INTRODUCTION

This booklet provides doctoral students with helpful information about policies and procedures in the doctoral degree process. It is designed to enhance the quality and consistency of advising, ensure equity and integrity in the degree process, and promote continuous progress toward completion of the degree.

The College of Education offers a variety of academic concentrations leading to the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree. The School Psychology Concentration leads to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree. A goal of these concentrations is to contribute to the preparation of education leaders and scholars in all educational settings.

There are six major steps to the doctoral degree:

1. Admission and Assignment of Initial Advisor
2. Formation of Guidance Committee and Development of a Proposed Program of Study
3. -- Formation of Comprehensive/Qualifying Examination Committee
   -- Preparation for the Completion of Comprehensive/Qualifying Examination
4. Formation of Dissertation Committee
5. Completion of Dissertation Proposal
6. Preparation for and Completion of the Dissertation and Oral Examination
Advising Guidelines for the Doctoral Degree

Graduate School regulations, requirements, and administrative processes which affect your progress toward receipt of the degree are found in the Graduate School Bulletin ([http://www.umass.edu/grad_catalog/education/cags.html](http://www.umass.edu/grad_catalog/education/cags.html)) and the Graduate School Handbook. These publications are available online at [www.umass.edu/gradschool/handbook](http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/handbook). Refer to those documents for information, regulations, and procedures concerning enrollment status, statute of limitations, grading policy, academic average for graduate degrees, satisfactory or reasonable progress, maximum credit loads, course withdrawal, incomplete grades, academic dismissal, transfer of credits, leave of absence, program fee, off-campus fee, and readmission.

The guidelines that follow provide information which reflects elements unique to the College of Education ([www.umass.edu/education](http://www.umass.edu/education)) or items which have proven especially helpful to School of Education graduate students.

Within the framework of the University Graduate School regulations and with the advice and approval of a guidance committee, students plan academic programs of study which include two consecutive semesters of full-time study (Residency Requirement).

To ensure a successful doctoral concentration, students are advised to follow the ADVISING CHECKLIST carefully and complete the doctoral forms that are benchmarks of progress toward the degree.

For further clarification of graduate procedures and processes, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs at 413-545-6984.
GENERAL ACADEMIC GUIDELINES

Doctoral Concentrations

A doctoral concentration leads to the highest degree awarded in the profession. Students should carefully plan their academic program of study during the early part of their second semester with the help of a faculty guidance committee. Previous academic work and professional experience should be considered in planning academic goals and scholarship.

A program of study will consist of:

- a minimum of 36 semester hours of course work (excluding 18 hours for the dissertation) beyond the Master’s degree (or a sound rationale for less) and include:
  - a specialization consistent with an academic concentration’s focus and goals;
  - **College of Education competencies** and/or course work in each of five areas:
    - human development,
    - social issues/justice,
    - pedagogy (facilitation of learning),
    - philosophy of education, and
    - research

The research competency usually is shown through two or more research or modes of inquiry courses.

- No greater than 9 credits from Independent Study or Independent Practicum

**Satisfactory or Reasonable Progress**

A student must make satisfactory and reasonable progress toward completion of a degree program within the Statute of Limitations for that degree. A student who is not making satisfactory or reasonable progress is subject to termination.

**Residency Requirement**

As indicated in the **Graduate School Bulletin**, a minimum of one academic year as a full-time graduate student in residence at the University is required. The residency year must consist of two consecutive semesters, either a fall/spring or a spring/fall sequence. **The summer session cannot be considered for residency.**
In order to qualify for full-time status, a doctoral student must be enrolled for **nine or more credits** per semester, either in regular graduate courses, Doctoral Dissertation Credits (899), or in some combination of both.

If a doctoral student is registered for less than 9 credits but is working full-time on their comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal of dissertation, they must **petition their Chairperson** who must then endorse and forward the petition to the Graduate Program Director.

To be in residence, a doctoral student must complete **two consecutive semesters** of 9 credits each. Dissertation credits can be used to fulfill this residency requirement.

**Statute of Limitations and Candidacy**

The statute of limitations (SOL) is the period within which all degree requirements must be completed. Doctoral Students are required to complete their program within five years of achieving candidacy, which is defined as completing the comprehensive examination. Students admitted Summer 2004 or later will have five years added to their SOL from the term in which the candidacy is effective. Students who entered prior to Summer 2004 will have the milestone added to their transcripts only but their SOL will not be changed. Two year extensions to this policy will be considered upon recommendation of the student’s chairperson and the Graduate Program Director.

