

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY PHD DISSERTATION GUIDE

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OVERVIEW

1. Complete program-specific course requirements.
2. Complete program-specific mentored experience requirements and submit Mentored Experience Requirements (PhD) Form
3. Complete program-specific qualifying examinations and submit signed Qualifying Exam Form
4. Form Research Advisory Committee (RAC) (see Title, Scope, and Procedure)
5. Present a proposal or prospectus of your dissertation to your RAC; when approved, complete, sign, and submit the Title, Scope, and Procedure Form
6. Form your Dissertation Defense Committee (see Dissertation Defense); complete, sign, and submit the Dissertation Defense Committee Form
7. File your Intent to Graduate by appropriate deadline (see Intent to Graduate)
8. With your committee, complete written dissertation
9. Consult with your Dissertation Defense Committee and schedule your oral defense
10. Pass the oral defense; submit signed Dissertation Examination Approval (PhD) Form
11. Complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates
12. Submit your dissertation to Washington University via ProQuest electronically
13. Optional: Request a bound copy of your dissertation (through ProQuest)

MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DISSERTATIONS

The following “Statement by Graduate Council on Minimal Requirements for PhD Dissertations” was adopted at the Graduate Council meeting on April 19, 2012.

A dissertation is the product of extensive research and presents an original contribution to knowledge in a given field. It documents the candidate’s ability 1) to make substantive contributions to answering a major intellectual question and 2) to communicate research results with professional competence.

In all cases, the dissertation must constitute an integrated, coherent work, whose parts are logically connected. It must have a written introductory chapter that sets forth the general theme and core questions of the dissertation research and that explains the relationship among the constituent chapters or parts. The introduction will typically include, as is appropriate to the discipline, a review of the literature relevant to the dissertation, an explanation of theories, methods, and/or procedures utilized by the author, and a summary discussion of the contribution of the dissertation project to knowledge in the field. In its final deposited form, the dissertation must constitute an achievable product, which meets the standards prescribed by the university.

The dissertation may consist (in whole or part) of co-authored chapters and articles, but the candidate must be a major contributor to the research and writing of any such papers and must describe her/his ideas, individual efforts, and contributions to the larger work. To comply with the university’s policy on plagiarism and academic integrity,¹ a dissertation that incorporates co-authored work must also include in its introduction an explanation of the role of the candidate in the research and the writing of the co-authored work.

If a dissertation includes previously published materials (authored or co-authored), the candidate must provide a full referencing of when and where individual papers have been published. Because prior publication and multiple authorship have implications concerning copyright, PhD candidates should discuss copyright with advisers and obtain copyright clearance from any coauthors well in advance of defending the dissertation. Written permission must be obtained to include articles copyrighted by others within the dissertation.

It is the responsibility of the student and the student's dissertation committee to ensure that the dissertation meets all requirements regarding authorship, academic integrity, and copyright, as here outlined.

¹ Plagiarism is the willful or unintentional act of using, without proper acknowledgment, another person's or persons' words, ideas, results, methods, opinions, or concepts. . . . The act of claiming as one's own work any intellectual material created by another or others is wrong and will be treated as a serious violation of academic integrity.

PRELIMINARY PAPERWORK

TITLE, SCOPE, AND PROCEDURE

The Title, Scope, and Procedure may be filed with your school administrator as soon as your Research Advisory Committee has approved the subject and approach for the dissertation. The form must be filed at least six months before the degree is expected to be conferred or before beginning the fifth year of full-time enrollment, whichever is earlier.

The dissertation "scope" defines its limits—what you intend to cover and what you intend not to cover. The "procedure" describes the manner in which you intend to conduct your research. By defining the scope and procedure of your dissertation, you provide an initial outline or model to research your topic.

Research Advisory Committees consist of at least three full-time Washington University faculty members who are authorized to supervise PhD students and who have appropriate expertise in the proposed field of study. One of these faculty members must be the student's primary research advisor/mentor.

Your dissertation's title, scope, and procedure may change in the course of your research. Check with your school administrator to determine if you are required to file an amended form.

INTENT TO GRADUATE

You must file an Intent to Graduate form on WebSTAC for the semester in which you intend to graduate. If your graduation term changes, you must file a new form for the term in which you intend to graduate.

