MANAGEMENT, PH.D.

The doctor of philosophy degree is awarded for scholarly attainment and represents the highest degree in business administration that the University may bestow upon a student. Doctoral programs in business are designed principally for those who wish to prepare for careers in university teaching or for research positions in business and government.

The faculty of the Manderson Graduate School of Business offer the PhD degree in seven business fields: accounting, applied statistics, economics, finance, management, operations management, and marketing. The doctoral program in operations management offers an interdisciplinary concentration in management information systems.

Admission Requirements

Admission to doctoral programs in business is open to qualified individuals who hold undergraduate and/or graduate degrees from accredited colleges and universities. Individuals seeking admission to a doctoral program should follow the application procedure established by the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. Applications for admission are carefully evaluated by selected members of the graduate faculty of the specific field to which the student is seeking admission.

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

Student program committee. For registration for the first semester or summer session in residence, each student will be advised by the graduate coordinator or department head of the major field. The graduate coordinator guides the student in course selection and counsels the student regarding other aspects of the program.

Plan of Study. The PhD Plan of Study is available at the Graduate School website. 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. An amended Plan of Study (if needed) must be submitted to the Graduate School when the student submits the form for Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degree.

Scholastic requirements. If a student's cumulative grade average falls below "B," or if the student earns a "D" or "F" in a graduate course, the student may be dismissed from the program.

Residency requirements. The minimum period (following the bachelor's degree) for earning the PhD will vary dependent on the discipline. The program is full-time and a student is expected to maintain continuous residence at The University of Alabama. Additional information on doctoral residency is in the Doctoral Degrees section of this catalog.

Major field requirements. The student must choose a major field from one of the following programs: accountancy, applied statistics, economics, finance, management, marketing, or operations management. The major field may include cognate courses offered by divisions of the University outside or within the Manderson Graduate School of Business. The student must take at least seven graduate-level courses in the major field to prepare for the comprehensive examination.

Quantitative methods requirements. Each student is required to complete two courses in statistical methods equivalent to the content of ST 550 and ST 551, and two additional courses involving more advanced quantitative and/or statistical methods. These two elective courses are in addition to courses selected to satisfy the major or minor field requirements. A student who selects statistics as the major or minor field may satisfy the quantitative-methods requirement by completing at least four courses involving quantitative methods in addition to those selected to satisfy the minor field requirements in statistics.

Language/research tool requirements. There is no University-wide or College-wide language/research tool requirement for the PhD degree. Each program offering the degree may set its own requirements. In cases where the program has established a language/research tool requirement, candidates must complete the language/research tool requirement before taking the preliminary examination. Each student should contact the doctoral program coordinator in his or her major field for more information concerning language/research tool requirements.

Comprehensive and preliminary examinations. Each student is required to pass a comprehensive examination in the major field, and, if required, a comprehensive examination in the minor field(s). The examinations primarily aim to determine the student's ability to show relationships among the various segments of knowledge within the major and minor fields of study. The written examination in the major field is scheduled for each student by the department head or program director. Examinations in the minor field (if required) may be taken at any time scheduled by the respective programs.

Some disciplines may also require a preliminary or qualifying examination in which the student must demonstrate competency in the major field in order to continue in the program. Such examinations will normally be administered after the first year in the program and will be scheduled by the department head or program coordinator.

In accordance with University policy, a student may attempt each examination no more than two times. However, each student should consult his or her program's policies for the written comprehensive examination because programs may vary in approach and requirements.

Dissertation committee. The dissertation committee is appointed by the department head or the graduate coordinator in the student's major field, in consultation with the faculty and the student. The dean of the Graduate School must approve the committee upon submission of the form for Appointment/Change of Doctoral Dissertation Committee. The committee consists of a minimum of five members of the graduate faculty; no fewer than two members must be from outside the student's academic department. Each member of the committee must possess a terminal degree. Exceptions must be approved by the dean of the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration and by the dean of the Graduate School. The director of the dissertation is the chairperson of the committee.

Program areas may impose additional procedures for approval of dissertation proposals. The dissertation committee is responsible for admission of the student to candidacy, supervision of the dissertation, and administration of the final oral examination.

