DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The Graduate School reserves the right to change any provision or requirement at any time in order to fulfill its educational mission and exercise its educational responsibility. Refer to the Graduate School catalog and department website for all master's and doctoral degree program requirements and the academic forms needed for degree completion.

The general requirements for advanced degrees are set out under the tabs above. Special divisional (i.e., college and school) and departmental requirements are given in the sections dealing with the respective divisions and departments. Each student must assume full responsibility for understanding both the general and special requirements of the division and department in which the student pursues his or her major work.

Certificates and Micro-Certificates

A Graduate Certificate/Micro-Certificate is a post-bachelor's or post-master's credential that allows students to gain specialized knowledge and/or skills in a particular field. Unless otherwise specified, all of the policies below apply to both certificates and micro-certificates.

New certificates and micro-certificates must be formally approved in accordance with the university approval process for new programs. Changes to an existing certificate or micro-certificate must go through the College/School curriculum approval process. Only formally approved certificates and micro-certificates will appear in the UA Catalog.

Admission

Please see the Admission Criteria and Application catalog pages for details

Graduate-Level Coursework Requirements

A graduate certificate requires a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 21 hours of graduate-level coursework. For specific requirements, see the Graduate Catalog section for the particular certificate.

A Graduate Micro-Certificate requires a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 11 hours of graduate-level coursework. For specific requirements, see the Graduate Catalog section for the particular micro-certificate.

Graduate Certificate/Micro-Certificate courses must be numbered at the 500-level or above. A certificate may include courses that are part of an existing graduate degree program or courses created specifically for a certificate.

Graduate Credit

A minimum cumulative graduate GPA of B (3.0 on a 4.0-point scale) is required for the conferral of a graduate certificate. See the "Scholastic Requirements" subheading in the 'Grades and Academic Standing' section of the Graduate Catalog for details.

Previously earned graduate credits from UA may be applied to a certificate, if allowed by the academic unit offering the certificate program, and in accordance with the time limit requirements for graduate courses to be applied to a degree or other credential.

Graduate Credit for Noncredit Experiences

UA does not offer graduate credit for noncredit workshops, seminars, continuing education experiences, professional development, internships, work/life experience, or other non-credit-bearing experiences.

Double Counting Courses toward Multiple Programs

Credits earned toward a graduate certificate may also be applied to a master's or doctoral degree if allowed by the academic unit offering the degree program and in accordance with the time limit requirements for graduate courses to be applied to a degree or other credential.

Credits earned toward a master's or doctoral degree may be applied toward a certificate if allowed by the academic unit offering the certificate and in accordance with the time limit requirements for graduate courses to be applied to a degree or other credential.

Students may only share three hours of coursework between two certificates. A course may only be used twice to complete the requirements for any graduate credential.

Transfer of Credit

No more than 6 credit hours may be transferred from another institution to satisfy requirements toward a Graduate Certificate. Credit transferred must be earned at an accredited institution, meet the required time limits policy, be approved by the academic unit offering the certificate program, and be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School for final approval.

No courses may be transferred from another institution to satisfy requirements toward a graduate micro-certificate.

Time Limit

All requirements for a certificate must be completed during the six years immediately preceding the date on which the credential is to be awarded. There is no provision for an extension of the time limit beyond six years for students enrolled in a graduate certificate program.

Awarding of a Graduate Certificate

Graduate students will be eligible for the awarding of a graduate certificate when all required coursework has been successfully completed and all requirements of the Graduate School have been met. For undergraduate students participating in the Accelerated Master's Program (AMP), the graduate certificate can only be conferred concurrently with or subsequent to the conferral of the bachelor's degree. See the "Registration and Assistantships" section of the Graduate Catalog for details. Certificate conferral is noted on the student's transcript, but does not involve a printed diploma or participation in Commencement activities.

Master's Degrees

The primary purpose of master's degree programs is to provide students with subject matter at an advanced level in their fields of study. Master's degrees are designed to assist students either to continue their graduate studies or to meet the goals of their professions. In most cases, master's programs also help students become familiar with methods of independent investigation.

Program Requirements

Two plans are offered for the master's degree:

Plan I. Candidates for the master's degree under Plan I must earn a minimum of 24 semester hours of credit in coursework plus earn a minimum of 6 additional hours of thesis research hours, for a total of 30 hours.

Plan II. Candidates for the master's degree under Plan II must earn a minimum of 30 semester hours of coursework credit and pass the comprehensive examination or complete a culminating or "capstone

experience" as described under the Comprehensive Examinations section below.

Both plans require a minimum of 18 semester hours in the major subject. With the approval of the major department, the remainder of the coursework may be completed in either the major or a related field.

In some divisions and in many departments of the University, candidates are required to do their work under Plan I. Candidates working under Plan II may be required to participate successfully in seminar or problem courses that will give them an acquaintance with the methods of research and an appreciation of the place and function of original investigation in the field.

Residency Requirements

A student's program at the master's level must provide sufficient association with the resident faculty to permit individual evaluation of the student's capabilities and achievements.

Graduate Credit

A student must be admitted to the Graduate School and must register as a graduate student in order to receive graduate credit. Approval for graduate registration must be obtained from program advisors prior to registration.

Graduate Credit for Noncredit Experiences

All course credit used toward a UA graduate degree must be taught at the graduate level. No graduate credit may be earned for experiential learning not conducted under the direct supervision of graduate faculty of The University of Alabama. UA does not offer graduate credit for noncredit workshops, seminars, continuing education experiences, professional development, internships, work/life experience, and so forth.

Transfer of Credit

Courses of full graduate-level credit earned in a *regionally* accredited institution where a student was enrolled in the graduate school, may be submitted for review for inclusion in a master's degree program. Evaluation of credit for transfer will not be made until after the student has enrolled in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. Acceptance of credit requires the approval of the student's advisory committee and the dean of the Graduate School.

A student initiates the Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit form and must ensure that the Graduate School receives an official transcript from the outside institution. This should be done well in advance of the final semester, otherwise it may delay graduation and awarding of the degree.

With the approval of the student's department and the dean of the Graduate School, the greater of 12 hours or 25 percent of the required coursework for a master's degree may be transferred from an outside institution. Some master's degree programs allow fewer hours to be transferred. Be sure to check with your department's graduate program director regarding your department's transfer policy. Eligible coursework will have been earned during the six-year period (18 fall, spring and summer semesters) preceding the semester of admission to the UA master's program. Only courses in which a student earned a "B" grade or better may be transferred. Thesis Research (599) may not be transferred in from an outside institution. If approved, such coursework can be counted toward the minimum hours and coursework requirements for the master's degree.

In some cases, foreign educational credentials may not meet the Graduate School's criteria for transfer of credit. It may be necessary for students in this situation to secure an evaluation of their credentials from World Education Services Inc. (WES), an external foreign credential evaluation service. Additional information on their services can be found at their website.

400-Level Courses

A maximum of 6 semester hours of 400-level course credit may be accepted for graduate credit and used toward a master's degree. The department needs to submit the Approval of 400-Level Course Work for Master's Credit form through the UA DocuSign system in myBama. This form must be submitted for approval to the Graduate School by the last day to add a course for the semester in which the course will be taken.

Time Limit

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded. Previously approved transferred coursework that falls within six years of *admission* to the master's degree program can be counted toward the minimum hours requirement. There is no provision for an extension of the time limit beyond six years for master's students.

Revalidation of Expired Credits

There may be particular and limited instances where a student is re-admitted to a graduate program, and revalidation of expired credits is justified. In such cases, where the department and Graduate School feel it is appropriate to do so, the student may work with the graduate program director to petition for such revalidation, on a course-by-course basis. For each course for which revalidation is requested, the student must demonstrate, to the department's satisfaction, that the knowledge and skills gained in that course are still current. Currency will be evaluated by a committee of faculty, composed of at least three graduate faculty members within the degree program to which the student is requesting re-admission, and two from a separate department.

