

Checklist for Doctoral Students: Dissertation Candidates

This checklist describes steps you must take to complete your doctoral degree program. Normally, these steps occur sequentially; however, some may occur concurrently.

For additional information, consult NAU's [Academic Catalog](#) or your adviser. We encourage you to visit the Office of Graduate & Professional Studies (OGPS) [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\) website](#) for more information about preparing your electronic dissertation.

1. **Admission to Regular Status.**

If you were admitted with provisional status, complete the provisions of your admission as soon as possible. Your department will notify the OGPS when you have completed these provisions so your admission can be changed to regular status.

2. **Meet with your adviser and develop your Program of Study.**

Access the official [Program of Study](#) for your program, and determine the courses you are required to take, and whether any previous graduate work will transfer into your program. Because of uncertainties surrounding course offerings, you may want to complete a tentative version of your program of study. By your third semester, you should file your program of study with your academic department. You will be required to provide a completed program of study at the time you submit your application for candidacy.

Transfer Credit

If applicable, submit a fully endorsed Petition for [Transfer Credit](#) immediately following the finalization of your first-version Program of Study. Official transcripts, received directly from the institution of origin, must be on file with Graduate Admissions before transfer credit may be assessed.

3. **Select your doctoral dissertation committee.**

In consultation with your adviser, select your doctoral committee. Submit a [Dissertation Recommendation](#) to your department chair. Your chair will forward the committee recommendation to the OGPS ETD Coordinator for approval and formal appointment.

Please note: In some programs, students have a program committee that guides their work through the comprehensive exams and then they modify their committee for the dissertation. In other programs, one committee will serve as both your program and dissertation committee. Only the dissertation committee is formally appointed by the OGPS.

4. **Complete your coursework and all professional development requirements.**

5. **Complete any language and/or research skill requirements.**

For Ph.D. candidates ONLY: You must complete your language exam and/or other skill requirements for your program. When you have completed the language exam, the Department of Modern Languages will report the results to the OGPS. If you satisfy the language requirement through another approved method, the results must be reported to the OGPS. Completion of other skill requirements (statistics, for example) must be noted on your program of study and will be verified by the OGPS.

6. **Complete your comprehensive, oral, and written exams.**

The exam results in the form of a report or formal correspondence must be filed with the Doctoral Candidacy Application.

7. **Write your dissertation prospectus and submit it for approval.**

Your dissertation committee must approve your prospectus. A copy of your signed prospectus title page must be included with the material you submit in support of your application for admittance to candidacy.

8. **Submit your application for admission to candidacy.**

You can be admitted to candidacy after you have:

- Completed all coursework in your program of study, except your dissertation and/or internship (as applicable)
- Completed the language or research requirement (as applicable)
- Passed your comprehensive, oral, and written exams
- Had your prospectus approved/passed prospectus defense
- Completed your degree's professional development requirement (and proof of tracking professional development)
- Completed any requirements for candidacy specific to your department

The [Candidacy application](#) for the doctoral degree should be submitted to the OGPS as soon as the final requirement is met. Delays in submission can complicate or adversely affect preparation for the dissertation defense.

In general, applications are best submitted early in any given Fall or Spring semester. It is not advisable to submit during summer sessions, as faculty are frequently not available for consultation.

With your Application for Candidacy for the doctoral degree, you must submit a completed program of study. For each course listed, you are required to include the course prefix and number (FOR 544, for example), the term in which you took the course, and the credit hours earned.

Complete the first section of the candidacy form and submit everything to your adviser for approval. The OGPS will verify the information provided and will notify you by e-mail whether you have been admitted to candidacy. If there are any problems with your candidacy application, you will be notified via email.

Incomplete or unclear applications significantly delay the processing of candidacy applications. Applicants should monitor their NAU email carefully for follow-up from the OGPS.

9. **Apply for graduation.**

You must submit an [Application for Graduation](#) to the OGPS during the semester *before* you plan to complete your degree requirements. Please see the Applying for Graduation policy. See the [graduation application deadlines](#).

