HEALTH EDUCATION & PROMOTION, PH.D.

The PhD program in Health Education & Promotion is designed to provide students with coursework and practical experiences needed to become leading faculty, researchers, and practitioners in health education and health promotion. By the conclusion of the program, students will be able to do the following: clearly conceptualize the theoretical and philosophical basis of health education and health promotion; effectively plan, implement, and evaluate health education and health promotion programs; elucidate the psychological and sociological influences on health education and promotion; and conduct their own independent research projects. For more information, please contact the Department of Health Science at (205) 348-9087 or Box 870311, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0313. Additional information is also available on the Department’s website.

Admissions

In addition to the minimum Graduate School admission requirements, to be considered for regular admission an application must include:

- Completion of a master’s degree program;
- Minimum score of 300 (verbal + quantitative) on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Students who do not meet this requirement, but who excel in other areas, may be considered for Admission with Permission to Continue;
- A personal statement of applicable experiences, specific research interests that align with faculty member(s) who the applicant would like to work with, and career goals;
- Evidence of adequate fit within the research agendas of Health Science PhD Program faculty;
- Three letters of recommendation from faculty or other professionals capable of judging the applicant’s ability to complete doctoral work in the program. At least one letter of recommendation must come from a faculty member; and
- An interview with select PhD Program Faculty and the PhD Program Coordinator.

Meeting the requirements above does not guarantee admission into the program. Applicants who are accepted into the PhD program must pursue their programs as main campus students until they graduate with a PhD degree.

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

Curricular Requirements

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Courses may include the following:

- HHE 530 Health Promotion Techniques
- HHE 586 Environmental Health Promotion
- HHE 587 Health Disparities
- HHE 588 Sex Ed: Theory & Practice
- HHE 589 Women and Health
- Other Courses with Approval

Directed Research 12

Courses may include the following:

- HHE 596 Independent Study
- HHE 602 Readings In Health
- HHE 603 Spec Projects In Hlth
- HHE 685 Field & Lab Experience
- HHE 698 Research
- Other Courses with Approval

Dissertation Research HHE699 18

Total Hours 66

The PhD program in Health Education & Promotion has two additional graduation requirements: a comprehensive examination and dissertation.

Dissertation: Students are required to complete an acceptable dissertation that shows their ability to conduct independent research. The dissertation should also demonstrate skills in organization, writing, and presentation on a particular topic in the field. It should make an original contribution to knowledge and be approved by the dissertation committee and Dean of the Graduate School. A final oral dissertation defense is the culminating experience. A minimum of 18 hours of HHE 699 Dissertation Research hours must be completed.

Transfer Credit

The PhD Program in Health Education and Promotion allows students to transfer up to 6 semester hours of elective graduate courses completed previously into the program (no more than six years old). Only graduate lecture coursework with grades of B or higher may be considered for transfer. Transfer decisions are based on (1) equivalence of a previous course to a similar course offered here and (2) how the transfer course would support the student’s program of study. However, students must complete a total of 66 credit hours of Doctoral work above the Master’s level. In addition, students may not transfer graduate coursework to satisfy the health education/health promotion core or research and statistical methods requirements.

Transfer of elective courses occurs on a case-by-case basis, assuming that the course has some relationship to the student’s overall career goals. Transfer credits often go toward the research focus or social and behavioral sciences. The Department accepts transfer courses they consider equivalent in rigor and content to similar courses offered in the department. The PhD Program Coordinator may request that students provide syllabi, course outlines, textbooks, and catalog descriptions for any courses they request to transfer.

See the Graduate School link below for more information about the UA Graduate School-wide transfer policies.
Doctoral Plan of Study Requirement

Early in the graduate program, each student must confer with their Faculty Advisor 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 by the Ph.D. Program coordinator and submitted to the Graduate School. The department submits the PhD Plan of Study through the UA DocuSign system in myBama. Employees only may access these forms under the Employee tab in myBama. The completed Plan of Study shows the Graduate School which courses the student has taken and which remaining courses will be taken to fulfill the degree requirements. The Plan of Study form does not allow the student/program to show in which order the courses were or will be taken. All doctoral students must have a completed Plan of Study approved by the Graduate School. Otherwise, a “hold” may be placed on future registrations.