Admission to candidacy. Students are certified by the dean of the Graduate School for Admission to Candidacy for the PhD degree after they have met the following requirements:

1. Completed the program of approved coursework
2. Demonstrated in comprehensive examinations their competence in (a) the major field and (b) each minor field requiring an examination
3. Satisfactorily fulfilled the language/research tool requirement, if any
4. Passed the preliminary examination, if required
5. Established an approved dissertation committee
6. Received approval of the dissertation proposal from the dissertation committee

Dissertation requirements. A dissertation showing power of independent research and literary skill must be prepared on a topic in the major field. The subject of the dissertation must be approved by the student’s dissertation committee. A student who completes the coursework but fails to complete the dissertation within five years after being admitted to candidacy will be required to retake the written examinations and the preliminary oral examination. All candidates are expected to register for dissertation supervision each semester and summer session until the dissertation is completed.

Final oral examination. When the dissertation has been completed the candidate will be given a final oral examination by the committee. This examination is primarily concerned with the research work of the candidate as embodied in the dissertation and the field in which the dissertation lies, but it may extend over the whole primary field of study. The final oral examination is governed by the rules of the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. All faculty members of the Manderson Graduate School of Business are invited to attend final oral examinations. The candidate will present a copy of the final draft of the dissertation to each committee member at least two weeks in advance of the final oral examination.

Time limit for completion of the PhD. A student entering the PhD program must complete all requirements for the PhD degree within seven years of the date of admission in the graduate program. If a student is suspended from the PhD program for exceeding the time limits for completion of the program, the individual may petition the department chair and the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration’s PhD Programs Committee.

Extension of time and/or additional requirements for readmission to the program must be recommended to the Graduate School of The University of Alabama by the student’s departmental graduate faculty and the dean of the college. A maximum one-semester extension may be granted in those rare instances in which the student presents documentation of compelling circumstances beyond the student’s control that made it impossible to complete the degree within 21 semesters after admission. See Time Limits Extension Request (Doctoral Only) for the steps in the University’s policy and conditions needed for the dean of the UA Graduate School to consider a one-semester extension.

Doctoral Degrees

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

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 minimum period in which a doctoral degree can be earned is 3 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 3-year minimum is the practice-focused DNP.

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The doctor of philosophy 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 is required of all candidates for the doctor of philosophy degree. A minimum of 48 semester hours of non-dissertation course credit is required. 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 24 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 or the Graduate School office (205-348-5921).

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

A minimum of two years of graduate study beyond the master’s degree is required for the completion of the EdD program. The student is required to complete 60 semester hours in approved graduate courses beyond the master’s degree, or 90 semester hours of approved graduate courses, and to defend a dissertation. The student must complete a minimum of 12 hours of dissertation research. In the College of Education section of the Graduate Catalog, there are specific regulations governing the EdD program.
Doctor of Musical Arts Degree
The 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 joint program offered by the University of Alabama in Huntsville College of Nursing (UAHCON), the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing (UABSON), and The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing (UACCN). The DNP is a practice-focused degree that is detailed in the Nursing section of this Catalog.

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 advisers 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 intent of the residency requirement is to ensure that doctoral students contribute to and benefit from the complete spectrum of educational, professional and enrichment opportunities provided at The University of Alabama. Though not all-inclusive, the list below shows some of the primary reasons why best practices in U.S. graduate education and the graduate faculty on the UA Graduate Council have determined that a substantial residency experience must be included in a doctoral program:

- provide significant interaction between the student and the various UA graduate faculty in the student’s discipline
- provide ample opportunities for student exposure to and engagement with cognate disciplines and research scholars working in those disciplines
- provide significant opportunities for face-to-face peer interaction between and among graduate students in the student’s discipline and in other disciplines
- provide the opportunity for a mentor-apprentice relationship between the student and graduate faculty, as well as adequate time for in-depth and direct faculty evaluation of the student

There are two possible methods for meeting doctoral residency. The traditional method is the method of choice by the majority of UA departments. There also is an alternative method available, but only for doctoral students in specific departments or programs that have submitted a proposal for an alternative and had the faculty of the Graduate Council evaluate and approve the alternative. (Those departments and programs are in a bulleted list in the last paragraph of this section of the catalog).

Traditional Doctoral Residency
The residency requirement is that the student must spend an academic year in continuous residence on the campus of The University of Alabama as a full-time student in the Graduate School. Any one of the following 4 methods can be used to meet traditional residency:

- a full-time fall semester plus full-time enrollment the next spring
- a full-time summer (consisting of 9 or more graduate hours in the 13 weeks from Interim through the end of Summer II) plus the following full-time fall semester
- a full-time spring semester plus the next full-time summer semester as defined above
- a full-time spring semester plus the following full-time fall semester

To meet this requirement, only graduate-level, non-dissertation coursework can be applied. Dissertation or thesis research cannot be used. The Graduate Council, consisting of representatives of the UA graduate faculty, has established a policy that distance learning courses delivered online or by any other distance learning format may not be used to satisfy the traditional doctoral residency requirement.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of UA departments follow traditional residency as described above and do not permit any distance learning hours to be used to meet residency.

