

George Washington University
School of Business

Ph. D. Program Handbook

REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE
PROGRAMS OF STUDY LEADING TO THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
IN THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

ISSUED BY THE COMMITTEE ON
DOCTORAL STUDIES

Office of Doctoral Studies
School of Business
The George Washington University
450 Duques Hall, 2201 G St., NW,
Washington DC 20052

202-994-6298

sbphd@gwu.edu

<https://business.gwu.edu/academics/programs/doctoral>

TABLE OF CONTENTS	Page
Sec. I Preamble	1
Mission	1
Overview	1
Doctoral Program Faculty	2
Applicability	2
Sec. II Admissions	3
Admission of New Students	3
English Language Requirement	4
Review Process	4
Admission Criteria	5
Transfer Policy	5
Sec. III. Financial Assistance	7
Rules Related to Working for Pay	7
Continuation of Financial Assistance	8
Sec. IV. Residence Rules	9
Sec. V. Tuition	9
Sec. VI. Doctoral Curriculum	10
Coursework	10
Independent Study	11
Sec. VII. Faculty Advisors	11
Sec. VIII. Study Plan	12

Sec. IX. Summer Research Paper	13
Sec. X. Comprehensive Examination	13
Sec. XI. Proposal and Dissertation	14
Sec. XII. Dissertation Committee	15
Chair of the Dissertation Committee	16
Other Members of the Dissertation Committee	16
Approval	17
Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee	17
Conflicts of Interest	17
Sec. XIII. Performance Reviews	18
Sec. XIV. Involuntary Separation from the Doctoral Program	20
Master's degree from GWSB	21
Sec. XV. Dissertation Procedures	21
Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty	22
Research Involving Human Subjects	22
Style and Format of Dissertations	22
Electronic Submission of Dissertation	23
Dissertation Timetable	23

Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration
School of Business, George Washington University

Welcome to the George Washington University doctoral program. A Ph.D. in Business Administration from the GW School of Business (GWSB) is designed to prepare you for a successful career as a scholar at a leading research university. At GWSB, we believe in excellence in both research and teaching — and we'll prepare you to excel in both disciplines. Our program is challenging, but also supportive and collegial. Students develop close working relationships that will continue throughout their careers.

This handbook, used by both students and the doctoral program faculty, is your primary resource and will guide you throughout your tenure as a doctoral student and Ph.D. candidate. Useful links:

<https://business.gwu.edu/academics/programs/doctoral>

<https://business.gwu.edu/academics/programs/doctoral/doctoral-students>

bulletin.gwu.edu/

<https://registrar.gwu.edu/>

I. Preamble

Mission

The mission of the doctoral program of the George Washington University School of Business is to prepare scholars, scientists and thought leaders seeking academic careers in the subject fields of business. The program requires students to acquire a deep understanding of the theories, methodologies and paradigms that constitute the forefront of discourse and research in business and the social sciences. It requires students to develop research skills working with school faculty to create new knowledge published in leading journals of the field.

Overview

This document, prepared by the GWSB Doctoral Committee establishes the policies that guide the administration and execution of the GWSB doctoral programs. The Doctoral Committee is responsible for establishing and overseeing school wide policies and quality standards. Department programs must meet at least the baseline school-wide standards established in this Handbook. Departments may publish individual program guides that set *higher* standards, otherwise the standards of this Handbook shall prevail.

The policies in this Handbook describe a doctoral program with the following general features:

- The Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration is a degree offered in a number of the school's departments or interdepartmental units that are recommended by the school Doctoral Committee and approved by the Dean (in this Handbook the term "Department" refers to the school's academic departments as well as interdepartmental doctoral programs);
- The programs offered by the Departments aim to prepare students for academic research careers via rigorous preparation in research methods and theory relevant to the field, by encouraging student research initiatives as well as collaborations with faculty, and by producing high quality dissertations that make a significant contribution to knowledge;
- The Doctoral program is a full-time program of studies and research, and admitted students shall be supported by adequate internal or verified external financial support for five years;
- Applications are evaluated by each Department and recommendations for admission and fellowships are submitted to the Doctoral Committee that makes final decisions;
- The Doctoral Committee is responsible for maintaining quality control via periodic reviews of student progress, renewal of fellowships, and termination from the program if necessary;
- The Doctoral Committee review Department programs and doctoral seminars and courses after every three years to ensure they are meeting program goals that advance the strategic objectives of GWSB.

Doctoral Program Faculty

Doctoral Program Faculty are accomplished researchers and scholars, have ongoing programs of scholarly research, and are committed to working with doctoral students to discover and guide mutual research interests. Faculty members are deemed doctoral program faculty based on publications in leading academic journals and other scholarly outlets. Criteria used by the Doctoral Committee to identify doctoral program faculty are similarly applied to non-faculty participants in the doctoral advising process. Students should seek advice on Doctoral Program Faculty from the lead professor of their program, prior to requesting faculty to serve on their advisory or dissertation committees.

Applicability

This Handbook comes into effect starting with the academic year 2014-2015 and applies to all new admitted students, and to all school faculty and doctoral programs as of this year.

