COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION SCIENCES (CIS), PH.D.

The college-wide doctor of philosophy degree in the College of Communication and Information Sciences is designed to:

- prepare communication scholars for positions of leadership in education, public service, the media, libraries, information-management positions and other communication-related fields
- add to a student’s usable body of knowledge in a chosen area of specialization within the field of communication and information sciences
- develop each student’s research, teaching and professional capabilities
- promote scholarly achievement and advancement of knowledge in the communication and information science disciplines, through basic and applied research

General Requirements for the PhD Degree

Coursework

Number of semester hours required in the program: 48–60 hours as determined by a student’s program advisory committee. An additional 24 hours of dissertation research will be taken, usually following admission to candidacy.

The student’s program advisory committee determines, in consultation with the student, the specific courses the student must take to satisfy program and research requirements.

Core requirement. CIS 610, Foundations of Doctoral Study in Communication & Information Sciences, is required of all students.

Theory. Students must complete two of the following four courses:
- CIS 604: Mass Communication Theory
- CIS 605: Cultural, Critical, and Rhetorical Theory
- CIS 606: Knowledge and Information Theory
- CIS 607: Theory Construction and Epistemology

The specific courses from among these four are to be selected by the student in consultation with the student’s program advisory committee. It is strongly recommended that students aim to have at least one of their two required theory courses counted as supporting their area of specialization (see below for details about specializations).

Research methods. Students must complete six hours of research methods coursework. The specific courses are to be selected by the student in consultation with the student’s program advisory committee. The College offers three research methods courses, at least one of which is likely to be among the student’s most appropriate options for fulfilling the research methods requirements. These courses are:
- CIS 603: Communication Research Methods (which focuses exclusively on quantitative research methods)
- CIS 608: Qualitative Research Methods
- CIS 609: Humanistic Research Methods

However, if the student’s program advisory committee recommends or stipulates research methods courses other than CIS 603, CIS 608 and CIS 609, the student need not complete any of these three courses.

Specialization. Students will consult with their program advisory committee to identify a specialization. A minimum of 18 credits must be designated by the program advisory committee as appropriate for the student’s area of specialization. A maximum of 30 credits may be so designated.

Cognate. Students will consult with their program advisory committee to identify a cognate area. It is recommended that students fulfill their cognate requirement in courses outside the College of Communication and Information Sciences. If the cognate is taken within the College, it must be in an area outside the specialization. A minimum of nine credits must be designated by the program advisory committee as appropriate for the student’s cognate area. A maximum of 15 credits may be so designated.

Additional/elective credits. Many students will find they have room in their program of study for one or more additional/elective courses after they have met the minimum core, theory, research methods, specialization and cognate requirements. Students will consult with their program advisory committee to identify appropriate additional/elective courses. These courses may be in the specialization, cognate or other areas as stipulated or approved by the student’s program advisory committee. It is permissible, though generally not advisable, that additional/elective credits be counted not in specialization or cognate areas but simply as elective credits. No more than 18 credits may be designated as additional/elective credits.

Dissertation. The University of Alabama Graduate School requires that students complete 24 hours of dissertation credit. In the College of Communication and Information Sciences, dissertation credits are completed by enrolling in CIS 699 Dissertation Research.

Summary of required credits. In sum, students allocate credit hours as follows:
- Core: 3 hours
- Theory: 6 hours
- Research methods: 6 hours
- Specialization: 18-30 hours
- Cognate: 9-15 hours
- Additional/elective: 0-18 hours
- Dissertation: 24 hours

Other requirements. In addition to the credit hour and coursework requirements specified above, the following policies apply:
- A minimum of 36 hours of coursework must be completed after enrollment in the CIS doctoral program.
- Up to 12 of these 36 hours may be transferred from a student’s masters program if approved by the student’s program advisory committee. Credits so approved must have been earned within a period of no more than six years prior to admission.
- A minimum of 24 hours of coursework must be at the 600 level. The remainder of hours of approved graduate course credit must be at the 500 or 600 level. No slash-listed 400/500-level course may be taken in the doctoral degree program. A maximum of six hours of 400- or 400/500-level credit may be transferred if completed as part of a master’s degree program.
- Each student must complete a minimum of four 600-level seminars from the College of Communication & Information Sciences curriculum. No 600-level seminar that may be deemed by the student’s program advisory committee to count toward fulfilling the research methods requirement may be counted toward this minimum
number of four 600-level seminars. In other words, if a program advisory committee approves a 600-level seminar class as a research methods class, this class cannot also be counted toward meeting the requirements for four 600-level seminar courses.

