

# PhD in Theatre

---

The Doctorate in Theatre and Performance Studies at MU aims to provide knowledge and research skills necessary to launch the successful student on a career of scholarly investigation of theatre history, dramatic theory, criticism, performance studies, playwriting and other modes of writing for performance (such as adaptation and translation), dramaturgy, performance ethnography, performance and theatre pedagogy.

## Degree Requirements

Doctoral degree requirements include the successful completion of:

- A course of study designed in consultation with the student's advisory committee.
- Additional course work to satisfy the department's requirements for a doctoral minor.
- Written and oral comprehensive examinations.
- Completion of a dissertation and oral defense of dissertation.

## Theatre Department Course Work

The Department of Theatre typically requires students entering the program with a master's degree to complete 48 semester hours of graduate level course work in the theatre department, including three semester hours of Dissertation Research, devoted to writing a dissertation prospectus. At least 15 hours must be at the 8000 level or above. A maximum of 6 hours directed readings/problems allowed toward total credit hours.

## Transfer Coursework

Students with a Master's Degree may have up to 6 hours of courses considered for transfer to their program of study. Students with an MFA may have up to 9 hours of courses considered for transfer to their program of study. Courses for transfer credit must be approved by the student's doctoral committee and indicated on Form D-2: Plan of Study for the Doctoral Degree.

## Doctoral Minor

The department also requires the student to complete a doctoral minor, a twelve-semester-hour unified area of study outside the Department of Theatre.

## Participation in Productions

The doctoral student is encouraged to participate in University Theatre and studio theatre productions and may, in some cases, be required to do so. Academic credit is available.

## Qualifying Examination

During the first semester of residence, the student completes a qualifying examination. The Graduate Affairs Committee of the Department of Theatre meets with the student to discuss the student's academic background, career goals and research interests for an oral review and discussion of their proposed course of study. The advisor submits Form D-1: Qualifying Examination Results and Doctoral Committee Approval, reporting on the departmental qualifying process.

## Advisory Committee

Doctoral Program Committee asks the graduate dean to approve a committee of four graduate faculty members to help the student plan and carry out a program. One member of the Doctoral Program Committee must come from outside the Department of Theatre.

## Program Planning

As early as is practical, usually in the student's second semester on campus, the student should meet with the Doctoral Program Committee to plan a doctoral program. The student should prepare a trial plan in consultation with the faculty advisor who serves as chair of the Doctoral Program Committee and reports the approved plan of study to the graduate dean on Form D-2: Plan of Study for the Doctoral Degree.

## Satisfactory Progress Guidelines for the PhD in Theatre

### Probationary Status

The following constitute grounds for placing a student on departmental probation:

- Earning a grade of C or below in any departmental course taken for graduate credit will result in probationary status.
- A grade of incomplete in any course will result in probationary status for the subsequent semester. Incomplete grades must be changed to a grade of A or B by the end of the probationary semester (dissertation research incompletes are evaluated as S/U until the dissertation is defended).
- Failure to comply in a satisfactory manner with all responsibilities related to graduate assistantships.
- Graduate students in our department are expected to conduct themselves in a manner reflecting the university's commitment to professional integrity, collegiality, and good citizenship. Students who consistently fail to conduct themselves in this manner may be subject to probation or dismissal.

In the case of each student on departmental probation, the director of graduate studies will confer with the advisor (in the case of an MA student), or the members of the program committee (in the case of a PhD student) to determine the grounds for removal of probation, and will communicate this decision to the student.

## Annual Review

Each Fall semester the director of graduate studies convenes the Graduate Studies Committee to review the progress and performance of all graduate students. Each graduate student in residence should meet with his or her advisor within the first two weeks of each semester to determine whether satisfactory progress has been maintained, and the advisor shall report the results of this meeting to the director of graduate studies.

## Losing & Regaining Financial Support

Termination of departmental financial support will result if the student is considered to be making unsatisfactory progress and the student's program may be terminated. Departmental financial support may be restored when the student has made satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree for one semester, has made an A or a B in all incomplete courses, and is judged to be off probation by the director of graduate studies.