The committee will then issue a recommendation to the dean of the Graduate School, who will rule on the petition.

Some methods for demonstrating currency may include but are not limited to 1) a professional portfolio; 2) an exam or essay linked to each course and demonstrating up-to-date knowledge; 3) a re-take of the comprehensive exams under current program guidelines, and/or 4) other methods deemed appropriate by the committee.

Students may request revalidation of up to 50% of the required minimum coursework for their degree. Credits earned from an institution other than The University of Alabama may not be revalidated.

Consideration of revalidation, and a plan of study based on the demonstration-of-currency and other remaining requirements, must be completed as part of the student's re-admission to the Graduate School. Revalidation of credits is not guaranteed. From the time of re-admission, students must complete the degree within the standard time limit, as specified in the Graduate Catalog at the time of the student's re-admission.

Thesis

A thesis evidencing research capacity, independent thought, and the ability to interpret materials is required of all master's degree candidates who pursue Plan I. The subject chosen must be in the major field and must be approved by the student's thesis committee chair. The committee must be formally established via a process initiated by the student and requiring the consent of each committee member, followed by final approval by the Graduate School reviewing for compliance with the regulations outlined below. Students initiate this process via their Graduate Student Portal.

A thesis committee must consist of at least three members appointed to the Graduate Faculty by the dean of the Graduate School. All members of a thesis committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty. The Committee Chair must be a Full or Associate member of the Graduate Faculty in the department where the degree is housed (see the Graduate Faculty section of the Catalog for details about appointments in multiple departments). One committee member must be from outside the student's major department. The majority of the thesis committee must be full-time regular University of Alabama faculty. If the outside member is not already a member of the UA Graduate Faculty (e.g., they may be a highly qualified person from another university, a business, or industry), the graduate dean needs to appoint that member by approving Affiliate Graduate Faculty status for the specific purpose of serving on the student's thesis committee. For multi-campus master's programs, unless otherwise defined in their agreements, the Committee Chair of a University of Alabama master's student must be a Full or Associate member of the Graduate Faculty in the University of Alabama department where the degree is housed.

The candidate must give members of the examining committee a minimum of two weeks to read the thesis before the date of the final oral examination. All members must agree that the student is ready for the final oral thesis defense. A final oral thesis defense is required of all students completing a thesis. See the "Final Thesis Defense" section below for further information.

In rare cases, a student may be unable to form a committee within their program or secure a thesis or dissertation chair. In these circumstances, the student's progress to date will be reviewed by the program's designated committee for such reviews. If the program does not have such a standing committee, the department chair will appoint an ad hoc committee of graduate faculty to review the student's progress to date.

This ad hoc committee will not work in the capacity of an advisory committee but will identify a path forward for the student, which shall include written expectations for progress and responsiveness to mentorship. The expectations and timeline must be agreed upon by a majority of the committee members, and all of the expectations must be shared in writing with the student.

In the context of these written expectations, the student will then have the subsequent semester to secure the support of an advisor, form a committee, and meet the written expectations of the ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee will reconvene at the end of that semester to evaluate the student's progress in meeting these three milestones. If the student does not meet the outlined expectations, the student will be dismissed from the program based on lack of progress.

Article Style vs. Journal Format for Master's Theses

Article Style.

At the doctoral level, "article-style dissertations" are unified works that include several distinct but related studies of research or creative activity, each of which is of publishable quality. The University does not permit an "article-style thesis" to be presented for a master's degree.

Journal Format.

A "journal-format thesis" is acceptable. Such a thesis follows the format of a particular journal in which the student and advisor want the thesis to be published. To prepare a journal-format thesis, the student uses the journal's "information for authors" or similarly titled guidelines in conjunction with the Graduate School's Thesis and Dissertation page for formatting guidelines.

Theses must comply with the regulations set forth on the Graduate School's website. Approval of the thesis by the graduate dean is necessary before graduation.

The thesis should be completed, if possible, while the student is in residence at the University. To request permission to complete a thesis in absentia, the student must, before leaving the University, submit a satisfactory outline of the thesis, as well as evidence that adequate facilities are available where the work will be done, to the head of the student's major department.

Protection of Human Subjects for Research

Scientific research involving human subjects has produced substantial benefits for society, but it also can pose troubling ethical questions. The mission of the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Protection of Human Subjects is to ensure that research involving human subjects is conducted ethically. University and federal policies require that review and approval to use human subjects in research precede the research. In the case of thesis research that involves the use of human subjects in any way, the principal investigator is responsible for contacting the college Human Research Review Committee to obtain approval for the planned research.

Final Thesis Defense

The final oral thesis defense is the culminating experience in the master's program. As such, all members of the thesis committee are expected to attend and participate in real-time. The thesis must comply with the Graduate School's formatting and style guidelines.

Following a successful thesis defense, any edits agreed upon during the defense must be incorporated into the manuscript, and the Thesis Committee Chair must approve the final manuscript. After a careful review to ensure that the manuscript adheres to the Graduate School's formatting guidelines, the candidate must submit the completed and approved manuscript to the Graduate School for final approval, address any remaining edits, and initiate the upload process for archiving the manuscript in the national dissertation repository, ProQuest. "Completed" means submitted to ProQuest after being successfully defended, carefully edited following the defense meeting, and having the Committee Acceptance Form (CAF) signed by all committee members, the department chairperson, and the graduate dean. A majority of the thesis committee must approve the written thesis and defense before submission to the Graduate School. A thesis will not be reviewed for final formatting approval until a completed Committee Acceptance form has been received by the Graduate School.

See the Registration & Assistantships section of the Graduate Catalog for policies regarding registration requirements during the semester of the thesis defense. Generally speaking, graduate programs may allow students to schedule thesis defenses at any time that is mutually agreed upon by the student and the committee. However, defenses should not be scheduled when University offices are closed, as specified in the Academic Calendar. When University offices are open, nine-month faculty may opt to participate in defenses during summer or interim sessions but are not required to do so.

A student may defend their thesis only twice. Failing the oral and/or written examination twice results in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School.

Graduate School deadlines, including each semester's thesis deadline, are available at the Graduate School's homepage. Consult the Graduate School's Thesis and Dissertation page for details of ETD submission, including information on what needs to be submitted to the Graduate

School. The graduate dean must approve the thesis before the student can be cleared for graduation.

Virtual Participation in Committee-Based Exams/ Defenses

All members of a student's graduate committee are expected to attend and participate, usually in person, in any oral examination as part of the student's graduate (Master's or Doctoral) degree program. Traditionally, oral examinations are conducted with the student meeting their committee while gathered in one physical location on campus. However, the need occasionally arises for virtual participation in the oral examination.

If a department or program chooses to allow virtual participation in oral examinations, they must ensure adherence to the following technical requirements. Departments or programs may enforce stricter guidelines than those outlined, including an on-campus-only policy if deemed necessary and appropriate.

Technical Requirements

In cases where departments or programs allow any level of virtual participation, from one virtual member to a fully virtual event, they must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Prior to any oral exam, the student and Committee Chair coordinate with other committee members regarding the protocol for the exam.
2. All participants must join using university-adopted videoconferencing tools that allow for **fully interactive** audio and video communications along with screen-sharing capabilities, which must be maintained throughout the examination and any related discussion.
3. The use of audio-only communications is not permitted.
4. Participation merely by viewing a recording of the oral examination is specifically prohibited.
5. All members of the committee, on- or off-site, must participate in the final evaluation of the examination or defense; provisions must be made to record their votes and collect their signatures as necessary using the digital signature system approved by the Graduate School.
6. The Committee Chair, or another non-student designee, shall be the host of the virtual meeting. A co-host may be assigned so that the event will not be interrupted by technical difficulties. The host should mute all participants (or ask participants to mute themselves) and ask the student to share their screen, if a presentation is involved, in order to make the presentation visible to all attendees. The host must also ensure that appropriate security precautions are taken to prevent the interruption of the event.
7. Following the public portion of the defense, the host shall ask all non-committee members to leave the meeting, or the host may manually remove them. In programs where the defense has both a public and a private portion, the committee may then continue the event as outlined in their program protocols.
8. Once the committee has completed the examination of the student, the host shall place the student into the waiting room (or have the committee members use a breakout room) so the committee can conduct their deliberations in private.

