Completion**

Following successful completion of the MS non-thesis or thesis comprehensive exam, the chair of the supervisory committee signs the Report of the Comprehensive Examination for the Degree of Master of Arts or Master of Science.

**Doctoral Qualifying Exam (for Students Pursuing Dissertation Option #2)**

All doctoral students must take the written and oral qualifying examinations. These exams can be taken when the student has completed at least 80% of the program of study, **normally at the end of the second year or at the beginning of the third year of study**.

**Arranging the Doctoral Qualifying Exam (for Students Pursuing Dissertation Option #2)**

Students are recommended to

- Confirm the date of the oral exam first, since all 5 committee members should be present
- In the event a committee member is external to the University of Utah, a conference call mechanism may suffice
- Count backward from the oral exam date approximately 2-3 weeks to schedule the written exam
- Schedule the written exam for a 3 day period over the course of one week
  - Example: Monday (8 hrs), Wednesday (8 hrs), Friday (4 hrs)
  - The chair of the supervisory committee collects all questions from the supervisory committee in advance and administers the exam to the student

**Written Exam Content and Procedures**

- Must cover the following content
  - Research methods and statistics
  - Major area of study/research emphasis
  - Auxiliary area(s) of study
  - Content is written by the supervisory committee, as solicited by the chair of the supervisory committee
- Student must supply his/her own computer to complete the exam and provide the answers on a storage medium to the chair of the supervisory committee
- Chair of the supervisory committee distributes all questions and answers to all members of the supervisory committee for evaluation
• All content is evaluated by the supervisory committee
  ▪ Grading scale is 1 to 5 where 1 = unacceptable, 2 = marginal, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = excellent
  ▪ Most questions receiving a score of 2 or lower must be re-taken either orally with the faculty member or re-written entirely
  ▪ A majority of the committee determines whether a student repeats any part or the entire exam
  ▪ A hard copy of the questions and answers must be provided to the Director of Graduate Studies to place in the student’s file

Oral Exam Content and Procedures
• Scheduled 2-3 weeks after the written exam
• Student reserves a conference room for 2 hours
• Content to include
  ▪ Follow-up on responses to written exam
  ▪ Optional questions not addressed on the written exam
  ▪ Any topic deemed appropriate by the supervisory committee
• Any part or the entire exam may be taken over only once
• Students who do not pass the exam on the second administration will be dropped from the doctoral program

Doctoral Project Option (for Students Pursuing Dissertation Option #1)
This would serve as the Doctoral qualifying exam for admission to candidacy. This is an alternative option, not a replacement, to the traditional comprehensive exam format. The use of the option must be approved by the mentoring professor; denial of this option is at the discretion of the mentor.

Project Guidelines:
• The student would need to have a committee in place before proposing a project.
• The project should largely be developed by the student and faculty mentor.
• The student is required to propose the project to their supervisory committee.
• A written component, which is too include an introduction (i.e. background, significance, purpose, hypotheses) and a proposed methods section, are required prior to the oral proposal (this must be sent to the committee two weeks prior to the proposal).
• IRB approval is required of all doctoral projects.
• The doctoral project oral defense must include a 30-40 min presentation followed by questioning.
Final Written Document

A paper submitted for publication to a journal appropriate to the student’s area of study. A copy of the paper will be retained in the student’s graduate file. As always it is possible that a manuscript is rejected, but evidence needs to exist of a final write up in journal format.

Form Completion

- **Report of the Qualifying Examination for the Ph.D., or M.Phil Degree and Recommendation for Admission to Candidacy** form is completed by the supervisory committee once the written (submitted manuscript) and oral (project defense) components are passed

- This form must be accompanied by the IRB or IACUC approval, if required, indicating the student has received approval to conduct the dissertation research

- IRB or IACUC approval may be submitted later

---


Completion of the MS or PhD degrees must include an approved project or research study. The guidelines below are general, given that projects and research studies will vary by the academic subdiscipline of the student, and by the guidance of different faculty members that comprise supervisory committees.

