

# Doctoral Degree: Completion

**Responsible University Officer(s):**

- Executive Vice President and Provost

**Policy Owner(s):**

- Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education

**Policy contact(s):**

- Karen Starry

**Date Revised:**

Jun 20, 2017

**Effective Date:**

Jul 16, 2012

## Policy Statement

This policy sets the standards for the doctoral final oral examination and the submission of the final copy of the doctoral dissertation for the completion of the doctoral degree.

### I. The Doctoral Final Oral Examination

- a. The doctoral final oral committee must consist of at least four members, including the advisor/s(s). All members assigned to the committee must meet the minimum eligibility standards established by the program and college. All members of the committee and the candidate must participate in the final oral examination. Committee members and/or the student may participate remotely as long as all conditions for remote participation in the examination are met.
  - i. At least three members (including the advisor) must be from the student's major field.
  - ii. At least one member must represent a field outside the major. If the student has declared a minor, the outside member, or one of the outside members, must represent the minor field.
  - iii. Members cannot satisfy the requirement with respect to more than one field.
  - iv. The chair of the committee cannot must not be the candidate's advisor or co-advisor.
  - v. At least two members of the committee must be tenured or tenure-track University faculty members who hold earned doctorate degrees or designated equivalents in appropriate fields from an accredited institution. At least one of the committee members must be a tenured University faculty member.
  - vi. Collegiate deans or their designated representatives at the collegiate level must verify eligibility and approve the members of the final oral examination committee.

- vi-vii. Changes in committee membership may be made if approved by the director of graduate studies and the collegiate unit. Changes must also be archived centrally in the system of record.
- b. Thesis ~~r~~Reviewers for the final oral examination:
- i. A minimum of two 2-major field thesis reviewers and one 1-minor/outside thesis reviewer are required. In the case of multiple minors, there must be a separate thesis reviewer for each minor.
  - ii. Advisor/s(s) and co-advisor/s(s) must serve as thesis reviewers.
  - iii. Students must provide reviewers with a copy of the thesis dissertation at least 14 days before the scheduled date of the doctoral final oral examination.
  - iv. Every designated reviewer on the doctoral thesis dissertation reviewer's report must certify that it the dissertation is ready for defense before the doctoral final oral examination may take place.
- c. The doctoral final oral examination must include:
- i. A public presentation of the candidate's dissertation to the doctoral final oral examination committee and the invited scholarly community.
  - ii. A closed session (open only to the doctoral final oral examination committee and the student candidate) immediately following the public presentation.
- d. ~~To be recommended for the award of the doctoral degree,~~ To pass the examination, all committee members, or all committee members save one, must vote pass. that the student has passed the doctoral final oral examination.
- e. Students are not allowed to retake the doctoral final oral examination.

## II. Submission of final copy of the doctoral dissertation

- a. Committee members must notify the candidate in writing of all required revisions to the doctoral dissertation as well as specifying a time limit for the submission of the revised doctoral dissertation within 7 seven (7) days of the final oral examination.
- a.b. If revisions are required as a condition of passing the final oral examination, the advisor/s must certify that the revisions have been completed before the degree is awarded.
- b.c. All students who complete a doctoral dissertation must file a digital copy of the dissertation with the University in accordance with University standards. Students may choose whether ~~or not~~ to request a temporary embargo on publication of the dissertation. n embargo of the publication of the dissertation for a limited period of time.

## Exceptions

Doctoral programs with approved completion requirements that do not include a final oral examination are exempt from I.

Doctoral programs with approved completion requirements that do not include a doctoral dissertation are exempt from II.

## Effective Date

This policy applies to all students admitted after January 1, 2013. Students who matriculated before January 1, 2013 may choose to continue under the policies in effect when they initially matriculated in their graduate program.

This policy does not apply to the J.D., M.D., Pharm.D., D.V.M., D.D.S, L.L.M degrees.

## Reason for Policy

---

This policy establishes uniform standards for the doctoral final oral examination; defines timely submission of copies of the dissertation for University archives, and supports Board of Regents Policy: *Openness in Research* which covers public dissemination of University-sponsored research.