Alternative Doctoral Residency
For many years there has been an alternative for EdD students at the Gadsden Center. See the College of Education section of this Catalog for details.

For other doctoral students, in 2008 the Graduate School worked closely with the Graduate Council so that a department could apply for approval of an Alternative Doctoral Residency (ADR) option for its doctoral students. There is a brief ADR proposal template (available from the Graduate School) for departments to use to propose an ADR option for their department. It includes such things as demonstrating that the proposed ADR will assure that ADR doctoral students meet 5 "value constructs" that underpin doctoral education as well as do other students in the department who earn doctoral residency by the traditional method.

When a department or program receives Graduate Council approval to offer an ADR, the ADR provides a second possible way for students in that department or program to meet the residency requirement. The approved ADR does not replace the traditional residency option, which is still available to students who choose it. Whether the student meets doctoral residency through the traditional method or an approved ADR method, dissertation (699) hours may not be used; only non-dissertation graduate hours may be used to satisfy the doctoral residency requirement.

In the specific departments or programs that have received Graduate Council approval to offer an ADR, students choosing the ADR option may be able to include up to a certain number of distance learning hours. The specific number is what was approved in the ADR proposal for that particular department. Contact the department for details. The following have been approved to offer an ADR:

- PhD in Counselor Education
- PhD in Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics
- PhD in Curriculum and Instruction
- PhD in Human Performance
- PhD in Instructional Leadership
- PhD in Instructional Leadership (Instructional Technology Concentration)
- PhD in Instructional Leadership (Social and Cultural Studies Concentration)
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 advisers 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.

Transfer of Credit
Graduate credit earned in the field of the doctoral degree from a regionally accredited institution in which the student was enrolled in the graduate school of that university may be considered for transfer and applied towards the requirements for a doctoral degree if approved by the department and the Graduate School. Evaluation of credit for transfer will not be made until after the student has enrolled in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama.

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.

There are two options for possible transfer of graduate credit at the doctoral level.

1. All doctoral programs: Up to one-half of the required coursework (exclusive of dissertation research hours) for a doctoral degree may be transferred from another institution if the credit was in-field and was earned during the six-year period (18 fall, spring and summer semesters) preceding the semester of admission to the UA doctoral program. Revalidation (recertification) of credits more than 18 semesters old at the time of admission to a doctoral program is not an option. Only courses in which a student earned a “B” grade or better may be transferred. The student must have attained an overall graduate GPA of “B” or better on all graduate work attempted. Under this option, a Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit form must be submitted to and approved by the Graduate School.

2. PhD Programs Only: A student holding an earned, in-field master’s degree and working in the field or a related field since earning the degree may request approval for up to 24 hours of credit to be applied to the PhD. To do this, the student must have earned at least a “B” overall graduate GPA from the awarding institution. If approved for transfer, these hours would count toward the minimum 48 coursework hours required for the PhD degree. For departments participating in this program, the use of this option must be indicated on the Plan of Study.

To participate in Option 2, the Plan of Study must be submitted during the first semester of enrollment. If any coursework from the in-field or related-field master’s degree was earned more than six years prior to the date of admission, the graduate program director or department head/chair must submit to the Graduate School for evaluation a Field-Related Employment Since Earning Master’s Degree form with the student’s CV and a PhD Plan of Study.

Consideration of transfer of credit or the acceptance of an earned master’s degree as credit toward a PhD program is subject to a final decision by the Graduate School. In either case the student must ensure that the Graduate School has an official transcript of all credit involved. This will ensure that the student and advisor are fully aware of course hours needed when submitting the required Plan of Study, which must be submitted by the time the student completes 30 hours of transfer plus UA coursework. Planning to transfer courses in the penultimate semester or the final semester typically will delay graduation.

Please note that some departments allow fewer than 24 hours of graduate transfer credit. Be sure to check with your department’s graduate coordinator regarding your department’s transfer policy.

Each department wanting its doctoral students to be able to choose Option 2 needs to “opt in” to this option by informing the graduate dean in writing that they wish to be among the approved departments.

