Candidacy Requirements
Effective Fall 2020

Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM)
Michigan Program in Survey Methodology (MPSM)

To advance to Candidacy, a student must:

1. Complete all course requirements in accordance with their home program’s policy,
2. Complete four terms in the Doctoral Seminar,
3. Earn a passing grade on the Qualifying Exam within twelve months of entering the program, and
4. Earn a passing grade on the final paper and final presentation at the end of the last term of the Doctoral Seminar.

Final decisions about Candidacy will be made following the completion of a student’s final term in the Doctoral Seminar at the May MPSM / JPSM faculty meeting. A faculty discussion will take place to determine if a student has met the requirements outlined above. Other circumstances will be considered including work performance (if applicable), professional development and the likelihood that the student will find a dissertation chair. The program directors will communicate the candidacy decision to each student no later than May 31. The department will process the necessary paperwork for approved students to advance to candidacy by the Fall of their 3rd year of doctoral study.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students must meet registration requirements based on the requirements of their home program. Students will be provided with these requirements prior to the start of their doctoral program.

DOCTORAL SEMINAR

The Doctoral Seminar is designed to help students:

A. Gain a thorough knowledge of important literature,
B. Identify gaps in the survey methodology literature worthy of further investigation,
C. Formulate research questions and hypotheses centered on the gaps,
D. Design a research study including planned statistical analyses (experimental, quasi-experimental, observational) for addressing specific research aims, and
E. Communicate the study’s rationale and design in writing as well as in an oral presentation and interaction with faculty and other students.
DOCTORAL SEMINAR: FINAL PAPER AND ORAL PRESENTATION

The Doctoral Seminar is designed to assess whether a student has sufficient knowledge, creativity, and aptitude to develop and complete a dissertation. To that end, each student will develop a final paper to be submitted and presented during their final (4th) term in the Doctoral Seminar.

Students are allowed to consult with any faculty members, including but not limited to Doctoral Seminar instructors, an academic advisor, or (if one has been chosen) a dissertation advisor, about their research ideas and questions. The faculty advice can include 1) whether the topic is suitable for such a paper, 2) pointers to relevant bodies of literature the student may not be aware of, and 3) whether the proposed research is well designed. Advice should not include detailed feedback on theory or design nor editorial assistance for grammar, format, or organization. Individual faculty members will use their judgment to determine what kinds of discussions with the students they feel able to take part in, given these broad guidelines.

Paper Format and Schedule

The final paper in the doctoral seminar will consist of at least three sections: (1) a description of a problem or gap in the literature identified by the student and accompanied by a review of relevant literature, (2) a proposal for a research study that would fill this gap in that literature, and (3) a detailed description of the study design that considers possible outcomes and their implications. The paper must be clearly written. It is is expected to be 20-30 double spaced pages (not longer), with 12-point font and one-inch margins, not including tables, references, and figures.

The paper should address a problem that would be appropriate for a dissertation. The design of the proposed study should be informed by what is feasible given the resources typically available for dissertation research. Methods of data collection, generation, or analysis should be proposed to investigate the problem.

Students are strongly encouraged to use the final paper from the Doctoral Seminar as the basis of their dissertation proposal (prospectus). While the student may develop a different topic for their dissertation research, this is inefficient and less likely to be successful because it does not build on work already completed and effort already invested.

The student must deliver the paper to the Doctoral Seminar instructors at least 14 calendar days (i.e., including non-business days) before the oral presentation. Failure to submit the paper 14 days prior to the scheduled date will disqualify the student from being examined, barring extenuating circumstances.
Oral Presentation Format and Schedule

The oral presentation is a meeting of the student, instructors of the Doctoral Seminar, and any faculty, students or staff who wish to attend. During the oral presentation, the student will give a brief 15-20 minute introduction to the research topic and then respond to questions raised by Doctoral Seminar instructors as well as faculty in attendance.

The presentation will be scheduled outside of the regularly scheduled time for the Doctoral Seminar and will take place no later than May 1 of the student's second year in the program. The schedule will be determined by the doctoral seminar instructors in order to accommodate the number of second year students in a given year.
Guidelines for Implementing PhD Requirements

This document is intended to clarify the time frame and requirements for completion of the Ph.D. by a full time student. It consists of a “typical” schedule and a series of requirements. At certain points (indicated below), explicit permission will be needed for an extension of the deadline. More detailed descriptions of the Qualifying and Comprehensive Examinations are available from the Director of JPSM.