Expected Timetable for Doctoral Studies

Month/Year	Milestones	Section in Handbook
2 nd year (by June 1)	Complete required courses (45 credit hours – at least 39 credits by 2 nd year and the remaining 6 credits by 3 rd year)	VI, p. 9
Per department schedule (recommended to finalize before 2 nd year)	Study Plans submitted for review by dept. as per dept. schedule	IX, p. 11
2 nd /3 rd year (per department schedule; typically Fall of 2 nd year, but no later than September 1 of 3 rd year)	Submit Summer Research Paper	X, p. 12
3 rd year (by Fall)	Pass field Comprehensive Examination	XI, p. 13
Fall semester 3 rd year	Mid Program Performance Review: Submit all documents required by dept. by its Fall due date. Depts. submit Study Plan and all required documents to Doctoral Office by Dec. 15.	XIV, p. 17
3 rd /4 th year (typically 3 rd year, but no later than Spring of 4 th year)	Defend Dissertation Proposal*	XIII, p. 15
4 th year (by March 30)	Fourth-Year Fellowship Review: Submit Review Form and data to Doctoral Office	XIV, p. 17
4 th /5 th year	Teach one GWSB course	XIV, p. 17
4 th /5 th year	Defend Final Dissertation*	
In extenuating circumstances time to finish may be extended with permission up to a total of 7 years for the whole program excluding leaves of absence.		IV, p. 8

* See XVI for a detailed timetable for the dissertation.

II. Admissions

Admission of New Students

Applications are submitted online (<https://business.gwu.edu/graduate-admissions>). Applicants should make sure to submit any additional materials required by the GWSB doctoral program directly to the school's Doctoral Office. Application deadlines are posted on the website each year (typically January 15).

Applicants should direct general questions to the Doctoral Office and program specific questions to the lead faculty of each department.

- All application materials, including statement of purpose, essays, and personal statements, must be prepared by the student. Any misrepresentation or withholding of material facts, shall nullify an admission decision, and result in dismissal if discovered subsequent to joining the program.
- Applicants who were enrolled to a doctoral program in any field in any university in the past 5 years must disclose full details in a letter to the Doctoral Office and Field Department at the time of application. Failure to do so shall nullify an admission decision, and result in dismissal if discovered subsequent to joining the program.
- Only full-time students are accepted in the program. Students cannot change to part-time status at any stage in the program.

English Language Requirement

Students from countries where English is not an official language and non-native English speakers are required to take either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (Institutional Code 5246, Department Code 02), the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the PTE Academic Test or the Duolingo English Test. The test must have been taken within the past 2 years. Exceptions may be made for applicants who hold a degree from a university located in a country in which English is the official language and also the language of instruction at the university. Applicants must obtain written approval from the Lead Faculty in the Department and the Associate Dean if they claim an exemption.

Minimum satisfactory TOEFL, IELTS, PTE or Duolingo scores are defined as follows:

- TOEFL: 600 or above (paper exam), 100 or above (internet exam); 250 or above (computer exam).
- IELTS: an overall band score of 7.0 with no individual band score below 6.0.
- PTE Academic Score of at least 68
- Duolingo English Test: Score of 110 or higher; scores should be sent to GW School of Business

Review Process

After the application deadline applications are forwarded for review in the Department specified on the application. Departments forward admission and fellowship recommendations to the Doctoral Committee in February.

- Recommended applicants must have been interviewed in person or by electronic media, by at least one faculty. The interview should seek to evaluate the applicant's academic interest and potential, the student's language skills, and how cognizant the applicant is with the issues discussed in written materials provided with the application.
- Each recommendation must be supported by at least two GWSB faculty (one must be

from the department and tenured).

Final decisions are made by the Doctoral Committee, and communicated informally by Departments to applicants by the end of March. The formal letter of admission and fellowship is issued by the Associate Dean.

Admission Criteria

Departments publish admission guidelines for their programs. In general, they, and the Doctoral Committee, apply the following criteria to evaluate applicants:

- Scholastic aptitude and potential for scholarly research evidenced by high GMAT or GRE scores, the statement of purpose, strong educational background and GPA in previous degrees, and letters of recommendation especially those from educational mentors.
- Doctoral study requires significant quantitative, writing and conceptual skills. Some departments place a high value on quantitative ability.
- Fit between the research interests of the applicant and research faculty of the field.
- Demonstrated proficiency in English language and communication (verified by interview).
- Acknowledged understanding that a Ph.D. is fundamentally a research degree for preparing students for academic careers.
- Commitment to pursue doctoral studies as a full-time student.

Transfer Policy

In general, the GWSB doctoral program does not accept transfers from doctoral programs at other universities. The exception is when a student is accompanying a senior professor newly hired by GWSB, who is the student's dissertation advisor. An exception might also be considered for a student of exceptional merit seeking to transfer due to relocation (which must be documented) to the Washington DC area.

The doctoral committee will consider the following in deciding (by majority vote) to admit a transfer student:

- The student would have been a strong candidate for initial admission to the program, and, depending on the stage of the completed program, has accumulated a commendable record of research in progress.
- The student has completed a program or part of a program of doctoral studies at least as rigorous as that required at GWSB, and will make up any deficiencies or additional requirements if required by the department or doctoral committee.

□□□□The student is transferring from a recognized doctoral program at a reputed school of business or allied field.

In all cases the student must be in (i) good academic standing (is not being dismissed or counseled out), and (ii) highly recommended by the professor he/she is accompanying and the doctoral program faculty of the department of admission. The letter of admission shall stipulate the stage in the program the student is entering, and where relevant, the additional requirements the student will meet in the GWSB program.

Internal Transfers. The situation may arise that a student wishes to transfer from one program to another. Transfers have to be approved by a majority of the doctoral program faculty of both programs, and by the Doctoral Committee. Transfers should not be allowed if the theory and empirical literatures of the programs are not complementary. The transfer student may be required to take additional theory seminars in the new program. Transfer students must be in good standing and not at risk to be counseled out. Since a fellowship will usually be involved the two programs must agree how this will be handled, and the arrangement approved by the Associate Dean.

