

# Ph.D. Handbook

2018-2019

## Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development

*This Handbook is designed to provide Ph.D. students in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development (OLPD) information about graduate programs and procedures. The Handbook augments and is not a substitute for other sources of information. The University of Minnesota Graduate Education Catalog provides information about major program regulations, and the Twin Cities Class Schedule includes regulations and deadlines for each semester. The [Graduate School Policies and Governance website](#) is also useful. These resources and many others are available on the web.*

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## Pathway to the Ph.D.: Tasks and When You Should Complete Them

*Tasks noted here with asterisks (\*\*\*) have associated deadlines.  
Your progress on these tasks is checked during your annual review in Spring Semester,  
in accordance with the **Good Progress Rule**.*

### Step 1: Taking Courses / Credits

- Take courses or other credits as required or advised in your program.  
Plan to complete coursework within 2-3 years. Register for credits throughout your program, in accordance with the **Continuous Enrollment Rule**.
- Declare a minor (optional).  
A minor, if any, must be declared before submitting the GPAS form.  
You cannot declare a minor after the oral preliminary examination.
- \*\*\* Submit the Graduate Planning & Audit System (GPAS) form.  
Submit this form by the Fall Term of your second year or by the time you have completed 30 credits in the program (not counting transfer credits)
- \*\*\* Establish the oral preliminary examination committee.  
See the Appendix. This task needs to be completed within 3 months after submitting the GPAS form.

### Step 2: Written Preliminary Examination

- \*\*\* Write the written preliminary proposal.
- \*\*\* Take the written preliminary examination.  
Students normally take the written prelim exam during the summer after the first year in the doctoral program, the winter of the second year, or the summer after the second year.  
You must have completed 19 credits or be on track to complete 19 credits before the examination due date.

### Step 3: Oral Preliminary Examination

- Write the special paper, unless you are in the Human Resource Development program, which does not require a special paper.
- \*\*\* Take the oral preliminary examination.  
Plan to take the oral preliminary examination by the end of the second continuous semester (including summer session) following the term in which you passed the written prelim exam.

### Step 4: Dissertation Proposal

- Write the dissertation proposal.
- \*\*\* Establish the final oral examination committee.  
See the Appendix. This task needs to be completed before the proposal meeting, even if all members are the same as for the oral preliminary examination.
- \*\*\* Convene the dissertation proposal meeting.  
Convene the proposal meeting within six months after passing the oral prelim exam.
- Submit and obtain approval of your proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB).  
Submit your proposal after your committee has approved your dissertation proposal. Obtain IRB approval of your proposal before beginning any data collection or other dissertation research.

### Step 5: Dissertation

- Conduct dissertation research and write dissertation.
- Obtain your reviewers' signatures on the Reviewers' Report and submit it.
- Take the final oral examination.
- Make required revisions in your dissertation, if any.
- \*\*\* Submit dissertation and all required documents with eight years of entering the Ph.D. program, in accordance with the **8-Year Time Limit Rule**.
- Graduate (!). Attend the commencement ceremony (!)

## Three Important Rules

There are three important rules that you need to be aware of before you begin your doctoral program and throughout your time as a doctoral student: the Good Progress Rule, the Continuous Enrollment Rule, and the 8-Year Time Limit Rule

### Continuous Enrollment Rule

*All graduate students must register for courses or credits every Fall and Spring semester in order to maintain active student status.*

The One Stop Student Services website contains current information and policies regarding [registration to maintain “active” status](#). Even students who have completed all required coursework or all thesis credits must register.

Students who do not register by the last day of the registration period in Fall or Spring Semester will be automatically discontinued from the program and will no longer be considered active in the program. They will have to reapply for admission into the program, and readmission is never guaranteed.

### Registration Exceptions

The University has specified deadlines each semester for adding or dropping courses. If you wish to request a change to your registration (for example, to add or drop a course, or to change your grade basis for a course) after a deadline or if you wish to register for more than 18 credits, you need to [complete an online registration exception request form](#). Once submitted to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, the form will be forwarded to the proper individuals for approval. Note that University policy explicitly prohibits changes in grade basis (such as switching from A-F to S/N) after the second week of class.

### Leaves of Absence

The University of Minnesota leave of absence policy for graduate students allows graduate students to interrupt their enrollment for up to two years for reasons they cannot control (e.g., military service, medical issues, etc.) and return under the rules and policies in effect when they left without having to re-apply or negatively affecting their time to degree. ***Taking a leave of absence should be used only as a last resort, not a first.*** Full information regarding the University's [leave-of-absence policy can be accessed online](#).

The Department will grant a leave of absence for only one year or less at a time. Per the policy described above, a student may apply for a second year, if necessary, but the student must submit a separate application.

Please note the following points:

- Students should consult with their advisor prior to requesting an leave of absence. Being approved for a leave of absence does not guarantee the preservation of any financial aid or assistantship appointment the student may be currently holding.
- The submission of a leave-of-absence request does not guarantee that it will be approved by the Department or College, nor does it automatically cancel any active registrations.
- Barring an unexpected emergency situation, leave-of-absence requests must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the term in which the leave will begin.
- Students on a leave of absence will not have access to any University resources that are exclusive to students (including library privileges, access to faculty, and so on). The only exception to this is use of University email.
- Students returning from a leave must fill out a leave-of-absence re-entry form before the semester in which they wish to re-enter.
- Students may return early so long as the leave-of-absence re-entry form is submitted before the semester in which they wish to re-enter.
- Failure to return by the semester indicated on the leave-of-absence application will result in the student being discontinued from the program.
- International students should consult with International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) prior to requesting a leave of absence as such action could affect their visa status.

### **Applying for Readmission**

If students become "inactive," they will automatically be withdrawn from the program and must apply for readmission if they wish to regain active student status. ***Readmission of a discontinued student is never guaranteed.***

Students applying for readmission to an OLPD Ph.D. program must complete a Department readmission application and the Graduate School's online readmission application.

## **Good Progress Rule**

*Students are required to maintain good progress toward their degrees throughout their graduate programs.*

Each spring, the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development reviews the progress of all graduate students. (Certain programs within the Department may also perform reviews in the fall). This review process is viewed as a way of supporting students in their progression towards the degree and in their professional development. The annual review assures that problems are identified early so that students can receive timely guidance.

A student whose progress is found to be deficient is notified in writing of the deficiencies and is afforded an opportunity to demonstrate improvement. A registration hold may be placed on the student's record until the issue is resolved. The advisor and the Coordinator of Graduate Studies (on behalf of the Director of Graduate Studies) typically create a timeline by which deficiencies must be remedied, and a written agreement as to what will be considered demonstrated improvement will be made between the CGS and the student. Students are responsible for contacting their advisors to develop plans for making satisfactory progress by the deadlines.

### **Incomplete Grades**

One aspect of maintaining good progress relates to incomplete grades. Course instructors are not obligated to assign incomplete ("I") grades when coursework has not been finished, but some do. It is always in your best interest to resolve all incomplete grades as soon as possible. The OLPD Department allows graduate students to carry a maximum of 8 non-reported ("NR") or "I" credits in the program at any given time. Students with more than 8 "NR" or "I" credits risk having a registration hold being placed on their student record until they are under the limit.

Many instructors will establish conditions that a student must meet prior to assigning an "I" grade. Some instructors require a written agreement with the student so there is no misunderstanding about expectations in resolving the "I" grade. Although such formal agreements are not required, both you and the instructor may find such a contract useful in case there are any future misunderstandings over outstanding requirements.

Only an assigned instructor of a given course can assign a grade for that course. Only this person may update an "NR" or "I" grade or a "K" grade (which is assigned by an instructor to indicate that the course is still in progress and that a grade cannot be assigned at the present time). If the course instructor leaves the University or too much time passes, it may not be possible to update the course grade, or the instructor may decide to assign a grade based on the coursework received to date from the student. If a given course does not have a specific assigned instructor of record, please contact the Coordinator of Graduate Studies for instructions.

## **8-Year Time Limit Rule**

*The Graduate School requires that all incoming Ph.D. students complete their degrees within eight calendar years of their initial enrollment into the graduate program.*

Whether a student is attending the Ph.D. program on a full- or part-time basis, all requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed and the degree awarded within eight years after admission and matriculation to the graduate program. Applying the Graduate School's current interpretation of this rule, a student who enters a Ph.D. program in September, 2018 must complete the degree by December 31, 2026.