Such credit must be identified clearly on the draft Outline of PhD Program (Plan of Study), which requires Health Science Department and Graduate School approval. All students must forward their completed Outline of PhD Program (Plan of Study) draft to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator for processing. The Ph.D. Program Coordinator will route the completed and signed Plan of Study to the Graduate School. A minimum of 48 hours of graduate coursework must be listed, including transfer credit if applicable. A Transfer Credit Evaluation Form must be submitted to the Graduate School. A minimum of 18 hours of continuous dissertation research (699) is required. A copy of the approved Plan of Study must be submitted to the Graduate School when the department submits the Admissions to Candidacy for Doctoral Degree form through the UA DocuSign system in myBama. Any changes to the Plan of Study need to be resubmitted and on file with the Graduate School. If there is a course on a doctoral student’s Plan of Study that they do not take, then the student will be denied Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree.

Comprehensive Exams

The PhD Program Coordinator conducts the comprehensive examination in conjunction with a committee of PhD program faculty. One purpose 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. Therefore, a student may take the written examination only twice. Failing the examination twice results in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School. The comprehensive exam is offered on the first Thursday of the Fall semester and the last Thursday of the Spring semester each year. This exam should be prepared for by individual study expanding on the content covered in the four core courses listed below:

- HHE 604: Doctoral Seminar;
- HHE 605: Advanced Theoretical and Scientific Basis of Health Education and Health Promotion;
- HHE 606: Planning and Administration of Health Education and Health Promotion Programs; and
- HHE 667: Advanced Evaluation in Health Education and Health Promotion.

The exam must be passed unconditionally before the student can submit their dissertation prospectus and defend their dissertation proposal. Prior to taking the exam, students must have completed their core course requirements. Two weeks prior to the exam, each student will receive a list of scenarios describing health problems and intended audiences; students will select one option to focus on during their exam.

Students should NOT assume that “A” level performance in their coursework is adequate preparation for the comprehensive exam. Students must be registered for at least one semester hour of graduate work during the semester(s) the comprehensive exams are taken. To prepare, students should review all materials from listed coursework as well as other related courses and supplementary material. Each student must demonstrate the highest levels of learning including application, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation of material covered throughout the program.

Students who receive a grade of INCOMPLETE will be asked to schedule a meeting with the PhD Program Coordinator to discuss their results. After this meeting, the student will have one week to revise their answers in a “take-home” format. The revised version will be distributed to graduate faculty graders to determine if it is a PASS or FAIL (i.e., a second score of 79 or less). If the student’s revised exam fails, the student will have one more opportunity to re-take the comprehensive exam at a subsequent regularly scheduled examination testing date.

Failed comprehensive examinations can only be retaken once. A student who fails their comprehensive exam must re-take the exam at the next regularly scheduled comprehensive examination testing date. Failing the comprehensive exam twice results in dismissal from both the PhD program and the Graduate School.

Once a student has passed the comprehensive exam, the Doctoral Qualifying Exam Form must be submitted to the UA graduate school.

Admission to Candidacy Requirements

The requirements for advancing to candidacy include passing the comprehensive examination; completion of all coursework as listed on the approved program of study; receiving dissertation committee approval of the dissertation prospectus during a mandatory meeting of all committee members, 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 Enrollment Policy

Graduate School information on Continuous Enrollment.

Dissertation Requirements

Prospectus Document

Students are required to complete an acceptable dissertation that shows their ability to conduct independent research. The dissertation should also demonstrate skills in organization, writing, and presentation on a particular topic in the field. It should make an original contribution to knowledge and be approved by the dissertation committee and Dean of the Graduate School. A final oral dissertation defense is the culminating experience. A minimum of 18 hours of dissertation credit must be completed.