III. Financial Assistance

GWSB doctoral fellowships for new admissions are made available each year by the decision of the Dean and allocated by the Associate Dean among programs that have been approved by the Doctoral Committee. Student applicants should confirm availability with the lead faculty in each department.

Fellowships packages include full tuition, salary/stipend, and health coverage.¹

International students: The minimum English language requirements apply to admission as well as financial support. Except when exempted by the Department and the Associate Dean, to be eligible to receive a fellowship, international students must have a minimum TOEFL score of 100 (internet exam), 600 (paper exam), 250 (computer exam), or an overall band score of 7.0 (with no individual band score below 6.0) on the IELTS, or a PTE Academic Score of at least 68, or a Duolingo English Test Score of 110 or higher.

Applicants are required to disclose all sources of financial support. Financial support from outside GWSB is not a qualification for admission. Students have to independently meet academic criteria.

We strongly encourage students to seek external funding.² External support packages, in combination with GWSB support, will match or exceed GWSB fellowships. Students with external funding are not required to work as Graduate Assistants but they are subject to the same maximum part-time work rules as other students to meet required full-time status in the program.

Students must meet year-to-year performance standards to continue in the program irrespective of whether their funding is internal or external.

Rules Related to Working for Pay

Students **admitted on a full-time basis**, whether on full or partial GWSB fellowship, externally funded, or self-funded, **may not work full time**, until they have successfully defended their dissertation. The only exception is working in an ABD-status faculty position at a university school, if approved by the Associate Dean on the Department's certification that the candidate is nearing completion of his/her dissertation.

Further, all full-time students may not work **part-time** inside or outside the university for more than 20 hours per week during their residency (see section IV for residency requirements), until they have successfully defended their dissertation. After passing all comprehensive exams, students may work an additional 10 hours per week *during summer*, with the approval of their Departments and the Associate Dean.

- Students receiving the full salary-stipends included in a GW fellowship, are required to work 20 hours a week as Graduate or Research Assistants (GAs, GRAs) during the academic year and during summer. This is counted toward the 20 hours of part-time

¹ U.S. students must pay the entire cost of the insurance by the enrollment deadline. The university reimburses \$1,500 in November. International students are automatically enrolled in the GW Student Health Plan; \$750 is placed in the student's account in fall and \$750 in spring.

² External support must be consistent with work-rules outlined in the next section.

- work permitted to full-time students.
- International students on F-1 visas are not permitted to work outside the university.

Strict Rule. Rules restricting paid work while in the doctoral program are *strict rules* that students agree to by accepting an offer of admission or fellowship. Any violation is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Continuation of Financial Assistance

During the first two years fellowships are renewed based on performance in course work. Students are expected to take advanced courses appropriate to a doctoral education and perform at a level expected of students on full scholarship.

From the third year onward, the student is expected to demonstrate competence in research and scholarship, demonstrated by indices such as: (i) successful development of the summer research paper toward publication in a quality journal, (ii) active engagement in research with faculty to produce articles targeted to quality journals, (iii) active participation in the academic life of the department (e, g., attendance at speaker seminars), and (iv) timely progress toward proposal defense and completing the dissertation.

The following are examples of circumstances under which fellowships may be terminated (which may also result in dismissal from the program):

- If student fails to complete required courses with satisfactory grades in the first and second years of the program.
- If student fails to complete a summer research paper acceptable to the doctoral program faculty of the Field and the Doctoral committees within the time provided by the Field plus one semester for requested revisions.
- If student violates the work-for-pay rules.
- If student fails to maintain the support of the faculty Advisor, or fails to find a doctoral faculty member in the student's department willing to serve as the student's dissertation Chair within a semester of passing the comprehensive exams.
- If the student fails to pass any part of the comprehensive exams in two attempts.
- If the student is unable to successfully defend a dissertation proposal by the end of the Spring semester of the fourth year.
- If the Department determines in a scheduled review that the student does not demonstrate an aptitude or active engagement in scholarly research.

IV. Residence Rules

Residency is defined as fully engage in course work or dissertation research, including research related field research. Students that expect to be out of Washington D.C. area for part of their dissertation work must receive approval from the dissertation chair and doctoral committee.

Leaves of Absence (LOA)

A LOA means a student is placed on “inactive” status at the university. He or she cannot receive payments from fellowships or other school activity such as teaching or research assistantships. Fellowships are not extended due to a LOA.

A student may be granted leaves of absence during his/her time in the program for a period not to exceed one year in total except in extraordinary circumstances. Leaves are granted by the Associate Dean for Research and Doctoral Studies after consulting with the student’s faculty Advisor and the GWSB Doctoral Committee. Tuition is waived during a LOA, and the 7-year clock extended for up to a maximum of one year. Leaves are granted under the following conditions.

Medical emergency. Student shall provide a medical note from a medical doctor that the student is medically unable to participate in doctoral studies and research, or that a family member is suffering from a medical condition that requires regular care from a caregiver (the nature of the medical condition is not to be disclosed). The duration of the LOA depends on time covered by the doctor’s note. If the medical LOA is for the purpose of providing care, the student must certify the nature of the relationship, and that she/he is the only relative that can provide the care.

Personal or family emergency. The student shall explain the nature of the personal or family emergency in writing in confidence to the Associate Dean. If the student does not wish to disclose personal matters to school faculty, she/he shall seek the assistance of the GW University Counseling Center which offers professional services for all kinds of personal and family emergencies. The Center’s records are confidential and are not part of the student’s academic record. The Center shall advise the Doctoral Office if the student is faced with a legitimate family emergency.

