

The Path to Graduation – Doctoral Students*

- Develop program of study and file Permanent Program of Study form with Registrar's Office after 9 hours of coursework have been completed (usually the second semester of enrollment). This form may be revised and resubmitted if the program of study changes. The program of study will also be used to compute the degree program GPA.
- Complete all required coursework and comprehensive exams. File results of comprehensive exams with the Registrar's Office and The Graduate College.
- Identify faculty advisor to serve as committee chair and develop dissertation proposal. If research protocol clearance is needed, submit application to the appropriate review board.
- Fill out Permission to Elect form, obtain required signatures and call number from department, and submit form to The Graduate College for approval prior to the first term of enrollment in dissertation credit hours. Registration for dissertation hours must comply with the University's continuous enrollment requirement as well as any additional department requirements.
- Formally appoint dissertation committee by submitting the Notification of Appointment to a Dissertation, Project, or Thesis Committee form to The Graduate College. The committee must be appointed prior to the final term of enrollment in dissertation hours, but earlier appointment is advised. The committee may be revised if changes are needed by filling out the same form marked as a revision to the committee.
- Conduct research for and write dissertation.
- Attend workshops on dissertation formatting and electronic submission of dissertation.
- Apply for a graduation audit at least four months prior to the anticipated graduation date. Earlier application is advised – the graduation date can be changed for no additional charge by contacting Graduation Auditing.
- After Graduation Auditing has confirmed that all other requirements for graduation have been met, arrange for defense of dissertation with dissertation committee and submit Dissertation Defense Scheduling form with abstract to The Graduate College at least two weeks before requested defense date (three weeks notice is strongly recommended). The defense must take place on or before the date specified in the audit letter and on the Calendar of Deadlines.
- Download and complete three dissertation approval forms to be signed after defense.
- Hold dissertation defense at least one week prior to dissertation submission deadline and secure signatures of all committee members on your dissertation approval forms.
- Format dissertation according to *Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses, Specialist Projects, and Dissertations* and submit the committee-approved document to The Graduate College by the deadline specified in the audit letter and on the Calendar of Deadlines (generally four weeks before commencement).

- Graduation Auditing will send notification of commencement details several weeks before commencement to all students who have applied to graduate in that term. The Graduate College will provide additional details for doctoral students and faculty participating in the ceremony. Since there is no ceremony in August, August doctoral graduates will be invited to participate in the December ceremony.
- Final approval of the doctoral dissertation must be attained prior to the date of commencement for the degree to be conferred.

**Note: This information is intended to serve as a brief overview of the timeline that should be followed to ensure timely graduation of doctoral students. The policies and procedures published in the Graduate Catalog and any additional requirements specified in your department's graduate handbook should be followed.. Forms and additional information can be found on The Graduate College website at <http://www.wmich.edu/grad>.*