

# Doctoral Requirements (Graduate Studies)

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The University of Missouri grants types of doctoral degrees: the doctor of philosophy (PhD), the doctor of education (EdD), and the doctor of nursing practice (DNP). Consult with individual departments to learn about the availability of degrees. To obtain a doctoral degree, a student must follow the general regulations of the Graduate Faculty Senate, as well as special requirements of the degree program. It is the student's responsibility to adhere to all regulations and satisfy the graduation requirements of the Graduate School and the degree program. An individual who has held, at any time, a regular tenure-track appointment in an MU academic program is not eligible for a doctoral degree from that department or the area program in which that department participates.

## Selecting a Doctoral Advisor

The student selects an advisor or co-advisors, by mutual consent, from doctoral faculty members who are dissertation supervisors in the department or area program in which the major work is planned. When the graduate student's home academic program is the involved academic program for a jointly appointed faculty member, the person may serve as chair/advisor with the approval of the director of graduate studies from the student's home academic program. In the event that an advisor retires or leaves MU, they may continue to serve as a student's advisor unless there is written academic program policy prohibiting such an arrangement. If the program allows a faculty member who has left MU to serve, a co-advisor should also be identified so that there is a faculty member at MU to provide further support to the student. If an advisor is unable or unwilling to continue to serve, the academic program, with the leadership of the director of graduate studies, will assist to ensure that a replacement is found.

## Doctoral Qualifying Examination or Process and Forming a Doctoral Program Committee

A department or program determines the nature of the qualifying examination or process. The unit may also limit the number of times this examination or process may be attempted. In conjunction with the completion of the qualifying examination, the student's advisor must recommend the doctoral program committee. The committee must be approved by the academic program's director of graduate studies and the Graduate School. The Qualifying Examination Results and Doctoral Committee Approval (D1) (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/current-students/forms-cs/>) form should be submitted to the Graduate School within the first 2 years of doctoral study.

## Committee Changes

Changes to the committee must be submitted on the Change of Committee form ([https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected\\_rules/personnel/ch320/](https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/personnel/ch320/)).

## Membership Requirements for Doctoral Committees

The doctoral program committee shall be composed of a minimum of four members of the MU graduate faculty and will include at least three members from the student's department or degree program (e.g.,

Interdisciplinary Neuroscience, Genetics Area Program, Informatics) and an outside member from a different MU department or program. At least two of the doctoral committee members must be MU doctoral faculty, one of whom must be the chair or co-chair. For students pursuing an EdD, an outside member is not required.

Additional committee members with specialized expertise who do not meet the criteria for the MU graduate faculty or doctoral faculty may serve on a doctoral committees as a fifth or sixth member, with special permission of the Dean of the Graduate School.

## Graduate Committee Membership for Jointly Appointed Faculty

Chapter 320 of the Collected Rules and Regulations ([https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected\\_rules/personnel/ch320/](https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/personnel/ch320/)) for the University of Missouri requires that all jointly appointed faculty members will have a designated Primary Appointment and Primary Department, as well as affiliation with one or more involved departments or units. These affiliations affect membership status of jointly appointed faculty on graduate student committees as follows:

### Doctoral Committee Member

A faculty member can serve only as an Internal Member when their Primary Appointment is in the graduate student's home academic program. When a graduate student's home academic program is the involved academic program for a jointly appointed faculty member, they may serve as either an internal or external member of the committee.

### Graduate Committee Membership for Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct faculty may serve as a committee chair or committee member only in academic programs in which they are appointed and approved for graduate or doctoral faculty membership as appropriate for the student's degree (master's or doctoral). Service on graduate committees outside the academic program in which an adjunct member is appointed requires a recommendation by the director of graduate studies and/or department chair/director from the student's home academic program and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

### Duties

All members of the doctoral program committee will be intimately involved and will actively participate in the activities of the doctoral student at all the stages of the student's career at MU, except, in some cases, in the qualifying examination/process. The committee also may participate in the assessment of a student's background and potential for success in the academic program's doctoral program. Committee members may call a meeting of the full committee at any time to discuss the student's progress.

