

Doctoral Degree Policies

Degrees Offered

Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.)

The D.M.A. is the terminal professional practical degree in music, designed for performers and conductors wishing to acquire the highest performance abilities.

Doctor of Nursing Practice (D.N.P.)

The Doctor of Nursing Practice degree is a clinical doctorate offered for post baccalaureate nurses with specialization as a Family Nurse Practitioner. An individually-tailored program of study for the D.N.P. is also available for the certified advanced practice nurse with a master's degree.

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) is available with two options: 1) Institutional Analysis and 2) Occupational and Adult Education. The degree requires extensive field service involving qualitative and/or quantitative research, leading to a dissertation that will apply a theory at an institution.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

The Doctor of Philosophy degree is awarded in recognition of high scholarly attainment as evidenced by a period of successful advanced study, the satisfactory completion of prescribed examinations, and the development of an acceptable dissertation covering some significant aspect of a major field of learning.

Residence Requirements

Graduate study for the Doctor of Philosophy degree normally requires a minimum of three (3) years of full-time study beyond the baccalaureate degree. A student who has a master's degree or equivalent must devote at least one of the two remaining academic years of study in residence at North Dakota State University.

Language Requirements

Some graduate programs have a language requirement and, if so, the program will determine the language or languages applicable to the candidate's field of study. International students whose native language is not English may satisfy the language requirement in their native language, providing their graduate program approves. In these cases, the basis for proficiency will be the candidate's use of English, rather than the foreign language.

Language proficiency is certified by the Department of Modern Languages.

Supervisory Committee

The supervisory committee should be formed during the term immediately after the major adviser is identified for the student, and members should be identified before the plan of study is formulated, so that all committee members have a chance to contribute to the Plan of Study.

The supervisory committee will have at least four members. The members consist of:

1. The major adviser, who must be a full or affiliate member of the graduate faculty Level 1. The student selects the adviser with approval of the program administrator and the Dean of the Graduate College. The major adviser-student relationship must be a mutually acceptable one. The major adviser will act as the chair of the student's supervisory committee and will be in charge of the Plan of Study. The remaining members of the committee must be agreed upon by the student and the major adviser.
2. A second member, who must be a full or affiliate member of the graduate faculty.
3. A third member, who could be either a faculty member or a qualified off-campus expert in the field. If this committee member is not a full or affiliate member of the graduate faculty, the approval of the Dean of the Graduate College is required. Approval by the dean requires a memo from the program/department chair explaining the qualifications of the person to be on the committee and the person's curriculum vitae.
4. The Graduate School Representative (GSR) is chosen by the student, in consultation with the committee chair, at the time of the supervisory committee formation.

Eligibility Requirements: The GSR must be a full member of the graduate faculty, AND be either a tenured faculty member outside the committee chair's/co-chairs' home department(s) OR a faculty member outside the primary college of the committee chair/co-chairs. If the student is in an interdisciplinary program, the GSR must also be outside of that program. Additionally, the GSR must be clear of any conflicts of interest with either the student or the committee chair/co-chairs. Examples of possible conflicts of interest may include budgetary relationships, family or financial, personal relationships, or research and/or publication relationships between the GSR and either the student or the committee chair.

The role of the GSR is to ensure that Graduate College policies are followed, that the expectations for the student's performance are reasonable, and that the interactions between the student and the supervisory committee are conducted in a professional and equitable manner. Graduate School Representatives serving on a committee for a program that has been approved by the Graduate College to use an outcomes-based approach to assess doctoral student performance also have the responsibility to document that the process and assessment of the student's performance in the doctoral program match the defined program outcomes. The GSR signs preliminary and final examination reports to confirm that these standards have been met.

Plan of Study

The Plan of Study should be submitted to the Graduate College for approval no later than the term immediately after the supervisory committee is formed and must be filed in the Graduate School prior to scheduling the comprehensive/preliminary examination. Revisions may be made, with the Request for Change form, later as advisable and necessary, but must be approved by the student, adviser, the administrator of the student's program, and the graduate dean.

Each program has the responsibility of defining the requirements for a major in its disciplinary area. This information should be made available to students electronically and/or in the program handbook.

