

MLC Dissertation Completion Timeline and Recommendations

The following benchmarks and recommendations should be observed in order to ensure timely completion of the dissertation. The two-fold rationale for establishing these benchmarks is (1) to assist the dissertating candidate (and dissertation research director) with management of the completion calendar, and (2) to allow faculty members a suitable amount of time to read dissertation material at the applicable intervals and then respond with appropriate feedback and support for the candidate. Dissertating candidates are expected to make every effort to meet the following benchmarks.

Please note that all candidates are encouraged to consult with the MLC departmental Graduate Director about fulfilling the residency requirement, which is of particular concern for candidates pursuing the degree on a part-time basis.

Part I (The benchmarks established for **Part I** apply primarily to full-time candidates who hold Graduate Teaching Assistantships. Part-time candidates, who may be in the workforce, can establish a different pace for coursework completion and for writing of the dissertation, keeping in mind the seven-year time limit imposed by the Office of the Graduate School for completion of all degree requirements. All candidates are subject to the benchmarks established for **Part II**.)

1. No later than the fourth semester of PhD program: completion of all coursework and fulfillment of the language proficiency requirement. (Note: the fourth semester is the benchmark for candidates who began the program with approximately 30 semester hours of transferable credit from a prior M.A.; candidates entering directly from the B.A. will typically face this same benchmark in the eighth semester of the PhD program; candidates whose M.A. credits have partly or fully expired, being more than six years old, will need to consult with the MLC departmental Graduate Director to establish the appropriate benchmark semester for completion of coursework requirements).
2. No later than the fifth semester of PhD program: completion of the Pre-prospectus / Exam / Prospectus cycle, including the successful defense of the final prospectus.
3. Sixth and seventh semesters of the PhD program (assuming a successful fifth-semester prospectus defense): Subsequent to the successful prospectus defense, the candidate will sit down with the dissertation director, and they will mutually decide on a timeline for the sixth and seventh semesters, such that the candidate will be able to meet the benchmarks described below in **Part II** leading up to and including the final doctoral semester. It is expected that the bulk of the dissertation will be drafted during the sixth and seventh semesters.
4. No later than the eighth semester of the PhD program: completion and successful defense of the dissertation, and uploading of final draft of the dissertation to ProQuest.

Part II (The benchmarks established for **Part II** will be in force for all candidates, regardless of full-time or part-time status and regardless of GTA or non-GTA status.)

1. Subsequent to the successful prospectus defense, the candidate will sit down with the dissertation director, and they will mutually decide on a specific timeline, such that the candidate will be able to meet the benchmarks described below leading up to and including the final doctoral semester. (Note: for GTAs, this benchmark overlaps with the more specific timeline given in **I.3** above). The candidate and dissertation director will also come to an understanding about how available the director will be during intervening breaks (such as summer). They will review the likely structure for the dissertation, including how many chapters will be included and when each chapter will be submitted for review by the dissertation director. If necessary, IRB approval procedures will be addressed and related calendars set. For non-GTA dissertators, the timeline agreed upon may be different from what has been established for GTAs in **I.3** above, but in all cases candidates must be aware of their seven-year completion deadline. Note that the *Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree Form* should be ready for signatures at the close of the successful prospectus defense and should then be submitted to the Office of the Graduate School, along with the following two forms, if they have not yet been submitted: *Appointment/Change of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee Form* and *Outline of the PhD Program (Plan of Study) Form*. All are available at <http://graduate.ua.edu/students/forms/>.
2. No later than three months prior to the expected dissertation defense, following consultation with the dissertation director, the candidate will send the most current version of the dissertation to the complete committee (approximately December 10-15 for a spring graduation, or in early July for a fall graduation).
3. The proposed complete draft of the dissertation should be sent to the dissertation director at least two weeks prior to its submission to the full committee (approximately the second week of February for a spring graduation, or the second week of September for a fall graduation). Candidates having co-directors should submit this a week earlier, allowing time for consultation between the co-directors.
4. The complete penultimate draft of the dissertation should be sent to the committee at least three weeks prior to the dissertation defense (approximately the last week of February for a spring graduation, or the last week of September for a fall graduation).
5. The dissertation defense should occur at least two weeks prior to the deadline for uploading the completed dissertation to ProQuest (hence the defense date would be approximately March 10-15 for a spring graduation, or October 10-15 for a fall graduation).
6. By approximately the last week of October (for fall graduation) or March (for spring graduation), the dissertation must be uploaded to ProQuest and the *Committee Acceptance Form for Electronic Thesis or Dissertation* must be submitted (available at <http://graduate.ua.edu/students/forms/>), in accordance with the requirements stipulated by the Office of the Graduate School. Candidates must check the specific day of the deadline for the relevant semester. The calendar of academic deadlines for students is consultable online at the Graduate School website: <http://graduate.ua.edu/students/deadlines/>.