### **Applying for a Time Extension**

A student who, for legitimate reasons, is unable to complete the degree within the time limits indicated above may petition for an extension. It is important to note that time-extension requests are not automatically approved and they may be denied.

The student may petition the Department and College for one extension of up to 24 months by submitting a [Request for Extension to the Maximum Time Limit form](#). Please note that this counts as the first time extension regardless of the length of time requested. The student must obtain the approval of the advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies and the College. This petition must be submitted at least six months prior to the end of the time limit.

If a petition is approved, you will be notified in writing of the expectations for progress and of the deadline (month and year) for degree conferral. If the petition is denied, you will be notified in writing that you will be terminated from doctoral candidacy and from the graduate program upon expiration of the time limit.

Under extraordinary circumstances, students may file a second petition for an additional 24-month extension after the first 24 months have expired; however, such petitions after the initial extension must be reviewed and approved by the advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, the College, and the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education. Students who have been terminated under such circumstances may apply for readmission to the program; however, readmission is not guaranteed.

## Step 1: Taking Courses / Credits

Course and credit requirements are listed below. Students are, of course, permitted to take additional courses or credits beyond those required, even when they are taking or have completed thesis credits.

All graduate-level courses offered by the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development are listed on the Departmental website under Resources. All courses offered in a particular semester are listed on the University of Minnesota's OneStop website.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the extraordinary opportunity to enroll in courses relevant to their doctoral study across the Department's programs, across the College's departments, and across the University.

*All course selections and planning should be done in consultation with your advisor.* In particular, students should consult with their advisors before choosing a pass/fail grading option (designated "S/N" for satisfactory / not satisfactory) for courses that allow either letter grades or S/N grades.

To register for classes, access the University's registration system through [One Stop Student Services](#). One Stop has an [online tutorial on how to register for University classes](#).

It is expected that students will complete their program core within the first two years of full-time graduate study or within the first three years of part-time study.

As indicated in the Pathway to the Ph.D. section above, all Ph.D. students must successfully complete the required coursework as well as their program's written preliminary examination, oral preliminary examination, and final oral examination requirements. The Department also requires students to meet formally with their dissertation readers in a proposal meeting after the preliminary oral examination and before embarking on their thesis research.

### Courses / Credits for Your Degree Program

This section provides an overview of courses and credits required for the Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development. Specific requirements are listed on each program area's Program Planning Sheet for the Ph.D.

## **1) Departmental Core**

All program tracks require the Departmental Core:

- OLPD 8011 / Doctoral Research Seminar (1 credit)  
All doctoral students are required to take this course during Fall Semester of their first year.
- OLPD 8015 / Inquiry Strategies in Educational and Organizational Research (3 credits)  
All doctoral students are expected to take this course during Spring Semester of their first year.
- Quantitative Methods Course (3 credits)
- Qualitative Methods Course (3 credits)
- Two Additional Methods Courses (6 credits)

## **2) Program-Specific Courses and Electives**

Requirements in this area vary by program track. Consult the Ph.D. Program Planning Sheet for your program.

All program tracks require 32 credits in this area, except Educational Policy and Leadership which requires 30.

## **3) Thesis Credits**

All Ph.D. students are required to register for 24 thesis credits.

- OLPD 8888 / Thesis Credits: Doctoral

The 24 credits must be taken over two or more terms (Fall Semester, Spring Semester or Summer Term).

Students cannot enroll for thesis credits until the first available registration period after completion of the oral preliminary examination has been recorded in the Graduate School record system. Students usually begin taking thesis credits as soon as possible, after passing the oral preliminary examination.

Students often schedule the oral prelim around the start of a semester, after completing necessary preparations during the summer or winter break. A student who intends to start taking thesis credits during that same semester must complete the oral prelim early enough to allow time for processing of the exam results. If a student passes the oral prelim and the Graduate School processes the Preliminary Oral Examination Report before noon on the last day to add a class for a given

semester, the student may be able to take thesis credits that term instead of waiting until the following semester.

To ensure that the student will not violate the University's Continuous Enrollment Rule by not being registered when switching to thesis credits, the student should register for something prior to the start of the semester. If the student then passes the oral prelim at the beginning of the semester, in time to register for thesis credits, it will be easy to switch the registration.

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any enrollment requirements that may apply (related, for example, to assistantships, visa status, etc.) when deciding what to register for and how many credits.

## **Other Credit Options**

Students must register for some course or credit every Fall Semester and every Spring Semester. Sometimes students and their advisors agree to do a Problems course together (OLPD 8095); other times, students need a special registration option. For example, students may need to register for non-course credits if they have completed all the courses for the Ph.D. but are not yet ready to take thesis credits (OLPD 8888) or have already taken all required thesis credits.

There are three main options for students. [Full details on all the special registration categories below can be found online.](#) These credits are not meant to be long-term place holders.

While these course options will not apply towards a degree, they will maintain a student's active status in the program.

### **OLPD 8666: Doctoral Pre-Thesis Credits**

*Who may register:* only students who have not yet passed their oral preliminary examination

This registration option is for doctoral students who must be registered for a specific number of credits (usually to be in compliance with requirements of the University or external agencies such as employment as a graduate assistant, loan deferment, visa requirements, etc.), and for whom neither coursework registration nor the other special registration categories are an option. Regular tuition rates apply.

### **OLPD 8444: Advanced Doctoral Status**

*Who may register:* only students who have successfully completed all required coursework, taken all required thesis credits, and completed all other steps to the Ph.D. other than the final oral examination. To register, a student must submit an application, which must be approved before registration can take place.

This one-credit registration option is for doctoral students who must certify full-time status to be in compliance with requirements of the University or external agencies (such as employment as a graduate assistant, loan deferment, visa requirements, etc.). Regular tuition rates apply.

This course may not be taken with any other courses in a given semester. A new application must be submitted for every semester a student intends to take OLPD 8444. The application deadline is early in the previous semester. [The application form and instructions are available online.](#)

### **GRAD 999: Graduate School Active Status**

*Who may register:* only doctoral students who have completed all coursework and thesis credit requirements. To register, a student must submit a Departmental petition to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, which must be approved before registration can take place. Requests to take GRAD 999 that are submitted after the last day to add a class in any given semester will automatically be denied.

***By College policy, a doctoral student may use this registration option only twice during the degree program..*** This course option is tuition-free to students, but the College is charged a fee of approximately \$2,000 per semester per student enrolled in GRAD 999 to pay for services accessed to during the semester.

This zero-credit, zero-tuition registration option intended for students who need to maintain their active student status. Students cannot use GRAD 999 to meet any other requirements of the University or external agencies. For example, students who must maintain full-time status to hold an assistantship, defer loans or receive financial aid cannot use GRAD 999 to meet related eligibility requirements.

International students must consult with the Office of International Student and Scholars Services (ISSS) prior to taking GRAD 999, as there may be consequences related to visa status. International students may need to complete certain forms for ISSS prior to enrolling in GRAD 999, in order to maintain their visa status.

## **Including Transfer Credits in Your Degree Program**

With the approval of the advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the College of Education and Human Development, students may apply some coursework from another graduate degree program to the Ph.D. program. Such coursework may be, for example, from a master's program completed at the University of Minnesota or other recognized graduate institution. Students should discuss with their advisors the possible use of these credits in their programs.

Credits are transferred by listing the courses on the Program Planning Sheet. Credits not accepted as part of a student's Graduate Planning and Audit System (GPAS) form (see below) cannot be transferred to the University of Minnesota graduate transcript.

Policies in both the Department and the Graduate School determine the number and nature of the credits that can be transferred.

### **Department Policy**

Transfer of credits requires advisor approval in relation to the Ph.D. student's program plan. Students who wish to transfer previous graduate coursework to the *departmental core* or *program core* requirements may do so only with approval of the advisor and by formal petition to the appropriate program coordinator.

Doctoral students may be allowed to transfer up to 9 credits of previous graduate work into their Ph.D. program. The credits earned must:

- 1) meet criteria presented in the Graduate Education Catalog,
- 2) closely match the planned program emphasis, and
- 3) be approved by the advisor.

If a student's prior graduate degree was in a program similar to the current Ph.D. program track or if the student's prior graduate degree included OLPD graduate courses, an additional 9 credits may be transferred for a total of 18 credits.