A prospectus (6-8 doubled-spaced pages, with one-inch margins and 12-point font) is written by the student that describes the plan for the dissertation (e.g., brief background, potential theory, sample, methods, etc.). After the pre-proposal is written and approved by the Dissertation Chair, the student shares the form with prospective committee members to assess their interest and willingness to serve on the project. After the committee has been composed, the Dissertation Chair is required to set a pre-proposal meeting to discuss the student’s dissertation idea further, ensure everyone is on the same page about what will potentially be done, and provide guidance and direction as needed. This meeting helps the student avoid writing the dissertation proposal (the first 3
chapters of the traditional dissertation – it will look different for article-style dissertations) without meeting with the committee and getting their early, important feedback about its direction. The Dissertation Chair must email the PhD Program Coordinator following the meeting to report the outcome (i.e., prospectus approved OR prospectus not approved). If the prospectus is not approved by all committee members during the first pre-proposal meeting, then another pre-proposal meeting must be scheduled for a later date. Doctoral students will not be admitted into candidacy until all of their committee members have approved their dissertation prospectus during this required meeting.

**Prospectus Outline**

The prospectus should be of sufficient length to provide a scholarly outline of the proposed research. A length of 6-8 doubled-spaced pages, with one-inch margins and 12-point font, would be appropriate in most situations. The prospectus is a presentation of the intended research.

**Traditional Dissertation Format for Prospectus**

I. Abstract

A brief (200 to 300 words) presentation of the background and rationale for the proposed research, including a brief presentation of the methods and study population.

II. Background and Significance

Brief background description and literature relevant to the research problem. The significance of the study and the research problems should be stated.

III. Literature Review

Include relevant literature published to date on the research topic, including statistics with subsections when needed. Include the theoretical basis or framework for the proposed and a strong rationale for why the theory/model was selected among various alternatives. List definitions and explanations of terminology when needed.

IV. Hypothesis and/or Research Question(s)

One central research hypothesis would usually be suitable with potentially one or more secondary hypotheses. When appropriate, research questions might be presented in place of hypotheses.

V. Methods and Materials

As appropriate, include basic research design, subjects or participants, limitations of the research, sampling plan, pilot testing, laboratory techniques, reagents, instruments, data collection procedures, evaluation theory and/or strategy, statistical analysis, tentative plan of analysis, power calculations, timeline, delineation of research variables, the test of validity and reliability of data collection instruments.

**Article-Style Dissertation Format for Prospectus**

1. Description of the problem to be examined and how it is related to previous theoretical and empirical literature in the area. Include all relevant literature published to date on the research topic, including statistics with subsections when needed. Include the theoretical basis or framework for the proposed and a strong rationale for why the theory/model was selected among various alternatives. You may also include the background and significance and literature review. A list of references should be included that reflects a thorough review of the extant literature. This section should lead to the formation of the research questions that form the basis of the papers to be included in the written dissertation.

2. Description of the individual papers (at least 2) that will form the core of the written dissertation, including for each:
   - Research questions and, if appropriate, hypotheses can also be stated
   - Research design and methods that will be utilized
   - Expected problems and limitations can be included as appropriate
   - Sources of data
   - Time schedule (can be tentative)

**Appointment/Change in Doctoral Dissertation Committee**

Around the same time that your Dissertation Committee Chair submits the Doctoral Candidacy Form, you, as the student, should submit the “Appointment/Change in Doctoral Dissertation Committee Form.” The process for setting up or changing your dissertation committee is an electronic process. This paperless process will generate emails to each committee member so that they can accept or reject the invitation to serve on your committee. Members of the committee should be selected along with your Dissertation Committee Chair.

Please click HERE to link to the Graduate Academic Activities to set up or change your dissertation committee. Please click HERE for instructions on initiating the committee formation process. This online form officially establishes the student’s doctoral committee.

**Dissertation Committee Membership**

All dissertation committee members must hold Graduate Faculty status at UA and represent at least two academic departments. The chair of the committee must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty. Our Department requires that the Dissertation Committee Chair (or its lead Co-chair) is a PhD Program Faculty member in our department. The doctoral dissertation committee must include a minimum of five (5) faculty members. We also require a minimum of three (3) individuals from our Departments’ PhD Program faculty serve on the dissertation committee. There should be at least one committee member from outside of our department. These individuals should be selected along with your dissertation committee chairperson. You and your Dissertation Chairperson should ensure that they have (or will have) Graduate Faculty Membership. Students should try to form a dissertation committee by the end of their second semester of doctoral study. Dissertation committees are formed in the Graduate Academic Activities page.