Required Plan of Study
By the time each doctoral student has completed 30 graduate semester hours of UA and/or transfer work toward the degree, the student must have a doctoral Plan of Study approved by the dean of the University of Alabama Graduate School. Failure to obtain approval of the Plan of Study by the completion of 30 hours may result in the student’s having a hold placed on future registrations.

Students admitted to the doctoral program may be required to complete additional coursework to be prepared for doctoral-level (600-level) study and research in communication and information sciences, at the discretion of the student’s program advisory committee or the CIS associate dean for graduate studies. All degree requirements must be completed within seven years after first enrollment in the program.

Doctoral students who begin the program with incomplete master’s theses must complete the master’s thesis during the first year of doctoral study. Students must provide official transcripts of their master’s degree work as evidence that their master’s degree has been awarded. If a student fails to provide the transcript, the College may refuse to administer the PhD preliminary examination and/or may withdraw financial support. The Graduate School may nullify the doctoral program admission.

Scholastic requirements
A student must maintain cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 on a 4.00 scale for graduate courses undertaken following admission to the doctoral program. A doctoral student whose grade point average falls below 3.00 at any time after 6 semester hours have been completed will be placed on academic warning by the Graduate School and the College of Communication and Information Sciences.

- A student on academic warning will not be permitted to apply for admission to candidacy and may not hold an assistantship.
- Warning status must be removed (by raising the overall average to 3.00 or higher) within the next 9 hours of graduate work following the period of warning. Failure to remove the warning status will result in the student’s suspension from the Graduate School and the program.
- A grade of "I" (Incomplete) is evaluated as an "F" in computing GPAs, and such grades must be removed within four weeks of the next term of enrollment.
- A student who earns a grade below "B" in more than two courses will be dropped from the program.

Students who are dropped from the program may petition the College of Communication and Information Sciences Graduate Studies Committee for readmission. The committee may in turn make a special request to the dean of the Graduate School for approval of the student’s readmission.

Residency requirement
The minimum period in which the doctoral degree can be earned is three full academic years of graduate study. The student must spend an academic year in continuous residence on the campus of The University of Alabama as a full-time student (9–12 hours of coursework per semester) or, if specifically approved by the faculty concerned, one full summer consisting of two terms, preceded or followed by one regular, full-time semester. Only non-dissertation coursework can satisfy this requirement; dissertation research cannot be used. Students must complete their residence requirement before admission to candidacy.

Preliminary examination
A preliminary examination is required of all doctoral candidates. The examination is given after all required course work and other work prescribed by the student’s Program Advisory Committee has been completed. The examination must be completed at least three months before the degree is awarded.

The student demonstrates, through written and oral examinations, a capacity to understand, synthesize, and apply communication theory and research techniques, as well as demonstrate knowledge of the pertinent literature, issues, and recent advances in the student’s area of specialization and cognate area of study. In other words, the examination must cover:

1. theory
2. research methods
3. the student’s area of specialization, and
4. cognate area

The written examination is administered by the student’s program advisory committee, which may call on other faculty members associated with the student’s coursework for assistance in preparing the examination. Sixteen hours are set aside for the examination—four hours for each division (theory, methods, specialization, and cognate). The examination is to be completed within a two-week period.

The oral portion of the examination is required of all students and will be scheduled as soon as possible following the completion of the written examination. Immediately following the oral examination, the examination committee will determine whether the student has passed, must perform additional work to demonstrate competency in one or more areas of the examination, or has failed the examination. When additional work is required, the examining committee may choose to administer another oral examination. In the case of a clear failure, re-examination must take place after six months and before twelve months have elapsed. Each of the four portions of the preliminary examination may be taken only twice. The examining committees will rule either pass or fail on the second examination.