Parental Leave. The doctoral program treats an application for parental leave the same way it treats a medical emergency. A doctor’s certificate and birth certificate are required.

V. Tuition

Tuition is paid each fall and spring semester the student is registered in the program. The tuition rate for each academic year (Fall and Spring semesters) is published annually in the University Bulletin (www.gwu.edu/~bulletin).

Tuition is charged for each semester the student or candidate continues in the program including dissertation research years. GWSB Fellowships cover tuition for five years, subject to performance.

VI. Doctoral Curriculum

Coursework

The doctoral curriculum involves two years of formal courses established by each Department and approved by the Doctoral Committee. Students should consult the lead faculty in their Department or their Advisor about the required courses and electives they should register for, well in advance of each semester.

Common to all programs:

- Four required courses in research methods and quantitative analysis.
- Four courses or seminars that cover important theoretical empirical studies or research methods in each field.
- At least one doctoral level seminar or course (including a methods course) must be taken from outside the student's field of study.
- Summer Research Paper (3 credits) during the first or first and second summer, as required by the Department.
- All doctoral students are required to teach one section of a GWSB course during the 4th or 5th year of their studies as part of doctoral training. For students on GWSB Fellowship this is counted as 20 hours of permitted part-time work for that semester.

These 30 credits constitute the core requirement for all programs. The remaining 15 credits required to meet the total of 45 credits requirement are chosen, in consultation with the student's Advisor, from elective courses approved by the Field. Students should aim to complete 45 credits courses in the first two years. At least 39 credits must be completed within two years and the remaining 6 credits should be done in the 3rd year.

In general, all courses taken should be 8000 level doctoral courses. If a student needs to take lower level courses to remedy background preparation, or wishes to take non-doctoral graduate courses to broaden his/her learning, the Advisor's approval and course syllabus should be submitted to the Associate Dean.

- Students have to complete 45 credit hours of graduate study in the first two years of the program. All courses must be taken for letter grades. Six credits may be independent studies (more than that require permission of the Associate Dean).
- The use of "incompletes" (such as those which may result from research papers due past the end of class) is strongly discouraged. If granted, they must be completed in the semester (or summer) immediately following.
- Required courses cannot be waived without substitution. Students holding a specialized masters or doctoral degree in a particular area (such as statistics or mathematics) may petition the Associate Dean to substitute up to 12 credits of

required courses with alternative graduate level courses approved by the Advisor.

Independent Study

Doctoral studies may benefit from the study of a literature that is not offered as a formal graduate course at GW or area schools. Or a student may wish to work with a faculty member on a joint research project. In such situations the student may take an independent study with a GWSB faculty member who can provide individualized guidance.

The student and study-supervisor will prepare a “syllabus” consisting of (1) a list of topics and potential readings, or a research proposal, and (2) the work product that will be produced at the end of the study and graded (e.g., a literature critique, a research proposal, a working paper). The syllabus has to be approved by the doctoral faculty of the department.

Normally students may not take more than two independent studies in all. More than two requires justification and the permission of the Associate Dean.

The work product must be graded by the faculty study-supervisor. The syllabus, and graded work-product (when complete) is attached to the student’s Study Plan.

VII. Faculty Advisors

As soon as practical after starting the program of studies, the doctoral faculty of the student’s Department shall assign each student a faculty Advisory Group or Advisor (as required by Department policy or by the student’s interests) from among the Doctoral Program Faculty. The Advisor if there is only one, or one member of an Advisory Group, is designated the Primary Advisor. Advisors normally have research interests shared by the student, but this is not necessary. The student may request a change in or addition of advisor(s) at any time.

Faculty advisors do not have to be tenured but must satisfy Doctoral Program Faculty publication criteria.

Advisors oversee the program of studies of the doctoral student, ensuring that he/she registers for required courses and seminars in the necessary sequence, and assists the student in selecting elective courses. Advisors guide the student’s summer research project or direct the student to faculty with appropriate expertise in the area of the student’s interest. Advisors coordinate with the department’s faculty representative on the doctoral committee to see that reviews and approvals are completed in a timely manner.

Advisors should not have a conflict of interest with the student such as would arise from a supervisory, business, or personal relationship outside the university.

VIII. Study Plan

Soon after the student has been assigned a faculty advisor the student shall develop a Study Plan that lays out the sequence of methods and theory seminars required by the Department. The Advisor(s) shall have a working copy of the Study Plan and guide the student about suitable electives to complete the student's study program. The Study Plan should be more or less finalized before the start of the second year and submitted for review and approval by the Doctoral Program Faculty of the student's Department by a specified due date.

For the record a copy of the *department approved* Study Plan shall be submitted to the Doctoral Office. The Doctoral Committee may request a copy of a Study Plan. Study Plans in the Doctoral Office must be **updated** with grades, outcome of work in progress or requested revisions before students can take Comprehensive Examinations and be admitted to candidacy.

The following guidelines are used to prepare and evaluate Study Plans.

- Students take a minimum of 45 credits during their doctoral program as stipulated by their Departments and this Handbook. Up to 12 of the required method course credits can be substituted with the approval of the Advisors and the Associate Dean, for students with graduate degrees in a technical area (for example, a recent masters or doctorate in statistics or mathematics). The summer research paper, and required Departmental doctoral seminars cannot be substituted.
- Students are required to take at least one doctoral level course outside their field of study. Methods courses, independent studies or directed readings, do not satisfy this requirement.
- Courses counting toward the required 45 credit hours must be taken for a letter grade.
- "Syllabus" and graded work-product for independent studies must be attached.
- For elective coursework taken outside GWSB, attach evidence that such courses are in fact doctoral level or advanced graduate level experiences.
- Summer research paper. If in progress or under required revisions, attach reviewer comments. State if the paper has been presented at, or is scheduled to be presented at, a meeting of the faculty or an academic conference.