**Dissertation Proposal**

Having received guidance from the dissertation committee, the formal dissertation proposal can be developed and generally completed after all or most of the course work is completed, and the comprehensive examination has been successfully completed. The dissertation proposal aims to show the appropriateness, manageability, and significance of the projected research. The department defines a dissertation proposal as the first three chapters of the traditional dissertation (note: the format will look different for an article-style dissertation). 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 proposed research’s significance, literature review, and methodology. Each student will work closely with their Dissertation Chair and committee to develop a dissertation proposal.

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
A dissertation showing the ability to conduct independent research and skill in organization, writing, and presentation must be prepared on a topic in health education and promotion. It must constitute an original contribution to knowledge. Early in the process, the subject of the dissertation must be approved by the dissertation committee and by the Dean of the Graduate School. The doctoral dissertation is designed to provide students with a significant research experience. Students may choose from 2 formats to conduct a dissertation: the typical 5-chapter format and the article-style dissertation format. Refer to the following documents contained in this policy guide: Guidelines for the Article-Style Dissertation Format. The Dissertation Chair and committee members will assist the student in selecting a format.

**Article-Style Dissertations**

At the doctoral level, "article-style" dissertations are unified works that include several distinct but closely related research or creative activity studies, each of which is of publishable quality. 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. This option is available to students enrolled in the PhD Program in Health Education and Promotion.

Article-style dissertations must be based upon research completed while the student is enrolled at The University of Alabama. The student must be the first author, or equivalent, as defined by the discipline for each article used. 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 clarifies the importance of the studies, integrates the major findings, and discusses 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. The manuscript will be one of the sets of tables, figures, and reference lists for the document.

All parts of 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. Doctoral students who choose the article-style dissertation will write a final, completed dissertation that will consist of a number of journal-style manuscripts or articles. At UA, the official minimum number of manuscripts in the article-style dissertation is two (2). 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.

**Authorship Guidelines for Article-Style Dissertations**

The student should be the primary author on all of the published or publishable works. Committee members are typically included on the papers produced by the dissertation work since they are working in a collaborative relationship with the graduate student. The decision regarding authorship should be based on the degree to which a given committee member contributed to each paper. Serving on the committee does not guarantee authorship.
If an article(s) is multi-authored, you should justify or clarify the contributions of the other authors in relation to the research project. Issues of clarification should include the origins of the conceptualization and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the data, and other significant areas of contribution. The student will be involved with every aspect of the dissertation.

General requirements for assigning authorship credit to the manuscripts generated during the dissertation process include:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

For more details on peer-reviewed journal article authorship expectations.

The doctoral student will consult with the committee members to decide on the fate of unpublished papers at the time of graduation. Time limits should be established, so that publication of papers is not held up if the graduate does not submit papers following graduation.

**Traditional Dissertation**

A dissertation consists of three main parts: the preliminary pages, the text, and the reference matter. Each part contains several sections. Some sections may be omitted, but the order of the following outlines must be observed.

**Preliminary Pages**

- Title page includes Committee Chair and list of committee members (required; see Appendix A. Do not number this page)
- Copyright page (required; see Appendix A. Do not number this page)
- Abstract (required; number this page ii) - **must not exceed 350 words**
- Dedication page (Optional)
- List of abbreviations or symbols (required when symbols used are not self-explanatory)
- Acknowledgments (required)
- Table of contents (required; titles of each section listed must concur exactly with body of the paper. Do not list this page among the contents)
- List of tables (required when tables are used)
- List of figures (required when figures are used)
- List of illustrations (required when illustrations are used)

**Main Manuscript**

- Body of paper (with 5 chapters or sections formatted following the template available by clicking Template in the ETD website's index of topics)
- Bibliography or References (choose one, depends on accepted practice within the discipline)
- Appendices
- IRB Certificate (where applicable)

**Illustrative Materials**

- Drawings, graphs and colored images may be included only if they are of high quality. All materials must conform to the margin requirements outlined in this manual.
- Photographs, charts, maps, drawings, and similar items can be included.