The committee chair must have a secondary videoconferencing system available as a back- up in the case of technical difficulties. Cancellation of the examination should only occur in the case where both the primary and secondary back-up systems fail. If an examination must be rescheduled, it will be done without prejudice to the student. Since committee deliberations are an essential aspect of the examination, completing the examination and final discussion via email or other non-audiovisual means is not an option. If the student or any committee member(s) have a disability that will be impacted by virtual participation, accommodations for participation must be provided.

Comprehensive Examinations and Culminating Experiences

In addition to the regular course examinations, all master's candidates must receive a passing grade on a culminating experience (also known as an exit assessment) in which the student is expected to integrate prior learning. Each graduate program, with the approval of the Graduate Council, determines the most appropriate format. The culminating or capstone experience may consist of one or more of the following:

- a written and/or oral examination based on the content of the degree program;
- a thesis and final oral defense;
- a designated course (such as a capstone course) requiring interpretation and integration of information from previous courses;
- a research paper, a "policy and practice" paper, a portfolio, or equivalent experience;
- a public performance or exhibition along with a contextualizing paper; and/or
- a practicum or internship.

If the culminating experience requirement is met with the first and/or second option above, then the examining committee for comprehensive examinations must consist of at least three members of the graduate faculty from that department and appointed by the dean of the Graduate School. The examination must be given at least six weeks before the date of graduation (two weeks before for Plan II) and reported promptly to the dean of the Graduate School on appropriate forms. A student may take the final oral or written examination only twice. Failing the examination twice results in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School.

If the culminating experience is met with one of the other options, programs may designate how many times the course or experience may be attempted. After the allowable number of attempts, a failing grade results in dismissal from the degree program and the graduate school.

Application for Graduation

Each candidate for a master's degree must submit an Application for Degree via myBama no later than the last day to add a course for the semester (or first term of the summer semester) in which requirements for the degree are to be completed. That specific date is published each semester at the Graduate School's website under Current Students/ Deadlines for Graduate Students.

Second Master's Degree

Six (6) semester hours of eligible credit from one master's degree at The University of Alabama may be applied to the requirements for a second master's degree, but only if the department of the second master's agrees to the courses in the plan of study. Any hours from the previous master's degree must have been earned during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the second degree is to be awarded. ***Please note that if a student double counts six hours between two master's degrees, no hours may double count toward any additional master's degrees.

Educational Specialist Degrees

The Educational Specialist degree (EdS) is offered in some departments of the College of Education that offer doctoral degrees. Students interested in the EdS degree should contact the department involved regarding availability of the degree.

The EdS degree normally is granted at the end of the sixth year of collegiate study and falls in time between the master's degree and the doctorate, although it is not viewed as intermediate between the master's and doctoral degrees. In the College of Education, some EdS degrees lead to a teaching certification for P–12 education fields. In some teaching fields, the purpose of the degree is to prepare undergraduate-college teachers, especially those who will be employed in junior colleges, small private and state colleges, and the group of colleges labeled as "developing" institutions. The primary goals of the EdS degree are teaching and acquiring professional proficiency.

Because the purposes of the EdS degree may differ from those of either the EdD or PhD, credit earned in an EdS program is not automatically transferable to a doctoral program. Instead, if a holder of an EdS degree enters a doctoral program at a later date, the doctoral advisory committee will decide how much of the credit earned in the EdS program will be counted toward the doctorate.

Program Requirements

The EdS degree requires a minimum of 30 semester hours of study beyond the master's degree. (Students completing an EdS program and also expecting to receive an Alabama Class AA certificate for service in the public schools must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours and achieve a minimum 3.5 GPA on all work attempted.) Generally, the following requirements will hold for the degree:

- If a student enters a program with a master's degree in the same field, a minimum of 12 additional semester hours in the teaching field must be taken as part of the 30-hour total. Some departments may require more than these minimums.
- Since one of the goals of the EdS degree is to prepare undergraduate-college teachers, certain courses in higher education may be necessary, if required by the major department. A faculty advisor in the program in higher education administration will advise students on the appropriate courses to complete this requirement.
- Candidates for the EdS degree will be required to complete all coursework at the 500 and 600 levels.

Graduate Credit

A student must be admitted to the Graduate School and must register as a graduate student in order to receive graduate credit. Approval for graduate registration must be obtained from program advisors prior to registration.

Transfer of Credit

Courses of full graduate-level credit earned in a regionally accredited institution where a student was enrolled in the graduate school may be submitted for review for inclusion in a degree program. Evaluation of credit for transfer will not be made until after the student has enrolled in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. Acceptance of credit requires the approval of the student's advisory committee and the dean of the Graduate School. Credit will not be accepted for transfer from any institution at which the student failed to achieve a "B" average on all graduate work attempted. Only courses in which a student earned a "B" grade or better may be transferred.

In some cases, foreign educational credentials may not meet the Graduate School's criteria for transfer of credit. It may be necessary for students in this situation to secure an evaluation of their credentials from World Education Services Inc. (WES), an external foreign credential evaluation service. Additional information on their services can be found at their website.

A student initiates at the Graduate School's website a Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit earned at another institution. It is also the student's responsibility to assure that the Graduate School receives an official transcript of the credit concerned, well in advance of the final semester and typically before or at the time of advancement to candidacy.

The greater of 12 semester hours or 25 percent of appropriate post-master's-degree credit, earned through a regionally accredited institution approved to offer graduate programs beyond the master's level in the field of study where the credits were earned, may be transferred to apply toward an EdS degree. To be considered for transfer, credit must have been completed during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded.

Previous and appropriate post-master's-degree credit earned at The University of Alabama before a student applies for admission to the EdS program can be applied toward the EdS degree, provided it meets the program requirements of the particular department and the time limitation stated above.

Please note that some departments allow fewer than 9 hours of graduate transfer credit. Be sure to check with your department's graduate coordinator regarding your department's transfer policy.

Graduate Credit for Noncredit Experiences

All course credit used toward a UA graduate degree must be taught at the graduate level. No graduate credit may be earned by correspondence study or for experiential learning not conducted under the direct supervision of graduate faculty of The University of Alabama. UA does not offer graduate credit for noncredit workshops, seminars, continuing education experiences, professional development, internships, work/life experience and so forth.

A student in his or her last semester of work toward the master's degree who does not need a full course load to complete the course requirements of his or her master's program may register for work toward the EdS degree, in the amount needed to complete full registration loads.

Residency Requirement

A student's program at the EdS level must provide sufficient association with the resident faculty to permit individual evaluation of the student's capabilities and achievements.

Time Limit

All requirements for the EdS degree must be completed during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded. There is no provision at the EdS level for a time limit extension beyond 6 years.

Plan of Study

A standard form for an EdS plan of study is available in each department. Because each department or program participating in the EdS degree has established a framework of requirements for the degree that indicates the general structure of its program. At or before initial registration, each student develops a formal plan of study for the degree, designating all courses he or she plans to take in the program. In reaching decisions, the

student should consult with the program director. The student will file a completed plan of study with the program director who, upon approving the plan, will distribute a copy to the student and retain one copy for departmental files.

A plan of study may be amended at any time using appropriate forms and following the procedure described above. Until formal approval of an amended plan of study is made, the original or current modification of the plan will be in effect.

Admission to Candidacy

As noted above, the EdS Plan of Study is available in the College of Education and must be approved by the Graduate School before the student can be admitted to candidacy for the EdS degree. Thus, it is best to complete the plan of study by the end of the first or second semester of coursework.

The department advisor will submit the Admission to Candidacy for the EDS degree through the UA DocuSign system in myBama with the approved Plan of Study attached for Graduate School approval.