Deadlines for filing the Intent to Graduate form for each semester are set by the University Registrar. <https://registrar.wustl.edu/student-records/graduation/intent-to-graduate/>

Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID)

PhD students are encouraged to establish an Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) and begin to populate your profile. ORCID is a free, persistent personal digital identifier which several funders, publishers, scholarly associations, databases, and universities require. Many scholars will want to establish their ORCID profile and maintain it throughout their careers. You are also encouraged to include your ORCID in your dissertation submission in ProQuest.

For more information, visit <http://libguides.wustl.edu/orcid>

Create an ORCID Profile: <https://orcid.org/register>

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Dissertation Defense Committee

The dissertation committee consists of at least five members. Normally, the three members of the Research Advisory Committee also serve on the dissertation committee. The dissertation committee is then additionally augmented to ensure that the following criteria are met:

- Three of the five members (or a similar proportion of a larger committee) must be full-time Washington University faculty members or, for programs offered by WashU-affiliated partners, full-time members of a WashU-affiliated partner institution who are authorized to supervise PhD students and who have appropriate expertise in the proposed field of study. One of these three members must be the PhD student's primary thesis advisor, and one may be a member of the emeritus faculty.
- All other committee members must be active in research/scholarship and have appropriate expertise in the proposed field of study, whether at Washington University, at another university, in government, or in industry.
- At least one of the five members must bring expertise outside the student's field of study to the committee, as judged by the School of Medicine Graduate Program Council.

Attendance by a minimum of four members of the dissertation defense committee, including the committee chair and an outside member, is required for the defense to take place. This provision is designed to permit your defense to proceed in case of a situation that unexpectedly prevents one of the five members from attending. Do not plan in advance to have only four members in attendance; if one of those four cannot attend, your defense must be rescheduled. Note that the absence of all outside members or of the committee chair would necessitate rescheduling the defense. *

Students, with support of their Dissertation Defense Committee Chair, may opt to hold their dissertation defense in-person or by utilizing a virtual or hybrid format. **

*Policies passed by the Graduate Council in November 2013.

**Policy passed by the Doctoral Council in July 2022.

Dissenting Vote(s) at a Dissertation

Faculty members of the Dissertation Examination Committee normally will examine the student candidate and vote to approve the dissertation. In the vast majority of cases these votes are unanimously for approval. In the rare case that there are faculty concerns that can not be resolved through subsequent revisions, and which therefore result in dissenting (negative) vote(s), the Committee Chair will refer the case to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education for resolution.

In the case of a single dissenting vote, the Committee Chair and the dissenting voter will be asked to explain the reasons for the dissent in a letter to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education. After consulting with these and other members of the Committee, the Vice Provost for Graduate Education may then decide to accept the majority opinion and approve the Dissertation, or may seek the opinion of an additional reader. After considering this additional

evidence, the Vice Provost for Graduate Education may approve, or may decline to approve, the Dissertation.

In the case of two or more dissenting votes, the Committee Chair and the dissenting voters will again be asked to explain the reasons for the dissent. The Vice Provost for Graduate Education may then decide to decline to approve the Dissertation, or to ask the Department or Graduate Program to name a Resolution Committee, consisting of three tenured or tenure-track professors at Washington University or elsewhere who did not serve on the original committee, to reexamine the Dissertation and the candidate. A unanimous positive recommendation from this committee will be required in order for the Vice Provost for Graduate Education to approve the Dissertation. Failure of a Department or Graduate Program to identify three faculty members to serve on this Resolution Committee will be tantamount to a rejection of the Dissertation.*

*Policy approved by the Graduate Council on April 26, 2007; Language updated to reflect VPGE June 15, 2022.

HOW TO ARRANGE A DISSERTATION DEFENSE

1. Under the advisement of your committee chair, establish a dissertation defense committee that conforms to the university-wide policy and procedures (see above).
2. Fill out (your department may do this for you) the Dissertation Defense Committee Form.
3. This form must be signed by your department's Director of Graduate Studies and sent to your school administrator. Your DGS or a department staff member should send it (not you). The school administrator will email approval to the DGS. Only after this step has been completed should the defense be scheduled.
4. After the committee has been approved and at least 15 days before the defense, your department (not you) should send an email to your school administrator stating the time, date, and place of the defense. The email should have a copy of your CV attached if you are an Arts & Sciences student on the Danforth Campus. Do not put your Social Security Number, birth date, or birthplace on your CV.
5. You are responsible for giving copies of the dissertation to your committee. Committee members may request rescheduling of the defense if the dissertation is not made available at least 1 week in advance. However, most departments require dissertations to be available to committee members 2-4 weeks before the defense.

