

PhD Milestones Timeline & Overview

May 22, 2024



Agenda

- Recommended timeline at-a-glance
- Overview of milestones
- Dispelling myths
- Q & A

Recommended Timeline At-A-Glance

Year

01 Coursework
Complete 36 units of coursework as outlined on degree audit and in consultation with faculty advisor.

02 Coursework
Complete 36 units of coursework; any remaining from degree audit and recommendations from faculty advisor to fill information gaps.

03 Complete Written Qualifying Exam
Once all coursework is checked off on the degree audit and your faculty advisor agrees you are ready, complete take home written exam

04 Complete Oral Qualifying Exam
After successfully passing the written exam, begin writing pre-proposal and form committee with faculty advisor/chair. Once chair approves, schedule oral exam defense.

05 Dissertation Defense and Submission
Write and defend dissertation; submit for publication.



Coursework

Coursework - Years 1 & 2

- Review degree audit; map out plan for academic year using the [tentative schedule](#)
- Take 36 units each year of required courses in consultation with faculty advisor.
 - Note: faculty advisor may recommend additional courses outside of required curriculum to fill information gaps for research.
- Notify Graduate Program Administrator of substitution or waivers as you progress; email confirmation from faculty advisor is required.



Written Qualifying Exam

Written Qualifying Exam – Year 3

- After completing all required and recommended courses, prepare for written exam
- Take home format over three days during week 8 of the term
 - SDRC accommodations should come from their office directly for time extensions
- Potential outcomes
 - Pass – low pass, pass or exceptional pass
 - Fail – need to retake topic (different question) the next quarter; one more attempt

Written Qualifying Exam – Year 3

- Total questions: 3 or 4*
- Question topics
 - Area group topic – may be from a specific class identified by FA or larger topic within field
 - Methods – may be from a specific course or pre-proposal
 - Dissertation topic – recommend starting pre-proposal
 - Theory – typically only ESC group

*School Psych students have 5 questions due to APA requirements



Pre-Proposal & Oral Qualifying Exam

Pre-Proposal & Oral Qualifying Exam – Year 4

- After passing the written exam, begin working on or complete pre-proposal for your dissertation.
- Must pass the exam by the end of 4th year (12 quarters enrolled)
- Form committee of five members and nominate in R'Grad via R'Web.
 - Chair, 3 members and 1 oversight member
 - Can have co-chairs
 - Majority should be from SOE at UCR
 - Need to nominate at least two weeks prior to scheduled exam

Pre-Proposal & Oral Qualifying Exam – Year 4

- Format of exam
 - Modality – online, hybrid or in-person
 - Closed to the public (only student & committee)
 - Slide presentation of pre-proposal (what you plan to do for your dissertation study); committee will ask questions
 - Committee deliberates at conclusion of presentation; notifies student of outcome (pass/fail)
- Potential outcomes
 - Pass – advanced to candidacy
 - Fail – one more attempt

Pre-Proposal & Oral Qualifying Exam – Year 4

- Presentation slides might include:
 - What's the problem?
 - Research questions
 - Why your study matters
 - Literature review (buckets of literature that align with the problem)
 - Theory
 - Methodology

Proposal – Year 4

- Once you pass the oral exam and update your pre-proposal to reflect the feedback received from the committee, your chair will determine when the pre-proposal is complete (now the proposal)
- Once complete, your chair should email Heather to confirm approval and the item is checked off on your degree audit.
- Proceed to IRB submission (if needed)



Dissertation Defense

Dissertation Defense – Year 5

- Format of exam
 - Modality – online, hybrid or in-person
 - Open to public (anyone can attend)
 - Slide presentation of dissertation (summary of chapters); committee will ask questions
 - Committee deliberates at conclusion of presentation; notifies student of outcome
- Potential outcomes
 - Pass – no revisions or minor revisions
 - Pass with revisions – need to submit within 120 days

Dispelling Myths

- Your oral qualifying exam and dissertation committees, while ‘testing’ you, is there to help.
- Your Chair will not let you proceed until you’re ready. Remember – you are a reflection of them.
- You are not expected to know how to do everything – this is your first time and it’s okay to ask for help.



Q & A