Time Limits
All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within seven years (21 fall, spring, and summer semesters) following admission to the doctoral program, with the following specific exceptions approved by the Graduate Council: psychology, modern languages and classics, English and political science (eight years if entering the doctoral program with a baccalaureate, not master’s degree), and eight years from the time of first registration in PhD courses for students dually enrolled in the PhD program in political science and the JD program.

Previous graduate credit may be applied to the doctoral degree if the credit was earned during the six-year period (not seven years) 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. Revalidation (recertification) of any expired course credit is not an option.

Time Limits Extension Request
Only under compelling circumstances beyond the student’s control a student may petition for a one-semester extension to the seven-year time limit (or eight-year time limit for the selected programs noted 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:
  a. describes the compelling circumstances,
  b. briefly describes the current status of the dissertation, then
  c. includes a timeline showing each important remaining step in the completion of the dissertation. The last step 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 his 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 dropped
one or more preliminary sections of the dissertation as well); and having
departments require the defense of a dissertation proposal and/or writing
departmental approval of the dissertation subject (although some
coursework as listed on the approved program of study; receiving
program and the Graduate School.
Failing the examination twice results in dismissal from the degree
awarded. A student may take the oral or written examination only twice.
should be completed at least nine months before the degree is to
research competence to begin work on a dissertation, the examination
purposes of the preliminary examination is to determine the student's
or other committee established in the program area. Whereas one of the
The examination is conducted by the student's supervisory committee
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.

**Plan of Study**

Early in the graduate program, each student must confer with the
appropriate departmental adviser 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.
The PhD Plan of Study and DMA Plan of Study are available at the
Graduate School website. The Plan of Study for other doctoral programs
(EdD, 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.

An amended Plan of Study (if needed) must be submitted to the Graduate
School when the student submits the form for Admission to Candidacy
for Doctoral Degree.

**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 requirements for advancing to candidacy include passing the
qualifying (major or preliminary) examination; completion of all
coursework as listed on the approved program of study; receiving
departmental approval of the dissertation subject (although some
departments require the defense of a dissertation proposal and/or writing
one or more preliminary sections of the dissertation as well); and having
the committee recommend the student for Admission to Candidacy for
the Doctoral Degree. The completed candidacy form is submitted to the
Graduate School well in advance of the final semester.

**Continuous Dissertation or Document Registration**

Once a student has met the requirements for admission to candidacy,
received approval for the dissertation research proposal, or initiated
enrollment in 699 (dissertation research for a doctoral degree), the
student must pursue completion of the dissertation without interruption
by enrolling each fall and spring semester of the academic year for
at least 3 hours of dissertation research. Summer enrollment for 699
Dissertation Research is expected if the student is working on the
dissertation and using any University facilities or resources, including
faculty time, but the only time summer registration is required for
dissertation research (3 hours minimum) is when a doctoral student is
graduating in August or defending the dissertation during the summer
semester. This is true whether or not the student has formally submitted
an Application for Admission to Candidacy.

Each PhD student must have completed a minimum of 24 hours of
such dissertation work upon completion of the degree. The amount of
dissertation 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 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 giving an overview and stating 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 such things as the length of the introduction and detail of
the review of the literature.

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. Early in the process, the subject of the dissertation must
be approved by the dissertation committee of the major department or
division and by the dean of the Graduate School.

A dissertation committee, with the director of the dissertation as
its chairperson, supervises the preparation of the dissertation. The
committee shall have no fewer than five members, all of whom are
appointed by the dean of the Graduate School. The graduate dean's
approval of the proposed dissertation committee is expected to be
obtained before significant progress is made on the dissertation—typically
just before or just after the dissertation proposal meeting. For this
purpose, the student submits the form for Appointment/Change of a
Doctoral Dissertation Committee.

All members of a dissertation committee must be members of the UA
Graduate Faculty. The committee chair must be a full member of the
Graduate Faculty, as described in the Catalog’s section on Qualifications of the Graduate Faculty. One member must be from outside the student’s major department. If the outside member is not a full or associate member of the UA Graduate Faculty (e.g., a highly qualified person from another university, a business or industry), the graduate dean needs to appoint that member by approving Temporary Graduate Faculty status for the specific purpose of serving on the student’s dissertation committee.

The final oral 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. Virtual attendance via interactive video or teleconference is permitted for off-campus external committee members, but Tuscaloosa campus faculty should attend in person unless extraordinary circumstances dictate the need for virtual attendance.

