

THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

The dissertation represents the culminating research experience for doctorate of philosophy students through which degree candidates are expected to complete quality original scholarship that contributes to the theoretical/research knowledge base of the candidate's field of study. The college, school or department determines the amount of credit allowed for research and work on the dissertation.

The Graduate School of Professional Psychology requires their doctorate of psychology candidates to complete a doctoral paper instead of a dissertation.

The Morgridge College of Education requires their doctorate of education candidates to complete a doctoral paper instead of a dissertation.

Program-Level Dissertation Proposal Committee

All candidates for the doctorate of philosophy degree must have a dissertation director who is a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the student's graduate program. Programs may require that dissertation proposals be approved by or defended before a committee within the department. Programs reserve the right to determine the composition of the dissertation proposal committee. However, only those who meet the following University requirements may serve as voting members of the oral defense committee.

Doctoral Dissertation Oral Defense Committee

The doctoral candidate's dissertation oral defense committee is recommended by the school or department and approved by the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education. The *Thesis/Dissertation Oral Defense Committee Recommendation* form should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Education as soon as the dissertation proposal has been approved or defended but no later than the first day of the quarter in which the student expects to complete the degree.

Composition

The committee is composed of a minimum of four and a maximum of seven members. Minimally three are voting members, including the dissertation director. The chair of the oral defense committee is a non-voting member and must be from a department, school, or college other than that of the candidate. All voting members of the committee must be full-time appointed faculty at DU and have research records appropriate to the student's area of specialization.

Faculty from appropriately related programs who hold the terminal degree in their field may serve on the committee as long as the candidate's graduate program has the majority representation and a two-thirds majority of the members, excluding the director, hold the earned doctorate.

When a doctoral degree is interdisciplinary, faculty representation from all disciplines must be reflected on the committee.

Oral Defense Committee Chair

The committee member from outside the student's graduate department represents the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education and serves as chair of the oral defense committee. The oral defense committee chair must be a tenured member of the DU faculty and must hold an earned doctorate from an accredited institution.

It is the responsibility of the student to find an appropriate oral defense committee chair to serve who meets these requirements.

Note: *Students in the DU-Illiff Joint PhD Program may have an Outside Chair from the Illiff School of Theology, but that faculty member must be outside of the Illiff concentration field in which the student is enrolled.*

Dissertation Director

The dissertation director must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the candidate's graduate program. It is the dissertation director's responsibility to ensure that the student's research meets appropriate academic standards for the discipline in which the degree is being conferred.

Special Members

In rare occasions, students may request to add an adjunct faculty member, post-doctoral appointee, a professor from another institution, or another qualified person—including someone without a doctorate but with other appropriate qualifications—as a special committee member. A special member may not be considered a substitute for one who meets the University requirements; rather, the special member should be considered as an addition to the core committee.

Students also may request that a non-tenure track, full-time appointed DU faculty member serve as committee chair.

These requests must be supported by a strong rationale, have the support of the student's program and be approved by the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education. The request must include: a statement of rationale, the proposed special member's CV and *Thesis/Dissertation Oral Defense Committee Recommendation* form.

Unit-Specific Requirements

Schools and departments reserve the right to establish requirements that are stricter than the minimal University standards. It is the student's responsibility to determine whether or not the unit has requirements in addition to University policy and the unit's responsibility to ensure that those requirements have been met before submitting the committee proposal form to the Office of Graduate Education.