The information required in a Study Plan is laid out in the standard form to be used and may be modified from time to time. Students should obtain current forms from the Doctoral Office.

Department representatives on the Doctoral Committee are responsible to see that study plans are completed accurately, without typos, have the required signatures and statements by faculty Advisors and Chairs, and are submitted on time. Poorly written and incomplete forms will be returned without consideration.

IX. Summer Research Paper

The summer research study and paper are required of all students, but Departments establish their own schedules for when the paper is to be completed. For example, a Department may require the study be completed in the first summer with a due date in Fall of the second year; another may require that the paper be completed in stages over the first and second summers. The student may work with a member of the Advisory group, or any Doctoral Program Faculty in the Department, who will provide advice regarding the literature, suitable problems, research design, data collection and analysis, suitable target journals and their writing style.

Departments may permit students to conduct a study that takes advantage of an ongoing research project of a faculty member. This must be communicated to the doctoral faculty of the department *prior* to the student starting the work. Where a student works on an existing research project of a faculty member, the student must propose and tackle a unique aspect of the research project. The faculty member may provide data and close guidance, but the student shall contribute a new conceptualization of the research problem, its theoretical development, hypotheses or mathematical modeling, conduct the data analysis when relevant, and write the paper and its inferences.

Summer research papers can only be submitted under the name of the student. The papers must have a coversheet signed by the Advisor attesting to (1) the fact the research is an original study by the student developed at GW under the his/her supervision, (2) the paper was written by the student, and (3) the amount and type of work contributed by the student—for example, theory or model development, data collection, and data analysis and so on.

Completed summer research papers are to be evaluated by a committee of three Doctoral Program Faculty (not including the primary advisor of the study). The committee may send the paper back for revision if deemed deficient. Students may be allowed no more than one semester and/or summer to complete required revisions. Extensions may only be granted if (1) the faculty Advisor certifies that the student worked diligently on the project over summer, and (2) there is clear evidence the paper could not be completed due to factors outside the student's control (such as serious problems with data).

The grade for the summer paper should reflect the quality of the paper and the quality of contributions by the student.

The summer research paper, which is targeted ultimately for submission to an academic journal or conference, must also be presented formally at a school or department research workshop for doctoral students and interested faculty.

X. Comprehensive Examination

After the student has completed all the field coursework and summer research approved in the Study Plan, the faculty Advisor and department faculty administer a comprehensive examination according to standards and procedures established by each Field, which may be more rigorous than school requirements. Departments may also require students to pass a

qualifying exam.

- The comprehensive exam must be written, in-class or take-home, and may include an oral component.
- The comprehensive exam must be evaluated by at least three doctoral program faculty.
- The comprehensive exam establishes the student's mastery of the chosen field. It is important that the exam evaluate the student's depth of knowledge and not just superficial understanding.
- On successful completion of the comprehensive exam the student's Advisor shall submit a signed communication to the Doctoral Office certifying that the department faculty are satisfied with the student's performance in all components of the exam and recommend that he/she be admitted to candidacy. The Doctoral Office will determine if the student has completed all other requirements of the program. The Associate Dean shall then inform that she/he is now considered a "doctoral candidate" and may form a dissertation committee and develop a dissertation proposal.
- Failure to pass *any part* of the comprehensive exam in two attempts shall lead to withdrawal of the fellowship and termination from the program. Failing in *all* the components of a comprehensive exam in the first attempt may be adequate grounds for termination.

XI. Proposal and Dissertation

The Chair and members of the Dissertation Committee are responsible for overseeing the development, evaluation and final defense of the proposal and the dissertation. The Department faculty shall establish the standards for an acceptable proposal and dissertation subject to the following guidelines.

The tradition for a Ph.D. thesis is that it is an original and scientifically defensible study conceived, developed and executed by the student. The study is expected to hold the promise to advance knowledge, science and the literatures. The dissertation is developed under the close supervision of the chair and members of the Dissertation Committee, but the written thesis that is submitted and defended as a doctoral dissertation is comprised only of the work of the student. That is the school policy, however, departments may choose to make exceptions, especially if they accept the so-called essay format.

It is not uncommon today to see dissertations using an essay format—i.e., dissertations comprising of two to six essays. Ideally the essays are related studies, but they need not be. Departments accepting this format will establish stated policies of what can be included in an essay dissertation, and the policies must be approved by the Doctoral Committee. The policies should adhere to the following:

- The student must be the *primary author* of all essays. These works must involve an intellectual contribution by the student, and cannot consist, for example, of helping a faculty member in data collection or data analysis, even if the student is a co-author on a resulting paper by virtue of such contribution.
- The works must be wholly accomplished during the time the student is part of the doctoral program of the school of business. Works started or completed prior to joining the program cannot be included. In rare circumstances the Associate Dean may relax this condition for students transferring to the GWSB program, if all other conditions of this policy are satisfied.
- The proposal and dissertation may include completed manuscripts, manuscripts under journal review, or published papers that meet the foregoing conditions and are permitted by the Department's policies. The status of such papers must be clearly acknowledged in the dissertation. Except for such papers, the dissertation must be written by the student.
- Included papers that predate the proposal defense, must be examined and approved in writing by the Chair of the Dissertation committee and by the Associate Dean.
- Submitted proposals and dissertations shall have a cover letter signed by all members of the dissertation committee, and co-authors if any, certifying the student's contribution(s).