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<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Qualifying Exam</td>
<td>May to August (assuming the student enters the program in a Fall semester) or following the student’s second semester.</td>
<td>Typically, doctoral students will spend their first year taking core courses in preparation for the Qualifying Exam. Students who enter the program having taken the JPSM core courses, or their equivalents, may take the Qualifying Exam before completing two semesters. Permission from the Director of JPSM is required to either take the exam early or to postpone it beyond August. There will be three possible outcomes of the Exam—Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. A student receiving a Conditional Pass will be given a specific set of tasks to perform (conditions), as a way of demonstrating mastery of the relevant areas. Upon completion of the conditions, the student will be re-evaluated by the Examinations Committee to make a final pass/fail decision. A student receiving a Fail would normally not continue in the program, although the student may petition the faculty to retake the exam at the next sitting.</td>
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<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Choose advisor(s)</td>
<td>September or October (or, beginning of the third semester) Before the end of the summer of the student’s second year in the program, assuming the student enters the program in a Fall semester, or no later than the conclusion of the student’s second year in the program</td>
<td>The Advisor(s) will develop a detailed plan and schedule for the student; this/these advisor(s) will likely serve on the dissertation committee. The committee will consist of a member of the Examinations Committee and three other members of the faculty, not including the instructors from the doctoral seminar. If the student has already selected a thesis advisor, the advisor will not be part of this committee. The comprehensive examination consists of a written research proposal and oral examination. The research proposal is typically based on the student’s research paper from the Doctoral Seminar or on another topic if the seminar paper was not considered to be acceptable by the course instructors. Questions at the oral examination determine if the student demonstrates sufficient mastery of the proposed topic and survey methodology to proceed to write a dissertation. There will be three possible outcomes of the Exam—Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. The second outcome may require the student to rewrite the research proposal and/or be re-examined by the committee. Normally, students given a grade of Fail would not be permitted to pursue the Ph.D. further. However, students may petition the faculty to submit a new research paper within the next 6 months. A student is advanced to candidacy after the Comprehensive Examination is passed.</td>
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<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Assemble Dissertation Committee</td>
<td>Fall or Spring of third year</td>
<td>The Dissertation Committee for JPSM students must include at least five members, at least three of whom are “Regular” Maryland faculty members (students must contact the Examinations Committee for a list of “Regular” Maryland faculty members); 1 or 2 must be from outside JPSM. The Dissertation Committee for Michigan students must consist of four members and follow the Rackham School of Graduate Studies guidelines for membership. The student is expected to work closely with the advisor to formulate a dissertation topic and to write the prospectus. The student provides the dissertation committee with a written prospectus and makes an oral presentation of the proposed research. Oral presentations to the entire JPSM faculty and student body are encouraged to inform the broader community about the research being conducted in JPSM. The dissertation committee will decide whether the Prospectus describes an acceptable topic and may require revisions if it deems necessary.</td>
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<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Draft of dissertation</td>
<td>January 1 of year 4 (or beginning of eighth semester)</td>
<td>The dissertation itself should be completed in no more than two years after passing the Comprehensive Examination. The dissertation should consist of material suitable for one or more journal articles or chapters, though it will generally be more detailed; most dissertations will report a series of experiments, non-experimental studies, new statistical methodology or innovative modeling, secondary analyses, or simulations. The oral defense will be partly open to the public during the candidate’s presentation; it will then be restricted to the Committee, the candidate and interested faculty members not on the Committee. All committee members vote on the outcome. The possible outcomes are Pass, Fail, or Deferred. Any extensions beyond two full years after the Comprehensive Exam will require approval of the Committee and the Director of JPSM. Michigan students must accumulate 36 “fee totals” (9 per semester) before candidacy and 32 after candidacy. This means that a student is not eligible for candidacy until after the second year has been completed. Michigan students entering the PhD program with what the faculty considers to be a “relevant Masters degree” are only required to accumulate 18 fee totals prior to candidacy, i.e. two semesters. The requirement to accumulate 32 fee totals (8 per semester) after candidacy may delay graduation for some students until the end of year 4. Allowable fee totals are capped at 9 per term before candidacy and 8 per term after candidacy so it is not possible to speed completion of the program by registering for additional classes per term.</td>
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<td>Second draft of dissertation</td>
<td>June 1 (or end of 8th semester)</td>
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<td>Oral defense</td>
<td>August (or 3 months following second draft)</td>
<td>The Maryland Graduate School requires that every student seeking the Ph.D. satisfactorily complete a minimum of 12 semester hours of dissertation credits (899).</td>
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