## Doctoral Plan of Study & Degree Requirements

The doctoral program committee provides academic program approval of the student's Plan of Study (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/d2digitalsignature.pdf>), which will prepare the student for research or scholarly investigation in the chosen field of study. The plan of study includes a list of the courses and the credit to be earned. By successfully completing the plan by deadlines, a doctoral student will:

- Prepare the student for research or scholarly investigation in the chosen field of study.

- Satisfy the credit-hour and residency requirement of the academic program.
- Satisfy any special requirements (proficiency in foreign languages, collateral field, doctoral minor, other special research skills) imposed by the department or area program.
- Satisfy the requirement for a minimum of 15 hours of MU coursework at the 8000/9000 level (exclusive of research, readings, and problems).

The committee also recommends to the Dean of the Graduate School, as part of the Plan of Study, any request for transfer of graduate credit. Changes to the plan of study should be submitted on the Plan of Study Course Substitution form (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/current-students/forms-cs/>).

## Doctoral Credit-Hour Requirement

MU requires a minimum of 72 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree for doctoral degrees. The student's doctoral program committee must approve all course work used to satisfy the credit-hour requirement and may require additional course work beyond these minimums.

## Transfer Credit

The doctoral committee may recommend up to 30 hours of post-baccalaureate graduate credit from a regionally accredited university be transferred toward the total hours required for the doctoral degree. It is the responsibility of the doctoral committee to determine the appropriateness of course work for transfer credit. All requests for exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

## Extension & Correspondence Credit in Doctoral Programs

The doctoral committee may recommend that courses taken through MU's Extension division be counted toward the credit-hour requirement. Extension or correspondence course work from institutions other than MU may not be used to meet the total hours required for the doctoral degree.

## Time Limits on Transfer Credits

All courses to be applied to the plan of study must be completed within eight years of filing the plan.

## Grades at the Graduate Level

To become eligible for a degree, a doctoral student must have completed all MU graduate work attempted with a GPA of 3.0 (A=4.0) or higher. Review grading policies (<http://catalog.missouri.edu/academicpolicies/gradesandcreditsg/>) for more information.

## Foreign Language Proficiency

In general, an English-speaking student may establish foreign language proficiency, if it is required, by demonstrating an ability to translate into English two foreign languages; or by demonstrating a high order of fluency in one language; that is the ability to read, write, and converse in that language and to translate that language into English and English into that language. However, very few programs require a foreign language proficiency.

## Plan of Study Completion Before Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

The student must substantially complete the course work outlined in the Plan of Study to the satisfaction of the doctoral program committee and the Graduate School before being declared ready for the comprehensive examination (<https://gradstudies.missouri.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/d3.pdf>).

## Doctoral Comprehensive Examination

The student must be enrolled to take the doctoral comprehensive examination (<https://gradstudies.missouri.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/d3.pdf>). It is to be administered only when MU is officially in session. The comprehensive examination is designed by the academic program. It consists of written and oral sections. It must be completed at least seven months before the final defense of the dissertation. The two sections of the examination must be completed within one month.

### Written Section

The written section or sections of the examination may be conducted in one or both of the following two ways:

1. The written sections may be arranged and supervised by the major advisor, in which case questions are prepared and assessed by the doctoral program committee.
2. The major advisor may delegate responsibility for arranging, preparing, supervising, and assessing the written sections of the examination to one or more departmental/program committees appointed for this purpose.

### Successful Completion

For the comprehensive examination to be successfully completed, the doctoral program committee must vote to pass the student on the entire examination, both written and oral sections, with no more than one dissenting or abstaining vote from the committee. A report of examination results, carrying the signatures of all members of the committee, must be sent to the Graduate School and the student no later than two weeks after the comprehensive examination is completed.

### Exam Failure

A failure of either the written or oral section of the exam constitutes failure of the comprehensive exam. 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.

### Request for Clarification

If 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 as well. The committee must respond to this request in writing within two weeks and a copy must be filed with the Graduate School.

### Retaking the Comprehensive Examination

The student who fails may not take a second comprehensive examination for at least 12 weeks. Failure to pass two comprehensive examinations automatically prevents candidacy.