Didactic, Greek for "to teach", credits are courses numbered 601-689, 691; 700-789, 791; 800-889 and 891.

Bachelor's to Doctoral Degree

- Minimum 90 credits total
- 27 of the 90 must be didactic credits
- 15 of the 27 must be should be 700 or 800 level course work

Master's to Doctoral Degree

- Minimum 60 credits total completed at NDSU
- 15 of the 60 credits must be 700-800 level didactic courses
- Specific programs may required completion of additional credits

Transfer of Credit

All graduate credits used to meet the requirements of a doctoral degree must be approved by the supervisory committee, the program administrator, the academic dean, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Bachelor's to Doctoral students: the doctorate requires 27 credits of course work, and of these, no more than 12 may be transferred by the petition process.

All transfer credits

1. College-level course work from regionally accredited colleges or universities (or equivalent for international institutions) is eligible for acceptance in transfer (credits from international institutions can be transferred only if approved by a committee from the student's program);
2. must carry only grades of A or B on a 4-point scale;
3. must have been earned within a 10-year period at the time of the final examination;
4. must be clearly graduate level (a course listed as both graduate and/or undergraduate level will not be transferred);
5. must not be a continuing education, correspondence, extension, or workshop course;
6. must not be internship, individual study, special problem, or research (disquisition) courses, or courses graded Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory;
7. must not have been used to fulfill the requirements of a baccalaureate or master's degree;
8. must be verified by an official transcript; and
9. will not be used in calculation of the grade point average.

It is the responsibility of the student to provide official transcripts of graduate courses taken elsewhere to the Graduate College.

NOTE: The special problem credits in item (6) above are equivalent to North Dakota State University 696/796 Special Topic credits.

Time Limitation

Graduate credit for any course work that is more than 10 calendar years old at the time of the final examination cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements. The final examination is valid for one year. Should a student not have his/her disquisition approved by the Graduate College or fail to meet other degree requirements, the final examination must be retaken.

If a period of time two years or greater lapses before the disquisition is approved by the Graduate School, the student must reapply, re-defend the dissertation and must register for a minimum of two (2) credits. The student's degree will post at the end of the semester in which the disquisition is approved by the Graduate School.

Plan of Study

A student must be in good academic standing to submit a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study should be submitted to the Graduate College for approval no later than the term immediately after the supervisory committee is formed and must be filed in the Graduate School prior to scheduling the comprehensive/ preliminary examination. Revisions may be made, with the Request for Change form, later as advisable and necessary, but must be approved by the student, adviser, the administrator of the student's program, and the graduate dean.

Each program has the responsibility of defining the requirements for a major in its disciplinary area. This information should be made available to students electronically and/or in the program handbook.

Didactic Credit-Based Doctoral Degrees

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- Specific programs may required completion of additional credits

Outcomes-Based Doctoral Degrees

Ph.D. programs using an outcome-based curriculum are not expected to include a minimum number of didactic credits. The total number of credits required for a degree is the same as didactic credit based programs, but the credits can be earned through any credit-based academic activity.

Programs must have an approved statement of expected program outcomes and a strategy for measuring the desired outcomes. The program outcomes must include, but are not limited to:

1. Ability to synthesize information
2. Demonstrated ability to think critically
3. Effective written and oral communication skills
4. Mastery of major methods or analytical approaches of the field
5. Ability to contribute creatively to the discipline
6. Professional and ethical behavior standards consistent with the expectations of the discipline
7. Professional and workplace skills necessary to succeed in chosen career path

Changes in curriculum must be submitted through the proper curriculum approval channels (<https://www.ndsu.edu/facultysenate/acadaffairs/channels>).

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4. must be clearly graduate level (a course listed as both graduate and/or undergraduate level will not be transferred);
5. must not be a continuing education, correspondence, extension, or workshop course;
6. must not be internship, individual study, special problem, or research (disquisition) courses, or courses graded Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory;
7. must not have been used to fulfill the requirements of a baccalaureate or master's degree;
8. must be verified by an official transcript; and
9. will not be used in calculation of the grade point average.