**Supplementary Files**

- Supplementary materials, e.g. audio, video, and Spreadsheet, may be included as supplementary files as part of your electronic submission, however, you MUST follow the formatting and submission requirements set out in ProQuest's instructions for supplementary files.

**IRB Certification**

- A copy of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) certification must be included in the appendix where a dissertation involves human subjects.

**Dissertation Defense**

When the student and the committee consider the dissertation to be complete, the committee will conduct the final oral examination of the dissertation. The final oral dissertation defense is the culminating experience in the doctoral program. Once the dissertation committee has agreed that the student is prepared for the final oral dissertation defense, the student and committee members will set the defense date. 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.

Final defense presentations typically last about 30 minutes. They often include a brief handout of the presentation outline and main points and electronic presentation formats. Dissertation chairs help students decide on an appropriate presentation package. During the period of doctoral study, the faculty expects PhD students to attend the public portion of dissertation final defense meetings of other PhD students.

After conferring with their Dissertation Chair, students traditionally take responsibility for contacting committee members and arranging a date, time, and location for dissertation final defense meetings. Refreshments are not required at the final defense. Dissertation Chairs announce the dissertation's final defense date, time, and the location at Department and College levels. Faculty Advisors invite all graduate students and department faculty to attend the public portion of dissertation final defense meetings. An email announcement should be sent to Jenny Goddard (jgoddard@ches.ua.edu) for inclusion in the CHES Newsletter.

*In preparing for dissertation final defense meetings, PhD candidates will:*

- Work closely with the Dissertation Chair and Committee at all stages in completing the dissertation.

Provide Committee members with one electronic copy (delivered by email) as an MS Word file of the final version of the dissertation.

All members of a student's dissertation committee are expected to attend and participate in real-time, usually in person, in any oral examination as part of the student's graduate degree program. Traditionally, oral examinations are conducted with the student meeting their committee while gathered in one physical location on campus. However, the need occasionally arises for virtual participation in the oral examination. Virtual attendance via interactive video or teleconference is permitted for off-campus external committee members, but the student and UA Tuscaloosa campus faculty should attend in person unless extraordinary circumstances dictate the need for virtual attendance. In addition, the dissertation must comply with the regulations in A Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations.

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 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 dissertation’s field, but it may encompass the complete program for the degree. The majority of the committee must approve that the student successfully defended the dissertation. 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.

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.

All Committee members must be present and sign the appropriate paperwork following successful defense of the dissertation. Most dissertations, even in the final form for the meeting, require some follow-up work. The Doctoral Final Defense Form must be completed and submitted to the UA Graduate School once a student has passed their dissertation defense.

After the successful defense, the Dissertation Committee Acceptance Form for Electronic Dissertation must be completed and submitted to the UA graduate school once the dissertation committee is ready to sign off on the final version of the dissertation. In other words, a student can pass their defense, but the committee may want them to make changes before the dissertation is submitted to the Graduate School. In this case, only the Doctoral Final Defense Form would be submitted to acknowledge that the defense has taken place and the outcome of the defense, but the Dissertation Committee Acceptance Form for Electronic Dissertation would be held student has made the changes required by the dissertation committee. Thus, the PhD candidate’s program effectively concludes when all Committee members accept the dissertation and sign the appropriate paperwork.

**Time Limits for Degree Completion Requirements**

Graduate School information on Time Limits.

**Student Progress Requirement**

**EVALUATION STANDARDS**

1. **Engagement in Scholarly Activities (e.g., research, manuscripts, conference presentations, teaching, professional development):**

Each year, students will be assessed on their engagement in scholarly activities. Sample activities that doctoral students might do to meet the annual scholarly engagement requirements are presented below.