Proposal. The normal expectation is that the proposal (1) presents a well-defined research problem, literature review and research hypotheses that are grounded in the literature, and (2) clearly lays out its proposed research design, measures and data collection methodology. Some Fields may require the proposal develop its mathematical models or analytical methodology, and some may require that initial parts of the study have been completed.

The bottom line is that the proposal should be complete enough that it can be evaluated and "defended" in terms of its scientific merit and potential contribution to knowledge.

XII. Dissertation Committee

Immediately following the successful completion of field Comprehensive Evaluations, candidates should select the faculty member(s) he/she would like to conduct the dissertation research under and who are willing serve as the Chair(s) of the Dissertation Committee. A candidate may request two faculty members to serve as Co-Chairs if they are willing. Candidates work with the Chair(s) to constitute a Dissertation Committee with requisite expertise to guide and evaluate the dissertation research.

GWSB doctoral dissertation committees consist of *not less than four members* including the Chair(s). Departments may impose additional criteria to those below.

Chair of the Dissertation Committee

The Chair³ of the dissertation committee is an expert in an academic area the candidate is interested in conducting his/her research and under whose supervision the candidate decides she/he wishes to work. The Chair must be a member of the GWSB faculty from the department the student was admitted to. For a Chair to be from another field, the student must go through the necessary “internal transfer” process (see section II).

The school has established research and publication requirements for faculty who may chair or co-chair dissertations. Both chairs and co-chairs must meet the same *publication* standards. The Chair must also be tenured. If the committee has a designated Chair and a Co-Chair then the former must be tenured but the latter need not be. If the committee has two Co-Chairs then any one of them needs to be tenured. The candidate should check with the Advisor or the Associate Dean about who may Chair a dissertation.

Starting with the proposal, the Chair plays the principal role in guiding the candidate through the research process. The Chair critically reviews written materials developed by the student, supervises revisions, advises on accepted standards of science, and advises when the proposal or final dissertations is ready to be presented to the other committee members. The Chair may eventually play an important role in introducing the candidate and his/her research to the academic community.

The important mentorship role of the Chair notwithstanding, **the dissertation must consist predominantly of the intellectual contributions and discoveries of the candidate.** As described more fully in XII above, in an “essay dissertation” at least one essay must be the sole work product of the candidate (without co-authors) and he/she must also be the principal contributor of all other work included in the dissertation.

If the Chair concludes the candidate is unable to progress toward an acceptable proposal or dissertation he/she may advise the Dissertation Committee accordingly. The Committee may request and consider the work the candidate has been able to do and decide to terminate the dissertation processes if in its judgment the flaws in the work are not correctable with reasonable effort in reasonable time.

The Chair is supported in guiding the dissertation by the other members of the committee who add breadth of expertise in the area and in methodology.

Other Members of the Dissertation Committee

The other committee members may be chosen from among the Doctoral Program Faculty of GWSB, other University departments, or from another university, government agency, or industry. At least two of the committee members (counting the Chair) must be full-time faculty from the candidate’s department and at least one must be from outside the department. Nonacademic members must be acknowledged experts in the subject matter of the dissertation and may be counted in the minimum four required members if they have doctoral degrees and publication records that meet GWSB doctoral program faculty criteria.

³ GWSB uses the term “Chair” of the Dissertation Committee, but the term “Advocate” is also commonly used at GW to refer to this role.

Nonacademic professionals who are recognized experts in subject areas of the candidate's dissertation but do not have doctoral degrees or the publications to meet GWSB criteria, may serve on the committee as "additional members" to the minimum four required members. Additional members may also include academic members who are research active but do not exactly meet school doctoral program faculty criteria at a point in time. All additional members must have sufficient research or professional credentials and must be approved by the Associate Dean.

Approval

The Dissertation Committee has to be approved by the Associate Dean. Students should obtain the required Approval Form from the Doctoral Office. The committee should be formed within one semester after passing all comprehensive examinations. The candidate or chair of the committee shall submit the names and CVs of the proposed members on the prescribed "Dissertation Committee Approval" form to the Doctoral Office. The form must be submitted at least 45 days prior to the anticipated defense of proposal.

Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee is charged with approving a research proposal and in accepting the final dissertation itself. The members must be physically present at the proposal and dissertation defenses. Sometimes this may require proof of concept or exploratory studies to have been completed.

All members of the committee must agree before a proposal or a dissertation can be defended or accepted. Proposals and dissertations must be well written, well organized and free of noticeable flaws or else they should not be considered for a formal defense.

The committee has the responsibility to certify that the completed research satisfies the standards of a doctoral dissertation. Each member shall complete and sign the certification form. The standards the committee shall apply in its judgment include:

- the research is of academic quality,
- it makes a meaningful contribution to knowledge,
- its methods and conclusions are scientifically defensible, and that therefore
- it has a high probability of being published in the field's leading journals.

If the committee is not satisfied, the Chair shall require that the proposal or dissertation be revised in accordance with the expressed criticisms, and defended again. If the candidate cannot correct the flaws pointed out by the committee member(s) in the second defense, she/he may not be allowed a third attempt, and the Associate Dean should be informed by the Chair that the defense has failed.

Conflicts of Interest

Dissertation committee members should not have conflicts of interest with the student such as would arise from a supervisory, business, or personal relationship outside the university.

XIII. Performance Reviews

The doctoral program faculty of each Field shall develop a method and schedule for evaluating student performance and set due dates for students to submit the requisite information. It is expected the program faculty will hold annual meetings to evaluate its students and maintain a record of the proceedings. These proceedings provide the basis for reviews and actions by the Doctoral Committee.

