

Checklist for Doctoral Students: Dissertation Candidates

This checklist describes steps you must take to complete your doctoral program. Normally, these steps occur sequentially; however, some may occur concurrently. We suggest you “check off” and date each step as you complete it.

For additional information, consult NAU's [Academic Catalog](#) or your adviser. We encourage you to visit the Graduate College [Thesis and Dissertation website](#) which provides detailed information about preparing your electronic dissertation (referred to as an ETD).

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 Graduate College 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 an updated 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 at the Graduate College 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 Graduate College 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 Graduate College.

4. Complete your coursework and residency requirements.

See the [Academic Catalog](#) for information about the residency requirement.

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 Graduate College. If you satisfy the language requirement through another approved method, the results must be reported to the Graduate College. Completion of other skill requirements (statistics, for example) must be noted on your program of study and will be verified by the Graduate College.

6. Complete your comprehensive 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 residency requirements for the [EdD](#) or [PhD](#);
- completed the language or research requirement (as applicable)
- passed your comprehensive exams;
- had your prospectus approved;
- completed any requirements for candidacy specific to your department.

The [application for Candidacy](#) for the doctoral degree should be submitted to Graduate College *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 an *updated* program of study that lists the courses actually taken. For each course, 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 Graduate College 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 ETD Coordinator.

9. Apply for graduation.

You must submit an [Application for Graduation](#) to the Graduate College during the semester *prior* to the semester in which you plan to complete your degree requirements. Please see the [Applying for Graduation](#) policy. The graduation [application deadlines](#) can be found on the Graduate College website.

10. Submit your dissertation electronically to the [ETD Coordinator](#) for format review.

Please review the Graduate College resources for [Electronic Theses and Dissertations](#) (ETDs). Please read all instructions carefully and provide all required information.

Submit your document *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 the format check to take at least five to ten business days. Be aware that the format editor does not review dissertations during the last two weeks of each semester or during the period between semesters.

11. Schedule the oral defense of your dissertation.

To schedule your defense, your **committee chair** must submit the [Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form](#) to the Graduate College [ETD Coordinator](#) 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. [Please see the Requirements for Theses and Dissertations.](#)

The ETD Coordinator will ask that you forward an electronic copy of 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 Graduate College [deadlines](#). Be aware that the defense copy of your dissertation must be in (essentially) 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 I** and the UGC representative will submit it to the Graduate College 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 semester from the time you begin this work, until completion of your degree. [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 II**, 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 Graduate College by the Committee Chair or designee identified on Part I, and will not be accepted if submitted by a student.

In order to graduate during a given term, Part II is due to the Graduate

College 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 carry additional 799 credit. Please see the [Continuous Enrollment Policy](#).

A student can submit final revisions within six months of defense date but must enroll for at least 1 unit of 799 for each term within that six month period, apply for the appropriate future term graduation and may be required to re-sit the defense. Please see the [Requirements for Theses and Dissertations](#).

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

Upon submission of Oral Defense Form Part II to the Graduate College, submit your final electronic copy 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 graduate.

For detailed instructions about submitting your final copies, see the information provided on the Graduate College [Thesis and Dissertation website](#)

**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 where you submit your electronic copy.

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 copies will not prevent you from participating, but you must have passed your defense. Information on graduation can be found on the [NAU graduation web site](#).

Please monitor your official NAU email account for correspondence from the ETD Coordinator regarding preparation for and coordination of commencement ceremony activities. The Graduate College 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. You should receive your diploma in the mail approximately eight weeks later.