## Doctoral Candidacy & Continuous Enrollment

Candidacy for a doctoral degree is established by passing the comprehensive examination. Status as a continuously enrolled doctoral student begins the term after the term in which the comprehensive exam was successfully completed. Students must maintain continuous enrollment during their candidacy (the period after successful completion of the comprehensive examination).

### Procedure for Continuous Enrollment

Candidacy is maintained by enrolling in 9090 Research (or 9990 Research for some Engineering students) for two semester hours each fall and spring semester and for one semester hour each summer session, or an equivalent number of hours through enrollment in other coursework, up to and including the term in which the dissertation is defended. Continuous enrollment provides access to an advisor's support, doctoral program committee guidance, and university research facilities for completion of the dissertation. Failure to enroll continuously in the appropriate number of hours until the doctoral degree is awarded may terminate candidacy.

### Reestablishing Candidacy After Time Off

Candidacy may be reestablished by registering for the hours missed during the time off and completing the requirements specified by the student's doctoral program committee. Registration fees owed may not exceed the amount owed for seven terms, regardless of the number of terms beyond seven for which the student failed to continuously enroll. The committee's requirements may include a second comprehensive examination or evidence of currency in the research field as suggested by publications in refereed journals or other measures. Candidacy is reestablished when the student's advisor and the departmental, area program, or divisional director of graduate studies submits a written request to the Graduate School explaining the basis for the decision. Once approved, a Reactivation Form (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/reactivation.pdf>) must be completed by the student and sent to the department/program for processing. Students who have an approved leave of absence during candidacy for reasons related to pregnancy, parenting, and/or other care-giving reasons do not have to register for the missed hours, but do have to complete the necessary hours for graduation requirements. Other exceptions are made at the discretion of the Dean of the Graduate School.

## The Doctoral Dissertation

The dissertation must be written on a subject approved by the candidate's doctoral program committee, must embody the results of original and significant investigation and must be the candidate's own work.

A report of the dissertation defense (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/current-students/forms-cs/>), carrying the signatures of all members of the committee (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/current-students/doctoral/>), is sent to the Graduate School before the deadline preceding the anticipated date of graduation. For the dissertation to be successfully defended, the student's doctoral committee must vote to pass the student on the defense with no more than one dissenting or abstaining vote. The dissertation defense form reports whether the student has successfully orally defended the dissertation.

## Required Dissertation Format

Every doctoral candidate should review the Guidelines for Preparing Theses and Dissertations from the Graduate School (students can enroll in a Canvas Organization that also provides this information and mechanism to submit the approved written dissertation) and should consult their director of graduate studies for academic program style requirements. All dissertation defenses shall be open to the general faculty. Academic programs are encouraged to announce dissertation defense dates to academic program colleagues.

## Submission of Dissertation to the Graduate School

The final copy of the dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate School electronically or as a PDF file on a CD-ROM. Specific instructions are provided in the Guidelines for Preparing Theses and Dissertations. Once the final copy of the dissertation is approved by the Graduate School and all other degree program requirements have been met, the student will be recommended for degree conferral.

## Reasonable Rate of Progress

Reasonable rate of progress is governed by both the campus wide policies of the Graduate Faculty Senate listed below, as well as academic program regulations, which may be more restrictive. Failure to satisfy the Graduate Faculty Senate's rate of progress policies leading to dismissal is handled by the Request for Extension process (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/policy/requests-for-extension-and-appeals-in-graduate-student-progress/>). For academic advice or assistance with degree program planning, students should contact their advisors. Dismissals arising from violation of academic program policies may be appealed using the Appeals Process (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/policy/requests-for-extension-and-appeals-in-graduate-student-progress/>). Students should also refer to the section on the Dismissal Policy (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/policy/probation-termination-and-appeals/>) for additional details.