Examinations

In addition to the regular course examinations, a final comprehensive examination is required. The examination may be written or oral or both, at the discretion of the major department. No candidate is eligible for the final examination until approved by the appropriate program director. A student may take the final oral or written examination only twice. Failing the examination twice results in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School.

The examination will be prepared and conducted by a committee of at least three members of the UA graduate faculty, including the program director in the major area of study and a designee (or two or more people from the major area of study, designated by the program director) and the program director (or a designee) from the minor field of study, if one has been included in a program. Committees will be appointed by the dean of the Graduate School on request of the major program director. Each candidate must be judged by the major department to have completed the examination(s) satisfactorily.

If a candidate receives failing marks in both the minor area of study and the professional education field, the candidate will be judged to have failed the examination. If a candidate fails either the minor examination or the professional education examination, the committee as a whole will reach a decision about the satisfactory or unsatisfactory nature of the candidate's performance on the examination. If a candidate does not have a minor field, the committee members will meet to reach a decision in the event the student fails the professional education examination.

All written examinations will be kept on file by the program directors for five year following the date of the last term of enrollment, and students will have the right to confer with their program directors regarding the strengths and weaknesses shown on the examinations. The committee chair must submit the EDS Comprehensive Exam form through the UA DocuSign system in myBama following exam completion.

Virtual Participation

Scope and Goals

All members of a student's graduate committee are expected to attend and participate, usually in person, in any oral examination as part of the student's graduate (Master's or Doctoral) degree program. Traditionally, oral examinations are conducted with the student meeting their committee while gathered in one physical location on campus. However, the need occasionally arises for virtual participation in the oral examination. In these cases, graduate programs must ensure adherence to the following if any graduate-level oral examination involving the student's entire thesis/dissertation committee includes virtual participation.

- The student's consent must be sought and obtained in advance of conducting the oral examination with virtual participants.
- Virtual participation by committee members *must* include both audio and visual capability so that:
  - each committee member can hear the student and view the student, any presentation slides, and any demonstrations;
  - the student can hear and view each committee member.
- All committee members must participate interactively and in real-time for the *entire* examination, including any preparatory discussion leading up to it, the presentation itself, its discussion and evaluation.

The following sections provide detail on the technical and attendance requirements for an oral examination with virtual participation. Departments and programs may enforce stricter guidelines than those outlined, including an on#campus#only policy if deemed necessary and appropriate.

Technical Requirements

Real-time and fully interactive audio and video communications must be maintained throughout the examination and any related discussion. The audio/video communications facilities must allow the student and all committee members to see and hear each other during the entire examination. There must be adequate provision for the transmission of text, graphics, or writings referenced or generated during the examination (e.g., slides, whiteboard). The use of audio-only communications is not permitted.

In case of technical difficulties or technology failure, the committee will decide whether tocontinue the examination once the difficulty is resolved, or to cancel the examination and reschedule it for a later date, without prejudice to the student.

If the student or any committee member(s) have a disability that will be impacted by virtual participation, reasonable accommodations should be provided.

Attendance Requirements: campus-based programs

Programs should ensure that students are advised about virtual participation guidelines related to an oral examination, including reference to these guidelines as well as any other program-specific requirements.

It is generally expected that members of a graduate student's committee be physically present with the student for each oral committee examination. However, an oral examination may have virtually participating committee members according to the following rules:

- **Any one member** of the graduate student's committee (excluding the chair / advisor) can participate at a distance without seeking further authorization.
- The **committee chair** will be allowed to participate at a distance only if rescheduling the oral examination for a time when they are on campus would cause hardship to the student. In this case, the committee chair should submit a petition to the Dean of the Graduate School, outlining the reasons leading to the request.
- Similarly, a petition from the committee chair to the Dean of the Graduate School is also required if **more than one committee member** is to participate at a distance. Such petitions will only be considered if rescheduling the oral examination to a time when only one member

of the committee would be participating at a distance would cause significant hardship to the student, as outlined in the petition.

All committee members participating virtually must be able to **fully interact** in the oral examination via audio and video capability; participation by viewing a recording of the oral examination is specifically prohibited. All members of the committee, on- or off-site, must participate in the evaluation of the examination; provisions must be made to record their vote and collect their signatures as necessary.

Student participation at a distance in graduate oral examinations involving their committee is generally not allowed for campus-based graduate programs. However, the committee chair and/or the graduate program director, in agreement with the student, may draft a petition to seek permission from the Dean of the Graduate School to conduct such an oral examination. This arrangement will only be considered if the committee chair agrees to it, and if rescheduling the oral examination for a time when the student is on campus would cause great hardship to the student; the petition should clearly outline the extenuating circumstances leading to this need.

Attendance Requirements: online or hybrid programs

An online graduate program is defined as a program in which no aspect of the degree program occurs on-campus, including oral examinations. A hybrid program is defined as a program which has both online and on-campus elements.

For online and hybrid programs that handle oral examinations in an online setting, all committee members as well as the student may participate virtually in the oral examination. However, these programs must fully adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Technical Requirements section above for any oral examination involving the entire committee.

Hybrid programs that require oral examinations to take place on campus must adhere to the guidelines set forth for campus-based programs.

Application for Graduation

Each candidate for an educational specialist degree must submit an Application for Degree via myBama no later than the last day to register or add a course for the semester (or first term of the summer semester) in which requirements for the degree are to be completed. That specific date is published each semester at the Graduate School's website under Current Students/Deadlines for Graduate Students.

Doctoral Degrees

The University offers several types of doctorates, each of which is described below.

The minimum period in which a doctoral degree can be earned is three full academic years of graduate study after completion of a baccalaureate degree, although in most disciplines the period is longer. Graduate teaching assistants (GTA) or graduate research assistants (GRA) whose work assignments are 10 hours per week (i.e. the equivalent of 3 semester hours) or more should expect to take more than the minimum period of 3 academic years to earn a doctoral degree. The only exception to the three-year minimum is the practice-focused DNP.

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is regarded as the researcher's degree. Program requirements include the acquisition of special skills for conducting independent, scholarly research of publishable quality. Requirements traditionally include a working knowledge of one or more foreign languages, but currently a number of foreign-language alternatives have been approved by departments. Through acquisition of these skills, PhD candidates demonstrate their potential for careers as independent, publishing scholars. Refer to departmental sections of this Catalog for details on foreign-language requirements or alternatives.

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is granted on the basis of scholarly proficiency, distinctive achievement in a special field, and capacity for independent, original investigation. The first two criteria are tested in coursework and a comprehensive examination, the last in a dissertation in which the student must present clearly and effectively the results of substantial research. A combination of these accomplishments, rather than the mere accumulation of residence and course credits, is the essential consideration in awarding the PhD degree. The PhD differs from the EdD in a number of ways, including the fact that the PhD Plan of Study and comprehensive examination demonstrate a higher-level research focus, and there is a greater number of dissertation hours and higher level of complexity and independent thought in a PhD-level dissertation.

Field of Specialization - A defined field of specialization as outlined in the student's Plan of Study is required of all candidates for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. A minimum of 36 semester hours of non-dissertation course credit is required. Departments or programs may require more than this minimum. Candidates should consult their departments or the appropriate section of this Catalog for additional requirements. The doctoral course as a whole must be unified, and all its parts must contribute to an organized program of study and research. In addition, a student must complete a minimum of 18 hours of dissertation research.

Research skill/language requirements - There is no university wide foreign language/research skill requirement for doctoral students; each college or department offering the PhD degree may set its own requirements. This policy reaffirms the importance of research skills and foreign languages in the highest academic degree granted by American universities, but it also recognizes that the departments offering the degrees are in the best position to determine the number and nature of such requirements in the interests of their students. For further information about PhD foreign language/research skill requirements, students may contact their departments.