### **Graduate Education Policy**

Some of the general Graduate School rules that apply to transfer of credits are listed below. For further requirements and information, students should check the [Graduate Education Catalog](#).

- Graduate-level courses taken before the award of the baccalaureate degree cannot be transferred.
- Graduate-level courses appearing on an undergraduate transcript cannot be transferred into a graduate program.
- Graduate-level courses taken through the College of Continuing Education or Master's of Liberal Studies program at the University of Minnesota are not accepted for transfer.
- The Graduate School allows a maximum of 12 semester credits taken as a non-degree graduate student. Refer to the Graduate Education Catalog for details and consult with your advisor (and, if necessary, your Program Coordinator or the Coordinator of Graduate Studies) before making assumptions about transfer credits.
- Official transcripts of the transfer coursework (from institutions other than the University of Minnesota) must be submitted to the Graduate School Office of Admission if they were not submitted previously, during the admissions process.

### **Transferring Courses from a Quarter System**

To convert quarter-based credits to a semester-based program, multiply the number of quarter credits by .67 to obtain semester credits.

### **Transferring in OLPD Coursework Taken Under Prior Designators**

Prior to Spring 2012, OLPD courses were listed under five course designators (ADED, BIE, EDPA, HRD, and WHRE). Students transferring in courses under these designators need to list them using their original designators and course numbers.

Prior to Summer 2016, certain OLPD courses were listed under the PSTL course designator. Students transferring in courses under the PSTL designator need to list those courses as such on the Program Planning Sheet.

## **Including a Minor in Your Degree Program**

Students are eligible to complete a minor program of study to complement the major program for the Ph.D. The minor program may be in OLPD or in another department. ***Taking a minor is optional.*** Students who are interested in pursuing a minor are strongly encouraged to discuss the possibility with their faculty advisor. Some minors are more complementary to a given major program than others.

A current listing of all [graduate minors \(program related and free standing\)](#) can be found in the Graduate Education Catalog. Minor programs housed within OLPD include:

- [Integrative Leadership](#)
- [International Education](#) (through Comparative International Development Education)
- [Multicultural College Teaching and Learning](#) (through Higher Education)
- [Program Evaluation](#) (through Evaluation Studies)
- [Sociocultural Studies in Education](#)

Every minor has its own Director of Graduate Studies. The DGS of the minor program must approve and sign all paperwork you submit concerning curricular matters. Requirements for eligibility and admission to individual minors vary widely. Students are advised to study the minor program's website and contact the DGS of the minor to determine what is required for admission and completion of the minor.

### **Declaring a Minor**

After you have been admitted to a minor program, you must declare to the Graduate School that you are in that minor. A minor is officially declared by a) registering it via the appropriate online form available on the Graduate School website and b) obtaining the approval of the minor program's Director of Graduate Studies via the Graduate Planning and Audit System (GPAS; see below).

***The minor must be declared prior to submitting the GPAS form for the major program.*** When the minor appears on the student's Graduate School record, a second GPAS form for the minor will appear in the system. The student will submit the GPAS form for the minor program at the same time the GPAS form for the major program is submitted.

### **Advisor in the Minor Program**

Graduate Students who enroll in a minor will be assigned an advisor in that minor. The major advisor cannot also serve as your minor advisor. The minor advisor must be assigned as an outside graduate committee member (see Appendix) throughout the doctoral program, specifically on both the oral preliminary and final oral examination committees. If the minor advisor is removed and not replaced with another minor advisor, the minor will be removed from the student's record, even if the student has completed all the required coursework.

### **Allocating Courses to the Major and Minor Programs**

A specific course can only satisfy a major requirement or a minor requirement, not both. A student cannot count the same credits for core requirements for the major and for the minor.

### **Dropping a Minor**

Consult the OLPD Coordinator of Graduate Studies for instructions.

## **Submitting the Graduate Planning and Audit System Form (GPAS)**

The Graduate Planning and Audit System (GPAS) form is a required online form that must be submitted to the Graduate School. This form is accessible online via the MyU Student Portal. When completed, the GPAS lists all the courses that constitute the student's own, individual course of study for the Ph.D., that is, all the courses that will count toward the student's Ph.D.

The GPAS form should be filed at the end of your first year in the Ph.D. program (or when you have completed 30 credits, if you are attending part-time). Failure to do so may result in a registration hold being placed on your registration until this step is completed. Also, the GPAS form must be filed and approved before you establish an oral preliminary examination committee.

Note that the GPAS form is filed before the student has completed the coursework for the degree. Having an approved GPAS form on file helps you plan ahead and protects you from possible, future curriculum changes.

Another important function of the GPAS form is to verify that you have taken all required coursework for the program. When you get close to graduating, the Office of the Registrar runs an audit of your GPAS form against your transcript, to ensure you have met all degree requirements and taken all courses listed on the GPAS form. If the audit finds anything amiss, you will be notified that the issue needs to be addressed before you can graduate.

## **Steps for Submitting a GPAS Form**

Students need to follow the steps listed here to submit the GPAS form for the primary program. Those who have a minor need to submit a GPAS form for the minor as well (see below).

1) Fill out the Program Planning Sheet for the Ph.D. in your program area with your advisor's guidance. Do not initiate the submission process until your advisor has approved your full course plan.

You need to list all courses that will constitute your graduate program: courses you have taken, courses you are currently taking, courses you will take, and courses you intend to transfer into your program from another graduate degree program. You also need to include all courses that constitute your minor, if any.

If you intend to include transfer credits from other graduate programs or a substitution to a stated requirement, be sure to list these on the sheet in the proper places. Your advisor can help you with this part.

2) Obtain your advisor's signature on the Program Planning Sheet. If you have more than one advisor, the primary advisor needs to sign.

3) Submit the signed form to the Department's Coordinator of Graduate Studies. The CGS takes care of most of the submission process for the GPAS form.

*There is, however, one more step you need to take.*

4) Access the GPAS system:

- On the University's website, sign into the MyU portal.
- Select the "Academics" tab.
- Select the "Degree Progress" sub-tab.
- Click the "Grad Planning & Audit System" link located near the bottom of the page.

*You are now in the GPAS system.*

- Be sure your graduate program is the one listed. If the graduate program that appears is incorrect, press the tab labeled "Change" next to the program name and select the proper program.

- ***Do NOT add or change any courses or transfer credits. Just press the "Submit" button at the bottom.***

*You are now done with your part of the GPAS. Exit the system.*

All graduate-level courses that you have taken at the University in the past, are currently taking, or are currently registered for will automatically load into your GPAS form.

All future courses and transfer courses that you listed and all course substitutions to which you and your advisor have agreed will be entered into the GPAS system manually by the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, using the Program Planning Sheet that your advisor signed and you submitted. Please note that the CGS can deny a substitution related to a requirement, if it is deemed inappropriate.

Note: If you look deeper into your GPAS form online, there is a good chance that you will see that not everything is listed correctly. ***This is normal so do not worry.*** The Coordinator of Graduate Studies will use the Program Planning Sheet to fix all inconsistencies manually.

When the CGS determines that all degree requirements are met, the GPAS form is approved at the Department level and then forwarded to the Graduate School's office of Graduate Student Services and Progress. Once your GPAS has been approved at that level, it will be reflected on your student record.

### **Steps to Submitting a GPAS Form for a Minor Program**

Courses in your minor must be included on the Program Planning Sheet that you submit for your major program.

Some colleges at the University do not yet use the GPAS system. If your minor is in the College of Education and Human Development, you need to submit a separate GPAS form for the minor. To submit a GPAS form for a minor that uses the GPAS system, follow step 4) above but sign into the minor program instead of the major program.

If you are uncertain about the need to submit a GPAS form or if you encounter any problems, contact the Coordinator of Graduate Studies for assistance.

### **Updating the GPAS Form**

Sometimes a student needs to revise a GPAS form that has already been submitted. The student and advisor may agree that certain courses listed on the form should be changed, or there may be changes in the courses offered. All changes need to be discussed with and approved by the advisor.

Email all GPAS changes to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, copying your advisor for proof of approval. Clearly specify which courses need to be removed or added. It is often best to submit a revised Program Planning Sheet with all changes clearly noted.

Please submit changes to the CGS in a batch, not every time you make a minor change in your program.