During the first two years department faculty are expected to review student Study Plans, performance in courses and seminars, and their work on the summer research paper. Students are expected to maintain a **minimum GPA of 3 with no grades below B-**. Incomplete grades have to be completed by the end of the semester following the one in which incurred.

Earning a C or F grade in any required course or seminar, or a poor-quality summer paper, immediately raises the question whether the student should continue in the doctoral program. If the student does not show an aptitude and promise for doctoral studies the Advisors or department doctoral faculty may recommend the student be terminated from the program at this point. In that case the Study Plan, along with comments of the Advisors and department program faculty, are submitted for review and a decision by the Doctoral Committee.

If the department decides the student shows sufficient promise to be allowed to appear for the Comprehensive Examination, the Advisor will communicate the department's decision to the Associate Dean for approval.

Third Year Mid-Program Review. In year three of a student's program of studies the Department doctoral faculty and the Doctoral Committee will make a comprehensive evaluation of student progress and aptitude for doctoral studies to determine if the student demonstrates the intellectual potential to make significant contributions to knowledge, and thus decide if the student may continue in the program.

The Primary Advisor shall submit to the Doctoral Office a dossier for each student including:

- Student's completed Study Plan
- Copy of Summer Research Paper, comments of the 3-member evaluating committee, progress in developing the paper, etc.
- Results of the Comprehensive Examination
- Any other relevant documents, and
- Detailed **Mid Program Performance Evaluation Report** to the Associate Dean and the Doctoral Committee. The Report should provide a candid evaluation of the motivation and aptitude of the student for scholarly research, and include a tally of votes by the department Doctoral Program Faculty recommending whether the student should be continued or terminated.

The Doctoral Committee shall complete its review and the Associate Dean shall inform the student of the outcome. In the interest of transparency, the Associate Dean's letter should summarize key observations in the Mid Program Performance Evaluation Report.

Fourth Year Review. The Doctoral Committee shall conduct a review in the 4th year to decide if the fellowship will be continued for the 5th year. The student will submit the 4th year Annual Report, statements from the faculty Advisor or the Chair of the Dissertation Committee if constituted, and supporting documents including copies of research papers and reviewer comments where relevant, to the Doctoral office. The 4th year review focuses on evaluating the student's engagement in research activities of the department in general, and in particular:

- progress in publishing or presenting the summer research paper,
- joint-research with faculty,
- quality of the student's research skills,
- likelihood of finishing the degree in five years, and
- commitment to an academic career.

Following the third or the fourth year review the Doctoral Committee can either:

- continue the student/candidate with or without continuation of Fellowship,
- place the student on probation and recommend specific corrective action, and resubmission of the Annual Report by a specified date in the current semester or academic year,
- terminate the student if the Annual Report shows the student is not successful in moving forward on research and working with faculty (as evidenced by working papers, journal submissions or publications), or if the Annual Report is a resubmission that fails to satisfy recommended actions or standards of performance, then terminate the student from the program by a majority decision.

Summary of Performance Evaluation Schedule

Month/Year	Performance Evaluation Action
Per department schedule	Submit Study Plans for Annual reviews by Department program faculty
2 nd year	Department recommendation for early termination
2 nd year	Department clearance to appear for Comprehensive examination
3 rd year	Mid Program Performance Review: Departments submit Study Plan, Summer Research Paper and all required documents to Doctoral Office
3 rd year	Doctoral Committee completes Mid Program Reviews
4 th year	Students submit Form and supporting documents for Doctoral Committee review of Fellowship continuation for fifth year.

XIV. Involuntary Termination from the Doctoral Program

A student may be terminated from the doctoral program for any number of academic reasons or conduct unbecoming a scholar. Termination may be initiated by the Field faculty, the Associate Dean, or the Doctoral Committee, but the final decision shall be made by a majority of the Doctoral Committee.

At any time during the course of the program it is determined that a student or candidate has misrepresented or withheld material information, is guilty of academic dishonesty or unethical behavior, or otherwise acted in a manner harmful to the professional image of the doctoral program, the student can be terminated from the program by a majority vote of the Doctoral Committee.

At any time after the completion and award of the degree it is determined that a student or candidate falsified material information, such as academic credentials or scores to gain admission, or was guilty of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism and manipulating data or results, the doctoral committee may recommend (by majority vote) to the Dean to petition the university administration that the doctoral degree granted to the individual should be revoked.

Termination is initiated by the circumstances leading to the withdrawal of Fellowship, or any of the following circumstances (but is not limited to them):

- Misrepresenting or withholding material information, plagiarism, falsifying data or results, dishonesty or conduct unbecoming a scholar.
- The student violates the work rules and restrictions for full time students, international students, and for students on fellowships.
- The student fails to complete the course requirements of the field in the time allowed.
- The student fails to meet summer research paper expectations.
- The student fails to submit a Study Plan and requested date for review and approval by the Advisor and the Department doctoral program faculty by due dates, or fails to submit all required documents for the 3rd year mid-program review by the Doctoral Committee so that they reach the Doctoral Office by the due date.
- The student is placed on academic probation for any reason and fails to satisfy the terms of probation in the period allowed.
- The student fails to perform the required work as GA and teaching, or fails to meet the residency requirements of the fellowship.
- An unfavorable evaluation by the Advisor and the doctoral program faculty of the Department in any review.

- An unfavorable evaluation by the Doctoral Committee in any scheduled review.
- The student fails any component of the comprehensive examination twice. Failing in *all* the components of a comprehensive exam in the first attempt may be adequate grounds for termination.
- The Department program faculty is of the opinion the student is not committed to research and does not participate in the intellectual life of the school.
- The student's dissertation proposal is rejected twice.
- The student fails to successfully complete the final dissertation defense within two attempts or by May 31 of the seventh year in the program.

