

THESIS & DISSERTATION PROCESSES AND DEADLINES: Students

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.

Processes, checklists, and resources can be found on the [Graduate College ETD website](#).

All forms can be found on the Graduate College [Forms Index](#) website (e.g., dissertation committee recommendation form, candidacy application, defense scheduling form).

Please be aware that for all doctoral and master's students:

- Passing grades for Thesis (699) or Dissertation (799) credits will not be entered on the student's transcript until the final, approved manuscript is uploaded to ProQuest.
- Summer defenses are **STRONGLY** discouraged. Faculty are not on contract during the summer months and are therefore not obligated to be available to students.
- Please contact the ETD Coordinator or the Associate Dean at the Graduate College with any questions. We are happy to help.

DOCTORAL TRACK

Step 1 - Forming of the Dissertation Committee

1. Dissertation committees should be formed within the first or second year of study at NAU.
2. 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.
3. The Dissertation Committee Recommendation form should be submitted to etd@nau.edu for approval by the Graduate College dean. All requested materials must be included, as outlined on the form. **ALWAYS** download the form directly from the Graduate College website to avoid outdated versions.
4. Once received, the Graduate College will evaluate and issue an official approval memorandum.
5. If the make-up of your committee's membership changes for any reason (i.e., if your dissertation committee chair or any committee members change), make sure to submit a revised dissertation committee recommendation form to etd@nau.edu to be re-approved. Mark the *Revised box* at the top.

Step 2 - Applying for Candidacy

Students can apply for candidacy after they have:

1. Completed all coursework with the exception of dissertation units or internship. A student is considered ABD (All But Dissertation) at this point. (Transfer credit coursework should have already been approved prior to submitting the candidacy application.)
2. Completed the professional development requirement.
3. Completed the language or research requirement (if applicable).
4. Passed comprehensive exams.
5. Successfully defended the prospectus.
6. Completed any requirements for candidacy that are specific to their department.

Students should apply for candidacy well in advance of the graduating semester.

Students must include an updated and signed [Program of Study](#) listing all courses that will be used to fulfill the degree requirements with the candidacy application, along with the other documentation specified on the application.

A candidacy application **CANNOT** be submitted at the same time as the Dissertation 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.

Note that students must be continuously enrolled in at least one unit of 799 every fall and spring term until they graduate even if this will exceed the number of units required for the degree.

Step 3 - Scheduling a Doctoral Defense

The student must format the manuscript following the [Format Checklist](#) (under the *Graduate College formatting guidelines* tab) and submit the title page, abstract, and entire dissertation (everything in a single document) to the ETD Coordinator for a format check at least 10 business days prior to the date of the dissertation defense. This is a strict deadline. Earlier submissions are recommended, to provide a more manageable time frame for both the ETD Coordinator as well as for the student.

The committee chair or student must submit the Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form to etd@nau.edu 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 College 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. Deadlines can be found on the [Graduate College website](#).

STEPS FOR GRADUATING DOCTORAL STUDENTS:

1. Submit the dissertation for a format check to etd@nau.edu at least 10 business days before the defense.
2. Submit the Dissertation Defense Scheduling form to etd@nau.edu at least 10 business days before the defense.
3. After the defense, the committee chair must submit the *Oral Defense Form - Part 1* to the ETD Coordinator within 48 hours of the defense. This is the Pass/Fail form and lists any required revisions of the dissertation.
4. Resubmit your dissertation with revisions to the committee for review and approval.
5. If the revisions are approved, the committee chair will submit the *Oral Defense Form - Part 2* to the ETD Coordinator. This form also notes the student's copyright selections.
6. When you receive a copy of the *Oral Defense Form - Part 2* from your committee chair, upload the final version of your dissertation to ProQuest. Follow the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Information](#) document (under the *ETD Information and guidelines* tab); it contains all of the instructions needed to upload the manuscript to ProQuest.
7. All Ph.D. students must complete the *Survey of Earned Doctorates* found on ProQuest. It is a short survey located on the ProQuest website or at the [SED website](#), and it is a degree requirement. Note: Ed.D. students do not need to fill out the survey.
8. Ensure that you have successfully applied for graduation in your Louie - Student Service Center. The graduation application step-by-step guide and deadlines are on the [Graduation](#) tab of our webpage.

ALL OF THESE STEPS MUST BE COMPLETED BY 11:59 PM ON THE LAST DAY OF TERM TO BE ELIGIBLE TO GRADUATE.

THESIS TRACK

The Graduate College is not involved in the scheduling of defenses for thesis students nor the forming of thesis committees. However, **thesis defenses are not permitted the last week of a term.** Deadlines can be found on the [Graduate College website](#).

STEPS FOR GRADUATING MASTER'S STUDENTS (who have a thesis requirement):

1. Format your thesis following the [Format Checklist](#) (under the *Graduate College formatting guidelines* tab) and submit the title page, abstract, and entire thesis (everything in a single document) to the ETD Coordinator for a format check at least 10 business days prior to the date of your thesis defense. This is a strict deadline. Earlier submissions are recommended, to provide a more manageable time frame for both the ETD Coordinator as well as for the student.
2. After the defense, the committee chair must submit the *Oral Defense Form - Part 1* to the ETD Coordinator within 48 hours of the defense. This is the Pass/Fail form and lists any required revisions.
3. Resubmit your thesis with revisions to the committee for review and approval.
4. If the revisions are approved, the committee chair will submit the *Oral Defense Form - Part 2* to the ETD Coordinator. This form also notes the student's copyright selections.
5. When you receive a copy of the *Oral Defense Form - Part 2* from your committee chair, upload the final version of your thesis to ProQuest. Follow the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Information](#) document (under the *ETD information and guidelines* tab); it contains all of the instructions needed to upload the manuscript to ProQuest.
6. Note that students must be continuously enrolled in at least one unit of 699 every fall and spring term until they graduate even if this will exceed the number of units required for the degree.
7. Ensure that you have successfully applied for graduation in your Louie - Student Service Center. The graduation application step-by-step guide and deadlines are on the [Graduation](#) tab of our webpage

ALL OF THESE STEPS MUST BE COMPLETED BY 11:59 PM ON THE LAST DAY OF TERM TO BE ELIGIBLE TO GRADUATE.