## **Establish the Oral Preliminary Examination Committee**

This step is related to the oral preliminary examination (Step 3), but it needs to be accomplished here in Step 1, within 3 months of submitting the GPAS form. Please see the Appendix for rules and procedures to be followed in establishing the oral preliminary examination committee.

## Step 2: Written Preliminary Examination

By Graduate School policy, all doctoral students are required to take a written preliminary examination. In OLPD, the purpose of the "written prelim" is to evaluate a student's ability to: a) develop a question about an issue, problem or topic relevant to the student's studies that can be addressed through analysis of the literature in that area; b) conduct an analysis of the relevant literature; c) write a literature review that is a critical, scholarly synthesis of the literature; and d) demonstrate doctoral-level skill in writing. The written prelim has two parts: the written preliminary proposal and the written preliminary examination.

Students may take the written preliminary examination in the summer or in the winter:

Summer:        Proposal due April 30  
                    Examination begins May 30  
                    Examination due August 30

Winter:         Proposal due October 15  
                    Examination begins November 15  
                    Examination due February 15

*(When a due date falls on a weekend or University holiday, the due date automatically shifts to the next work day. Proposals and examinations are due at 4:30 p.m. on the due date.)*

Students normally take the written preliminary examination during the summer after the first year in the doctoral program, the winter of the second year, or the summer after the second year.

### Eligibility

To be eligible to take the written preliminary examination, students must:

- 1) have completed 19 credits or be on track to complete 19 credits before the examination due date;

*Neither transfer credits nor credits from a masters degree in OLPD can be counted toward the minimum credit requirement.*

- 2) have "active" status with the Graduate School (meaning their enrollment in the program has not been discontinued);

- 3) be in good academic standing (with a minimum 3.0 grade point average and adequate progress toward the degree);
- 4) have submitted a completed Graduate Planning and Audit System (GPAS) form, approved and signed by their primary advisor, to the OLPD Department; and
- 5) have the approval of their advisor(s).

## Written Preliminary Proposal

Each student, in consultation with the advisor(s), selects an important issue, problem or topic (henceforth, "issue") relevant to the student's studies. The issue should be represented in the research literature by a variety of perspectives, conclusions or phases of development. Working with the advisor (and other faculty members, if desired), the student writes a proposal that briefly presents what the student intends to write about in the written preliminary examination.

The written preliminary proposal should:

- 1) identify the issue under investigation, present a question about the selected issue that can be addressed through analysis of the relevant literature, and briefly justify the question's significance;
- 2) propose a theoretical or conceptual framework to be used for the review of the literature and briefly justify its appropriateness for analysis of the literature;

*The framework might be based, for example, on theory, on stages of development of the issue, on chronology, on a comparative analysis across nations or institutions, or other appropriate way of organizing what the student intends to say about the literature to be reviewed.*

- 3) present a brief overview of what the literature review will cover;
- 4) include a list of all references cited and only the references cited in the proposal;
- 5) include a cover page with the student's name, the advisor's name, the name of the program coordinator, and the date on which the proposal was submitted;

*The student's name should not appear on any other pages of the proposal.*

- 6) be well-written;
- 7) follow the format and style specifications noted below; and
- 8) be **between 750 and 1,000 words** in length, excluding references and the cover page.

Examples of topics of previous written prelim proposals and exemplary proposals are available from the student's Program Coordinator. Coordinators and students' advisors should also be consulted for examples of exemplary critical, well-integrated, published literature reviews. Previous written prelim exams are not made available to students.

### **Submission and Evaluation of the Written Preliminary Proposal**

The written preliminary proposal must be submitted to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies by 4:30 p.m. Central Standard or Daylight Time on the due date. Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated by the student's primary advisor and at least two other faculty members in the students' program. The possible scores are Acceptable and Not Acceptable.

If the reviewers determine that the proposal is Acceptable, the student may proceed to the written preliminary examination. If the reviewers determine that the proposal is Not Acceptable, the student will have seven days from the notification date to make revisions (as specified by the faculty reviewers) and resubmit the proposal to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies. If the faculty reviewers determine that the revised proposal is Acceptable, the student may proceed to the examination; if the faculty reviewers determine that the revised proposal is Not Acceptable, the student must wait until the next examination period and begin anew. The student cannot take the written prelim examination without having received an Acceptable score on the written prelim proposal.

## **Written Preliminary Examination**

The written preliminary examination is a review of the literature on the issue that was presented initially in the written preliminary proposal. The review must be a critical, scholarly synthesis of the literature.

Students are not required to pursue a topic that is directly related to a future special paper, oral prelim or dissertation proposal, though such a connection is often desirable and may help the student to make timely progress toward the doctoral degree.

During the three-month examination period, students may not consult their advisor(s) or any other faculty member, nor may any faculty member comment on drafts.

Students may consult an editor, but the editor may only provide technical advice on grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Consultation among students is acceptable; however, no editor, fellow student or other person may provide any assistance on the content of the examination. When students submit the examination, they must sign a form verifying that the examination is entirely their own work except for quoted text, appropriately signified by quotation marks.

Students have a three-month period in which to write their paper, but it is *not* expected that they will devote three months of full-time research and writing to it.

The written preliminary examination should:

- 1) identify the issue under investigation, present the question about the issue that drives analysis of the literature, and justify the question's significance;
- 2) present the theoretical or conceptual framework that is used for the review of the literature and justify its appropriateness for the topic;

*The framework might be based, for example, on theory, on stages of development of the issue, on chronology, on a comparative analysis across nations or institutions, or other appropriate way of organizing what the student intends to say about the literature to be reviewed.*

- 3) present a review that is a critical, scholarly synthesis of the literature;
- 4) include a list of all references cited and only the references cited in the examination;
- 5) include a cover page with the student's name, the advisor's name, the name of the program coordinator, and the date the examination was submitted;

*The student's name should not appear on any other pages of the examination.*

- 6) be well-written;
- 7) follow the style specifications noted below;
- 8) be **between 6,000 and 7,500 words** in length, excluding references and the cover page.
- 9) **Ph.D. Students in Human Resources Development** do not write a special paper for the oral preliminary examination; therefore, the written preliminary examinations in HRD has one additional requirement that does **not** apply to students in other program areas: the written preliminary examination should present two or three potential research questions, derived from the review of the literature.

### **Submission and Evaluation of the Written Preliminary Examination**

The written preliminary examination must be submitted electronically to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies by 4:30 p.m. Central Standard or Daylight Time on the due date. If an unexpected, documented problem (e.g., significant health issue or family emergency) occurs during the exam period that precludes completion of the exam, a student may request cancellation of the exam, which must be approved by the advisor, the Coordinator of Graduate Studies and the Director of Graduate Studies. The request must be made in writing at least one month before the examination's due date.

Each examination will be reviewed and evaluated by two faculty members in the student's program. If the reviewers disagree in their evaluations, a third faculty member in the student's program will review the examination. The possible scores are Pass, Revise and Fail.

Students are expected to achieve a score of Pass, which indicates that the exam is acceptable and meets the examination requirements listed above. The Department will notify the Graduate School that the student has passed the written preliminary examination.

Students may receive a score of Revise, which indicates that the exam is not acceptable in some specific and significant way, but that the reviewers believe a revised examination could meet the standards for a Pass. Students who receive a score of Revise should meet or talk with their advisor(s) as soon as possible to review together the comments from faculty reviewers. Students are given one month to complete and submit the revision, which will be scored by faculty reviewers as Pass or as Fail. After meeting with the advisor(s) to go over reviewers' comments, students may not consult with their advisor or any other faculty; in other words, the same rules as apply to the original writing period apply to the revision periods.

Students may receive a score of Fail, which indicates that the exam falls significantly below acceptable standards in ways that cannot be adequately addressed by a revision over the course of one month. If a student receives an initial score of Fail or a score of Fail on a revision, the student must retake the examination at the next written prelim exam period, starting over with the proposal process. If a student fails the written preliminary examination twice (by initial score or by score on a revision), the student will be dismissed from the doctoral program.

### **Schedule for Notification of Examination Results**

Notifications of the results of the written preliminary examination follow this schedule:

Exam Due Date:	All exams are due on the same date, as noted above.
Distribution Date:	All exams are distributed to reviewers within three working days after the Exam Due Date.
Review Due Date:	All reviews are due on the same date, three weeks after the Distribution Date.
Notification Date:	Within three working days after the Review Due Date, all students will be notified of their scores or notified that their review is not yet complete. The latter case may occur because a third reviewer is needed or because faculty have been delayed in submitting their reviews.