## Procedures

---

- [Canceling or Recessing the Doctoral Preliminary and/or Master's or Doctoral Final Oral Examination](#)

## Forms/Instructions

---

- [OTR 197 - Thesis or Dissertation Hold Request](#) 
- [Reviewer's Report Workflow Guide](#)
- [Doctoral Graduation Packet Request](#)
- [Final Exam Workflow Guide](#)

## Appendices

---

- [Mutual Roles and Responsibilities for Faculty and Graduate Students: Guidelines](#)
- [Required Conditions and Best Practices for Remote Participation in Graduate Examinations](#)
- [Typical Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Degree Completion Steps](#)

- *Thesis Formatting and Submission Guidelines*

## Frequently Asked Questions

---

- *FAQ: Doctoral Degree: Completion*

## Contacts

---

Subject	Contact	Phone	Email
Primary Contact(s)	<u><i>Karen Starry</i></u>	612-625-2815	<u><i>starry@umn.edu</i></u>
University of Minnesota - Duluth	Erik Brown	218-726-8891	<u><i>etbrown@umn.edu</i></u>
University of Minnesota - Rochester	<u><i>Jeffrey Ratliff-Crain</i></u>	507-258-8006	<u><i>ratliffj@r.umn.edu</i></u>

## Definitions

---

There are no definitions associated with this policy.

## Responsibilities

---

### Graduate School

- Provide current guidelines for formatting and submitting the dissertation, information regarding inclusion of to include not only current instructions for electronic formatting and filing, but also guidelines governing the use of already published material in the dissertation, and .-G guidelines related to potential should take account of possible copyright issues.
- Ensure that the guidelines are available in accessible formats.

### Collegiate Units

- Approve and archive in the system of record committee membership (including any subsequent changes to an approved committee).
- Approve and record the specific procedures used by programs for administering and grading the doctoral preliminary and final oral examinations.

- Maintain and publish any additional collegiate-level publishing standards or guidelines (e.g., stylistic conventions based on discipline, language of the thesis) [in accessible formats](#).

## Programs

- [Provide program-specific information in the graduate handbook](#).
- [Ensure that the graduate student handbook is available in accessible formats](#).
- Maintain and publish any additional program-level publishing standards or guidelines (e.g., stylistic conventions based on discipline, language of the thesis).
- Review and approve committee membership (including any subsequent changes to an approved committee); route program-approved requests to the collegiate unit for approval.

## Students

- [Must meet Meet](#) all standards for the doctoral final oral examination
- [Must meet Meet](#) the formatting requirements for the submission of the final doctoral dissertation.
- [Must meet Meet](#) all requirements for completing the doctoral degree.

## Related Information

---

- Administrative Policy: *Eligibility to Serve on Graduate Examination Committees*
- Administrative Policy: *Doctoral Degree: Performance Standards and Progress*
- Administrative Policy: *Admission for Master's and Doctoral Degrees*
- Administrative Policy: *Readmission or Changes to Master's or Doctoral Degree Objectives*

## History

---

### Amended:

June 2017 – Comprehensive Review, Minor Revision. 1) Rewrote the introduction to clarify the goal of the policy, 2) moved language regarding composition of the final exam committee from Appointments to Graduate Examination Committees policy to this policy for consistency, 3) added language to clarify that the co-advisors must be thesis reviewers, 4) added language requiring the committee to notify the student in writing of any required revisions to the dissertation and a deadline for the completion of such revisions, 5) clarified language to indicate that students have a choice

whether or not to impose and embargo on publication of the thesis for a limited time period, 6) removed language regarding reactivation in order to graduate. Changes in policy respond to need for greater clarity on policy intent on the part of affected constituencies and enhanced consistency in policy implementation across programs.

**Effective:**

July 2012 - New Policy, Comprehensive Review. 1. Establishes guidelines for remote participation in graduate milestone examination. 2. Specifies the University as the digital archive of record for deposit of dissertations. 3. Facilitates reactivation of students who have completed all other degree requirements so that their degree may be conferred. 4. Extends applicability of policy requirements to programs not formerly under the aegis of the Graduate School.