Interdisciplinary Studies

There is a PhD degree program in interdisciplinary studies, and it is administered by the Graduate School. In addition to the general requirements for the PhD degree, the program of study and the supervisory committee for the prospective interdisciplinary studies degree candidate must be approved by the dean of the Graduate School before the student is admitted to the program. See Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) at the Graduate School's website for information on prerequisites, admission procedures, course of study, and other aspects of IDS programs.

Doctor of Education Degree

The Ed.D. degree requires a minimum of 60 hours of graduate study beyond the master's degree, including at least 48 hours of coursework and 12 hours of dissertation research. There will be no college-wide major field requirement. Program areas will determine the nature of the required coursework. There will be no college-wide major field requirement. Program areas will determine the nature of the required coursework. Credit hours designated as dissertation research hours in the College of Education cannot be used to meet credit hour requirements for coursework.

Students pursuing the Ed.D. degree in the College of Education must satisfy the following:

1) Foundation Course Requirements: Students are required to abide by the minimum of 6 credit hours of Foundation Courses. Foundation

courses included BEF and BEP courses, as well as courses outside of the program, as judged by the faculty in the program area. Program areas are, of course, free to require more than the minimum. They are also free to determine whether transfer credits can be counted against the requirement.

2) Research Course Requirements: Students are required to abide by the minimum of 9 credit hours of Research Courses. Program areas may require more than the minimum. Research courses include BER courses and courses outside the program, as judged by the faculty in the program area. They are also free to determine whether transfer credits can be counted against the requirement.

3) Dissertation hours: Ed.D. students must complete a minimum of 12 hours of dissertation research.

4) Transfer Credit: The College will abide by the Graduate School transfer credit policy of allowing up to one-half of the course credit toward degree completion to be transfer credit. Course transfer decisions belong to program area faculty and are not restricted by anything other than the 50% limit.

The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) requires a minimum of two years of graduate study beyond the master's degree for completion. The student must complete 48 semester hours of approved graduate coursework beyond the master's degree, or 78 semester hours of approved graduate coursework beyond a bachelor's degree, and defend a dissertation. The student must complete a minimum of 12 hours of dissertation research. The College of Education section of the Graduate Catalog contains additional regulations governing the Ed.D. program.

Doctor of Musical Arts Degree

The Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree requires a minimum of 48 semester hours beyond the Master of Music degree, plus recitals and other examinations as determined by faculty of the School of Music. Specific requirements for each major area are outlined in the School of Music section of the Graduate Catalog.

Doctor of Nursing Practice

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) is a practice-focused degree that is detailed in the Nursing section of this Catalog.

Doctor of Social Work

A Doctor of Social Work (DSW) degree is a practice doctorate degree in social work. It provides coursework on theory and skills in social work practice that are more advanced than what one would typically experience in an MSW program for social work.

Admission to Doctoral Degree Programs

Admission to any doctoral program is limited to students whose scholastic records show distinct promise of success in doctoral study. Admission to the Graduate School and the earning of a master's degree from The University of Alabama does not guarantee acceptance into a doctoral program. Students in doubt about their acceptance into doctoral programs should consult with departmental advisors and the Graduate School, which makes the final decision about admission. A department may terminate a student's doctoral admission if there is documented unsatisfactory academic or other progress toward completion of the degree.

Residency Requirements

The University of Alabama recognizes that doctoral students should be immersed in advanced study and inquiry, interact extensively and meaningfully with faculty and peers, engage with the academic community in their field, and have access to the educational resources of the University. To achieve these goals, a minimum of 50 percent of coursework hours to be counted in a student's doctoral program must be from The University of Alabama (exclusive of dissertation research hours and subject to the Graduate Catalog's Transfer of Credit policies). Additionally, 100 percent of dissertation credit hours must be from The University of Alabama. Diverse academic traditions, rapidly changing instructional modalities, and new student populations are acknowledged and accommodated with this policy.

Graduate Credit

A student must be admitted to the Graduate School and must register as a graduate student in order to receive graduate credit. Approval for graduate registration must be obtained from program advisors prior to registration.

Graduate Credit for Noncredit Experiences

All course credit used toward a UA graduate degree must be taught at the graduate level. No graduate credit may be earned by correspondence study or for experiential learning not conducted under the direct supervision of graduate faculty of The University of Alabama. UA does not offer graduate credit for noncredit workshops, seminars, continuing education experiences, professional development, internships, work/life experience, and so forth.

Previously Earned UA Graduate Credit and Transfers of Graduate Credit

Previous graduate credit earned at The University of Alabama or another accredited institution may be applied toward the requirements for a doctoral degree if approved by the department and the Graduate School. The student must have been enrolled as a graduate student, or a UA Accelerated Master's Program student, at the time the previous credits were earned. To be applied toward the requirements for a doctoral degree, all previous graduate credit must have been earned during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) preceding the semester of admission to the UA doctoral program. Such credits may constitute no more than 50% of the program's minimum doctoral coursework requirement. If an in-field master's degree or other relevant graduate credits were earned from an accredited institution other than UA, these credits may be applied toward the doctoral degree as transferred credit. See below for further information about credits earned more than six years prior to the semester of admission.

Consideration of transfer of credit (or the acceptance of a previously earned master's degree as partial credit toward a Ph.D. program) is subject to a final decision by the doctoral program and the Graduate School. Only courses in which the student earned a grade of 'B' or better may be transferred. Evaluation of previous coursework from an outside institution cannot be made until the student has enrolled in the Graduate School at The University of Alabama. For such cases, the student must initiate the Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit and ensure that the Graduate School has an official transcript of all credit involved. Transfer of credit may be requested based on course-by-course equivalencies, or by block transfer (MSC 501) if a master's degree was earned. Any approved transferred coursework will need to be reflected on the doctoral Plan of Study. With few exceptions, the Plan of Study should be submitted by the time the student completes 30 total credit hours (including both transferred and UA coursework). Planning to transfer courses in the penultimate or final semester will typically delay graduation.

Please note that some departments have established lower limits or other criteria for allowable transfer credits. Be sure to check with your graduate program director regarding your department's transfer policy.

Dissertation Research hours and Thesis Research hours may not be transferred in from an outside institution.

Graduate Coursework Earned More than Six Years Prior to Admission For Ph.D. Programs Only

For Ph.D. Programs Only: Previous coursework that was earned more than six years before the student's admission to the UA Ph.D. program requires special approval to be applied toward a UA Ph.D. program. The prior coursework or master's degree may be from UA or another accredited institution. These credits, if approved by the student's major program, may constitute no more than 50% of the program's minimum Ph.D. coursework requirement. Additionally, because such coursework was taken outside of the six-year window, the student's continuity of knowledge in the field must be demonstrated. For this purpose, the graduate program director or department head/chair must submit to the Graduate School, for evaluation, a *Field-Related Activity Since Earning Master's Degree* form, along with the student's CV or resume and — if from an outside institution - the Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit form.

Coursework from a previously earned master's degree from an outside institution may be transferred in as a block of credit (MSC501) and must be noted as such on the Ph.D. Plan of Study. Individually transferred courses must have a grade of 'B' or better to be eligible for transfer. Such credits may constitute no more than 50% of the program's minimum doctoral coursework requirement.

Admission to Doctoral Program Prior to Completing Master's

If a student who is enrolled in a master's degree program subsequently gains admission to a doctoral program within the same department, before completing the master's degree, the student's program of study may be changed to "Master's En Route to Doctoral Degree." In such cases, the policies of "Master's En Route" supersedes the 50% transfer rule, and the department has the option of allowing some or all of the relevant coursework to count toward the doctoral program requirements. Students must apply to the doctoral program as outlined in the Admission Criteria section of the Graduate Catalog. When the student is admitted, the program director will notify the Graduate Registrar that the student's program has been changed from the master's to the doctoral program, and will submit a revised Plan of Study. This option is reserved for students whom the department deems ready for doctoral study before completion of the master's degree.