## **Format and Style Specifications**

*These specifications apply to both the written preliminary proposal and the written preliminary examination.*

Documents must adhere to the word limits noted above.

Documents must be submitted as Word documents, not in pdf form.

Documents must be double-spaced and formatted in Times New Roman 12-point font, with one-inch margins.

Documents must employ APA Style (as in the most current *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*) in the following particulars: cover page (but no abstract); running head with title (but not the author's name); page numbers; in-text citations of quoted or paraphrased material; and formatting of headings, subheadings and references.

Documents that do not adhere to these format specifications will be returned to the student and not distributed to faculty reviewers. Students may be given 24 hours to make simple adjustments in formatting and resubmit the document, but they are not permitted to make changes in content after initial submission.

## Step 3: Oral Preliminary Examination

By Graduate School policy, all doctoral students are required to take an oral preliminary examination. For most students, the oral preliminary examination has two parts. The special paper must be completed and approved by the advisor(s) before the oral prelim can be scheduled; however, Ph.D. students in the Human Resource Development program do not write a special paper. The oral preliminary examination itself takes place in a meeting between the student and the student's oral preliminary examination committee.

### Establish the Oral Preliminary Examination Committee (Reminder)

The student should have completed this task in Step 1, as it needs to be completed within three months after submitting the Graduate Planning and Audit System (GPAS) form.

### Special Paper

After passing the written preliminary examination, students are required to complete a special paper in preparation for the oral preliminary examination. Note: this requirement applies to Ph.D. students in Comparative International Development Education (CIDE), Education Policy and Leadership (EPL), Evaluation Studies (ES), and Higher Education (HE). ***This requirement does not apply to Ph.D. students in Human Resource Development.***

Students prepare the special paper under the guidance of their advisor(s). The special paper is a critical review of the literature in the area of the student's scholarly interest. It is not merely an annotated bibliography, but rather a conceptually organized synthesis of the relevant literature. The special paper may explore areas for possible dissertation research by locating gaps in knowledge in a particular area of inquiry, or it may serve as an integrative background piece for dissertation research that the student already has in mind. The paper should conclude with a set of research questions that represent potentially fruitful lines of research in the area of inquiry. The special paper is normally between 30 and 50 pages in length.

In some programs, the special paper is written as two chapters that are similar to the first two chapters of the dissertation. The paper may thus be thought of as an early version of the first two chapters of the dissertation. The student is ***not*** required to complete the dissertation proposal before the oral preliminary examination.

The special paper must be distributed to the oral preliminary examination committee at least two weeks before the examination. The paper serves as a point of departure for committee members' questions at the oral preliminary examination, in that it represents the student's area of expertise and research interest.

## Oral Preliminary Examination

The oral preliminary examination is a general knowledge examination in the area of the student's research interests, and it includes a discussion of the special paper (in all tracks except Human Resource Development). The exam is conducted in accordance with Graduate School policy. All assigned members of the student's oral preliminary examination committee must be present at and participate in the oral preliminary examination.

Students should plan to take the oral prelim by the end of the second continuous semester (including the summer session) following the completion of the written preliminary examination. Individual program tracks in the Department may specify earlier deadlines. Failure to pass the oral prelim within this timeline may result in a registration hold being placed on your record until this milestone is achieved.

It is the student's responsibility to schedule the oral preliminary examination with the committee members at a date and time they agree upon and to reserve a room for the meeting through the OLPD Departmental office – in person (Burton 206) or by phone (612-624-1006). The room and any equipment that may be needed (e.g., laptop, Skype cart, etc.) should be reserved as soon as the meeting date and time have been finalized, as the Department's meeting rooms are often in high demand. The room should be reserved for two hours (plus set-up time, if any).

### **Eligibility**

The Graduate School must authorize the taking of the examination in advance. The student is responsible for requesting authorization by filing the [online Doctoral Preliminary Oral Examination Scheduling Form](#) at least one week in advance of the examination.

The Graduate School's requirements for authorization are the following:

- The student must hold active student status in the Graduate School at the time of the examination.
- The student's Graduate Planning and Audit System (GPAS) form must have been approved by the Graduate School. If the student has a minor, the associated GPAS form for the minor must also be approved prior to the preliminary oral examination.
- The student must have passed the preliminary written examination, and the result must have been recorded by the Graduate School.

Once the Graduate School authorizes the examination, it generates a customized Preliminary Oral Examination Form, which is not available online. This form will be signed on the day of the examination by all committee members to record the outcome of the exam. The student is responsible for picking up the form prior to the exam and giving it to the chair of the oral prelim exam committee. Unless the Preliminary Oral Examination Form has been generated and given to the committee chair, the exam is invalid.

## **Taking the Oral Preliminary Examination**

The committee chair runs the oral preliminary examination. The student should consult with the committee chair to find out how the exam will be conducted. The meeting typically takes place within a span of two hours.

All members of the oral preliminary examination committee must be in attendance at the exam. One member may participate remotely, if the committee chair permits such participation. Remote participation is discouraged by the Department, but is sometimes necessary. If technical difficulties arise that prevent the committee member from participating remotely, the exam must either be suspended immediately until the member can participate or rescheduled for another date and time.

When a committee member is unable to participate in the exam due to unexpected circumstances, the exam is invalid, which is a very serious matter. Committee substitutions can be made in the case of an emergency, but the Department must be informed before the examination begins. Should such a circumstance arise, the student should immediately contact the faculty advisor (or the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, if the advisor is the committee member in question) to discuss possible options for finding an appropriate substitute committee member on short notice. If a substitute committee member cannot be found on short notice, then the exam will need to be postponed. If a substitute committee member is found and approved by the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, the student will need to [revise the preliminary examination committee](#) to reflect the change as soon as possible.

The student is expected to be physically present at the oral preliminary examination. Exceptions will be approved only in extreme circumstances; such exceptions require advance approval of the advisor, the chair of the committee, and the Director of Graduate Studies. The student may be required to have a pre-approved proctor present in the room with the student during the examination, to ensure the academic integrity of the exam. If technical difficulties arise that prevent the student from participating remotely or the exam from proceeding, the exam must either be suspended immediately until the student can participate or be rescheduled for another date and time.

The chair ensures that the Preliminary Oral Examination Form is signed by all committee members. All signatures on the Preliminary Oral Examination form must be originals. Signatures made by others on behalf of a committee member are not allowed under any circumstances. The student is responsible for ensuring that the signed form is returned to the Graduate School within 24 hours of the examination (except in the case of a score of Pass with Reservations; see below).

The Graduate School does allow one of the committee signatures to be a scanned or faxed copy, which is important if one member of the committee participates remotely. In that case, either the student or the committee chair (by the chair's preference) will need to arrange to have a copy of the form (as already signed by all other committee members) faxed or emailed to the remote member. That member must sign the form and then fax it back or email a scanned copy to

whoever is in possession of the original signed form. The signed copy should then be attached to the original form and submitted to the Graduate School.

No refreshments are necessary or expected at oral preliminary examinations. The focus of these exams should be on the academic work; food and beverages might be a distraction. Students often, however, want to bring refreshments, and so the Department has developed the following guidelines:

- Bringing refreshments is allowed but limited to oral preliminary examinations, proposal meetings and final oral examinations.
- Students who choose to provide refreshments should not bring more than a beverage and one other item (such as cookies or pastries or other similar item).
- Coffee and water are typically available in the OLPD Departmental office (206 Burton Hall). Students who wish to use these resources should inform the office staff of their intent well before the exam takes place, so that beverages can be prepared ahead of time.

### **Outcome of the Oral Preliminary Examination**

The outcome of the oral preliminary examination, with all committee members present and voting, is recorded in one of three ways: Pass, Pass with Reservations, or Fail.

**Pass:** An outcome of Pass is recorded if the committee's vote is as follows:

for a four-person committee: 4 Pass **or** 3 Pass and 1 Fail

for a five-person committee: 5 Pass **or** 4 Pass and 1 Fail.

Candidates who do not earn one of these committee votes fail the examination.

Students who have passed the oral preliminary examination without reservations are candidates for the Ph.D. degree. At this point, but not before, the student may note this candidacy on the curriculum vitae.

