

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.

Time Period	Requirement	Date	Comments
Year 1	Qualifying Exam	May to August (assuming the student enters the program in a Fall semester) or following the student’s second semester.	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Year 2	Choose advisor(s) Comprehensive Examination	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	<p>The Advisor(s) will develop a detailed plan and schedule for the student; this/these advisor(s) will likely serve on the dissertation committee.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A student is advanced to candidacy after the Comprehensive Examination is passed.</p>

Year 3	Assemble Dissertation Committee	Fall or Spring of third year	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
	Dissertation Prospectus	June (or at the end of the 6 th semester)	
Year 4	Draft of dissertation	January 1 of year 4 (or beginning of eighth semester)	<p>The dissertation itself should be completed in no more than two years after passing the Comprehensive Examination.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>Any extensions beyond two full years after the Comprehensive Exam will require approval of the Committee and the Director of JPSM</i></p>
	Second draft of dissertation	June 1 (or end of 8 th semester)	
	Oral defense	August (or 3 months following second draft)	

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.

The Maryland Graduate School requires that every student seeking the Ph.D. satisfactorily complete a minimum of 12 semester hours of dissertation credits (899).