

**Guidelines and Procedures for Doctoral Dissertations
in the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's
Department of Modern Languages**

The dissertation committee is composed of at least three faculty members. The chair of the dissertation committee must be a member of the Modern Languages faculty and must be a member of the UL Lafayette Graduate Faculty at Level 2. At least one other member of the Modern Languages faculty must serve on the committee, and the dissertation committee must consist of a simple majority of members of the Department of Modern Languages. At minimum two members of the committee, including the chair, must be on the Graduate Faculty. If the committee is composed of more than three members, a simple majority of the members must be on the UL Lafayette Graduate Faculty.

A doctoral student must form the dissertation committee before taking comprehensive examinations. The student must submit the Doctoral Dissertation Committee form to the Graduate School; this form is available for download on the Graduate School's website.

Upon successful completion of the written and oral components of the comprehensive exams, the student must write a Prospectus of the Dissertation (generally ten pages of text, plus a bibliography) in consultation with the director. The Prospectus must include at minimum a workable topic for the scope of the dissertation, a clearly defined thesis to be examined, an explanation of the critical approach(es) that will be used, and a bibliography of primary and secondary sources. The student must be ready to present and defend his or her Prospectus within one month of completing the oral exam. The dissertation committee, and not the comprehensive examination committee, will attend the Prospectus defense and either accept the Prospectus or require revisions to the Prospectus before acceptance.

Only when the student has successfully defended his or her Prospectus will the student be considered ABD (all but dissertation).

It is the student's responsibility to remain in regular contact with all committee members during all phases of the research, writing, and revising stages. Regular meetings with the entire committee are strongly encouraged; the student should meet at least once per semester with his or her director.

The committee members will assist the student in producing a workable plan for the submission of chapters or sections, and it is the student's responsibility to meet deadlines set by the committee and/or Graduate School. Satisfactory progress toward the completion of the dissertation is a requirement for eligibility for continued enrollment in the Graduate Program and for retention of assistantships.

All students should download and carefully read the Guidelines for Graduate Theses and Dissertations, available on the Graduate School's website.

Each semester, the student must submit a Doctoral Student Progress Report to the Graduate School; the student will receive this report from the Graduate School and must request approval

and the signature of his or her dissertation director or advisor. The report should detail measurable advancement toward completion of the degree.

Students must allow the committee members at least three weeks to read chapters submitted for consideration. Students should expect to revise their work multiple times before it reaches its acceptable form. In light of this, students should not plan to graduate until all committee members have seen all the work, have had ample time to read it, and have indicated to the student that he or she should apply to graduate that semester.

Each semester, the Graduate Coordinator will provide a timeline of deadlines for submission of the dissertation; these deadlines must be respected in order to meet the Graduate School's deadlines, which are publicized on the Graduate School's website. Dissertations are submitted to the Graduate School for final approval only after they have been defended, revised, and proofread.

A doctoral student should expect to have completed the writing stage before the beginning of the semester in which he or she will graduate.

Students do not set the date of the defense. The defense date is set by the members of the committee. A defense date will not be scheduled until all members of the committee are satisfied with the student's work. No defenses will be scheduled during the summer.

The defense consists of a short introduction provided by the candidate which includes the student's motivation for asking the research question examined, situating the dissertation in the existing field of research, and giving a very brief summary of the contents with special emphasis on the conclusions reached at the end of the process. After the short introduction, the members of the committee will ask questions of the candidates. The candidate should be ready to expand upon any related topics and to make assertions that are beyond the scope of the written dissertation. Each professor will generally interrogate the student for approximately twenty minutes. It is advisable for the student to take notes, or to designate a trusted colleague to take them, during the discussion since it will typically treat areas of weakness that should be improved upon for future research projects. At the conclusion of the discussion, the student and any audience members will leave the room while the committee consults. The results will then be privately communicated to the student.

At the beginning of his or her final semester, the student must file the Application for Degree form, a paper form available in the Graduate School office. This form must be turned in to the Graduate School and must be accompanied by the Graduation Checklist, available for download on the Graduate School's website.

The Separation Clearance Form is required of all graduating students.