General Guidelines for Doctor of Philosophy Degree

Although advanced course work is an integral part of the doctoral candidate's program, no specific number of courses is set for attainment of the degree. The real basis for developing an acceptable program is to demonstrate mastery of a selected field and the ability to conduct independent research in the field.

You become a candidate for the PhD degree AFTER the following requirements (Milestones) are completed:

a) Approval of your Petition to Begin Study in the PhD program
b) Passing the Qualifying (preliminary) Exam – written and oral portions
c) Provide proof of English proficiency
d) Approval of the Application for Candidacy by the Graduate School

The Petition to Begin Study for the PhD is reviewed by the Graduate Faculty in the major area and the Graduate Advisor. For University of Texas students completing the MS, a form is available. Students finishing their MS elsewhere give the same information in the application for admission. The Graduate Advisor will notify students whether they are admitted to begin the PhD program or denied admission.

The Qualifying (preliminary) Exam usually consists of a written and/or oral exam in a given area of Civil Engineering administered by a committee consisting of at least three members of the Civil Engineering Graduate Studies Committee. This exam should be taken by the end of the first year beyond the MS degree.

The objective of the English proficiency requirement is to ensure that all PhD candidates possess the writing skills necessary for effective technical communication before embarking on the dissertation writing process.

1. English proficiency should be demonstrated in one of three ways:
   ♦ By submitting a GRE analytical writing score of 4.0 or greater at the time of application;
   ♦ By retaking the GRE and achieving an analytical writing score of 4.0 or greater;
   ♦ By passing an approved technical writing course.

   Students who cannot demonstrate proficiency on the basis of their GRE analytical writing score must either retake the GRE, or enroll in an approved technical writing course as soon as possible as a Ph.D. student.

   CE 397 Advanced Written Communication for International Engineering Students; CE 389C Advanced Engineering Communication; or an ESL (ESL 388W or 389W) course are the only technical writing courses approved at this time.

2. Arrange through your major area of study to take the qualifying examination.
   This exam has any of four possible outcomes:
   a. Pass
   b. Pass with recommendations regarding the student's program of work.
   c. No Pass but re-examination permitted
   d. No Pass - No re-examination

   The qualifying exam should be completed as soon as possible in the student's doctoral program. The qualifying examination must be taken and passed during the first year in residence or continued registration will not be permitted. Exceptions will be handled on an individual basis by petition.
After passing the technical portion of the Qualifying Exam and demonstrating English proficiency, you should apply to the Graduate School for **Admission to PhD Candidacy** and request that a supervising committee be appointed by the Graduate Dean. You MUST be admitted to candidacy before you can register for CE X99R. The Application for Doctoral Candidacy is now completed on the Graduate School's website. The application for candidacy should be submitted as early as possible after passing the Qualifying Exam (before completion of the course work).

When most of your course work is completed and you have been admitted to PhD candidacy, you should arrange to take the **Mastery of the Major (Comprehensive) Exam** which is administered by your supervising committee. This exam is usually taken early in the second year of residence in the PhD program.

The **Defense of the Dissertation** is the final exam of the PhD program. It is your obligation to submit an acceptable dissertation to the Graduate School. Therefore, every effort should be made to complete the dissertation and pass the Defense of the Dissertation exam **before** you leave The University of Texas at Austin for employment.

You MUST be registered for Dissertation (X99R and W) continuously from the time you are admitted to Candidacy until graduation. Register for "R" the first semester **ONLY** and "W" for each subsequent semester. If you leave the campus without completing the requirements (incomplete courses or dissertation), continuous registration must still be maintained.

The following steps constitute the usual procedure for completing your degree requirements:

1. **Early in the semester you plan to graduate** submit a **Doctoral Degree Candidate Form** online. Exact deadlines are specified by the Graduate School each semester.

2. **A copy of the final draft of the dissertation which has been reviewed for technical and grammatical accuracy by the supervising professor** should be submitted to each member of the supervising committee **not less than four weeks** before the date on which you intend to defend the dissertation.

3. **Each member of the supervising committee must sign a form on which he/she indicates that the dissertation has been received and agrees to be present at the Final Oral Examination (Defense of the Dissertation).** Changes to the supervising committee membership must be made **not less than 30 days** prior to the defense.

4. **The Request for Final Oral examination** (Defense) must be filed in the Graduate School along with one copy each of your dissertation abstract, the title page, table of contents and lists of figures and tables, and the unsigned Committee Certification of Approved Version “Signature Page” (see Format Guidelines for Dissertation) at least **two weeks** prior to the Final Oral Examination. The oral request form must be typed or word-processed onto pink paper.

5. **Upload your completed dissertation** to the Texas Digital Libraries (TDL) site prior to submitting a hard copy of the **Committee Certification of Approved Version (Signature Page)**, signed by all members of your committee (no proxy signatures allowed); additional title page; final version of your abstract; Intellectual Property (Copyright) Tutorial Certification; Statement on Research with Human Participants; Statement of Research in Restricted Regions; Survey of Earned Doctorates (optional). There are processing fees. For more information inquire in the Graduate Studies Office or on their website: [https://gradschool.utexas.edu/](https://gradschool.utexas.edu/).