

**From Comprehensive Exams to Graduation**

**Doctoral Student Check List**

**Graduate Program in Literature and Criticism**

Our program prides itself on the quality of our advising and mentoring, but it is ultimately your responsibility to understand all policies and procedures. Among the most important is the “Time to Completion” policy, which states, “Doctoral candidates must complete degree requirements no later than seven years after beginning IUP doctoral program course work.” Though an extension can be granted, that is only done in exceptional circumstances.

Timely graduation requires that you be aware not only of degree requirements, but their sequence and timing and the forms that need to be completed as you progress. If you have questions, consult the program handbook (available online or from the program office in 506 HSS), the program director, program secretary, or your adviser.

Timely graduation also requires that you be aware of the various obligations of program faculty, who typically have many students to advise, courses to teach, scholarship to write, and exams, chapters, and dissertations to read. Remember, there are designated times when faculty may not be expected to perform professional, work-related activities (unless they are otherwise teaching or under contract): any and all recognized holidays; the two weeks in January prior to the beginning of spring semester (unless the faculty member is teaching during Winter semester); spring break; the two weeks in May preceding Summer Session 1 (unless a faculty member is teaching a Pre-Session course); and the two weeks in August prior to the beginning of fall semester. This can complicate scheduling, particularly during the summer. Communicate regularly and clearly with faculty regarding expectations, schedules, and any other matters that might impact your time to graduation.

**THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete—or have plans to complete—all coursework, including the Research Skills requirement, and pass your Candidacy and Foreign Language exams, before you submit the Comprehensive Exam Application Form.

\_\_\_\_\_ Choose an Acting Advisor

* This person will probably be the director of your dissertation. They will help you to conceptualize your comprehensive exam lists, form your committee, proctor the exam, work with you to create your dissertation proposal, schedule the proposal defense, be the initial reader of your dissertation chapters, and schedule and manage your dissertation defense.
* It is important that you communicate regularly with your advisor, particularly if you are encountering personal or professional problems or opportunities that might impact your progress.

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete an “Acting Advisor and Comps Committee Chair Notification Form”

 \_\_\_\_\_ Complete and give your adviser a copy of your “Progress to Degree Form”

\_\_\_\_\_ Discuss the timetable to graduation

* Work backwards from the Dissertation Defense date to submission of defense-ready Dissertation to chapter draft and revision dates to Dissertation Proposal meeting and revision dates to Comprehensive Exam date to completing Comprehensive Exam Application Form. Refer to the handout: “Timeline for Acting Advisor & Dissertation Director.”

\_\_\_\_\_ Understand the difference between Dissertation Credits and Extended Credits

* As long as you are in the program (for both Summers-Only and Academic Year students), you must register for at least 1 credit every fall and spring semesters until you graduate.
* At first, register for Dissertation Credits (and only Diss Credits) until you have 12, and only 12, Diss Credits. After 12 Diss Credits, you register every fall and spring for 1 credit of Extended Credits until you graduate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Set up your Comprehensive Exam lists, committee, and schedule

* The “Application for Comprehensive Exams” form must be completed at least one semester prior to the date of the written exam.
* The exam committee is usually the same as the dissertation committee. The Acting Advisor usually advises the Narrow List, but not necessarily.
* The readings for the Comprehensive Exam are intended to serve as the basic research for the Dissertation, and should, therefore, lead directly to ideas for the Dissertation Proposal.
* Remember that an annotated bibliography is required for the Dissertation Proposal. You should write such annotations as you study for the exam, as ideally many of the same readings will be part of the Proposal.

\_\_\_\_\_ Take the exam

* You have 1 week to write the exam, followed by a 90-minute oral exam, which typically occurs no sooner than 1 week, nor later than 4 weeks after the written portion is completed.
* Be aware of faculty schedules, particularly during the summer. Plan ahead to avoid delays.

**THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

\_\_\_\_\_ After you pass the Comprehensive Exam, work with your adviser to develop the Dissertation Proposal and set up the Dissertation Proposal meeting.

• Review Dissertation Reading Protocols are described on pp. 24-25 of the L&C Program Handbook.

• Be aware of faculty schedules, particularly during the summer. Plan ahead to avoid delays.

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete the “Research Topic Approval Form” (RTAF) after a successful Dissertation Proposal meeting or when requested revisions (which are typical) are completed. Submit the RTAF together with the 1-2 page abstract and timeline for completion to the L&C Program secretary.

* This means you are now officially ABD and the Acting Adviser (now the Dissertation Director) will be paid for the Dissertation Direction after you have registered and paid for all 12 Dissertation Credits.

\_\_\_\_\_ Clarify with your Advisor and committee which reading protocol will be followed

* Protocol A: When a substantial portion of the project (2/3) has been drafted, has been revised with director comments and then sent to the committee for general comments and a green light, then committee readers should be allowed at least 4 weeks to review such a 2/3 copy, after which the student should have at least 4 weeks (or more if necessary) after receiving the 2/3 copy back from the committee to respond to any suggestions at this stage [readers should inform the director of the dissertation if they believe that significant problems or other postponements of the timeline might be necessary]; once a student has revised, a final, complete defense copy should be sent to all readers at least 4 weeks prior to a scheduled defense.
* Protocol B: The dissertation director assumes primary responsibility for guiding the student in the completion of a draft and revision of all chapters; then readers are given a complete draft to review. Readers should receive a complete draft at least 8 weeks prior to a scheduled defense.
* Communicate clearly with your adviser concerning expectations regarding how you will submit chapter drafts for critique, how soon they will return comments to you, and so on.

**THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE**

\_\_\_\_\_ Schedule the Dissertation Defense

* Make sure that your readers have adequate time to prepare as defined by the reading protocol you have chosen.
* Make sure you have adequate time to address requested revisions before the dissertation submission deadline (November 1 for December, April 1 for May, July 1 for August).

\_\_\_\_\_ Submit dissertation draft to the School of Graduate Studies and Research for format review

* Deadlines: November 1 for December graduation, April 1 for May, July 1 for August.
* This does not need to be the final version.

\_\_\_\_\_ Apply for graduation with the SGSR

* Deadlines: December 1 for December, May 1 for May, August 1 for August, January 1 for January.
* Application is completed through your MyIUP page.

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete the IUP Electronic Dissertation Publishing Agreement and the Survey of Earned Doctorates (these can be found on the Forms page of the SGSR website).

\_\_\_\_\_ Defend the dissertation

* Typically, the dissertation defense lasts 90 minutes and consists of a 5-minute opening statement by the dissertator, questions and discussion led by each of the readers, private deliberation among the committee members, then pronouncement of their decision (pass or pass with revision).
* The dissertation defense is open to the public, and friends and family are welcome to attend.

\_\_\_\_\_ Submit one copy of the signed dissertation signature page to the SGSR.

\_\_\_\_\_ Submit the final version of your dissertation to ProQuest

* Deadlines: November 15 for December graduation, April 15 for May, July 15 for August.

\_\_\_\_\_ Celebrate, Doctor! You’ve achieved a rare and remarkable life goal.