Admission to candidacy
A student is certified by the dean of the UA Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the PhD in Communication & Information Sciences after meeting the following requirements:

- completion of the program of coursework and other requirements prescribed by the student’s program advisory committee, approved by the CIS associate dean for graduate studies, and approved by the dean of the UA Graduate School on the Plan of Study and Admission to Candidacy form
- demonstration, by passing the preliminary examination, of competence in the theory, research methods, the specialization, and the cognate
- a successful defense of a dissertation proposal
- approval by the UA Graduate School of the Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree

A department-approved Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree is submitted to the UA Graduate School as soon as possible after passing the comprehensive (preliminary) examination.
Dissertation committee
Following a successful completion of preliminary examinations, the candidate for the PhD in Communication and Information Sciences must form a dissertation committee.

The dissertation committee is composed of at least five members. The Graduate Faculty of the College of Communication and Information Sciences must be represented by at least three members. A fourth member may be from CIS or from a college or school outside the College of Communication and Information Sciences, but he or she must have graduate faculty status. A fifth member, to be appointed by the Graduate School of the University, must be a member of the Graduate Faculty in a division other than the College of Communication and Information Sciences; this so-called “Outside Member” represents the UA Graduate Faculty at large. Only full members of the Graduate Faculty may chair doctoral dissertations.

At least one committee member other than the chair must have full membership in the Graduate Faculty of the College of Communication and Information Sciences. All other members may be associate members. However, no more than one temporary member of the Graduate Faculty may serve on any given committee.

The UA graduate dean’s approval of the proposed dissertation committee must 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.

Dissertation
After successful completion of the preliminary examination, degree candidates must submit a written proposal to their dissertation committee.

The proposal describes the importance of the proposed topic, outlines the hypotheses to be evaluated, provides and overview of relevant literature, specifies the methodology to be used, and lays includes a timetable for completion of the project. The dissertation must make a significant original contribution to the field of communication and information sciences and must demonstrate the candidate’s ability to report that research in writing in a clear, comprehensive, and scholarly manner.

The student must submit the proposal, and later the dissertation, to the committee at least 14 days prior to the defense. After the proposal has been circulated among the members, the student’s dissertation committee meets for the student’s oral defense of the proposal. The candidate must complete the dissertation and all other degree requirements within seven years of the date of admission to the doctoral program.

Final examination
The candidate must present a copy of the final draft of the dissertation to each committee member at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the final examination. After the dissertation has been completed and accepted by the candidate’s dissertation committee for purposes of the examination, the candidate will be given a final oral examination by the dissertation committee.

The final examination is concerned primarily with the research embodied in the dissertation and with the field in which the dissertation lies, but it may extend over the student’s entire primary field of study. The final oral examination is governed by the rules of the Graduate School of The University of Alabama.

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.

Electronic submission of theses and dissertations (ETD) is required. Consult the ETD website for details of ETD submission.

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 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
An amended Plan of Study (if needed) must be submitted to the Graduate registrations. the student will complete 30 semester hours of UA and/or transfer credit approved by the Graduate School no later than the semester during which school. All doctoral students must have a completed Plan of Study (EdD, DNP) are available from the student's department, college or Graduate School website. The Plan of Study for other doctoral programs must be prepared and submitted to the Graduate School.

- 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 (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 Graduate School. Graduate Council policies do not provide the option for a student to complete within the time limit to revalidate (recertify) either UA or transfer courses completed more than six years prior to the date of admission. Thus, a readmitted student would be able to apply to the new admission only those courses approved by the department and Graduate School and completed within the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) prior to the new admission.

**Repeating Courses When Given an Extension**

When requests are made for extensions of the doctoral time limits, and it is deemed that an out-of-date course is integral to the degree program, the college dean may request permission of the Graduate School for such a course to be repeated. In this case, both grades are used in calculation of the GPA.

**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 not 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 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>Completion Status</th>
<th>Minimum Hours of 699 Registration Required in the Final Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Completed</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ProQuest/the Graduate School?</th>
<th>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)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After 4:45 p.m. on the last-possible day for instructors to post grades for 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<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>
</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
the principal investigator is responsible for contacting the college Human Case of Dissertation research that involves the use of human subjects, 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 Rights Office to ensure that research involving human subjects is conducted ethically.