## Time Limits for Doctoral Degree Completion

The Graduate Faculty Senate policy governs the Reasonable Rate of Progress established for doctoral students:

Effective fall semester 2000, a doctoral student must successfully complete the comprehensive examination within a period of five years beginning with the first semester of enrollment as a doctoral student. In addition, the program for the doctoral degree must be completed within five years of passing the comprehensive examination. Individual departments or area programs may stipulate a shorter time period. For an extension of this time the student must petition the Graduate School by submitting a request to the advisor who, in turn, submits a written recommendation to the Graduate School, which has been endorsed by the department or area program director of graduate studies.

## Doctoral Degree Extension Request

Regardless of when a student entered the program or passed the comprehensive exam, any candidate requiring additional time must submit a request for an extension. On petition of the candidate and the candidate's academic program, an extension of time may be granted by the Graduate School. Academic programs specifically reserve the right to re-certify currency in the discipline. All requests for extensions should

be endorsed by the academic program's director of graduate studies and accompanied by a description of the process whereby currency in the discipline is certified, if required, by the academic programs. See also Active Duty Policy (<https://veterans.missouri.edu/forms/active-duty-form/>).

## Dual Doctoral Degrees

### Dual Doctoral-Professional Degrees

As the US workforce becomes increasingly interdisciplinary, some graduate students elect to concurrently pursue a PhD (doctoral) degree in combination with professional degree. Examples include the MD/PhD and the JD/PhD. Dual degrees are cooperatively arranged between a graduate degree granting program and a professional degree granting program. The Graduate School oversees the doctoral (PhD) degree portion of the dual doctoral/ professional degree. Dual degrees are approved by the Graduate Faculty Senate.

Students must apply to **both** the Graduate School and the professional degree program, notifying both of their interest in a dual program. Please refer to the A-Z list of graduate degree programs (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/degree-programs/>) to learn what is currently available.

Because some students may not be aware of an approved dual degree program before their arrival at MU, the option to participate in an approved dual degree program may be postponed until no later than the end of a student's second semester at MU.

The governing policies for dual degrees are the same for master's and doctoral students. Please refer to the dual-degree information for master's students (<https://gradschool.missouri.edu/current-students/dual-degree/>) for more information.

### Dual Degrees for Medical Students

The MD/PhD program is for the student seeking a biomedical research career. Additional years are integrated into the medical curriculum to satisfy requirements for the PhD. (A MD/MS dual degree is another option). The graduate degree (MS or PhD) is typically accomplished after completion of the MD program. PhD programs are available in diverse areas at MU.

Students are accepted to the joint program by a single committee. Students interested in this dual degree program should inquire at the dean's office in the School of Medicine.

### Financial Support

Financial support may be provided for the graduate portion of the dual-degree program. Fellowship support may be provided for the PhD portion of this program, while loan and scholarship funds may be available for the MD curriculum.

### Applying Credit

Students participating in the MD/PhD Program at the University of Missouri may apply up to 30 hours of credit for courses taken during the preclinical phase of the MD program towards the 72 hour requirement for the PhD degree. These MD courses, however, cannot be used to satisfy the requirement for 15 hours of 8000/9000 of graduate level course work.

The following table lists the distribution of credits for the preclinical courses among areas of study that can be used by the student and their committee in determining how many credit hours should be applied toward the PhD.

Course	Applicable Hours Toward the PhD
Biochemistry	6 hrs
Microbiology	4 hrs
Immunology	3 hrs
Pharmacology	4 hrs
Physiology	4 hrs
Pathology	6 hrs
Neurosciences	3 hrs

### Advising & Committees

There will be a separate advisor and committee for each degree program.

*Note:* The option of a combined committee structure may be included in proposals for Graduate Faculty Senate consideration, e.g., co-advisors who would also serve as outside members, plus one additional member from each degree program, for a total of four committee members.

### Dual Degree Progress Forms

Special dual degree program forms will be used to certify plans of study, committee members and final defense/examinations.

### Timelines for PhD Completion

Policies governing doctoral degree completion, including but not limited to examinations, forms, continuous enrollment, and dissertation format, defense and submission, are detailed in the doctoral degree requirements section of the Catalog and website.

### Conferral of Dual Degrees

Upon completion of all degree program requirements, the Graduate School and the professional school will confer separate diplomas.