## Satisfactory Progress Before the Comprehensive Exam

Each semester prior to the semester in which PhD comprehensive examinations are taken, satisfactory progress is maintained when a student completes nine semester hours of graduate level work with a grade of B or above. Incomplete grades are given only under extraordinary circumstances and with the approval of the graduate faculty. Doctoral students who have been maintaining satisfactory progress toward a degree for a period of 36 months are expected, barring unusual and extenuating circumstances, to be prepared to write comprehensive examinations.

## Satisfactory Progress During and After Comps

For the semester in which PhD comprehensive examinations are taken and in semesters after comprehensive exams and orals are passed, satisfactory progress is maintained when, in the judgment of the student's dissertation advisor, the student is making satisfactory progress toward completion of the dissertation. Doctoral students who leave MU having completed all but the dissertation must maintain continuous enrollment by registering for two semester hours of Dissertation Research each fall and spring term and one hour in the summer term. Failure to register negates a student's candidacy.

## Graduate School Regulations on Satisfactory Progress

The Graduate School's regulations regarding a reasonable rate of progress for doctoral students enrolled during or after Fall 2000: Effective for students beginning their doctoral studies during or after Fall Semester 2000, a PhD student must successfully complete the comprehensive exam within a period of five years beginning with the first semester of enrollment as a PhD student. For an extension of this time limit, the student must petition the Graduate School by submitting a request to the advisor, who, in turns, submits, via the departmental director of graduate studies, a written recommendation to the Graduate School. The Theatre Department recommends taking comprehensive exams no later than the third year of consecutive full enrollment. Only students who have taken and passed their exams by May of their third year of assistantship will be considered for a fourth year of assistantship with the department.

All requests for extensions should be endorsed by the departmental director of graduate studies and should be accompanied by a description of the process whereby currency in the discipline is certified, if required by the department.

## Dissertation and Comprehensive Examination

### Dissertation Proposal/Prospectus

Before comprehensive exams may be scheduled, students will be required to complete a Dissertation Proposal (Mini-Prospectus), concisely but clearly expressing the Statement of Research Question and Tentative Thesis, a Justification and Rationale, a Statement of Method and Theory, a Chapter Summary, and Annotated Bibliography. The Mini-Prospectus should be at least five pages, not including the bibliography. The theatre department faculty members on student's Doctoral Program Committee must approve this proposal. After successful completion of comprehensive exams, the student will expand the dissertation proposal into a Dissertation Prospectus - a more detailed and thorough

description of the dissertation project. The prospectus should provide a clear statement of the purpose of the dissertation, describe the need for the knowledge the dissertation report will supply, outline the research questions, and demonstrate the methods by which the scholar will answer these questions. The candidate will present the prospectus to the Doctoral Program Committee and will be prepared to defend it. After successful defense of the Full Prospectus the doctoral student is considered "ABD" – "all but dissertation."

## Comprehensive Examination

After completing the doctoral minor, a substantial amount of the course work, and after obtaining the approval of the proposal from the Doctoral Program Committee (Mini-Prospectus), the student takes the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate a thorough grasp of the history and principles of theatre and performance studies. The examination provides the Doctoral Program Committee with a window looking back upon the student's training as well as a chance to estimate the student's potential as a problem-solving scholar and artist.

Readers of the examination look for more than a reiteration of the content of standard sources of information about dramatic art. The examinee should demonstrate an ability to analyze problems and data, to formulate theses or points of view, and to locate, evaluate and organize evidence to support a contention, the essential skills of scholarship. The comprehensive examination in theatre and performance studies allows candidates not only to tell what they know but also to demonstrate what they can do with information. Comprehensive exams are scheduled once each semester, during the first third of the current semester.

## Stages of the Comprehensive Exam

The examination is given in two stages.