FORMS & PERMISSIONS NEEDED PRIOR TO ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

DEADLINES

Your dissertation must be submitted and accepted by the deadlines indicated in your school's academic calendar. You are encouraged to submit your dissertation before the deadline in the event formatting changes are needed. The Examination Approval Form and Survey of Earned Doctorates share the same deadline as the dissertation unless otherwise indicated by your school.

COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS

Before you submit your dissertation electronically, you must have obtained permissions for any copyrighted work included in it for which you do not hold the sole copyright. This may include your own previously published work, whether or not you are its sole author.

You may wish to consult your subject librarian or [email Olin Library](#) [Copyright and Your Dissertation or Thesis: Ownership, Fair Use, and Your Rights and Responsibilities \(pdf\)](#)

THE EXAMINATION APPROVAL FORM

The form is signed by members of the dissertation defense committee at your defense and by the chair of your department or program afterward. Once completed, your department administrator will submit this form to your school administrator on your behalf.

SURVEY OF EARNED DOCTORATES (SED)

You are encouraged to complete your Survey of Earned Doctorates prior to the dissertation deadline. Do this as soon as possible so that your school office has a record of its arrival in time for graduation requirements to be met. School administrators are notified automatically once you complete the survey.

Your electronic submission of your dissertation will not be processed or approved until this email arrives.

Complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates: <https://sed-ncses.org/login.aspx?>

SUBMITTING YOUR DISSERTATION TO PROQUEST

After you have successfully defended your dissertation and made any committee requested changes, you are required to create an online account at ProQuest (<http://www.etdadmin.com/wustl>) to submit your final text. ProQuest is this country's most widely used commercial archiving service for dissertations and theses. This guide is to inform and advise you in making selections through the submission process in ProQuest.

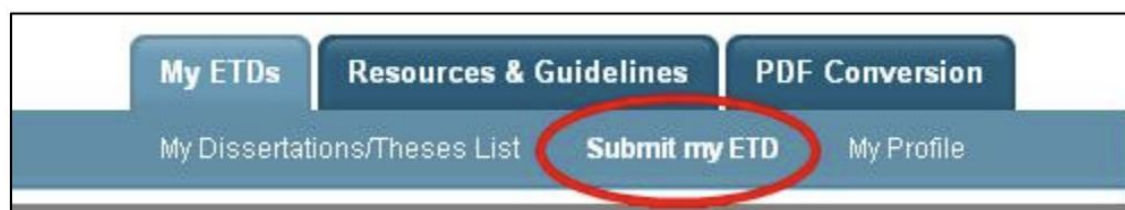
CREATING YOUR ACCOUNT AND GETTING STARTED

Before you create your account, make sure the following items are accessible:

- The full text of your dissertation, formatted as a PDF, with embedded fonts
- Supplementary files and/or supporting documents (optional)
- The body of your abstract, without the heading; note that there is no word limit on your abstract
- A full list of your committee members
- Any copyright permissions obtained; these will need to be submitted as a part of this process.



After you have created your account and logged in, select "Submit ETD" from the "My ETDs" tab.



On the left side of the webpage, you will see a menu of checkboxes. This portion of the guide will take you through each checkbox, step by step.



The instructions page includes similar information to what we have up above; please review and then click continue, which will bring you to the second checkbox, “PQ Publishing Options”.



The first half of this page requires you to indicate a selection for either “traditional” publishing or “open access” publishing.

Washington University is committed to providing open access for scholarly work authored by WUSTL students and faculty. Therefore, the WU Library has launched a platform called **Open Scholarship**: <http://openscholarship.wustl.edu>. When a student submits a dissertation to ProQuest, the Library automatically receives an electronic copy and makes it available on Open Scholarship. However, the Library respects all limitations, such as embargoes, that authors set on their submissions in ProQuest.

As you can see in the image below, Open Access Publishing PLUS requires a \$95 registration fee, whereas Traditional Publishing is free for Washington University students; the Library pays the fee to ProQuest for this option. Because the Open Scholarship platform will give your dissertation as much open access, at no charge, as ProQuest will charge \$95 to give it, we recommend that students choose Traditional Publishing.

