THESIS & DISSERTATION PROCESSES AND DEADLINES

Though departments may take on administrative tasks to assist their students, the student is responsible for understanding the processes and deadlines of their graduate career. This is communicated to all new graduate students at Orientation. As required by university policy, any and all university communication may only be sent to the student’s NAU email account. Please reinforce this message at every opportunity to your students.

Processes, checklists and resources can be found on the Graduate College website: https://nau.edu/graduate-college/thesis-and-dissertation/

All forms can be found on the website- (Dissertation Committee forms, candidacy, oral defense forms): https://nau.edu/graduate-college/forms/

DOCTORAL TRACK

Step 1 - Forming of the Dissertation Committee

1. When to form the committee – within the first year.
2. Submit form to Grad College etd@nau.edu for Dean approval. All requested materials must accompany the form (refer to #3 under Instructions). ALWAYS download and use forms found on website to avoid outdated versions.
3. Grad College will evaluate and issue an official approval memo
4. The committee MUST be approved BEFORE a prospectus defense. To not do so, risks a non-approval of the committee by the dean, thus, negating the composition of the prospectus committee and approval of the prospectus.

Step 2 – Applying for Candidacy

A student can be admitted for candidacy after a student has:

1. Completed all coursework with the exception of dissertation units or internship. A student is ABD (All But Dissertation) at this point.
2. Completed residency requirements
3. Completed the language or research requirement (if applicable)
4. Passed comprehensive exams
5. Has successfully defended prospectus
6. Completed any requirements for candidacy specific to department

A student should apply for candidacy well in advance of a student’s graduating semester.

A student must include an updated and signed Program of Study listing courses actually taken to be submitted with the candidacy packet.

A candidacy application CANNOT be submitted at the same time as the defense scheduling form. Ideally, a candidacy application should be submitted well before the graduating term. To apply for candidacy late in the graduating term is problematic and negates the function and meaning of doctoral candidacy.
Step 3 – Scheduling a Doctoral Defense

The committee chair or student must submit the Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form to the ETD coordinator at least 10 business days prior to the defense date. **This is a strict deadline.**

The ETD Coordinator will work to secure a University Graduate Committee (UGC) member to sit in on the defense. The role of the UGC member is to represent the Graduate Dean and ensure that defenses are conducted in a manner consistent with the expectations and standards of the Graduate College.

Doctoral defenses are not permitted in the last two weeks of term – final date noted on website

**If faculty or admin prepare, submit and track most of these steps but not all of them, please inform your students of the steps they are responsible for.**

“HOMESTRETCH” FOR GRADUATING STUDENTS:

1. Submit Defense Scheduling form at least 10 business days before defense (doc students only)
2. Submit the dissertation for format check to ETD Coordinator 10 business days before defense
3. Committee Chair must submit the Oral Defense Part 1 form to ETD Coordinator within 48 hours of defense. This is the Pass/Fail form and lists required revisions (please explain this form and process to students in advance of the defense)
4. Student resubmits dissertation with revisions
5. If revisions are approved, the chair submits the Oral Defense Part 2 form to the ETD Coordinator. This form also notes the student’s copyright selections. Please provide the student with a copy of this form
6. When the student receives a copy of the Oral Defense Part 2 form, the student uploads final version of dissertation to ProQuest.  **Any Ph.D. (Ed. psych and – beginning Fall 2018 – C&I programs) student must complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates found on ProQuest. It is a short survey but it is a requirement of their degree. Ed.D. students do not need to fill out the survey.**
7. Confirm with students that they have applied for graduation
8. ALL THIS MUST HAPPEN BY END-OF-BUSINESS DAY ON THE LAST DAY OF TERM

**THESES TRACK**

The Graduate College is not involved in the scheduling of defenses for thesis students nor the forming of thesis committees. Defenses are not permitted the last week of term.

We first become aware of graduating thesis students when they submit their thesis for format check – 10 days prior to their defense date.

From that point, they follow the same process as doc students.

Final notes:

1. Passing grades will not be entered on the student’s transcripts until the final document is uploaded to ProQuest.
2. Summer defenses are STRONGLY discouraged. Faculty are not on contract during the summer months and therefore, are not obligated to be available to students.
3. Please contact the ETD coordinator or the Associate Dean at the Graduate College with any questions. We are happy to help.