**Pass with Reservations:** If, to achieve the minimum number of votes to reach a verdict of Pass, any vote of Pass with Reservations is included, then the outcome will be recorded as a Pass with Reservations. A vote to pass the student with reservations still constitutes a passing vote. If a score of Pass with Reservations is earned, the student will be informed immediately, but the committee is permitted one week in which to convey its reservations to the student by written letter and to specify the steps that must be taken to remove these reservations. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Graduate Student Services and Progress (GSSP) Office and should accompany the signed Preliminary Oral Examination Report. When the student has satisfied the committee's reservations, the committee is required to write a second letter informing the student and the Graduate School that the reservations have been removed and that the student may proceed toward the degree. Both letters should be written by the committee chair. The final oral

examination may not be scheduled until the Graduate School has received a copy of the letter indicating that the reservations have been removed.

If the committee members disagree as to whether the reservations have been satisfactorily removed, the committee chair asks for another vote, the results of which are subject to the same voting proportions as in the initial vote. If the student is unable to satisfy the committee's reservations, the student's doctoral candidacy and graduate-student status may be terminated.

**Fail:** If a score of Fail is earned, the student may be excluded from candidacy for the degree or may be allowed, on unanimous recommendation of the examining committee, to retake the examination, providing the re-examination is conducted by the original preliminary oral examining committee. In no case may the re-examination take place before 10 weeks have passed. No more than one re-examination is allowed.

## Step 4: Dissertation Proposal

This step involves writing the dissertation proposal, meeting with certain members of the final oral examination committee to get their approval of the proposed dissertation project, and obtaining the approval of the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board (IRB) – and other IRB's, if necessary – to proceed with the proposed research.

Students should plan to have the proposal meeting within six months after passing the oral preliminary examination and should check with their advisor in regard to scheduling this meeting. Failure to do so within the prescribed time frame may result in a registration hold being placed on the student's record until this milestone is attained.

### The Dissertation Proposal

Students write the dissertation proposal (sometimes called a prospectus) in close consultation with and under the guidance of their advisor(s). Each program track has its particular conventions, but the proposal typically includes the following components

- background and statement of the problem,
- a focused and critical review of relevant literature,
- a research question that will guide the inquiry,
- a conceptual framework or other presentation of the conceptual grounding of the study,
- the proposed research design and methodology with corresponding rationale,
- specific data collection and data analysis procedures that will be employed in the study,
- complete drafts of all data-collection instruments that will be used in the study, and
- limitations and delimitations of the study.

Students should consult with their advisors about modifications to this framework that may be needed for a specific research context or a particular research methodology.

For most students, the proposal serves as very good draft of Chapters 1-3 of the dissertation.

### Establish the Final Oral Examination Committee

This step is related to the final oral examination (Step 5), but it needs to be accomplished here in Step 4, before the proposal meeting, *even if all members are the same as for the oral preliminary examination*. Please see the Appendix for rules and procedures to be followed in establishing the final oral examination committee.

## **The Dissertation Proposal Meeting**

Before the student can proceed with the proposed research for the dissertation, the proposal must be approved by the final oral examination committee members, specifically the readers on the committee. To get the readers' approval, the student meets with them in a proposal meeting (sometimes referred to as a thesis panel or a prospectus meeting).

The proposal meeting must be attended by the members of the students' final oral examination committee who are identified as readers (see the Appendix). Some program tracks require all members of the final oral examination committee to participate in the proposal meeting. Students should consult their advisors on this point.

The proposal meeting is not an examination but rather a meeting focused on the dissertation proposal. The student must distribute the proposal to the participating committee members at least two weeks before the proposal meeting.

It is the student's responsibility to schedule the proposal meeting with the participating committee members at a date and time they agree upon and to reserve a room for the meeting through the OLPD Department office, in person (Burton 206) or by phone (612-624-1006). The room and any equipment that may be needed (e.g., laptop, Skype cart, etc.) should be reserved as soon as the meeting date and time have been finalized, as the Department's meeting rooms are often in high demand. The room should be reserved for two hours (plus set-up time, if any).

It is the student's responsibility to print the [Thesis Panel Prospectus Approval Form](#) and bring it to the proposal meeting.

### **Conducting the Dissertation Proposal Meeting**

At the meeting, the student and the participating members of the committee come to an understanding of what the student proposes to do for the dissertation research project. Students should consult their advisors for specific information on the conduct of the meeting. For example, faculty in some program tracks expect an oral presentation of the proposal; others do not.

The committee members are responsible for reviewing and approving the proposal, which presents the proposed content and methods of the study. The graduate faculty have the responsibility to ensure that the proposed study meets both high standards for the rigorous conduct of research and high ethical standards. For this reason, students must present very specific methods for the conduct of the proposed research. Approval will not be granted until the written proposal indicates that the student is prepared to submit an application to the Human Subjects Committee and then, after receiving IRB approval, to initiate the research.

The proposal approval process not only serves to ensure the integrity of research conducted at the University, but it also serves as a safeguard for students whose procedures or findings might be called into question in the future.

Students typically do not bring refreshments to the proposal meeting. If the student chooses to do so, the guidelines listed above (see Taking the Oral Preliminary Examination) should be followed.

### **Outcome of the Dissertation Proposal Meeting**

The outcome of the meeting is recorded on the [Thesis Panel Prospectus Approval Form](#), which is signed by the participating committee members at the conclusion of the meeting.

The committee may authorize the conduct of the study pursuant to the proposal, request revisions to the proposal, or reject the proposal. In cases where major revisions to a project are needed, the committee will need to reconvene to discuss such changes. Approval of the proposal indicates faculty support of the proposed research design and methodology.

The student is responsible for submitting the signed Thesis Panel Prospectus Approval Form to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies. Note that the form is a Department document and therefore is not submitted to the Graduate School.

The student may not submit a request for approval to any Institutional Review Board or begin the proposed research until the committee has approved the proposal.

## **Obtaining Human Subjects Approval of the Proposed Research from the Institutional Review Board**

Any research that involves human subjects on or off campus must be approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to data collection. The student cannot initiate the research before obtaining University approval to conduct the research.

[Information and forms are available online](#) or through the IRB Office. Questions concerning exemptions or other aspects of human subjects research review should be addressed to the IRB: Human Subjects Committee at 612-626-5654. The IRB's website provides detailed information about the processes and the conditions associated with each level of review. There are three options: a full committee review, an expedited review, and exemption from review. The full review level requires a full review by the IRB, which may take four to six weeks for review and notification of the decision. These forms are appropriate for research designs that may involve a potential threat to the human subjects or involve minors and thus may require more deliberation. The expedited review involves minimal risk to human subjects but nevertheless has some

potential risk. Exempted review applies to research projects that involve very minimal risk. Many students' dissertation projects qualify for the exempted review, but only the IRB can make this determination. Exemption waives only the need for further review; it does not negate the need for obtaining the consent of subjects where applicable.

***No research may be initiated until written notification of IRB approval is received.*** There can be no recruitment of subjects, no advertising, no mailing or distribution of consent forms, and no data gathering before the IRB has granted approval and indicated that the research may begin. Any concerns of the Human Subjects Committee must be addressed fully before approval is granted.

## **Step 5: Dissertation**

Completion and defense of an original research study is the most critical and important step toward the Ph.D. degree. This step signals the student's mastery of a specific topic and successful extension of knowledge in that area of research. It is what makes a student worthy of the title "Doctor of Philosophy" or Ph.D.

### **Establish the Final Oral Examination Committee (Reminder)**

The student should have completed this task in Step 4, as it needs to be completed before the proposal meeting.

### **Dissertation Research and Writing**

The process of completing a dissertation depends on the field of study and the specific topic of the research. Students do their dissertation research and writing under the guidance of their advisors. It is therefore important to maintain close contact with your advisor throughout the dissertation process.

Once you have received approval for your proposal from the Institutional Review Board, you may begin working on your dissertation project.

In most instances, only the advisor reviews drafts or sections of the dissertation until the advisor decides it is ready to be forwarded to the whole committee for review. In some cases, certain committee members may be asked to provide feedback on specific sections, when their expertise would be particularly helpful.

### **Preparing for the Final Oral Examination**

The final oral examination is also referred to as the dissertation defense. As the research and writing of the dissertation near completion, the student should request the Graduation Packet from the Graduate School. This packet has several items that the student will need towards the end of the program, including the online Application for Degree Form, the Reviewers Report Form, the Survey of Earned Doctorates, copyright information, and degree-clearance instructions.