A screenshot of a web form titled "Select Type of Publishing *". It features two radio button options. The first option, "Traditional Publishing", is selected and circled in red. It includes a "View agreement" link and four bullet points: "I want to make my work widely available and I want to be eligible to receive royalties on the sale of my work.", "I understand that I must maintain a current mailing address with ProQuest/UMI in order to be eligible to receive royalties.", "I understand that ProQuest/UMI does not charge a fee for Traditional Publishing.", and "I understand that my work will be available through ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, Udini and Dissertation Express, an". The second option, "Open Access Publishing PLUS", is unselected and includes a "View agreement" link and five bullet points: "I want the broadest possible dissemination of my work, and I want to provide free global access to the electronic copy of n", "I understand that I will not be eligible to receive royalties.", "I understand that the ProQuest/UMI fee for Open Access Publishing PLUS is \$95.00 USD.", "I understand that I will pay the fee, unless notified by my graduate institution that the school will pay.", and "I understand that my work will be available through ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, Udini and Dissertation Express, an".

The second half of the PQ Publishing Options page asks you to select your publishing and access options.

Select Publishing Options

I want major search engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo) to discover my work through ProQuest. * [Learn more](#)

Yes

No

Access options (e.g., delaying the release of your work)

If you choose to delay the release of your work, access to the full text of your work will be delayed for the period of time that you specify, repository.

Note: Most institutions have delayed release (or embargo) policies. Please consult with your Graduate School for more information.

Delaying release in ProQuest

I want my work to be available in ProQuest as soon as it is published. *

Yes

No - I have patents pending, or another reason why I need to delay access to the full text of my work.

The table below, from ProQuest, is an excellent summary of the advice our office would give you about whether or not you should embargo your dissertation.

Consideration	Recommended Action		
	Choose Traditional Publishing	Place an embargo on your dissertation	Restrict from Google/search engines
Likely submission to a peer-reviewed journal	✓	✓	
Interested/potential interest by an academic or commercial press	✓	✓	
Ethical need to prevent disclosure	✓	✓	✓

If you choose to embargo your work, select “No – I have patents pending, or another reason why I need to delay access to the full text of my work” and select how long an embargo you would like. If you need to embargo your work for more than two years, request as long an embargo as you wish by using the “Note to administrator” text box.

Delaying release in ProQuest

I want my work to be available in ProQuest as soon as it is published. *

Yes

No - I have patents pending, or another reason why I need to delay access to the full text of my work.

How long would you like to delay the release to ProQuest? * (more info)

6 months 1 year 2 years

If a longer embargo is necessary, please indicate in the Note to administrator.

Note to administrator (optional): 200 characters

[Clear](#)

Reason for delaying release to ProQuest: *

Select ▼

Enter your requested embargo length here, if it is beyond 2 years.

You can lift an embargo on your work at any time – or impose or extend an embargo – by contacting both ProQuest (at ETDSUPPORT@PROQUEST.COM or 1.877.408.5027) and the Washington University Libraries (at digital@wulib.wustl.edu) directly.

Contact information

Dissertation/Thesis details

On the contact information page, provide an email address that is checked regularly. You will be contacted regarding your submission.

You must include an abstract on the **Dissertation/Thesis details** page, even if your dissertation does not include one. There is no word limit on your abstract.

PDF

You are required to submit your dissertation as a PDF.

Register U.S. Copyright

You do not need to register your claim to copyright in order to include a copyright page in your manuscript. If your dissertation is not itself of monetary value and does not contain information of monetary value, then registering your claim to copyright is not necessary. In order to sue others for monetary damages caused by their infringing your copyright, you must have registered your claim to copyright.

If you wish to register your claim to copyright, you may choose to have ProQuest act as your agent to register your copyright for a fee, or you may decline that service and register your work yourself. More information about copyright registration can be found at <http://libguides.wustl.edu/copyright/registration>.

We will:

- Prepare an application in your name
- Submit your application fee
- Deposit the required copy or copies of the manuscript
- Mail you the completed certificate of registration from the Library of Congress

1. Previous U.S. Copyright Registration
Has registration for your published dissertation/thesis, or for an earlier version of the manuscript, been made with the Copyright Office?

Yes - copyright was previously filed No

2. Requesting ProQuest/UMI to file for U.S. Copyright Registration

Do not file for copyright - I am requesting that ProQuest/UMI not file for copyright on my behalf.

File for a new copyright - I am requesting that ProQuest/UMI file for copyright on my behalf.

- I understand that an additional fee of \$55.00 (USD) will be charged.
- I authorize ProQuest/UMI to submit an application for registration of my copyright in the Work in my name. I will receive the re
- If I have previously registered my published dissertation/thesis, or an earlier version of the manuscript with the U.S. Office of above (see Question 1).