Students whose statute of limitations expires will receive a letter from the Graduate School informing them of the deadline to apply for an extension. To apply for an extension, a student should write to their Committee Chairperson (i.e. that is, advisor), stating the rationale for the extension and outlining their academic progress to date. This correspondence should include a time line projecting the month and year each remaining part of the program will be completed (comprehensive examination, dissertation proposal, and final oral defense). The Chair must then endorse this request and forward it to the Office of Academic Affairs (Room 123, Furcolo Hall) at least one week before the Graduate School deadline.

**Grading System**

Only the following letter grades can be given to graduate students: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, F. These grades carry the following numerical equivalents for purposes of computing cumulative averages: A=4.0, A-=3.70, B+=3.30, B=3.0, B-=2.7, C+= 2.30, C=2.0, F=0.
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Dissertation Credits

Doctoral students are required to register for at least 18 dissertation credits. These are usually taken after the successful completion of the comprehensive examination. A maximum of nine (9) dissertation credits may be taken during any one semester. You may find that registering for dissertation credits during the summer session is cost effective. (It should be noted that summer session registration will not fulfill the residency requirement.) Dissertation credits are recorded on the transcript by the Graduate School with the grade of IP (In Progress) until the degree is completed, at which time they will be converted to SAT (Satisfactory).

Leave of Absence

Graduate students who request a leave of absence must petition the Graduate Program Director through their Committee Chairperson who, in turn, provides justification for the request to the Graduate Dean. If the Dean grants a leave of absence, the student’s statute of limitations is extended appropriately.

A student on leave of absence must maintain continuous enrollment by paying the Program Fee every semester during the leave. A student on leave relinquishes their full-time status and will lose their deferred status on any outstanding student loans.

Continuous Enrollment

Graduate students not enrolled for any course credits, but who are candidates for a degree, must pay a Continuous Enrollment Fee each semester (excluding summer terms) for continuous registration until the degree for which the student has been accepted has been formally awarded. Deadline for payment of this fee is one week after the first day of classes. Any student who does not pay this fee by the appropriate deadline, and later seeks readmission or applies for graduation, must pay the accumulated program fees plus a readmission fee. Students seeking readmission must file a written request, endorsed by their Committee Chairperson and Graduate Program Director, with the Graduate Dean.

Receiving a M.Ed. Degree or a C.A.G.S. en Route to the Doctorate

Most doctoral students already have a Master’s degree at the time of admission for doctoral study. Doctoral students who do not have a Master’s degree may file for the degree after the completion of the credit hour requirement for their program. To satisfy doctoral requirements, a minimum of 36 semester hours beyond these courses is required.
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Doctoral students may also file for a C.A.G.S. after the completion of 30 semester hours beyond the Master’s degree. Students apply for a C.A.G.S. by completing the C.A.G.S. paperwork and submitting it to the Graduate Program Office.

Doctoral students who terminate doctoral study after they complete at least 30 credit hours may apply for a terminal C.A.G.S. In this instance, the student must also submit a statement affirming that they are terminating their doctoral program for the CAGS.

DOCTORAL FORMS: PURPOSES AND EFFECT

D-1 Advising Information.

Form D-1 assures that each student meets with an advisor, receives appropriate academic advising, and receives and reviews appropriate catalogs, handbooks, guidelines, rules and regulations. The signed form is used by the Office of Academic Affairs to open a student file and enter student information on the computer database.

D-2 Formation of Guidance Committee and Proposed Program of Study.

Form D-2 establishes the doctoral Guidance Committee and records a proposed program of study.

In effect, it is an academic plan developed by the student and his/her committee. The Form D-2 will be reviewed prior to the scheduling of the Comprehensive Exams to assure that requirements agreed upon have been satisfactorily completed.

Any additional documents which are required by individual concentrations should also be attached to Form D-2.

Doctoral students who have taken graduate level courses as a non-degree student at UMass Amherst or at other universities (provided they are not used for another degree) may use up to 9 credits toward the minimum of 36 course credits required by the concentration. Students should discuss this possibility with their guidance committee (Form D-2). If the committee agrees, the student then lists the course(s) on the D-2 form.

Form D-2 must be submitted by the end of the second semester of study in the concentration.
D-2A Amendments to Program of Study.