### **Application for Degree Form**

When the student and advisor, along with the other members of the final oral examination committee, have determined the exact date of the dissertation defense, the student needs to fill out and submit the online Application for Degree Form (found in the Graduation Packet) by the first business day of the anticipated month of graduation. For example, if the student plans to graduate in March, the application must be submitted by March 1; however, if March 1 is on a weekend, the deadline for submitting the application is the first workday after March 1.

### **Reviewers' Report**

A complete draft of the dissertation must be submitted to all committee members and approved by the committee members who are designated as readers (also referred to as reviewers). The complete draft must be submitted at a time that gives the readers two weeks to do their reviews and allows additional time to deal with unforeseen issues that may arise. It is therefore advisable to deliver the draft to all committee members three weeks before the anticipated defense date.

Each reader makes an independent determination about the readiness of the dissertation for the final oral examination. In order to proceed to the defense, all of the reviewers must indicate that the thesis is "acceptable for final defense" or is "acceptable with minor revisions." If any reviewer indicates that the thesis is "unacceptable for defense and requires major revisions," the reviewer must inform the student in writing of the revisions required. Such revisions must be made prior to the defense.

The judgments of those designated as the readers on the committee are recorded on a Reviewers' Report Form that the Graduate School includes in the student's online Graduation Packet. The student is responsible for obtaining all necessary signatures on the Reviewers' Report Form. **The signed Reviewers' Report Form must be submitted to the Graduate Student Services and Progress (GSSP) Office prior to the final oral examination.** The Graduate School will consider the defense invalid unless this form is submitted to their office prior to the final oral examination. The student is responsible for making sure the signed Reviewers' Report is submitted by hand to the GSSP Office.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible for the final oral examination, the student must have:

- satisfactorily completed all work listed on the official Degree Program Plan form,
- passed both the written and oral preliminary examinations,
- maintained active status by registering for classes or credits,
- satisfied the thesis-credit requirement,
- submitted the Reviewers' Report Form to the GSSP Office, and
- completed all necessary requirements and steps so that the degree can be awarded within the time limit for degree completion (8 years from entry into the program).

It is the student's responsibility to schedule the final oral examination with the committee members at a date and time they agree upon.

It is the student's responsibility to [schedule the exam online with the Graduate School](#) at least one week in advance of the examination. This step triggers a review by the GSSP Office to ensure that all criteria listed above have been met. When the GSSP Office verifies that all is in order, it will release the Final Examination Form (on which the committee's votes will be recorded) to the chair of the final oral examination committee.

It is also the student's responsibility to reserve a room for the meeting through the OLPD Department office, in person (Burton 206) or by phone (612-624-1006). The room and any equipment that may be needed (e.g., laptop, Skype cart, etc.) should be reserved as soon as the meeting date and time have been finalized, as the Department's meeting rooms are often in high demand. The room should be reserved for two hours (plus set-up time, if any).

No refreshments are necessary or expected at the defense. If, however, the student chooses to bring refreshments for the committee (not for the guests at the public portion of the exam), the relevant guidelines indicated for the oral preliminary examination should be followed.

When a committee member is unable to participate in the exam due to unexpected circumstances, the exam is invalid, which is a very serious matter. Committee substitutions can be made in the case of an emergency, but the Department must be informed before the examination begins. Should such a circumstance arise, the student should immediately contact the faculty advisor (or the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, if the advisor is the committee member in question) to discuss possible options for finding an appropriate substitute committee member on short notice. If a substitute committee member cannot be found on short notice, then the exam will need to be postponed. If a substitute committee member is found and approved by the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, the student will need to [revise the preliminary examination committee](#) to reflect the change as soon as possible.

## **Final Oral Examination / Defense**

The student defends the dissertation at a formal meeting of the final oral examination committee. All members of the final oral examination committee must be present at the final oral examination. The absence of any member results in an invalid examination.

The examination consists of three parts:

- 1) a presentation open to the public in which the student presents the dissertation research, and a brief question-and-answer period during which the student responds to questions from the public;
- 2) a closed meeting between the candidate and the examining committee during which committee members ask the candidate questions about the dissertation (and possibly about related areas as well); and

3) a vote taken by the committee members (with the candidate out of the room) in accordance with Graduate School procedures, on whether or not the candidate passed the examination.

The student should work under the guidance of the advisor in preparing the presentation and getting ready to respond to committee members' questions.

The exam will not exceed two hours. Before beginning the examination or before beginning the closed portion of the examination, the chair may ask the student and any guests to leave the room for a few minutes to give the committee members an opportunity to clarify any issues or ask questions of the chair or advisor about procedures.

The formal presentation of the thesis typically includes the purpose of the research, the conceptual or other framework employed, a summary of data collection and analysis, the major findings, the conclusions, and the implications for theory, policy or practice. The presentation is typically 20-30 minutes and may make use of handouts or a PowerPoint presentation. It is recommended that the student carefully prepare and rehearse the presentation to improve timing, organization and ease of discussion.

The presentation portion of the examination is open to all interested parties (including family members, friends, other graduate students and other faculty). The guests are excused by the committee chair after the presentation and the brief question-and-answer period.

The faculty and student then reconvene in closed session. The committee members pose questions to the student pertaining to any aspect of the dissertation.

After questioning is completed, the student is temporarily excused, and the committee members independently vote, by written ballot, to pass or fail the student's defense of the thesis.

In order for the student to pass, three of the committee members must vote to pass. While the three readers must have read the dissertation and signed the form indicating that the dissertation is acceptable for defense, the judgment made at the final oral exam relates to the acceptability of the defense of the dissertation by the candidate.

If the judgment is that the student passed the examination, the committee members sign the Final Examination Form.

If the judgment is that the student passed the examination but that minor revisions are needed in the dissertation, the committee members still sign the Final Examination Form. If the dissertation is judged to require substantial revisions, signatures are withheld until appropriate revisions have been made. If the signatures are withheld, the Graduate School must be notified by letter within one week of the examination of the specific revisions required. The letter is written by the committee chairperson in consultation with committee members. The student receives a copy of the letter. Upon approval of the dissertation, committee members sign the Final Examination

Form. Please refer to the University of Minnesota Graduate Education Catalog for details about scheduling and reporting results of the final oral examination.

## Completion of the Degree

Once the defense is complete and any required revisions to the dissertation have been made and approved by the advisor or committee (as determined at the defense), the student is required to submit a copy of the final dissertation and other materials to the Graduate Student Services and Progress (GSSP) Office and the OneStop Office, as appropriate.

[Instructions on what needs to be submitted and how it needs to be submitted](#) can be found on the Graduate School's website.

Students do not need to submit a bound copy of the dissertation to the advisor, the committee members or the Department. Some faculty members, however, do expect to receive a bound copy of the dissertation if they have served on the final oral examination committee. Students should check with their committee members on this point.

### **Graduation**

Graduate degrees are awarded monthly. All Graduate School requirements must be completed by the last working day of the intended month of graduation.

To graduate at the end of any given month students must:

- submit their Graduate School Application for Degree form online **before the first workday of the intended month of graduation**, and
- complete all other requirements **by the last workday of the intended month of graduation**.

If you submit your final materials later than the month listed on your Graduate School Application for Degree, contact the GSSP Office at [gssp@umn.edu](mailto:gssp@umn.edu) to inform them of the situation and learn about options. Depending on your timing, the GSSP Office may treat your existing form as having been submitted in the later month, or they may require you to submit a new form.

Graduating before the end of the term may affect eligibility for student loans, housing, and so on. Check with the appropriate office if you have questions on eligibility.

The diploma will be mailed three to four months after graduation.

## **Commencement**

Commencement, not to be confused with graduation, is a ceremony and celebration of students' accomplishments. The commencement ceremony for the College of Education and Human Development is held only in the late spring. It is the only commencement ceremony held for CEHD advanced degree candidates. Attending or participating in the ceremony does **not** indicate that you have officially graduated.

If you wish to participate in commencement, the online Commencement Attendance Approval Form (which is made available in late Fall on the CEHD website) must be submitted and approved about three months before the commencement ceremony in early May. The Commencement Attendance Approval Form must be approved by the advisor and Director of Graduate Studies. The advisor's approval indicates that a draft of the thesis has been completed and that the advisor expects the student to complete the final oral examination by August of that same year. Students whose degrees have been awarded in the months prior to the March deadline need only submit the form to the CEHD Dean's Office.