**MS Non-Thesis Project Guidelines**

The project must be question driven. This means that as a result of the student’s involvement in coursework relative to one of the four subdisciplines, there is some desire to applying one or more of the concepts learned in a practical setting. The exact question to be asked, activities to implement or observe and the methods to determine outcomes of the project must be approved by the chair (faculty mentor) and other members of the Supervisory Committee.

The project must be a component of the practicum, internship or special project. Because the project is part of a practicum course, IRB approval is not required.

The focus of the non-thesis project is on practical application. Students will be asked: “What was learned that will impact practice?”

The written document in support of the non-thesis project should contain the following elements:

- The question
- What lead to the formulation of the question
- What was done to address the question
- What was learned
- What impact will the findings have on future professional practice?

The 20 minute final oral presentation during Graduate Seminar should also address the points listed above. The final oral presentation constitutes the comprehensive exam.
**MS Thesis Guidelines**

The Master’s thesis is written up as an empirical article. It is estimated that the article should be 20-30 double-spaced pages (not including references). Additional information, such as an in-depth review of literature and/or methodological and statistical details can be provided in appendices. The student should consult with the Chair of their Supervisory Committee about what to include in appendices. The inclusion of appendices is expected and encouraged (e.g., review of literature, additional analyses). In consultation with the Chair of their Supervisory Committee, students should identify a potential journal as the study is being conceptualized. The manuscript must be prepared for submission to a journal for review before the student’s oral defense. The thesis proposal contains the introduction and methodology portions of the manuscript. It is likely that these sections will be quite in depth for the proposal and need to be trimmed for the manuscript. The student is required to orally defend their research. Students should consult with the Thesis Editor to make certain that the formatting of the final thesis complies with university regulations. See [http://www.gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/index.php](http://www.gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/index.php).

In rare cases the Chair of the supervisory committee can request that the student write a traditional thesis.

*Note: This content was adapted from the Department of Psychology graduate student handbook.*

**Guidelines for Thesis and Dissertation Proposal Presentations**

- All MS thesis and PhD dissertation proposals are presented in Graduate Seminar (ESS 7850)
- The minimum passing grade for the proposal presentation is 80%, as evaluated by the supervisory committee (70% weight) and remaining ESS faculty (30% weight).
- All faculty in attendance provide evaluative feedback on the proposal
- Students who do not pass the proposal presentation must present the proposal a second time

The Director of Graduate Studies organizes and coordinates Graduate Seminar, so students and faculty wishing to set proposal presentation dates should do so through the Director of Graduate Studies. **Students must have approval from the supervisory committee prior to scheduling a proposal presentation date.** Students wishing to present a proposal in Graduate Seminar must provide

- many weeks notice of the presentation date, since dates fill quickly
- hard copies of the proposal to the supervisory committee as well as to faculty within the sub-discipline of the student at least 2 weeks prior to the proposal presentation
- an email copy of the proposal to the ESS administrative assistant for mass distribution to all ESS graduate students and faculty 1-2 weeks prior to the scheduled presentation

**Dissertation Options**
Doctoral students have multiple dissertation options. The decision as to which option to pursue should be made early in the student’s education in consultation with the student’s Chair and Supervisory Committee.

Options 1 and 2:

Option 1: Doctoral Project and Two or Three Article Dissertation
Students have the option of completing doctoral project in lieu of a comprehensive exam. The doctoral project entails the proposal, completion, defense and submission of a research study to peer reviewed journal. The focus of the doctoral project is made in consultation with the student’s Chair and Supervisory Committee. Following a successful defense and submission of the doctoral project to a peer reviewed journal the student will complete either a two or three article dissertation. The decision of whether to complete two or three articles should be made in concert with the student’s Chair and Supervisory Committee. Collectively, the doctoral project and articles in the dissertation support a singular theme.

Option 2: Qualifying Exam and Three Article Dissertation
Students electing to complete a qualifying exam will complete a three article dissertation. The articles should support a singular theme. The need for three articles should be clear and approved by the Supervisory Committee.

General Document and Proposal Guidelines for Option 1 and 2:

1. The dissertation includes an abstract that synthesizes the articles, as well as an introduction (Chapter 1) and a conclusion (Chapter 5, assuming 3 articles are presented). Chapters 2, 3, and 4 contain the articles.