Form D-2A should reflect any changes and Guidance Committee approval. It is used by the Office of Academic Affairs to record the approved changes in Form D-2. Since the Program of Study is a proposed plan, there may be changes or revisions.

D-3 Committee Membership/Comprehensive Qualifying Examination Committee.

Form D-3 is used to establish the student’s Comprehensive Examination Committee and to record the information in both student and faculty databases.

This committee should be established and convened prior to completion of formal course work. Committee members may be changed but note that students have found it very helpful to have a committee membership which carries through all six phases of the degree process.

D-3A Comprehensive Human Subjects Review Approval, Questionnaire, and Appendices.

Form D-3A informs the Human Subjects Review Committee of the nature of the proposed research. It also assists students in making methodological plans concerning types of interventions that are acceptable. Form D-3A and Appendices are to assure the Graduate School that a human subject’s review has been completed and the proposed research conforms to University Guidelines for Human Subjects Research. Form D-3A must be submitted prior to the submission of the research. Students conducting research involving human subjects must complete and submit all of form D-3A and Appendices.

D-4 Announcement of Comprehensive/Qualifying Examination.

Form D-4 verifies the completeness of coursework, content of the exam, and represents a public notice in the College (via the Beacon, the School of Education weekly bulletin) that the examination is to take place. The announcement must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs (Room 123, Furcolo Hall) at least two weeks prior to the examination.

D-5 Results of the Comprehensive/Qualifying Examination.

Form D-5 notifies the College and Graduate School of the results of the examination.
D-6  **Formation of Dissertation Committee.**

Form D-6 establishes the student’s Dissertation Committee. Form D-6 is used by the College and Graduate School to review the academic appropriateness of the membership and the Graduate Faculty Status of the members, and to record the information in the student and faculty databases.

The Dissertation Committee is composed of two faculty members from the College of Education (usually from the student’s department), and one faculty member from UMASS Amherst, outside of Education. Students should check with the Office of Academic Affairs to verify each faculty member’s graduate faculty status. Excerpts from page two of the Form D-6 will be published in the *Beacon*. Form D-6 should be completed at the time of or soon after completion of the Comprehensive Exam.

D-7  **Dissertation Proposal Approval.**

Form D-7 notifies the Graduate School that the student’s proposal has been approved and that committee members have agreed to review and evaluate the proposed research. Two copies of Form D-7 and the proposal are transmitted for review and processing: one for the College of Education and one for the Graduate School. The approved proposal must be on file for seven (7) months before the final oral defense may be scheduled.

D-7A **Dissertation Proposal Human Subjects Review Approval, Questionnaire, and Appendices.**

Form D-7A informs the Human Subjects Review Committee of the nature of the proposed research. It also assists students in making methodological plans concerning types of interventions that are acceptable. Form D-7A and Appendices are to assure the Graduate School that a human subject’s review has been completed and the proposed research conforms to University Guidelines for Human Subjects Research. **Form D-7A must be submitted prior to the submission of the dissertation proposal. Students conducting research involving human subjects must complete and submit all of form D-7A and Appendices.**

D-8  **Announcement of Final Oral Examination.**

Form D-8 notifies the Graduate School and the University when and where the examination is to take place, that all committee members will attend the examination, and that the committee members agree that the dissertation is complete and ready for presentation. **Form D-8 must be filed four (4) weeks before the oral defense.** Both the College of Education and the Graduate School publish scheduled oral examinations.
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D-9 Results of Final Oral Examination.

Form D-9 informs the College of Education and the Graduate School of the results of the examination. When successfully completed, the student proceeds with final required revisions of the dissertation, submits the dissertation electronically, and completes the Graduate School protocols associated with receipt of the degree and graduation.

D-10 Change of Committee Membership.

Form D-10 is used at any stage of the doctoral process to change the composition of the student’s committee. Form D-10 indicates that the new member has agreed to serve and that the previous member agreed to withdraw from the committee. The Office of Academic Affairs and the Graduate School use the information to revise appropriate databases.

Appendix:

A. Memo from College of Education Human Subjects Review Coordinators regarding CITI training
B. Memo from Human Subjects Review Committee (Informed Consent Guidelines)
C. Memo from Human Subjects Review Coordinators regarding Appropriate Informed Consent
D. Sample Informed Consent Letter
E. Review of Research Proposal Informed Consent Form

We recommended that you keep a copy of all forms for your files.