Stage One consists of a written examination, over the history of theatre, dramatic theory, criticism, writing for performance, performance studies, and theatre pedagogy; and Option 1: a third day of comps in which the student answers two questions provided by their outside member of the Doctoral Program Committee, or Option 2: an analytical paper consisting of one question posed by the outside member of the Doctoral Program Committee. For the written examination, two hours are allotted for answering each question, making a total of twelve hours for the examination, typically administered over a two-day period. For Option 1, the student is allotted four hours on the third day to complete the additional two questions from the outside member. For Option 2, the analytical paper is typically written over a one-week period, to be turned in within three days of finishing the written examination. The examination is evaluated by the student's Doctoral Program Committee, which decides whether or not the student should be advanced to the oral examination.

Stage Two is the oral examination administered by the Doctoral Program Committee. This examination provides an opportunity for the student to correct, amend, or defend assertions made in the written examination, although the oral examination is not bound by any limits established by the written examination. Ordinarily of two hours duration, the oral is also an opportunity for the student to demonstrate skill in oral explanation and argument.

## Criteria for Passage of the Comprehensive Exam

The result of the comprehensive examination shall be marked pass if all or all but one of the Doctoral Program Committee members recommend a pass on the entire examination, both written and oral sections. Should the examination be marked fail, the committee may recommend that the candidate retake the examination after a minimum period of 12 weeks. A report of the committee's decision (Form D-3: Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Results Form), carrying the signatures of all members of the committee, is sent to the Graduate School and to the student no later than two weeks after the comprehensive examination is terminated.

If a failure is reported, the committee also must include in the report an outline of the general weaknesses or deficiencies of the student's work. The student and the committee members are encouraged to work together to identify steps the student might take to become fully prepared for the next examination. If at any time the student believes that the advice given by the committee is inadequate, the student may send a written request for clarification to the committee. A copy of this request should be sent to the Graduate School. The committee must respond to this request in writing within two weeks with a copy to the Graduate School. Failure to pass two comprehensive examinations automatically prevents candidacy for the Doctorate in Theatre and Performance Studies at MU.

## Completing the Dissertation

The final step is completion and approval of the doctoral dissertation. The director of graduate studies can provide the student a copy of Guidelines for Preparing Theses and Dissertations.

## Formatting

Dissertations in the Department of Theatre should be formatted according to the latest edition of A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, ed. Kate L. Turabian or the MLA Handbook; the chosen format must meet with the dissertation advisor's approval.

## Graduate School Paperwork

Form D-4: Report of the Dissertation Defense, indicates that the student has defended the dissertation at an oral examination.

## Advisory and Committee Approval of the Dissertation

No draft of the dissertation can be considered a final draft until the advisor (First Reader) has approved it. The final committee meeting cannot be scheduled until all committee members have approved the dissertation; therefore, a candidate should not expect to graduate in any given semester unless all committee members can have at least 14 days to read the dissertation before the last date for oral examination as published by Graduate Education. Unanimous approval of the dissertation by four committee members constitutes satisfactory completion of this examination.

## Admission Criteria

<https://theatre.missouri.edu/grad/application-process> (<https://theatre.missouri.edu/grad/application-process/>)

Deadline: January 15. We only admit once a year, barring extraordinary circumstances.

- Minimum TOEFL scores:

Internet-based test (iBT)	Paper-based test (PBT)
112	650

- Minimum GPA: 3.0 in the last 60 hours
- GPA of 3.5 or better in master's program

## Required Application Materials

*To the Office of Graduate School:*

All required Graduate School documents

*To the Program:*

- 3 letters of recommendation
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Statement of purpose
- Scholarly writing sample
- Professional re#sume# or portfolio
- Creative (dramatic) writing samples

## Financial Aid from the Program

Some programs require an extra form or statement from those who wish to be considered for internal assistantships, fellowships or other funding packages. Check the program website or ask the program contact for details.

## Admission Contact Information

Graduate Contact  
Jabarbara Jennings  
129 Fine Arts Building; Columbia, MO 65211  
(573) 882-2021  
[jenningsjaba@missouri.edu](mailto:jenningsjaba@missouri.edu)

Director of Graduate Studies  
Dr. Kevin Brown  
129 Fine Arts Building; Columbia, MO 65211  
(573) 882-0527  
[brownkevin@missouri.edu](mailto:brownkevin@missouri.edu)

<https://theatre.missouri.edu/grad/welcome-and-overview/>