2. The introduction should function as the cord that weaves the various manuscripts together and describes, for the reader, their ‘collective meaning’ and ‘combined contribution’ to the field. It should include:
   a. A definition or statement of the problem
   b. The importance of the problem, i.e., why it is worth researching, why it matters to the field.
   c. The theoretical foundation (if appropriate) supporting the problem/issue.
   d. An overview of the important literature (overview, because each article will have its own unique literature review).
   e. The research questions and hypotheses.
   f. Explication of the general methodology to be used to answer those questions.

3. The conclusion will briefly summarize the dissertation’s major findings, limitations, discussion, and recommendations. The student will also present and discuss linkages (i.e., similarities and differences) between the separate manuscripts that are included in the dissertation, striving as much as possible to present the document as representative of a coherent body of work. The conclusion chapter ‘ties’ everything together and helps the reader see how the various manuscripts, taken together, make a contribution to the knowledge base regarding the problem. The conclusion chapter should present/discuss research imperatives, or knowledge gaps, not visible when each manuscript is considered individually and should articulate an agenda for future research on the issues addressed in the dissertation.

4. The dissertation proposal includes:
a. An introductory chapter addressing the following:
   i. A definition or statement of the problem
   ii. The importance of the problem, i.e., why it is worth researching, why it matters to the field.
   iii. The theoretical foundation (if appropriate) supporting the problem/issue.
   iv. An overview of the important literature (overview, because each article will have its own unique literature review).
   v. The research questions and hypotheses.
   vi. A detailed account of the methodology to be used to answer those questions.

b. If appropriate, a copy of the submitted doctoral project manuscript.

c. A timeline for completion.

d. The names of the journals the articles will be submitted to.

Additional Guidelines

1. All articles must be prepared for submission to a journal (s) prior to the dissertation defense; the Chair and Supervisory Committee must approve any exception to this rule. Articles may have been published before the defense; however, if so, the student must obtain copyright permission from the publishing journal to include the article in his/her dissertation. Doing so is required by U.S. law. When asking for permission to include the article in the dissertation, students should notify the journal editor that the dissertation will be made available on-line. Uploading your dissertation is a requirement of graduation.

2. Students should consult with the Thesis Editor to make certain that the formatting of the final dissertation complies with university regulations. There will likely be fairly substantial changes that need to be made. See http://www.gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/index.php.

3. In the likely event that one or more manuscripts are accepted for publication, students must secure all copyright permissions before finalizing the proposal and formatting the dissertation. Some journals might have copyright peculiarities that make it not worth the trouble to include that specific article in the dissertation. All of these issues should be considered early on in the process.

4. At least two of the articles should be based on data that are analyzed by the student. If the third article is conceptual in nature, a meta-analysis, or based on a synthesis of the literature, it must be connected to the theme or themes of the dissertation without overlapping heavily with the contents of either article. Whether the extent of any overlap is excessive will be determined by the student’s Chair and Supervisory Committee.

5. A certain amount of overlap is acceptable. For example, portions of the literature review may need to be cited in the various articles because it delineates the entire historical background of the study’s focal topic. Redundancy can be carefully reduced by citing one’s own work. However, self-plagiarism - reusing one’s own previously written work or data in a ‘new’ written product without letting the reader know that this material has appeared elsewhere - is prohibited.
6. Journals to which articles are being submitted must be approved by the Chair of their Supervisory Committee. Serving as an “editorial board” for the student, the Supervisory Committee will help select journals that will challenge the student and offer a reasonable chance of publication success.

7. Students must be first author on all articles. As first authors, students are responsible for development and articulation of the concept or idea for research, development of a proposal to pursue this idea, development of a research design, designing the intervention or assessment (if relevant), conducting the research and analysis, interpreting the results, and writing the manuscript. Co-authors must be identified at the student’s proposal defense. The article and the role of the coauthors must be presented and approved by all members of the Supervisory Committee. Any changes in co-authorship must be approved by the student’s Supervisory Committee.

8. If an article is rejected by a journal during the dissertation process, the student may submit to another journal approved by the Chair of their Supervisory Committee. In the case of a revise and resubmit during the dissertation process, any changes to the article must be approved by the Chair of their Supervisory Committee. Co-authorship will not be changed for a revise and resubmit.