Students can petition the GWSB doctoral committee to reconsider termination decisions. Petitions to extend beyond seven years are not accepted (if the circumstances merit, the appropriate relief is via a request for Leave of Absence).

The GWSB doctoral committee may or may not request a dismissed student to address the committee. It normally grants student requests to address the committee. The GWSB committee uses an anonymous majority vote to decide terminations.

Master's Degree from GWSB

The revised doctoral program requires rigorous evaluation of student ability and progress in doctoral studies. Not all students will meet performance standards and may be counseled out of the program. Beginning with students admitted in the academic year 2014-15, GWSB doctoral students who fail to meet research expectations and requirements and are being terminated, may be granted a master's degree from GWSB. The master's degree recognizes that the student has earned substantial advanced knowledge in a field of business but falls short of the aptitude for research required to complete a successful Ph. D. Students who do not perform well in the courses or leave voluntarily prior to comps, cannot receive a master's degree. The student must be recommended for the degree by two-third majorities of the doctoral program faculty of the Department and the Doctoral Committee.

XV. Dissertation Procedures

The Chair of the Dissertation Committee and its members supervise and guide the dissertation process. The following procedures apply:

- Soon after the candidate has formed a Dissertation Committee it should be reviewed and approved by the Department doctoral program faculty if it meets the minimum criteria of this Handbook and the criteria for doctoral program faculty. Upon approval the candidate submits the "Dissertation Committee Approval form" to the doctoral office for review and approval by the Associate Dean. The CVs of all members of

the Dissertation Committee must be attached with the form, and it must be signed by all members including outside members. The form must be submitted at least 45 days before the anticipated proposal defense.

- No less than 3 weeks before the candidate wishes to schedule the proposal defense, she/he must submit to the Doctoral Office (1) two bound copies of the proposal along with (2) the “Proposal Defense Request” form signed by all members of the Dissertation Committee proposing a date for the defense. Signing this form indicates that the committee members have received and reviewed copies of the proposal and agree it is a defensible proposal and agree to hear the proposal defense on the requested date. **Signing the proposal defense request form does not indicate a readiness to pass the proposal.**

- No less than 4 weeks prior to dissertation defense the members of the Dissertation Committee sign the "Dissertation Defense Request" form. Signing this form indicates that the Committee member has read the student’s dissertation and has judged that it is a viable dissertation that is ready to defend. *Signing the dissertation defense request form does not indicate a commitment to pass the student.* Two copies of the dissertation should accompany a request to schedule the dissertation defense.

- No less than 3 months must transpire between the proposal defense and the final dissertation defense.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

If at any point in the development of the proposal and defense of the dissertation the Dissertation Committee becomes aware the candidate is guilty of plagiarism, falsification of data or results, or submitting work done by someone else, the dissertation process shall be halted and the matter referred to the Associate Dean and the Doctoral Committee for dismissal proceedings.

Research Involving Human Subjects

Students planning to conduct research at GWU using human subjects in any way (such as survey respondents or participants in an experiment) **must obtain Institutional Review Board approval before conducting the study or collecting data.** Contact: Office of Human Research, www.gwumc.edu/research/human.htm; 202-994-2715.

Style and Format of Dissertations

The style and format requirements can be found at <https://library.gwu.edu/etd/sb>

Electronic Submission of Dissertations

Prior to being cleared for graduation, the candidate must submit a final electronic copy of the defended dissertation to the GW Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) site, library.gwu.edu/etd. Through this site, the dissertation will be sent to ProQuest/Microfilms, <https://search-proquest-com.proxygw.wrlc.org/pqdtglobal/advanced?accountid=11243>. No changes may be made to the dissertation from the one accepted by the Dissertation Committee.

Dissertation Timetable

Activity	Time frame
Formation of the Dissertation Committee	Immediately after passing all comprehensive examinations, but no later than the Fall semester of the 3 rd year for selecting the committee chair, and no later than the Spring semester of the 3 rd year for forming the whole committee.
Submit to Doctoral Office "Dissertation Committee Approval" form for review and approval by Associate Dean	3 rd /4 th year, but no less than 45 days prior to anticipated defense of proposal
Submit to Doctoral Office "Proposal Defense Request" form with requested date, and two copies of dissertation proposal	3 rd /4 th year, after delivering copies of the proposal to all Dissertation Committee members and their agreeing to hear the defense on requested date.
Proposal defense	3 rd /4 th year, but no later than the Spring semester of the 4 th year; not less than three weeks after filing "Proposal Defense Request" form and delivering copies to Committee and external examiners
Teach one section of a GWSB course	4 th /5 th year
Complete dissertation	4 th /5 th year and following successful proposal defense
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> File "Final Dissertation Acceptance Request" form with Doctoral Office <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Deliver two copies of the dissertation to the Doctoral Office <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Abstract of dissertation <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute copies of dissertation to Research Advisory Committee members and external reviewers	4 th /5 th year, upon approval of dissertation by the Dissertation Committee
Dissertation Defense	4 th /5 th year:

	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> At least three months since date of proposal defense <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Four weeks after filing "Final Dissertation Acceptance Request" form <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> By end of March for May graduation <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> By end of May for August graduation <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> By end of November for January graduation
File Graduation Application (including transcript and proof of GWSB course(s) taught),	4 th /5 th year; Graduation Applications due in Doctoral Office by: <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> October 1 for January graduation <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> February 1 for May graduation <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> June 1 for August graduation

ⁱ Updated March 8, 2021