

Department of Anthropology Dissertation Guidelines

Ph.D. candidates in the department of anthropology must complete a dissertation that is based on original research related to their area of specialization that adds to or transforms scholarly knowledge on a subject. Students are required to conduct dissertation research, which may include field, lab, and/or archival work, after Advancement to Candidacy. According to Graduate School policy, they must enroll in 2 credits of ANT 767 every semester until they successfully defend their dissertation and graduate, which they must do within five years of passing their qualifying exams. If students plan to conduct dissertation research outside of the United States they must also comply with University Administrative Regulation 4.9 and are encouraged to speak with staff in the University's International Office early in the dissertation planning process.

Students' dissertation research plans are approved by their committee through the proposal defense process. Their research (including IRB Approval which is required by law) will be closely supervised by their primary advisor. Upon completing their dissertation research, students are strongly encouraged to meet with their entire committee to present a brief overview of their initial research findings and a preliminary dissertation outline. The department expects each enrolled Ph.D. student, even those who have advanced to candidacy, to organize an annual committee meeting (with the exception of those who are away from campus while conducting dissertation research). Video or teleconferences are acceptable alternatives for students who are not in residence. This is especially important for students writing their dissertation as this process requires close consultation between a student and her/his committee. The meeting provides a valuable opportunity to update the committee on dissertation progress and ensures that the student receives consistent feedback from committee members, allowing him/her to take maximum advantage of the diverse expertise of the faculty.

The dissertation writing process requires multiple rounds of idea exchanges between students and committee members and students should anticipate the need for multiple revisions. Students who are writing their dissertations are encouraged to join writing groups, submit chapter drafts to their advisors according to pre-established schedules, and participate in "dissertation boot camps" and other on-campus activities designed to support dissertation writing. In addition, students are advised to seek out opportunities to present their dissertation research during the writing process (for example, at conferences, workshops, and departmental and interdisciplinary brown bags/colloquiums).

Dissertation Format

Departmental dissertation guidelines are designed to be flexible and the final form of a dissertation is left to the discretion of the committee members, in conversation with the student. The dissertation may take one of two general forms: 1) a book-length manuscript or 2) three publishable articles bookended for submission to the graduate school by introductory and background material and a conclusion. Appendices presenting data or methods may also be required for either format. Under the book-length format, dissertations are expected to run to approximately 150-300 double-spaced pages, excluding figures and bibliographies. The length of the three-article format will vary based on the anticipated publishing venues.

Dissertation Defense Process

In order to be eligible for the degree, students must complete the Application for Degree on myUK. This must be submitted by the deadline for the semester in which the student intends to

graduate. For the exact due date, see the [University Calendar](#) or the [Graduate School Bulletin](#). After consulting with the advisor, the student should submit the [Notification of Intent to Schedule a Final Doctoral Examination](#) form a **minimum of 8 weeks** prior to the anticipated date of the final examination date. Upon receipt, the Graduate School will audit the student's file to make sure that all requirements to this point have been met, and will begin the process of identifying an outside examiner for the defense. *Committees should not finalize a defense date before the outside examiner has been identified and has been consulted for their availability.* The student will be notified by email when your Outside Examiner has been assigned.

The final examination must take place no later than eight days prior to the last day of classes of the semester in which the student expects to graduate. Final examinations may not be scheduled during the period between semesters or between the end of the eight-week summer session and the beginning of the fall semester. Consult the [University Calendar](#) for deadlines on the scheduling of final examinations. A [Request for Final Doctoral Examination](#) form should be submitted a **minimum of two weeks** prior to the specific date of the defense. At this time the student should deliver a copy of the dissertation to the outside examiner. Dissertations must be received by the committee two weeks prior to the exam according to Graduate School regulations. *In order to ensure that committee members have sufficient time to review the dissertation in advance of the defense, students are advised to consult each member regarding a preferred distribution date and format (e.g., electronic or hard copy).*

Dissertation defenses are public. At least one week prior to the scheduled defense, the candidate should distribute a dissertation abstract to all departmental faculty and graduate students and announce the time and place of the defense. At the two-hour long defense, candidates typically make a short (10 minute) presentation of their dissertation findings. Students and those in attendance are then asked to briefly exit the room so that the committee members can consult with one another. Candidates are then asked to respond to questions from the committee members. At the end of the defense, students and those in attendance are again asked to exit the room so that the committee members can determine whether the defense has been successful or not. At the conclusion of the defense, required revisions are detailed and committee members sign the examination card provided by the primary advisor (or agree to sign it once the revisions are submitted).

Ideally all committee members will be physically present for the defense. However, if one member cannot participate in person for a valid reason then she or he may arrange to participate via Skype or video conference. No more than one member may be physically absent from a defense. The committee chair should email the signed examination card to the participant and have him or her sign and return it via email so that it can be submitted to the Graduate School.

After the Final Examination, students have **60 days** to submit the final copy of the dissertation to the Graduate School in pdf format (or less than 60 days if the student wants to graduate that semester and the semester deadline is sooner) and a completed [ETD Approval Form](#) [PDF] , signed by the advisor and Director of Graduate Studies. If, due to extenuating circumstances, it appears that a student will be unable to complete the requested revisions (or the committee members are unable to approve the revised dissertation) before the end of this 60 day period then the advisor should consult the DGS as soon as possible so that an extension may be requested.

Off-campus students can scan the ETD Approval Form after signing it and forward it electronically to the advisor for signature who in turn can pass it to the DGS for signature. It is the student's responsibility to upload this form to UKnowledge (Additional Files) as part of the ETD. The ETD Approval Form may be uploaded when the student first submits the ETD to UKnowledge, or at a later time, and can be viewed in the Supplemental Content area. The ETD Approval Form will not be accessible to the public when the ETD is approved.

Students are required to submit their thesis for a format check to UKnowledge (click here for [ETD Submission Guide](#)). The thesis will be checked to ensure that it meets format requirements of the Graduate School. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the ETD will display clearly and properly on a monitor when accessed, including working links so the ETD can be readily navigated (whether it is composed of a single or multiple files), that the printed pdf version will be clear and legible (including any figures or images), and that fonts have been properly embedded. The Graduate School also requires copies of any reprint permission letters and any required third party software licenses.

Final Submission checklist:

- Final submission of electronic dissertation via UKnowledge (see [ETD Submission Guide](#) for instructions)
- Confirmation page of the Survey of Earned Doctorates
- ProQuest/UMI Dissertation Agreement form
- [ETD Approval Form](#) [PDF] completed and signed
- Reprint permission letters and/or third party software licenses, if required
- All of the above items must be uploaded as Additional Files (Supplemental Content) to the ETD (see the ETD Submission Guide for instructions)
- Embargoes are now handled as part of the ETD Approval form

If you have any questions about this process, contact the [Degree Certification Officer](#) for your program. Please see the following links for more detailed information regarding Graduate School requirements and procedures:

http://www.gradschool.uky.edu/CurrentStudents/electronic_dissertation_defense_process.html

http://www.gradschool.uky.edu/CurrentStudents/electronic_dissertation_instructions.html

Approved by the Faculty April 22, 2016 (SML), revised October 18, 2024