



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 3341-3-06 Doctoral requirements in research and professional programs with a dissertation.

Effective: April 22, 2026

(A) Policy statement and purpose

This policy describes requirements for research and professional doctoral degrees that include a dissertation as the capstone experience. It does not pertain to clinically - and practically - based professional doctoral degrees in which the dissertation is not the capstone experience.

(B) Policy

(1) Credit hours

A doctoral program must consist of at least sixty credit hours of graduate coursework beyond the master's degree or ninety credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree. These hours must include at least sixteen hours of dissertation research. No more than thirty hours of dissertation research credit hours are applicable to the degree.

Transfer of credit from other institutions is described in the "Credit Transfer-Graduate" policy, rule 3341-3-05 of the Administrative Code.

(2) Level of work

The number of 5000-level credit hours that may be counted toward the minimum required credit hours may not exceed ten.

(3) Qualifying examinations

Programs may require students to take qualifying examinations prior to the preliminary experience [see (B)(5) of the rule (preliminary experience)]. In these cases, qualifying examinations typically reflect mastery of coursework, whereas preliminary experiences reflect readiness to conduct independent research. Refer to individual program requirements for details.

(4) Graduate faculty representative

(a) Appointment

The graduate college appoints a graduate faculty representative (GFR) to the student's committee when the student submits the preliminary experience application form. This appointment may be based on a nomination by the program or selected from a pool of volunteer graduate faculty representatives.



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The GFR:

- (i) Is not affiliated with the student's program;
- (ii) Is appointed before the preliminary experience is undertaken;
and
- (iii) Continues with the student through the dissertation process.

(b) Expectations and responsibilities

The GFR is expected to participate in the preliminary and dissertation experiences, including all scheduled committee meetings and deliberations. The primary responsibility of the GFR is to ensure a fair, equitable, and rigorous process.

(5) Preliminary experience

Students must successfully complete a preliminary examination or preliminary project administered by a preliminary experience committee in the doctoral program. The preliminary experience contains both a written and oral component.

(a) Preliminary Experience committee

A preliminary experience committee, whether chaired or co-chaired, must have at least four members, including the GFR.

In most cases, the chair and two committee members with disciplinary expertise come from the student's program of study; however, this composition is left to the discretion of the program.

These committee members:

- (i) Typically assist in the preparation of the preliminary examination or preliminary project, and
- (ii) Are expected to participate actively in the evaluation of the written and oral components of the experience.

Preliminary experiences must be conducted with the participation of all committee members.

Committee members must have appropriate levels of graduate faculty status as described in the "Graduate Faculty Status" policy, rule 3341-3-11 of the Administrative Code.



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(b) Preliminary experience eligibility criteria

The student may apply to complete the preliminary experience after having:

- (i) Removed any conditions of admission;
- (ii) Completed or approached completion of coursework required by the program before formally engaging in dissertation research; and
- (iii) Achieved a cumulative graduate grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0.

(c) Preliminary experience application

A preliminary examination or project application must

- (i) Be submitted by the student to the graduate college at least eight weeks prior to the proposed date of the preliminary examination or preliminary project.
- (ii) Include the signature of all committee members

(d) Preliminary experience results

Preliminary examination or preliminary project results are based on the preliminary experience committee's assessment of both the written component and the oral defense. The student successfully completes a preliminary experience if :

- (i) They have no more than one vote for failure, and
- (ii) Any conditions stipulated by the committee have been met.

The results are reported to the graduate college by submitting the preliminary experience report form. By signing the form, the GFR confirms that the process has been fair, equitable, and rigorous.

(e) Second attempt

If the student fails the preliminary experience, they may complete a second examination or project. This must follow a remediation period determined by the committee. The deadline



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for reexamination will also be determined by the committee in collaboration with the student. Dismissal from the doctoral program will result if the student fails the second attempt.

(6) Dissertation

(a) Dissertation committee

A dissertation committee, whether chaired or co-chaired, must have at least four members, including the GFR. In most cases the chair and two committee members with disciplinary expertise come from the student's program of study; however, this composition is left to the discretion of the program. In some programs, the members of the student's preliminary experience committee continue to work with the student through the dissertation process.

In other programs, some or all dissertation committee members may change. All committee members are expected to participate actively in the evaluation of the dissertation proposal (topic approval) through final oral defense and manuscript approval.

Committee members must have appropriate levels of graduate faculty status, as described in the "Graduate Faculty Status" policy, rule 3341-3-11 of the Administrative Code.

(b) Topic approval

The student's dissertation topic must be proposed to the student's dissertation committee in writing and defended orally at a dissertation topic approval meeting. Committee approval is documented via topic approval form. Substantial changes to the topic or methodology require students to submit a new topic approval form.

If the approved topic or research methodology changes substantially between the time of topic approval and the final defense of the manuscript, students must submit a new topic approval form.

(c) Committee change

If the student wishes to change committee members after the topic approval form has been completed, they must submit a committee change form. This requires approval of the committee chair, the



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graduate coordinator in the student's program, and the graduate dean or designate.

(d) Candidacy

Doctoral candidacy is conferred after successfully completing the preliminary experience and securing approval for the dissertation topic by the student's dissertation committee and the graduate college.

The student must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

(e) Dissertation research registration and continuous registration

Students must register for a minimum of sixteen credits of dissertation research (7990) and maintain continuous registration each fall and spring term until the dissertation is completed, the final oral exam (i.e., dissertation defense) has been passed, and the dissertation manuscript has been accepted by the graduate college. Summer registration is only required if university services are used or graduation occurs in that term.

The minimum continuous registration is one credit hour per semester. Missed terms must be made up, with tuition assessed at the current rates when the registration is processed.

(f) Dissertation manuscript and final oral examination

A degree candidate must submit a complete final draft of the dissertation manuscript to the dissertation committee sufficiently prior to the date set for the final oral examination.

Unless there are intellectual property issues or other substantive concerns the final oral defense should be open and announced to the campus community, at the discretion of the dissertation committee in collaboration with the student.

The student must pass a final oral examination (i.e., dissertation defense) administered by the dissertation committee, and secure that committee's approval of the dissertation manuscript. Approval requires no more than one dissenting vote.

A defense and manuscript approval form, inclusive of all required signatures, must be received by the graduate college by the



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published deadline. By signing the form, the GFR confirms that the process has been fair, equitable, and rigorous.

The final manuscript must be approved by the dissertation committee, meet all formatting requirements, and be submitted to OhioLINK by the published deadline required for graduation.

(g) Re-examination

If the student fails the final oral examination, they may take a second examination. This must follow a remediation period determined by the committee. The deadline for reexamination will also be determined by the committee in collaboration with the student. Failure of the second oral examination will result in dismissal from the doctoral program.