9. If an article is rejected by a journal after the successful completion and defense of the dissertation, co-authorship decisions that were made during the dissertation process will no longer be in effect. Submission to a new journal will be at the sole discretion of the Ph.D. graduate. Also after the successful dissertation defense, any new submission or resubmission, including changes in the authorship or article content, will be at the discretion of the Ph.D. graduate.

Option 3: Conventional Dissertation

In very rare cases students have the option of completing a traditional dissertation. The decision to pursue a traditional dissertation is made with student’s Chair and Supervisory Committee. The conventional dissertation is preceded by the successful completion of a comprehensive exam or a doctoral project. The traditional dissertation is composed of the following chapters:
1. Introduction
2. Literature review of subject area
3. Methodology
4. Results
5. Discussion

The proposal for a traditional dissertation includes
   a. Chapter 1: Introduction
   b. Chapter 3: Methodology
While Chapter 2, the review of literature, is not included in the proposal submitted for review it is assumed that it is completed before the student proposes.

Conducting the Research

- All procedures surrounding the thesis or dissertation must be approved by the supervisory committee
• Must have made presentation of proposal in Graduate Seminar.
• If human subjects will be used, application must be made to the Institutional Review Board
• IRB training must be completed by all students anticipating using human subjects in their research
• If animal subjects will be used, application must be made to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
• If any procedures requiring the use of ionizing radiation will be used, application must be made to the Radiation Safety Committee

Formatting of Theses and Dissertations

Students are responsible for using the Handbook for Theses and Dissertations, published by the Graduate School, when preparing the final thesis or dissertation document. This document is also available online (see Important Websites.) The primary responsibility for formatting the thesis or dissertation rests upon the student.

Students should
• use the formatting guide while writing the proposal
• provide a hard copy of the thesis or dissertation to the Thesis Editor in the Graduate School 2-3 weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense
• The Thesis Editor will provide students with a preliminary formatting screen to expedite formatting changes prior to submitting the document for format approval
• Choose one of the approval journal styles acceptable for formatting citations of the literature (http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/)

Defending the Thesis or Dissertation

• The dissertation is scheduled so that all committee members may be present
  • In the event a committee member is external to the University of Utah, a conference call may be arranged
  • The final oral defense of the thesis or dissertation is considered an exam, therefore, all students should register for a minimum of 3 credit hours in the semester of the defense
  • Student should reserve a classroom or conference room for a minimum of 2 hours
• A final copy of the thesis or dissertation should be provided to the supervisory committee 2-3 weeks prior to the defense
• An electronic announcement must be made of the final oral defense to include all graduate students and faculty in ESS as well as to faculty in the College of Health
  • Remember to include the date, time, name of student, name of supervisory committee members, title of thesis or dissertation, and abstract of the project
• A hard copy announcement of the defense, to include all of the above information, should be posted in the Department

**Day of Defense**

• The student provides an oral defense to last approximately 60 minutes or less
• The student entertains questions from the audience
• All guests are asked to leave, except the student and the committee
• The student entertains additional questions from the committee alone
• The student leaves the room while the committee convenes to determine its final decision for the student regarding results of the oral exam and changes required
• The student is invited back into the room with the committee for final judgment

**Post Thesis or Dissertation Defense**

• The student makes all required written changes recommended by the supervisory committee in consult with the supervisory chair
• The student makes all required written changes including formatting changes recommended by the Thesis Editor
• A copy is provided to the Department Chair
• The final document is given to the Thesis Editor with the committee form signed
• Once format approval is obtained, the document is printed on the required cotton bond paper with the required signature pages on bond paper as well
• Data collected for the thesis or dissertation project is the property of the University of Utah and must remain with the chair of the supervisory committee (or other designated individual involved in the research) at the completion of the study

_This final step in the thesis or dissertation should be handled immediately after the defense and preferably while the student is still on campus at the University of Utah. If a significant time is allowed to elapse between the defense and completion of final changes (>9 months), students may be asked to re-defend the thesis or dissertation._

_It is recommended that all students remain on campus until this final step is completed._