Master's En Route to Doctoral Degree

Programs have the option to grant the "Master's En Route" to doctoral students who do not already have a master's in that field. In such cases, the master's degree can be granted after a student has completed 30 or more credit hours, as well as completing other requirements as specified by the program (e.g., comprehensive exams or other milestones). Participating programs must be approved by the Graduate Council to offer this combined degree. In these cases, all coursework credits used to complete master's degree requirements (excluding thesis research courses) can potentially be applied toward the doctoral degree, as determined by the doctoral program.

Approved Master's En Route Programs

- Accounting, PhD
- Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics, PhD
- Anthropology, PhD
- Applied Statistics, PhD
- Biological Sciences, PhD
- Chemical Engineering, PhD
- Chemistry, PhD
- Civil Engineering, PhD
- Communication and Information Sciences, PhD
- Computer Science, PhD
- Educational Psychology, PhD
- Electrical Engineering, PhD
- Finance, PhD
- Geography, PhD
- Geology, PhD
- Human Nutrition, PhD
- Interdisciplinary Studies, PhD
- Management, PhD
- Material Sciences, PhD
- Mathematics
- Mechanical Engineering, PhD
- Nursing, DNP
- Operations Management, PhD
- Political Science, PhD
- Physics, PhD
- Psychology, PhD
- Quantitative Economics, PhD
- Romance Languages, PhD
- School Psychology, PhD

Time Limits

All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within nine years (27 fall, spring, and summer semesters) following admission to the doctoral program, with the following specific exception approved by the Graduate Council: Modern Languages and Classics (ten years if entering the doctoral program with a baccalaureate, not master's, degree).

Previous graduate credit may be applied to the doctoral degree if the credit was earned during the six-year period prior to admission to the doctoral program or accepted by the Graduate School as part of Option 2. Such credit must be identified clearly on the Outline of PhD Program (Plan of Study) and requires Graduate School approval. Only those students graduating within the time limit for their doctoral program may apply previously approved graduate credit to the doctoral degree.

Time Limits Extension Requests

Only under compelling circumstances beyond the student's control, a student may petition for a one-semester extension to the nine-year time limit (or ten-year time limit for the selected programs above). The Graduate Council approved the following steps to request an extension:

- To begin the process, the student petitions the department head. In the petition the student:
  - describes the compelling circumstances
  - briefly describes the current status of the dissertation, then
  - includes a timeline showing each important remaining step in the completion of the dissertation. The last step and and date in the timeline are submission of the successfully defended dissertation on or before the published final date for submission of dissertations for the requested extension semester.
- If the department head supports the petition, it is forwarded to the college dean.
- If the college dean supports the petition, it is sent to the graduate dean.

- If the graduate dean or their designee approves the extension, it will not require the student to validate any out-of-date UA or transfer courses previously approved for the plan of study.
- If a student fails to complete all degree requirements within the time limit for the student's doctoral program or within a one-semester extension approved as noted above, the student will be suspended from the doctoral program. To complete a doctoral degree, the student would have to reapply for admission and be admitted by the department and the Graduate School.

Revalidation of Expired Credits

There may be particular and limited instances where a student is re-admitted to a graduate program, and revalidation of expired credits is justified. In such cases, where the department and Graduate School feel it is appropriate to do so, the student may work with the graduate program director to petition for such revalidation, on a course-by-course basis. For each course for which revalidation is requested, the student must demonstrate, to the department's satisfaction, that the knowledge and skills gained in that course are still current. Currency will be evaluated by a committee of faculty, composed of at least three graduate faculty members within the degree program to which the student is requesting re-admission, and two from a separate department.

The committee will then issue a recommendation to the dean of the Graduate School, who will rule on the petition.

Some methods for demonstrating currency may include but are not limited to 1) a professional portfolio; 2) an exam or essay linked to each course and demonstrating up-to-date knowledge; 3) a re-take of the comprehensive exams under current program guidelines, and/or 4) other methods deemed appropriate by the committee.

Students may request revalidation of up to 50% of the required minimum coursework for their degree. Credits earned from an institution other than The University of Alabama may not be revalidated.

Consideration of revalidation, and a plan of study based on the demonstration-of-currency and other remaining requirements, must be completed as part of the student's re-admission to the Graduate School. Revalidation of credits is not guaranteed. From the time of re-admission, students must complete the degree within the standard time limit, as specified in the Graduate Catalog at the time of the student's re-admission.

The Continuous Dissertation or Document Registration requirement for 699 and 799 enrollment will be waived for the intervening years between the student's cessation of doctoral work and re-admission.

Plan of Study

Early in the graduate program, each student must confer with the appropriate departmental advisor or major professor to select courses, discuss when and by which method the doctoral residency requirement will be completed, discuss research interests, and so forth. Then a Plan of Study must be prepared and submitted to the Graduate School by the time the student has completed 30 coursework hours.

The PhD, DMA, and DSW Plans of Study are submitted by the department through the UA DocuSign system in myBama. The Plan of Study for other doctoral programs (Ed.D., DNP) are available from the student's department, college, or school. All doctoral students must have a completed Plan of Study approved by the Graduate School no later than the semester during which the student will complete 30 semester hours of UA and/or transfer credit toward the doctoral degree. Otherwise, a "hold" may be placed on future registrations.

A copy of the approved Plan of Study must be submitted to the Graduate School when the department submits the Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degree form through the UA DocuSign system in myBama.

Preliminary or Comprehensive Examination

A preliminary or comprehensive qualifying examination is required of all doctoral candidates. This examination is given after

- any foreign language/research skill requirements are met (PhD students only);
- two full years of graduate study are completed; and
- the supervisory committee deems the student to have adequate preparation in the major and minor fields of study.

The examination is conducted by the student's supervisory committee or other committee established in the program area. Whereas one of the purposes of the preliminary examination is to determine the student's research competence to begin work on a dissertation, the examination should be completed at least nine months before the degree is to be awarded. A student may take the oral or written examination only twice. Failing the examination twice results in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School.

Admission to Candidacy

The designation of candidacy reflects the student's demonstration of foundational knowledge and readiness to conduct independent research, in the discipline. The requirement for advancing to candidacy is determined by the faculty of the degree program and delineated in the program's section of the Graduate School Catalog and the program's Graduate Student Handbook.

Advancement to candidacy should involve either:

- passing the qualifying (major or preliminary) examination
- completing of all required coursework as listed on the approved program of study
- presenting or defending a dissertation prospectus or proposal
- or some combination of these milestones.

Students are not eligible to register for 699 or 799 credit hours until they have been advanced to candidacy. The Department Chair or Department Director of Graduate Studies, or their designee, shall submit the Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree form to the Graduate School during the semester that the student meets the program's candidacy requirements.

Continuous Doctoral Research Hours Registration

Once a student meets their program's requirement for admission to candidacy and the designated Department administrator submits the Application for Admission to Candidacy form to the Graduate School, the student must begin enrollment in 699 (dissertation/document research) or 799 (document/project research).

Once initiated, the student must pursue completion of the dissertation/document/project without interruption by enrolling in 699/799 each fall and spring semester of the academic year.

The only time summer registration is required for dissertation/document/project research is when a doctoral student is graduating in August or defending the dissertation/document/project during the summer semester.

Ph.D. students must complete a minimum of 18 hours of dissertation research credits (699). Ph.D. students must register for a minimum of 3 dissertation research credits each semester until reaching their program's minimum. Thereafter, they must register for a minimum of 1 dissertation

hour each semester, maintaining continuous enrollment in 699 until degree completion.

Ed.D. students must complete a minimum of 12 dissertation research credits (699). Ed.D. students must register for a minimum of 3 dissertation research credits each semester until reaching their program's minimum. Thereafter, they must register for a minimum of 1 dissertation hour each semester, maintaining continuous enrollment in 699 until degree completion.

DMA students must complete a minimum of 4 hours of document research (MUS 699). DMA students must register for a minimum of 1 document/project research hour each semester, maintaining continuous enrollment in MUS 699 until degree completion.

