Doctoral Degrees

Doctor of Philosophy

The degree of doctor of philosophy (PhD) requires distinguished achievement in both scholarship and original research. The degree is granted chiefly in recognition of the candidate's high attainment and ability in a special field of an academic discipline, as shown by work on required examinations and by the preparation of a dissertation. Minimum university and school, college, or department requirements of residence and study must be satisfied. The requirements for PhD degrees established by the Division of Graduate Studies are given below. Individual programs have additional specific requirements, which are presented in the departmental sections of this catalog.

Residency and Credit Requirements

For the PhD degree, the student must complete the equivalent of at least 81 credits of graduate-level academic work beyond the bachelor's degree over the course of at least three calendar years.

The doctoral residency requirement is as follows:

- At least 27 credits of graduate course work toward the doctoral degree must be completed at the University of Oregon while classified as a doctoral student. Course work completed as a UO master's student may count toward the doctoral residency requirement under these circumstances: (1) the master's program is in the same major as the doctoral program; (2) no more than one calendar year has lapsed between the last term of enrollment as a master's student and the start of the doctoral program
- Of these 27 credits, at least 14 credits must be in regular course work—i.e., not in individualized study credits such as Research (601), Reading and Conference (605), and Special Problems (605)
- The 18 required credits in Dissertation (603) do not count toward the residency requirement

Transfer of Credit for Doctoral Students

There is no formal university transfer credit process for doctoral students. Each program sets its own policy regarding acceptance of transfer credits, and is responsible for tracking how transfer credits fit into departmental degree requirements. Transfer credits can only be used to meet departmental degree requirements; they cannot be used toward the doctoral residency requirement or the 18 required credits of 603 Dissertation.

Language Requirement

Individual departments or programs may require knowledge of a second language or of other specialized disciplines, such as computer science or statistics, as part of a PhD program. Information about these requirements is available from the department or program offering the degree.

Candidates for the doctor of philosophy degree at the University of Oregon are expected to have proficiency in at least one language in addition to English if a substantial, relevant body of literature in one or more languages exists in the candidate's specialized field of dissertation research. It is the responsibility of the candidate's advisor or doctoral committee to determine which languages the candidate is expected to know before beginning dissertation research. Guidelines for language proficiency are established by the candidate's home department or program.

Advisory Committee

The advisory committee, appointed by the department, determines the work to be completed in light of the student's academic background and objectives. This committee usually consists of three or four members, and the student's advisor is chair.

Examinations and Advancement to Candidacy

Every PhD student must pass comprehensive examinations (oral, written, or both) or other similar requirements set by the department that cover the primary areas of the student's program and, if applicable, any supporting area required by the department. The student is responsible for material directly covered in completed graduate courses and for additional independent study in his or her field. Students should consult their department's/program's website or graduate handbook for information about requirements for advancing to candidacy.

Within two weeks of the student meeting these requirements, an advancement to candidacy form must be submitted. See the Division of Graduate Studies website for details.

Advancing to candidacy signifies that the student has completed their coursework, as well as other requirements as defined by their graduate program, and is ready to move forward to the dissertation phase. Minimum requirements for advancement to candidacy:

- Completed UO residency requirement (https://graduatestudies.uoregon.edu/academics/policies/doctoral/residency-requirements/)
- Completed pre-advancement coursework required by the program
- Completed all program-level non-coursework advancement requirements
- Cumulative UO GPA of at least 3.0
- In good standing (https://graduatestudies.uoregon.edu/academics/policies/general/satisfactory-progress/) according to UO and program standards

Dissertation

All PhD candidates must submit a dissertation based on independent and original research. The dissertation must contribute significantly to knowledge, show a mastery of the literature of the subject, be written in acceptable literary style, and conform to the standards outlined in the University of Oregon Thesis and Dissertation Style and Policy Manual. The manual is available from the Division of Graduate Studies website. Doctoral dissertations must be submitted electronically to ProQuest. Copyright registration is optional. Theses and dissertations completed at the University of Oregon will be available in Scholars' Bank, the UO's open-access repository for the intellectual work of its faculty, students, and staff at the University of Oregon.

Research Compliance

See Research Compliance (https://catalog.uoregon.edu/archive/2025-2026/graduate/general-requirements-policies/#researchcompliance) in the **General Requirements and Policies** section of this catalog.

Dissertation Committee

Following advancement to candidacy, the candidate's department proposes the membership of the dissertation committee to the vice provost of graduate studies, who appoints the committee after approving it.

The dissertation committee consists of a minimum of four members, each with a particular role. A detailed description of the policy on dissertation committees is available on the Division of Graduate Studies website.

Dissertation Registration

Registration for Dissertation (603) is allowed only after the candidate has advanced to candidacy. PhD students must have a minimum of 18 credits of Dissertation (603) to graduate. PhD students are required to enroll for a minimum of 3 credits of Dissertation (603) in the term of degree completion (unless completing in Summer term) and during any other term in which they are utilizing faculty time or university resources.

Defense of Dissertation

A formal, public defense must take place at a date set by the committee chair and approved by the Division of Graduate Studies.

Tentative approval of the dissertation by the committee is recommended prior to formal defense. This evaluation is based on copies of the final manuscript, which the candidate provides for the dissertation committee at least three weeks before the formal defense.