- Actively participate in a faculty-supervised independent research project.
- Engage in collaborative research and development activity with core program faculty and other faculty on campus.
- Present at a state, regional, national, or international conference (e.g., SOPHE, APHA).
- Collaborate with the research mentor or department professor as author or co-author of a scholarly manuscript for publication consideration to a peer-review journal.
- Complete HHE 596 (Independent Study) and/or HHE 602 (Readings in Health) with at least one written product (e.g., a literature review, secondary analysis, thematic paper) that could serve as the basis for a published article/research project, grant proposal, or dissertation topic.

*Note. Prior to Enrolling in Dissertation Credit Hours, Students Must Have:

1. Conducted a minimum of two research or other scholarly activities; and
2. Disseminated a minimum of two research or other scholarly activities via professional publication or presentation. The student must be the first author or primary presenter for at least one of these research projects.

**Teaching**

- For teaching assistants (TAs) or doctoral students those listed as instructor of a course(s), complete evaluations of teaching effectiveness in the classroom (e.g., SSOL results, student-initiated surveys to obtain student feedback on teaching).
- Attend a campus-wide teaching workshop (https://teachinghub.as.ua.edu) to improve teaching strategies when in the classroom.
- Serve in a leadership role on a committee or hold an office in a professional organization related to health promotion.
- Review abstracts for a professional organization’s annual meeting (e.g., APHA, SOPHE).

**Professional Development**

- Attend a campus-wide professional development research focused event (e.g., grant-writing workshop)
- Attend and/or volunteer to participate in Department/College/or UA research-related events (e.g., judge for URCA, attendance in Graduate Research Seminar).
- Attend a state, regional, national, or international conference (e.g., SOPHE, APHA).

1. **NCHEC Competencies specified in the Eight Areas of Responsibility of a Health Education Specialist:**
Students will self-assess their performance in profession-wide advanced competency areas, specifically, within NCHEC’s eight areas of responsibility of a Health Education Specialist (https://www.nchec.org/responsibilities-and-competencies). The assessment process will include pre- and post-program self-assessments conducted by the student which are then reviewed and evaluated by the faculty. Results will be used to identify program strengths and weaknesses, and will inform discussions around program changes.

1. Assessment of Needs and Capacity
2. Planning
3. Implementation
4. Evaluation and Research
5. Advocacy
6. Communication
7. Leadership and Management
8. Ethics and Professionalism

Additional Professional Standards:

In addition to adherence to ethics and the honor code described above, other evaluative areas include, but are not limited to, demonstration of sufficient:

1. interpersonal and professional competence (e.g., the ways in which students relate to peers, faculty, other professionals, study participants, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories);
2. self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-evaluation (e.g., knowledge of the potential impact of one’s own beliefs and values on clients, peers, faculty, health education/promotion professionals, the public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds or histories);
3. openness to processes of supervision (e.g., the ability and willingness to explore issues that either interfere with or impede professional development or functioning); and
4. resolution of issues or problems that interfere with student/ professional development or functioning in a satisfactory manner (e.g., responding constructively to critical feedback from supervisors or program faculty; the successful completion of remediation plans; participating in resolution of issues or problems).

The Code of Ethics for the Health Education Profession

Students are expected to adhere to rules, laws, and codes governing the academic training program and the field of health promotion, specifically the NCHEC Health Education Code of Ethics. Although students may not become Certified Health Education Specialists, doctoral students in this program are expected to adhere to the 2020 Code of Ethics, Articles I and II, for the Health Education profession (https://www.nchec.org/code-of-ethics).

The annual evaluation covers April 1 of the preceding year through March 15 of the current year. The Faculty Advisor or Dissertation Chair informs the student, PhD program coordinator, and department chair that the student passed the annual evaluation. If the Faculty Advisor or Dissertation Chair finds that the student is not making satisfactory progress, the Faculty Advisor works with the student and PhD program coordinator to resolve the problem. If the process does not resolve the problem, and the Faculty Advisor or Dissertation Chair exhausts all reasonable options to reach a solution, then the Faculty Advisor or Dissertation Chair refers the matter to the Department Chair for resolution. Depending on the chair’s assessment outcome, the Faculty Advisor/Dissertation Chair may support the student (with a “pass”), ask the student to comply with corrective measures, or dismiss the student from the program.