DNP Students must complete project research hours in NUR 795-798. DNP students must maintain continuous enrollment for a minimum of 1 hour in a department-specified course until degree completion.

DSW Students must complete a minimum of 9 hours of project research (SW 799). DSW students must register for a minimum of 1 document/project research hour each semester, maintaining continuous enrollment in SW 799 until degree completion.

The amount of dissertation/document/project research for which a student enrolls in any given semester should be commensurate with the progress a student is expected to make on the dissertation, as well as reflective of the extent to which University facilities and faculty time are invested in the proposed activities.

Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee should be formed and approved early in the dissertation research process, before significant progress is made on the dissertation. The committee must be formally established via a process initiated by the student and requiring the consent of each committee member, followed by Graduate School review for compliance with the regulations outlined below. Students initiate this process via their Graduate Student Portal.

PhD committees must consist of at least five members. EDD committees can consist of a minimum of 4 members. Any committee may have additional (voting or nonvoting) members if deemed appropriate. At least one of the committee members must be from outside the student's major department. These external members may be from another academic department at UA, from other universities, or from industry or the professional field. In all cases, these members external to the department/program must be appointed to UA's Graduate Faculty by the dean of the Graduate School, and must have significant professional qualifications that directly contribute to the depth and rigor of the dissertation.

All members of the dissertation committee must hold Graduate Faculty status at The University of Alabama. The chair of the committee must hold Full Graduate Faculty status in the department where the degree is housed; others may be Full, Associate, or Affiliate members of the Graduate Faculty. A majority of the Dissertation Committee members must be full-time regular University of Alabama faculty (that is, full-time, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor). For multi-campus doctoral programs, unless otherwise defined in their agreements, the Committee Chair of a University of Alabama doctoral student must be a Full member of the Graduate Faculty in the University of Alabama department where the degree is housed.

In rare cases, a student may be unable to form a committee within their program or secure a thesis or dissertation chair. In these circumstances, the student's progress to date will be reviewed by the program's designated committee for such reviews. If the program does not have such a standing committee, the department chair will appoint an ad hoc committee of graduate faculty to review the student's progress to date.

This ad hoc committee will not work in the capacity of an advisory committee but will identify a path forward for the student, which shall include written expectations for progress and responsiveness to mentorship. The expectations and timeline must be agreed upon by a majority of the committee members, and all of the expectations must be shared in writing with the student.

In the context of these written expectations, the student will then have the subsequent semester to secure the support of an advisor, form a committee, and meet the written expectations of the ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee will reconvene at the end of that semester to evaluate the student's progress in meeting these three milestones. If the student does not meet the outlined expectations, the student will be dismissed from the program based on lack of progress.

Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal aims to show the appropriateness, manageability, and significance of the projected research. The student formally presents the written proposal to the dissertation committee and defends it in a meeting with the committee. The proposal normally includes an introduction that provides an overview and states the significance of the proposed research, review of the literature, and methodology. Departments determine the details of the dissertation proposal's format with respect to specifics such as the length of the introduction and level of detail of the literature review. Once the student and dissertation chair have developed a proposal, and the graduate dean has approved the dissertation committee, the student schedules the dissertation proposal meeting that includes all committee members. The student cannot propose a dissertation and have its final defense in the same semester.

Dissertation

A dissertation showing the ability to conduct independent research and skill in organization, writing, and presentation must be prepared on a topic in the major field. It must constitute an original contribution to knowledge. The dissertation must be based upon research completed while the student is enrolled at The University of Alabama.

The subject of the dissertation must be approved by the student's dissertation committee and by the dean of the Graduate School. The final dissertation may take the form of a traditional, chapter-based document or a series of full-length publication-ready manuscripts which are part of a larger, cohesive body of work. The format (traditional vs. article-style) must be approved by the committee in accordance with the standards for the program and the discipline.

For article-style dissertations, the document must contain a minimum of three articles, in addition to introductory and concluding materials. A single abstract must accompany the document. In addition to an introduction presenting the unifying framework that supports the research, the document must include a concluding section that summarizes the importance of the work, integrates the major findings, and discusses the implications for the overall body of work.

Individual departments may have policies or guidelines related to whether sections of the dissertation may be included if they have been previously published elsewhere. Copyright issues also may arise if sections of the dissertation have been previously published. Therefore, students who are considering the submission of dissertation chapters/articles for publication prior to their dissertation defense should consult with their

advisor, and also with potential publication outlets, before submitting any dissertation-related manuscript for publication.

All parts of the dissertation must conform to the provisions set forth on the Graduate School page, except when the circumstances of a specific project or discipline's style manual require deviation. Students should email t (gradschool@ua.edu)he graduate school before beginning their work if they have questions concerning specific problems or deviations from traditional procedure.

The Dean of the Graduate School must approve the dissertation before the student can be cleared for graduation. See "Final Dissertation Submission and Approval" for details.

Final-Semester Minimum Doctoral Research Hours Registration

The Catalog section on Continuous Dissertation Registration for Doctoral Students states that once a student qualifies for doctoral candidacy, the student must enroll each semester for at least 3 hours of dissertation (699) research until reaching their department's minimum requirement, and at least 1 hour for each semester thereafter until degree completion and graduation. If certain conditions are met for the student's final semester, the student may qualify to enroll for fewer hours of 699 dissertation research. A zero-hour or one-hour 699 registration is permitted only in the final semester#. This exception applies only to students who registered for at least 1-3 hours of dissertation (699) research in the preceding semester and only under the conditions described in the table below:

When was the *completed electronic dissertation submitted to ProQuest/the Graduate School?	Minimum hours of 699 registration required in the final semester
By 11:59pm on the Final Grade Entry Day for the student's penultimate semester (date published in the University Academic Calendar#)	0
After the Final Grade Entry Day for the student's penultimate semester (date published in the University Academic Calendar#)	1

*"Completed" means submitted to ProQuest after being successfully defended and carefully edited following the defense meeting. The dissertation chair or department designee must submit the Committee Acceptance Form (CAF) through the UA DocuSign system. The CAF must be signed by all committee members, department chairperson, and graduate dean. The CAF is submitted by the department through the UA DocuSign system in myBama. At the time of ProQuest submission, the student also must submit the Survey of Earned Doctorates through the NORC website.

Footnotes

[1] International students on F-1 or J-1 student visas are not permitted to use the zero-credit hour exception above as the basis of maintaining minimum enrollment requirements as active students. Please see "USCIS" section under "Minimum Hours–Other Policies and Regulatory Bodies" on page 3 of this policy.

[2] The University Calendar is available at the Academics tab of the website of the University Registrar.

Protection of Human Subjects for Research

Scientific research involving human subjects has produced substantial benefits for society, but it also has significant ethical questions. The mission of the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Protection of Human Subjects is to ensure that research involving human subjects is conducted ethically. University and federal policies require that review and approval to use human subjects in research precede the research, no matter how great or small the involvement of the human subjects. In the case of dissertation research that involves the use of human subjects, the principal investigator is responsible for contacting the college Human Research Review Committee to obtain approval for the planned research. The University's IRB approval form is available at the IRB website.

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense is the culminating experience in the doctoral program. As such, all members of the dissertation committee are expected to attend and participate in real-time. Once all committee members are in agreement that the dissertation is ready for the final oral defense, the student and committee members will set a defense date. All doctoral candidates must give members of the dissertation committee a minimum of two weeks to read the dissertation before the defense date. The dissertation must comply with the regulations set forth on the Graduate School Website.

See the Registration and Assistantships section of the Graduate Catalog for policies regarding registration requirements during the semester of the dissertation defense. Generally speaking, graduate programs may allow students to schedule dissertation defenses at any time that is mutually agreed upon by the student and the committee. However, defenses should not be scheduled when University offices are closed, as specified in the Academic Calendar. When University offices are open, nine-month faculty may opt to participate in defenses during summer or interim sessions, but are not required to do so.

The dissertation defense is comprised of four parts.