The approved application for final oral defense must also be filed with the Division of Graduate Studies two weeks before the formal defense. Visit the Division of Graduate Studies website for specific instructions.

The time and place of the defense must be publicly noted. The dissertation committee must be present at the defense (with some exceptions—see the Division of Graduate Studies website for details). Remote defenses are also allowed; refer to the Division of Graduate Studies website for details.

Completion of Dissertation

Within two weeks following the defense of the dissertation but before the dissertation is submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies, committee members must confirm their approval of the defense, only if they have seen and approved what is substantially a final draft and if they are willing to delegate the oversight of any remaining minor revisions to the chair. If this is not the case, they should not approve the defense. Approval requires a unanimous vote. In the event of a split vote, the vice provost for graduate studies determines the review procedure after consultation with the student, the department chair (or the school or college dean), and the committee. Once the dissertation has been approved by the committee, the student must submit the dissertation electronically to the Division of Graduate Studies. Visit the Division of Graduate Studies website for deadlines and submission instructions.

Time Limit

The seven-year time limit for completing a doctoral degree begins with the first term of admission as a doctoral student at the University of Oregon. The residency requirement, the completion of advancement to candidacy requirements, and the completion of the doctoral dissertation must all be accomplished within this seven-year period. Taking academic leave does not automatically extend the seven-year deadline.

A petition for an extension of the seven-year time limit can only be considered if the student has already advanced to candidacy and has an approved dissertation proposal by the end of the seventh year. Petitions for extension of the seven-year limit may include the requirements of recompleting the doctoral residency requirement, advancement to candidacy requirements, or both. Petitions are evaluated case by case and are not automatically granted. Students on seven-year extensions must submit quarterly renewals outlining their progress before they are allowed to register for the next quarter.

Continuous Enrollment

Unless academic leave has been approved, a student enrolled in a doctoral program must attend the university continuously until all the program and university requirements, including submission of the dissertation to the Division of Graduate Studies, have been met. To be continuously enrolled, the student must register for 3 graduate credits each term excluding summer sessions. See Academic Leave (https://catalog.uoregon.edu/archive/2025-2026/graduate/general-requirements-policies/#onleave) under General Requirements and Policies.

Academic Leave

While on academic leave, the doctoral candidate acknowledges that he or she is not using any university or faculty services (e.g., no examinations are being taken, no committee changes are being processed, and no dissertation chapters are being submitted for review). Academic leave maintains the student's status as a degree candidate and reserves a place for dissertation supervision and other academic affairs upon the student's return to active enrollment within the seven-year time limit.

Doctor of Education

The Doctor of Education (DEd) degree is granted in recognition of the candidate's mastery of theory, practice, and research in professional education. The general requirements for residence, dissertation, advancement to candidacy, time limit, and continuous enrollment are the same as for the PhD degree. See the **College of Education (https://catalog.uoregon.edu/archive/2025-2026/education/)** section of this catalog for details.

Doctor of Musical Arts

Requirements for the doctor of musical arts (DMA) degree include formal admission, proficiency and comprehensive examinations, second languages, a program of study including area of emphasis, and a dissertation, lecture document, or digital portfolio. Requirements for residence, time limit, and continuous enrollment are the same as those listed for the PhD degree. See the **School of Music and Dance** section of this catalog for details.

Chronological Summary of Procedures Leading to Doctoral Degrees

1. **Admission**
2. **Continuous enrollment.** Students enrolled in advanced degree programs must attend the university continuously (except for summers) until all the program's requirements are completed, unless academic leave has been approved. Minimum enrollment is 3 graduate credits a term.
3. **Course work and residence.** Student's advisory committee, appointed by the department, school, or college, determines the program, which must include at least 81 credits of accredited graduate work beyond the bachelor's degree over the course of at least three years, of which at least 27 credits must be completed at

the University of Oregon, and of which 18 credits are in Dissertation (603).

4. **Second languages or other specialized knowledge.** Regulations are set by the department, school, or college.
5. **Advancement to candidacy.** Completion of comprehensive examinations or other similar requirements covering the major discipline advances the student to candidacy for the degree. Advancing to candidacy signifies that the student has completed their coursework, as well as other requirements as defined by their graduate program, and is ready to move forward to the dissertation phase.
6. **Appointment of dissertation committee, registration for Dissertation (603), and completion of dissertation**. The committee is appointed following advancement to candidacy and at least six months before completion of the dissertation. Typically, the committee consists of at least three members of the graduate faculty of the candidate's home department as well as an Institutional Representative who is a graduate faculty member from outside the candidate's department. A minimum of 18 credits in Dissertation (603) are required after advancement.
7. **Application for graduation** made to the Division of Graduate Studies. Deadlines and instructions are available on the Division of Graduate Studies website.
8. **Defense of dissertation.** The approved application for final oral defense must be filed with the Division of Graduate Studies no later than two weeks before the date of defense.
9. **Dissertation submission and publication.** Dissertations are submitted electronically through ProQuest. Detailed instructions are available on the Division of Graduate Studies website.
10. **Conferral of degree.** The degree is conferred at end of term in which all degree requirements are satisfied.
11. **Diploma issued.** The diploma is issued by Office of the Registrar approximately 6-10 weeks after the end of the term of degree conferral.