Academic Misconduct Information

Graduate School information on Academic Misconduct.

Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information

Graduate School information on Withdrawals and Leave of Absence.

Academic Grievances Information

Graduate School information on Academic Grievances.

Scholastic Requirements

Graduate School information on Scholastic Requirements.

Graduate School Deadlines Information

Information on Graduate School Deadlines.

Application for Graduation Information

Information on the Application for Graduation.

Doctoral Degrees

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

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

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

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

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is granted on the basis of scholarly proficiency, distinctive achievement in a special field, and capacity for independent, original investigation. The first two criteria are tested in coursework and a comprehensive examination, the last in a dissertation in which the student must present clearly and effectively the results of substantial research. A combination of these accomplishments, rather than the mere accumulation of residence and course credits, is the essential consideration in awarding the PhD degree. The PhD differs from the EdD in a number of ways, including the fact that the PhD Plan of Study and comprehensive examination demonstrate a higher-level research focus, and there is a greater number of dissertation hours and higher level of complexity and independent thought in a PhD-level dissertation.
Field of Specialization - A defined field of specialization as outlined in the student's Plan of Study is required of all candidates for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. A minimum of 36 semester hours of non-dissertation course credit is required. Departments or programs may require more than this minimum. Candidates should consult their departments or the appropriate section of this Catalog for additional requirements. The doctoral course as a whole must be unified, and all its parts must contribute to an organized program of study and research. In addition, a student must complete a minimum of 18 hours of dissertation research.

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

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

Doctor of Education Degree
The Doctor of Education (EdD) requires a minimum of two years of graduate study beyond the master's degree for the completion of the EdD program. The student is required to complete 60 semester hours in approved graduate coursework research 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 Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree requires a minimum of 48 semester hours beyond the Master of Music degree, plus recitals and other examinations as determined by faculty of the School of Music. Specific requirements for each major area are outlined in the School of Music section of the Graduate Catalog.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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. 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 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. When exercising this option, a Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit form must be submitted to and approved by the Graduate School. The requested transfer credit hours must be listed on the PhD Plan of Study as MSC501 under the transfer credit section. If the in-field master’s degree was awarded more than six years prior to admission to the current doctoral degree program, the graduate program director or department head/chair must also submit to the Graduate School for evaluation, a Field-Related Employment Since Earning Master’s Degree form with the student’s CV must be submitted by the department through the UA DocuSign system in myBama. In addition, the department is asked to provide the following, attached to the approved Plan of Study:
   a. An annotated work history from the student. This history should include job titles and major duties for all positions since earning a master’s degree.
   b. A brief paragraph from the corresponding faculty member, attesting that he/she has reviewed the work history and how that work applies to the current Ph.D. degree program.

   The Graduate School will make the final determination about whether up to 24 prior master’s hours can be applied to the Ph.D. requirements. PhD awarding departments that want to participate in offering Option 2 to their doctoral students, need to “opt in” by informing the graduate dean in writing that they wish to be among the approved departments.

   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 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.

   Dissertation Research (699) may not be transferred in from an outside institution.

**Time Limits**

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

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

**Revalidation of Expired Credits**

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

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

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

Students may request revalidation of up to 50% of the required minimum coursework for their degree. Credits earned from an institution other than The University of Alabama may not be revalidated. Consideration of revalidation, and a plan of study based on the demonstration-of-currency and other remaining requirements, must be completed as part of the student’s re-admission to the Graduate School. Revalidation of credits is not guaranteed. From the time of re-admission, students must complete the degree within the standard time limit, as specified in the Graduate Catalog at the time of the student’s re-admission.

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

**Plan of Study**

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

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

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

**Preliminary or Comprehensive Examination**

A preliminary or comprehensive qualifying examination is required of all doctoral candidates. This examination is given after
• any foreign language/research skill requirements are met (PhD students only);
• two full years of graduate study are completed; and
• the supervisory committee deems the student to have adequate preparation in the major and minor fields of study.