1. **Public Advance Notice**. A minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date, the candidate must submit the *Public Notice of a Dissertation Defense* form. This form includes the name of the candidate, the department or program, the title of the dissertation, an abstract of 200 words or less, and the date, time, and location of the dissertation defense. The candidate should consult with the Dissertation Chair prior to initiating this form. The form will be initiated by the candidate and signed by the Dissertation Chair, Graduate Program Director, and the Graduate School. Upon receipt of the completed form, the Graduate Program Director will ensure the scheduled defense is disseminated within the department. The Graduate School will post the scheduled defense on the Graduate School website.

2. **Oral Presentation**. An oral presentation of the dissertation is required and shall be public. The content and duration of the oral presentation are at the discretion of the Dissertation Chair, in consultation with the Committee, based on departmental norms, disciplinary standards, and traditions.

3. **Oral Defense**. This examination phase of the dissertation defense is required and may be public or private. Each department or program shall establish a policy for whether the oral defense is public, private, or both (i.e., has a public portion and a private portion).

4. **Committee Deliberation**. Committee deliberation is required and shall be private. Upon completion of the oral defense, everyone other than the committee members shall leave the defense location while the committee discusses, deliberates, and votes. For a defense to be successful, the majority of the committee must approve the dissertation and the defense.

The results of the dissertation defense must be reported to the Graduate School by submitting the Final Defense Form. The Final Defense Form

confirms that a majority of the dissertation committee approves or disapproves of the oral defense. Any changes made to the manuscript after the defense must be approved by the Dissertation Chair. Once the changes to the manuscript have been approved, the Committee Acceptance Form must be submitted by the department. The Committee Acceptance Form confirms that a majority of the dissertation committee has approved the written dissertation and the oral defense. The Committee Acceptance Form must be submitted at least six weeks before the Fall/Spring commencement, or five weeks before the Summer commencement, at which the degree is to be conferred.

The student must submit the final dissertation to the Graduate School, and the Dean of the Graduate School must approve the dissertation before the student can be cleared for graduation. See "Final Dissertation Submission and Approval" for details.

A student may defend their dissertation only twice. Failing the oral and/or written examination twice results in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School.

Virtual Participation in Committee-Based Exams/ Defenses

All members of a student's graduate committee are expected to attend and participate, usually in person, in any oral examination as part of the student's graduate (Master's or Doctoral) degree program. Traditionally, oral examinations are conducted with the student meeting their committee while gathered in one physical location on campus. However, the need occasionally arises for virtual participation in the oral examination.

If a department or program chooses to allow virtual participation in oral examinations, they must ensure adherence to the following technical requirements. Departments or programs may enforce stricter guidelines than those outlined, including an on-campus-only policy if deemed necessary and appropriate.

Technical Requirements

In cases where departments or programs allow any level of virtual participation, from one virtual member to a fully virtual event, they must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Prior to any oral exam, the student and Committee Chair coordinate with other committee members regarding the protocol for the exam.
2. All participants must join using university-adopted videoconferencing tools that allow for **fully interactive** audio and video communications along with screen-sharing capabilities, which must be maintained throughout the examination and any related discussion.
3. The use of audio-only communications is not permitted.
4. Participation merely by viewing a recording of the oral examination is specifically prohibited.
5. All members of the committee, on- or off-site, must participate in the final evaluation of the examination or defense; provisions must be made to record their votes and collect their signatures as necessary using the digital signature system approved by the Graduate School.
6. The Committee Chair, or another non-student designee, shall be the host of the virtual meeting. A co-host may be assigned so that the event will not be interrupted by technical difficulties. The host should mute all participants (or ask participants to mute themselves) and ask the student to share their screen, if a presentation is involved, in order to make the presentation visible to all attendees. The host must also ensure that appropriate security precautions are taken to prevent the interruption of the event.
7. Following the public portion of the defense, the host shall ask all non-committee members to leave the meeting, or the host may manually remove them. In programs where the defense has both a public and a private portion, the committee may then continue the event as outlined in their program protocols.
8. Once the committee has completed the examination of the student, the host shall place the student into the waiting room (or have the committee members use a breakout room) so the committee can conduct their deliberations in private.

The committee chair must have a secondary videoconferencing system available as a backup in the case of technical difficulties. Cancellation of the examination should only occur in the case where both the primary and secondary backup systems fail. If an examination must be rescheduled, it will be done without prejudice to the student. Since committee deliberations are an essential aspect of the examination, completing the examination and final discussion via email or other non-audiovisual means is not an option. If the student or any committee member(s) have a disability that will be impacted by virtual participation, accommodations for participation must be provided.

Final Dissertation Submission and Approval

Following a successful dissertation defense (see "Dissertation Defense" for details), any edits agreed upon during the defense must be incorporated into the manuscript, and the Dissertation Chair must approve the final manuscript. After a careful review to ensure that the manuscript adheres to the Graduate School's formatting guidelines, the candidate must submit the approved manuscript to the Graduate School for final approval, address any remaining edits, and initiate the upload process for archiving the manuscript in the national dissertation repository, ProQuest. Dissertations will not be reviewed for final formatting approval until a completed Committee Acceptance form has been received by the Graduate School.

The dissertation, in its final form, must be received in the Graduate School within 60 days of the dissertation defense. If this deadline is not met, the Dissertation Chair may require the candidate to schedule a second dissertation defense. Note that this 60-day deadline is separate from the deadlines for degree conferral and participation in Commencement ceremonies.

Graduate School deadlines for each semester, including deadlines for submitting the final manuscript to the Graduate School to graduate at the end of the semester, are available on the Graduate School's homepage. Consult the Graduate School's home page for additional details of the electronic submission process, including information on exactly what needs to be submitted to the Graduate School. At the stage of the Graduate School review of the manuscript, additional revisions may be required, to ensure that the final manuscript conforms to all formatting and editing standards. The graduate dean must approve the dissertation before the student can be cleared for graduation.

Dissertation Embargo

The University of Alabama maintains an Institutional Repository (IR) and collaborates with ProQuest/UMI to promote open access and expose UA scholarship to a worldwide audience. While open access to academic scholarship is beneficial to the research community, there are a few specific reasons that an embargo of a thesis or dissertation may be prudent. These decisions include but are not limited to, concerns about prior publication, funding agency requirements, pending patents, and the privacy of data or subjects.

A thesis or dissertation may be embargoed with the IR, ProQuest/UMI, or both. An embargo may last for a period of up to two years. It is the

responsibility of the committee chair/co-chairs to inform and advise the student during their decision-making process. The topic of embargo should be introduced early in the graduate student's tenure and then discussed formally with the student at the time of committee formation. This formal conversation should be documented by the committee chair/co-chairs on the student's Appointment/Change of Committee form. The committee chair/co-chairs should have a more in-depth discussion about an embargo once the student's topic has been finalized and approved by their committee. Any reasons for embargo which are associated with a committee member's activity (e.g. restrictions of an agency through which the student is funded) should be addressed at this time.

A preliminary decision about an embargo, including levels, entities, duration, and potential future renewal, should also be made at this point. The ultimate decision about an embargo should be made by the student in consultation with their committee chair/co-chairs following the oral defense of their final thesis or dissertation. Confirmation of this discussion should be indicated by the committee chair/co-chairs on the Committee Acceptance Form. The student may request renewal of an IR embargo, which must be approved by the Graduate School. In general, no more than one renewal of up to two years will be allowed. The student must contact ProQuest/UMI to request the renewal of an embargo in ProQuest/UMI.

Application for Graduation

Each candidate for a doctoral degree must submit an Application for Degree via myBama no later than the last day to register or add a course for the semester (or first term of the summer semester) in which requirements for the degree are to be completed. That specific date is published each semester at the Graduate School's website under Current Students Deadlines for Graduate Students.

Withholding or Withdrawing an Advanced Degree

The University of Alabama reserves the right to withhold or withdraw an advanced degree on the recommendation of the graduate faculty.