The dissertation must comply with the regulations in A Student Guide To Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Graduate School deadlines, including each semester’s dissertation deadline, are available at the Graduate School’s homepage. Consult the ETD website for details of ETD submission, including information on what needs to be submitted to the Graduate School. The graduate dean must approve the dissertation before the student can be cleared for graduation.

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. If certain conditions are met for the student’s final semester, the student may qualify to enroll for fewer than 3 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 3 hours of dissertation (699) research in the preceding semester and only under the conditions described in the table below:

**Final-Semester Dissertation (699) Minimum Registration Hours**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When was the *completed electronic dissertation submitted to ProQuest/the Graduate School?</th>
<th>Minimum hours of 699 registration required in the final semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By 4:45 p.m. on the last-possible day for instructors to post grades for the semester before the student’s final semester (date published in the University Academic Calendar)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 4:45 p.m. on the last-possible day for instructors to post grades for the semester before the student’s final semester, but before 4:45 p.m. on the last-possible day to register or add a course for the student’s final semester (both dates published in the University Academic Calendar)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 4:45 p.m. on the last-possible day to register or add a course for the student’s final semester (date published in the University Academic Calendar)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Completed” means submitted at ProQuest after being successfully defended; being carefully edited following the defense meeting; and having the Committee Acceptance Form (CAF) signed by all committee members, department chairperson and graduate dean. At the time of ProQuest submission, the student also must submit the Survey of Earned Doctorates through the NORC website.

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.

**Article-Style Dissertations**

This approach is intended for doctoral students whose dissertation will consist of a number of related manuscripts or articles that represent independent research or creative activity. It is an option available only to students in certain fields in which the faculty have received Graduate Council approval from the Graduate Council. A complete list of these fields is below:

- Accountancy
- Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics
- Applied Statistics
- Biological Sciences
- Chemical Engineering
- Chemistry
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Science
- Economics
- Education (all departments)
- Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Finance
- Geological Sciences
- Health Education and Promotion
- Management
- Management Science
- Marketing
- Mechanical Engineering
- Metallurgical and Materials Engineering
- Physics
- Psychology

Article-style dissertations must be based upon research completed while the student is enrolled at The University of Alabama. For each article used, the student must be the first author, or equivalent, as defined by the discipline.

As with traditional dissertations, the article-style dissertation must be the student’s original idea. It must be a unified work and include a sequence of articles of publishable quality around a cohesive theme, with a comprehensive review of literature demonstrating an in-depth understanding of the unifying framework.

- In article-style dissertations there will be introductory material to describe the studies, show how they are related, and explain their significance;
- connecting language to bridge each study to the next; and
• a summary making clear the importance of the studies, integrating
the major findings, and discussing the implications for the overall
topic.

These components do not have to be separate sections or chapters. They
may be parts of the manuscripts or may be accomplished in an abstract.

All parts of both traditional and article-style dissertations must conform
to the provisions set forth in A Student Guide to Preparing Electronic
Theses and Dissertations, except when the circumstances of a
specific project or discipline’s style manual require deviation. Students
considering the article-style approach should contact the Graduate
School before beginning their work if they have questions concerning
specific problems or deviations from traditional procedure.

All doctoral candidates must give members of the dissertation committee
a minimum of two weeks to read the dissertation before the date of the
required final oral examination.

Electronic submission of dissertations: August 15, 2009, is the date
when electronic submission began to be required and paper submission
no longer was accepted. Consult the ETD website for details of ETD
submission, including information on what needs to be submitted to
the Graduate School. The graduate dean must approve the dissertation
before the student can be cleared for graduation.

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.

Final Examinations
When the dissertation has been completed, the candidate will be given
a final oral examination by a committee of not fewer than five members,
one of whom must be from outside the student’s major department
or, for students in the College of Education, outside the student’s area
(not program), and appointed by the dean of the Graduate School. This
examination will focus primarily on the candidate’s research work, as
embodied in the dissertation, and the field in which the dissertation lies,
but it may encompass the complete program for the degree. The results
of the examination must be reported to the Office of the Graduate School
at least six weeks before the commencement at which the degree is to be
conferred.

Application for Graduation
Each candidate for a doctoral degree must submit an Application for
Degree via myBama not later than the last day to register or add a
course of the semester or the first term of the summer session in which
requirements for the degree are to be completed. That day is published
for each semester at the website of the University Registrar.

Clearing the Academic Record for Commencement
At least one week before commencement, the candidate’s record must
have been cleared for graduation.

Attendance at Commencement
A candidate for a doctoral degree must be present at a scheduled
commencement to receive the diploma and hood, unless excused by the
graduate dean.

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.