

PATH TO GRADUATION

Doctoral Students Western Michigan University

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PROGRAM OF STUDY

Develop a program of study and file the Permanent Program of Study form with the Registrar's Office after completing 9 credit hours of coursework (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.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Identify a faculty advisor to serve as committee chair and develop your dissertation proposal. If research protocol clearance is needed, submit application to the appropriate review board.

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DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Formally appoint a 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 a new dissertation committee form marked as a revision to the committee.

DOCTORAL CANDIDACY

Complete all required coursework and comprehensive exams. File results of comprehensive exams with the Registrar's Office. Submit Admission to Doctoral Candidacy form to the Graduate College.

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DISSERTATION HOURS

Register for dissertation hours in compliance with the continuous enrollment requirement.

Note: In order to stay in compliance with the continuous enrollment requirement, please also ensure that you are registered for the appropriate credit hour(s) during the semester you plan to graduate.

THE DISSERTATION

Conduct research and write the dissertation.

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WORKSHOPS

Attend workshops on dissertation formatting and electronic submission.

GRADUATION AUDIT

Apply for a graduation audit on the Registrar's Office website at least one year prior to the anticipated graduation date. Earlier application is advised—the graduation date can be changed for no additional charge by contacting Graduation Auditing.

Note: The deadlines are firm and will not be adjusted for any reason. The deadlines to apply for graduation are: October 1 for April graduation; February 1 for June, August, and December graduations. Once the deadline has passed you will have to apply for the next graduation period.

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DEFENSE SCHEDULING

After Graduation Auditing has confirmed that all other requirements for graduation have been met, arrange for defense of dissertation with your dissertation committee and submit the 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.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL FORM

Download and complete online the Dissertation Approval form to be signed electronically on or around the time of completion of the oral defense.

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THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Hold dissertation defense at least one week prior to dissertation submission deadline and secure signatures of all committee members on your Dissertation Approval form.

SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION

Format dissertation according to *Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses, Specialist Projects, and Dissertations* and submit the committee-approved dissertation to the Graduate College by the deadline specified in the audit letter and on the Calendar of Deadlines (generally four weeks before commencement).

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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

Final approval of the doctoral dissertation must be attained prior to the date of commencement for the degree to be conferred.

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LINKS TO FORMS & CALENDAR

01. Permanent Program of Study Form at the Registrar's Office
wmich.edu/registrar/students/forms

03. Dissertation Committee Appointment Form
wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u67/2020/Committee%20Appointment_0.pdf

04. Doctoral Candidacy Form
wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u582/2020/DAC%20Admission%201.23.20.pdf

08. Graduation Application instructions at the Registrar's Office
wmich.edu/registrar/graduation-doctoral

09. Defense Scheduling Form
wmich.edu/grad/current-students/dissertation

10. Final Approval Form
wmich.edu/grad/dissertation-approval

11. Calendar of Dissertation & Defense Deadlines
wmich.edu/grad/dissertation-deadlines

12. WMU formatting guidelines
wmich.edu/grad/current-students/dissertation

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:
wmich.edu/grad/current-students/dissertation