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 Rights Office 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.

Expedited Admission Track into the CIS Doctoral Program

The Expedited Admission Track into the CIS doctoral program allows highly qualified students to be admitted into the doctoral program after they complete an undergraduate degree. Such students will begin graduate coursework in a specific Master of Arts (MA) degree program of the College and complete their graduate degree as College-wide doctoral candidates, without having to reapply for admission or to transfer credit hours from the MA program into the PhD program. In short, if admitted on the expedited track, candidates will be able to count all of their MA coursework, rather than the maximum of 12 hours, toward their doctoral degree.

Students admitted on the expedited track would be required, upon completion of 24 hours of graduate coursework, to take a 12-hour comprehensive, qualifying examination administered by their academic advisor, program committee, and two representatives of the PhD program selected by the CIS associate dean for graduate studies. The PhD program representatives will lead the committee's determination of the overall quality of the comprehensive exam answers. If the candidate passes the qualifying examination, the candidate will be approved to continue in the CIS doctoral program. The completed 24 credit hours then also will apply toward the minimum of 48 hours of graduate course work required for the PhD. Upon completion of graduate work, such candidates will receive the MA degree, along with the PhD. Students deemed not to have demonstrated sufficient mastery to qualify for
continuing in the doctoral program will be permitted to complete the remaining requirements for their designated MA program and receive that degree from the College upon its completion.

Requirements

Students who wish to apply for the expedited admission track must meet the following criteria:

- Hold regular admission status for a specific College MA program and for admission into the PhD program (see requirements below)
- Submit a statement of purpose indicating interest and commitment to graduate work through the doctoral level
- Upon completing 24 hours of graduate coursework, passing a comprehensive, qualifying exam for continuing toward the doctoral degree
- Earn a certificate of completion, or equivalent, for the MA program, whereupon official admission into the doctoral program would be recognized

The UA Graduate School stipulates that the PhD requires a minimum of 48 hours of graduate coursework and 24 hours of dissertation. The expedited track meets this requirement. It is recommend that during their MA program matriculation students complete 600-level CIS classes likely meet the theory and research methods requirements for the doctoral degree. See the Coursework section above for details about theory and research methods requirements in the CIS doctoral degree program.

Assistantships in the expedited track

It is expected that students admitted to the expedited doctoral degree track receive funding from the department in which the student takes the first 24 hours. At his or her discretion, the CIS associate dean for graduate studies may offer the student a graduate teaching or research assistantship. If the CIS associate dean for graduate studies declines to offer the student an assistantship, the department in which the student will earn the MA is expected to provide an assistantship until the student completes the first 24 hours. The decision whether or not the MA department will provide support for the first 24 hours is solely a departmental decision.

After qualifying to continue in this track, students must complete 24 hours of coursework at the 600 level in order to complete doctoral program coursework requirements. Upon completion of 48 hours of graduate work, PhD candidates then follow the same procedures for exams and dissertation as required of all PhD candidates in the College program.

Faculty

Associate Dean for Graduate Studies
William Evans

Graduate faculty
Cory Armstrong
Meredith M. Bagley
Beth S. Bennett
Andrew C. Billings
Kimberly L. Bissell
Laurie Bonnici
Robin Boylorn
Kenon Brown
Matthew D. Bunker
Jeremy G. Butler
William Sim Butler
Glenda Cantrell
Alexa Chilcutt
George L. Daniels
Anna Embree
Robert N. Gaines
William J. Gonzenbach
Karla K. Gower
Jennifer D. Greer
Glenn Griffin
Darrin Griffin
Suzanne Horsley
Hyoungkoo Khang
Eyun-Jung Ki
Terry Kinney
Margot O. Lamme
Wilson H. Lowrey
Steven L. MacCall
Mary M. Meares
Steve K. Miller
Carol Bishop Mills
Jamie C. Naidoo
Mark D. Nelson
Elliot T. Panek
M. Scott Parrott
Joshua R. Pederson
Joseph E. Phelps
Ann E. Prentice
Rachel A. Raimist
Robert B. Riter
Christopher Roberts
Miriam E. Sweeney
Lu Tang
Kristen J. Warner
Jeffrey Weddle
Shuhua Zhou