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If a period of time two years or greater lapses before the disquisition is approved by the Graduate School, the student must reapply, re-defend the dissertation and must register for a minimum of two (2) credits. The student's degree will post at the end of the semester in which the disquisition is approved by the Graduate School.

IRB, IBC, and/or IACUC Approval

If a proposed graduate research project involves human, animal, or biohazard subjects, it must be submitted for review and approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), and/or the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). This process should be initiated by the student after his or her supervisory committee has approved the final research design, because IRB, IBC, and/or IACUC approval must be obtained **before** the research project commences and cannot be granted retroactively. A copy of the appropriate approval letters are to be included when the dissertation is submitted for editing.

Disquisitions that involve research using humans or animals as subjects or using biohazard materials will not be approved by the Graduate College if such research has not been previously approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), or Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) as appropriate. Every effort should be made by advisers to ensure that students are aware of these University requirements.

Examinations

The supervisory committee shall serve as the examining committee of which the major adviser shall serve as chair.

A comprehensive/preliminary examination will be required of each student after the greater portion of courses has been completed. This examination consists of a written part and an oral part. After passing the comprehensive/preliminary examination, the student will be formally admitted to candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. At least one academic semester must elapse between the comprehensive/preliminary examination and the final examination.

The final examination will be taken after the candidate has completed the course work and dissertation. This oral examination will be concerned primarily with the dissertation, but it may also cover material from course work, especially those courses fundamental to the dissertation. The dissertation in a near final form must be given to the committee members at least seven (7) days prior to the final examination.

Once a date is finalized with the student's supervisory committee, the Notification of Scheduled Examination form (http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/gradschool.ndsu.edu/Forms/Student_Forms/Request_to_Schedule_01.pdf) must be filed with the Graduate College at least two (2) weeks prior to the examination.

At the conclusion of each oral examination, the examining committee shall record, in writing, its approval or disapproval of the candidate and file the appropriate report of examination form to the Graduate College within seven (7) days of the exam.

A negative vote by more than one member of the student's committee will signify failure of either the comprehensive/preliminary examination or the final examination. Upon permission of a majority of the supervisory committee members, a candidate is allowed to take each examination twice. The supervisory committee will set a date at least one month after the failed examination. Exception to this time limit will be considered by the Dean of the Graduate College upon presentation of written justification from the chair of the supervisory committee in consultation with the committee members. Should both attempts to pass an examination result in failure, the candidate may request to take the examination a third time. A request for a third examination requires the support of the supervisory committee and program administrator, and the approval of the Dean of the Graduate College after consultation with the Graduate Council.

Continuous enrollment is required (fall and spring semester) until all degree requirements are completed, including Graduate School approval of the dissertation. Students defending in the summer semester must register for summer semester. To participate in commencement, the student must have passed the final examination seven days prior to the commencement ceremony.

Dissertation Video

Doctoral students are required to submit a three-minute video summarizing their dissertation research for a lay audience. The video should be produced during the final semester of study (specific timing varies by program). Some programs require these videos to be shown to the supervisory committee at the time of final defense, while others do not. Students should consult with their adviser regarding program policies. At a minimum, a student cannot successfully produce the video until the results of his or her research are known.

Dissertation

The dissertation must show originality and demonstrate the student's capacity for independent research. It must embody results of research that constitute a definitive contribution to knowledge.

Filing the Dissertation

After the final examination, the student incorporates all revisions into the disquisition as required by the supervisory committee. Once the corrections are made, students must submit the following items to the Graduate School:

- signed approval page
- IRB/IACUC/IBC Compliance Notification
- disquisition
- disquisition processing fee

The student will have one (1) year from the date of the final examination to complete the Graduate School disquisition review process and all other degree requirements. Should the disquisition not receive final approval or any other degree requirements not be completed within this time limit, the student must repeat the final examination. If a period of time two (2) years or greater lapses before the final copies are submitted, the student must reapply to the Graduate College, retake the final examination, register for a minimum of two (2) credits and request an extension.

A degree posts at the end of the semester in which the disquisition is approved and other degree requirements are completed.