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

**Admission to Candidacy**

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

Advancement to candidacy should involve either:

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

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

**Continuous Doctoral Research Hours Registration**

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

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

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

Ph.D. students must complete a minimum of 18 hours of dissertation research credits (699). Ph.D. students must register for a minimum of 3 dissertation research credits each semester until reaching their program’s minimum. Thereafter, they must register for a minimum of 1 dissertation hour each semester, maintaining continuous enrollment in 699 until degree completion.

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

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

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

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

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

**Dissertation Committee**

The dissertation committee may be formed early in the dissertation research process, or shortly before the dissertation proposal is approved. It is expected that the committee will be formed and approved before significant progress is made on the dissertation. The committee must be formally established via a process initiated by the student and requiring the consent of each committee member, followed by Graduate School review for compliance with the regulations outlined below. Click here for instructions on the process of establishing the committee.

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

All members of the dissertation committee must hold Graduate Faculty status at The University of Alabama. The chair of the committee must hold Full Graduate Faculty status; others may be Full, Associate, or Affiliate members of the Graduate Faculty. A majority of the Dissertation Committee members must be full-time regular University of Alabama faculty (that is, full-time instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor).

**Dissertation Proposal**

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

**Dissertation**

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

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

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

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

All parts of the dissertation must conform to the provisions set forth 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 should email gradschool@ua.edu before beginning their work if they have questions concerning specific problems or deviations from traditional procedure.

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

**Virtual Participation in Committee-Based Exams/Defenses**

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

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

**Technical Requirements**

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

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

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

**Final-Semester Minimum Doctoral Research Hours Registration**

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

This exception applies only to students who registered for at least 1-3 hours of dissertation (699) research in the preceding semester and only under the conditions described in the table below:
When was the *completed electronic dissertation submitted to ProQuest/the Graduate School?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Minimum hours of 699 registration required in the final semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By 11:59pm on the Final Grade Entry Day for the student’s penultimate semester (date published in the University Academic Calendar#)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the Final Grade Entry Day for the student’s penultimate semester (date published in the University Academic Calendar#)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Footnotes
1 International students on F-1 or J-1 student visas are not permitted to use the zero-credit hour exception above as the basis of maintaining minimum enrollment requirements as active students. Please see "USCIS" section under "Minimum Hours–Other Policies and Regulatory Bodies" on page 3 of this policy.
2 The University Calendar is available at the Academics tab of the website of the University Registrar.

Protection of Human Subjects for Research

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

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense is the culminating experience in the doctoral program. The Dissertation Chair and the student will coordinate with all committee members to choose a time, date, and location for the dissertation defense. All doctoral candidates must give members of the dissertation committee a minimum of two weeks to read the dissertation before the defense date. The dissertation must comply with the regulations in A Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations.

The dissertation defense is comprised of four parts.

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

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

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

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

The results of the dissertation defense must be reported to the Office of the Graduate School by submitting the Committee Acceptance Form at least six weeks before the Fall/Spring commencement, or five weeks before the Summer commencement, at which the degree is to be conferred. The Committee Acceptance Form, submitted by the department through the UA DocuSign system and found in myBama, confirms that a majority of the dissertation committee has approved the written dissertation and oral defense.

Any changes made to the manuscript after the defense must be approved by the Dissertation Chair. The student must submit the final dissertation to the Graduate School, and the Dean of the Graduate School must approve the dissertation, before the student can be cleared for graduation. See “Final Dissertation Submission and Approval” for details.

Final Dissertation Submission and Approval

Following a successful dissertation defense (see “Dissertation Defense” for details), any edits agreed upon during the defense must be incorporated into the manuscript, and the Dissertation Chair must approve the final manuscript. After a careful review to ensure that the manuscript adheres to the Graduate School’s formatting guidelines, the candidate must submit the approved manuscript to the Graduate School for final approval, address any remaining edits, and initiate the upload process for archiving the manuscript in the national dissertation repository, ProQuest.

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

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

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

**Withholding or Withdrawing an Advanced Degree**
The University of Alabama reserves the right to withhold or withdraw an advanced degree on the recommendation of the graduate faculty.