If ProQuest files for you, they will do these things.

Order copies

There is an alternate way to order copies of your dissertation. See the section called “How to submit copies for printing and binding”.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Your school administrator is notified when you submit your dissertation to ProQuest. The review process entails ensuring that your Examination Approval Form and Survey of Earned Doctorates have been completed and reviewing your dissertation to ensure it meets the formatting requirements. The amount of time we will need to review your manuscript, and the number and nature of any changes you may be required to make, are generally determined by

how carefully you have prepared your work. Your work must be formatted correctly and approved by your school administrator in order for you to graduate. **Do not wait until the deadline day to submit your dissertation!**

Once the review is complete, you will receive an email through ProQuest indicating one of the following:

1. Your submission does not require revisions and is accepted.
2. Your submission does not require revisions, but paperwork is outstanding.
3. Your submission requires some revisions that must be made before it is accepted.

If you have revisions you must make, log back into ProQuest, and you will see this screen:

- Washington University in St. Louis

Revising your dissertation/thesis

You can revise your submission:

- 1. First, make your changes**
 - On the left sidebar you'll see a list of Revision Options.
 - Select the item you wish to change.
 - A new page will display where you can make and save your changes.
 - Repeat for any additional changes you need to make.
- 2. Submit your changes**
 - After your changes are complete, click **Submit Revisions** from the left sidebar.
 - Follow the instructions on the "Submit Revisions" page to finish.

Submit your revisions:

[Submit revisions](#)

Click here to submit your revised PDF.

Please verify submission first
After you submit, you cannot revise your submission without permission from yo

Submission Summary:

If changes are needed, you can make them using the links provided.

Dissertation/Thesis Details:

Degree:
Title:
Abstract:
Subject Categories:
Keywords:
PDF:

Publishing Options:

[Submit revisions](#)

The Graduate School will not be notified of your modifications unless you click here.

HOW TO ACQUIRE BOUND COPIES

Once your revisions are submitted in ProQuest, and your school administrator has reviewed them, you will receive an email saying your dissertation is approved. Then, and only then, may you order copies of your dissertation to be printed and bound from Thesis on Demand. Any copies must be identical to your approved ProQuest submission. Therefore, when you upload a PDF of your dissertation for printing and binding, use the same one that was just approved in ProQuest.

1. Ask your department's administrator if your program will pay for a certain number of copies to be bound by Thesis on Demand. In some departments, those will be ordered directly by departmental staff; in other departments, you will order those and request reimbursement

for them. Clarify your department's procedures before ordering printed and bound copies of your work.

2. Go to Thesis on Demand to order copies. Begin by uploading your PDF; when prompted, fill out the rest of the page. If you want copies sent to different shipping addresses, you will need to go through this process separately for each address; all copies ordered together will be shipped together to a single destination. Note that this service will not ship to international addresses.
3. As soon as you reach the second page of the order form, "Document Information as Uploaded" will appear on the right-hand side of the page; check to be sure that the total number of pages, the number in color versus black and white, and the information about images is accurate. Your PDF for ProQuest will already have embedded fonts.
4. If your dissertation does not have color pages, choose the "Print Document in Black and White Only" option; if your dissertation does have color pages, choose the "Print Document in Color" option.
5. If you have any difficulty, begin by consulting the FAQ section of the bindery's website: <http://thesisondemand.com/faq/>. You will need to enter the university's zip code, 63130, in order to access these questions and answers.

Visit Thesis on Demand:

<http://wustl.thesisondemand.com/ordersystem/index.php?uri=/orderform/orderform/&page=1>

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE SUBMISSION

Below are some common errors students encounter in the process. Students should check their dissertation for the following:

- Does your title page indicate the correct administrative unit and school?
- Is your committee alphabetized by last name, after your chair/co-chairs? Did you remember to remove Ph.D. from your faculty titles?
- Is Your Title in Sentence Case, as in This Question?
- Does your title page indicate the month and year in which your degree is being conferred (not the month/year you are submitting the dissertation)?
- If you are including an abstract page, does it match the required heading found in the Dissertation & Thesis Template?
- Is your front matter numbered correctly, starting with ii?
- Does the page numbering on your Table of Contents correspond to the correct page location?
- Does your Table of Contents include your bibliography/references/works cited?
- Have you completed the Survey of Earned Doctorates?
- Have you completed the Post-Graduation Job Survey?

- Has your school administrator received your Examination Approval Form?
- Do you have any requisite copyright permission letters?