10. **Submit your dissertation electronically to the Canvas Dissertation Format Course for format review.**

Please review the OGPS resources for Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs). Please read all instructions carefully and provide all required information.

Complete the Dissertation Format Course *at least 10 business days* prior to your oral defense. It is advisable to submit your document well in advance of the oral defense; the ETD Coordinator will review incomplete or working documents formatted to reflect the basic requirements. See the [ETD Format Checklist](#) for specific information about the university's format requirements.

Expect to receive format check feedback in about five to ten business days after submission.

11. **Schedule the oral defense of your dissertation.**

To schedule your defense, your **chair** must submit the [Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form](#) to ETD@nau.edu *at least 10 business days* prior to the date when you wish to present your defense. **This is a strict deadline.**

You must choose a date and time for your defense when all members of your committee can attend.

The ETD Coordinator will ask that you forward your dissertation to the faculty member who will represent the University Graduate Committee (UGC) at your defense.

Dissertation defenses may not be held any later than ten business days prior to the end of the term. Please see the [OGPS ETD deadlines](#).

Be aware that the defense copy of your dissertation must be (essentially) in its final form when you submit it to your committee; only minor changes and corrections should be necessary after the defense.

At your defense your committee will sign the **Oral Defense Form Part 1** and the UGC representative will submit it to the OGPS within 48 hours of your defense. The form should be submitted electronically to ETD@nau.edu.

When you begin working on your dissertation you are expected to enroll in dissertation credits (799) each Fall/Spring semester from the time you begin this work, until completion of your degree (including up to the semester you defend). Please see the [Continuous Enrollment Policy](#).

12. **Complete Revisions.**

After you successfully defend your dissertation and make all the revisions required by your committee, your committee chair will complete the **Oral Defense Form Part 2**, verifying that all requirements specified during the oral examination have been met and that the dissertation is in its final form and ready for publishing. This verification form must be submitted to the OGPS by the **Chair** or designee identified on Part 1 and will not be accepted if submitted by a student.

In order to graduate during a given term, Part 2 is due to the OGPS by the [Registrar's published end of session date](#). Students unable to complete revisions by the end of term will graduate in a subsequent term, pending completion of requirements, and may be required to enroll in an additional 799 credit. Please see the [Continuous Enrollment Policy](#).

13. Submit the final version of your dissertation to [ProQuest](#).

Upon submission of Oral Defense Form Part 2 to the OGPS, submit your final version to ProQuest for approval and publication. The ETD Coordinator administers the ProQuest interface, but is unable to answer technical questions (please contact ProQuest).

Consult your faculty adviser regarding questions on embargos, copyrights, and the number and format of printed and bound copies (if required).

Your dissertation should not be submitted prior to the semester in which you plan to defend and confer your degree.

For detailed instructions about submitting your final version, see the information provided on the Dissertation Format Course and the [ETD webpage](#).

14. Submit the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) (Ph.D. CANDIDATES ONLY – NOT REQUIRED FOR Ed.D CANDIDATES)

The university requires that you submit the [Survey of Earned Doctorates \(SED\) form](#) if you are a Ph.D. seeking student. You will find this link within the NAU ETD submission site.

15. Participate in commencement ceremonies.

If you have successfully defended your dissertation, you may participate in university commencement ceremonies, which are held in December and May. A delay in submitting your final version will not prevent you from participating, but you must have passed your defense. Information on graduation can be found on the [NAU graduation webpage](#).

Please monitor your [NAU student email account](#) for correspondence from the ETD Coordinator regarding preparation for and coordination of commencement ceremony activities. The OGPS will check you in at the commencement venue and provide you with instructions and materials pertinent to your participation in the ceremony.

Once you've applied for graduation, your degree will be awarded at the end of the semester in which you complete all degree requirements. Your degree will be posted 4-6 weeks later.