The faculty of the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development look forward to celebrating your graduation and your attainment of the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the commencement ceremony!

## Appendix

# Establishing a Graduate Committee

This section presents rules and procedures to be followed in establishing a graduate committee. All rules apply to both the oral preliminary examination committee and the final oral examination committee, except where noted.

A Ph.D. student establishes an examination committee by identifying faculty members for the committee and submitting their names to the Graduate School via the required form.

**Oral Prelim:** A Ph.D. student must establish the oral preliminary examination committee within three months after submitting the GPAS form. Failure to do so may result in a registration hold being placed on the student's record until a committee is assigned.

**Final Oral:** The student must establish the final oral examination committee before the proposal meeting. This step is necessary *even if the intended members of the committee are the same as the members of the oral preliminary examination committee*, because, in administrative practice, the oral preliminary examination committee is technically disbanded after the oral prelim.

Usually most, if not all, of the final oral examination committee membership will be made up of the faculty who participated in your proposal meeting. If more than one of the individuals selected for the final oral examination committee did not attend the proposal meeting, your advisor may determine that a second proposal meeting is necessary before you can proceed further.

## Identifying Members of the Examination Committee

The student must work closely with the advisor to identify individuals who may be a good fit for the committee and the student's research interests. Once the student and advisor have agreed on a set of potential committee members and the role that each will play on the committee, the student should contact each one with a request to serve on the committee.

The process of identifying committee members must be informed by the rules as to who can be on a committee and who can serve in each role on the committee. Some of the rules below related to faculty-role status, which determines whether or not an individual is able to serve on a graduate committee. A complete listing of individuals who have faculty role status at the University, their tenure status, and their availability for certain committee roles is available online.

An examination committee must meet the following criteria:

- There must be at least four members on the committee.

It is possible, but generally not advisable, to have a fifth member.

- **Oral Prelim:** The advisor serves as the committee chair. Students who have co-advisors should consult with them to determine which should chair the committee.
- **Final Oral:** By University rules, the advisor is prohibited from serving as the chair of the final oral examination committee. It is possible for the outside member of the committee to chair the final oral examination committee, provided that person has status to do so for a doctoral program at the University of Minnesota (in OLPD or in another major), as indicated on the Faculty Role List. This choice is considered inadvisable, however, unless no other OLPD faculty on the committee are eligible to serve as chair.
- At least three members must have faculty-role status in a major program in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development. These individuals are considered to be your "internal" or "inside" members. Your primary advisor must serve as an inside committee member.

Only individuals working at the University who appear on the Graduate School's faculty-role list as having status to serve on committees may do so. In some instances, Medical School faculty not on the faculty role list may be allowed to serve. The Coordinator of Graduate Studies can provide information on those possibilities.

- At least one member must have faculty-role status in a graduate major or a graduate minor program outside the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development. This individual is considered to be your "external" or "outside" member.

If you have declared a minor, your minor advisor must serve as the outside member on your committee. If for any reason the minor advisor is dropped from the committee and not replaced with another individual with faculty-role status in that minor, the minor will be dropped from your record.

Some OLPD faculty and administrators have faculty-role status in an OLPD major, a minor, or another unit at the University. In most instances, these individuals may serve as either inside or outside member. For example, if Professor Q has a faculty role status in OLPD and in Social Work, Professor Q can be assigned as one of your inside members or as the outside member of your committee.

- **Oral Prelim:** The Department strongly recommends that you have at least two members who are tenured or on the tenure-track at the University.

- **Final Oral:** At least two of the committee members must be tenured or on the tenure-track at the University. As the advisor cannot serve as the chair, at least one of the other committee members must have the correct committee status to chair the final oral examination committee. The outside member of the committee can count as one of the two required tenured or tenure-track members, provided that member's tenure status originates from a University of Minnesota department or program.
- **Final Oral:** At least three committee members (the advisor, the outside member and one inside member) must be identified as readers (also referred to as reviewers). Readers are responsible for certifying that the dissertation is ready for defense before the final oral examination can take place. Students should consult their advisors to determine how many committee members should be identified as readers, as practices vary among the Department's program areas.

Occasionally, there are special circumstances involved in establishing an Examination Committee. Here are the rules for some special cases:

***One of the members of the committee no longer has faculty-role status:***

**Oral Prelim:** If the individual was on the committee prior to the expiration of faculty-role status, that individual, if willing, can still serve on the committee.

**Final Oral:** If the individual was on the oral preliminary examination committee, it may or may not be possible for that person to serve on the final oral examination committee. The student should consult the Coordinator of Graduate Studies for further information. If the individual was on the final oral examination committee prior to the expiration of faculty-role status, that individual, if willing, can still serve on the committee.

**Both the Oral Prelim and the Final Oral:** Note that if an individual who no longer has faculty-role status is switched to a different position on the committee (as, for example, from inside to outside member), that individual is no longer allowed to remain on the committee and may not be moved back to the original slot.

***One of the members of the committee has left the University (by retiring, taking a position elsewhere, etc.):***

The student should consult with the advisor to determine whether it would be best interest to keep that person on the committee or replace that member with a different faculty member. If both agree that the original member should remain on the committee, the student should make that request in writing (preferably by email). The original committee member may or may not agree to continue. There are no reimbursements for members who are no longer University faculty.

***The student and advisor agree to invite an individual not affiliated with the University to serve on the oral prelim committee.***

It is possible to petition for such an addition, but it is not common practice in the Department. It is also something of an imposition to ask outsiders to serve on University committees. Often the non-affiliated member's unfamiliarity with University policies and expectations of committee members leads to delays and other potential difficulties. Some OLPD students in the past have been delayed in completing their degrees due to issues related to having a non-University member on their committee. Also, it may take several weeks to process a request to add a non-University member. There are no reimbursements for these faculty for any related expense, including their time. The non-University member must serve as an outside member of the committee, even if the individual's work is in the same field of study as the student's research.

**Final Oral:** If a non-University individual served on the student's earlier oral preliminary examination committee, that individual may serve on the final oral examination committee without an additional petition.

Following are the steps for requesting that a non-University individual serve on an examination committee. All communication noted here may be by email.

- The student and advisor should carefully consider whether or not a non-University individual should serve as a committee member. There must be a substantive reason, such as an individual's unique expertise in the relevant research area, to warrant a petition.
- The student sends an email to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies requesting that the individual be approved to serve on the committee. The request should include:
  - a short statement (typically 1-2 paragraphs) indicating why this individual should be on the committee, along with an explanation of why no one at the University has this qualification;
  - the individual's current curriculum vitae;
  - a written statement from the non-affiliated individual indicating their willingness to serve on the committee;
  - a message of support from the advisor.
- The Coordinator of Graduate Studies compiles and sends the materials to the Director of Graduate Studies for consideration.
- The Director of Graduate Studies makes a written recommendation to the College's Associate Dean.

- The Associate Dean makes a final decision whether to allow the individual to serve on the committee. The Associate Dean's decision is final.
- The Coordinator of Graduate Studies contacts the student and provides further instructions.

## Steps in Establishing a Graduate Committee

Once the student and advisor have agreed on the committee membership and all committee members have agreed to serve the committee, the student needs to [petition online for the membership be established](#). The online form can only be initiated by the student, via the student's University login account.

Once submitted, the committee request is electronically routed to the following for approval:

- the primary advisor
- the Director of Graduate Studies (or the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, as designee)
- the Dean's Office of the College of Education and Human Development.

Once all these parties have approved the committee, the members of the committee and their roles will be officially recorded by the Graduate School.

If the advisor, DGS, or Dean's Office rejects the committee membership request for any reason, the student will be notified and will need to resubmit the committee request. If a reason is not given for the rejection, the student should consult the CGS or the faculty advisor.

## Steps in Changing a Graduate Committee

If the committee member being replaced is not the advisor, the student, with the advisor's approval, [completes a new online request](#), as above, to replace the member.

If the committee member being replaced is the advisor, the student needs to complete a Change of Advisor form first and return it to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies. Only the Department can re-assign a student's advisor within the graduate student record system. Once a new advisor is confirmed in the system, the student fills out a new online request form.