

Ph.D. Dissertation Policy

Department of Kinesiology • Michigan State University • East Lansing MI 48824 • <http://www.education.msu.edu/kin>

Adopted on 3/4/05, and effective immediately

Policies

1. A dissertation shall consist of a written report of original research. The format of the dissertation is prescribed by the Graduate School (<http://grad.msu.edu/format.htm>).
2. The dissertation committee shall consist of at least four regular faculty members, at least three of whom, including the dissertation director, possess an earned doctoral degree. Two members of the committee must be regular faculty members with appointments in the Department of Kinesiology.
 - a. Additional voting or non-voting members may be selected in addition to the four regular faculty members required by University policy. Additional members could include, for example, a faculty member from another university or research center or an off-campus professional involved in the planning and/or execution of the project.
 - b. The membership of the dissertation committee may be different from the membership of the student's guidance committee, and the dissertation director may be a different person than the student's advisor.
3. The student shall prepare, present, and defend a dissertation proposal prior to beginning any data collection (unless approved otherwise by the dissertation committee, a proposal includes the title page and introduction, literature review, and methods chapters of the proposed dissertation research). The completed written proposal must be provided to all committee members at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled proposal defense date. Approval of the proposal by the committee is required before data collection begins.
4. Generally, the dissertation proposal presentation should consist of a 15-30 minute talk in which the student briefly outlines the rationale and proposed methods for the study. After the presentation, questions may be addressed to the student by the audience, not to exceed 15 minutes total. After the question/answer period, the thesis committee will meet privately with the student to engage in scholarly inquiry and discussion about the thesis and to address any specific concerns. The student will then be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates on the outcome of the defense. The committee shall decide on one of four outcomes: approved with no changes, approved with changes (student's thesis advisor to be the final arbiter of the revised proposal), approved with changes (revision to be resubmitted to all committee members for re-evaluation), or rejected. Following these deliberations, the student will be apprised of the committee's decision.
5. If the project will involve research using human subjects, laboratory animals, or hazardous substances, an application must be submitted to the appropriate university review board (e.g., UCRIHS, AUCAUC, or ORCBS). Approval by the appropriate university review board is required before any data collection begins. In most cases, the student should list all members of the dissertation committee as co-investigators.

6. Upon conclusion of the research, the student shall prepare, present, and defend the written dissertation. The final defense meeting serves as the student's final certifying examination. This final presentation and defense shall follow the same procedures outlined above for the proposal defense, with the addition of a brief oral summary of the results, discussion, and recommendations.
- a. A traditional dissertation includes: (a) front matter – title page, acknowledgments, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, and abstract; (b) introduction; (c) review of literature; (d) methods; (e) results; (f) discussion; (g) recommendations; (h) references; and (i) appendices with information such as human subjects approval, copies of instruments, and raw data.
- b. An alternate presentation of the content may be used for the written dissertation if approved by the dissertation committee at the time of the dissertation proposal defense. For example, the committee may approve a final report that consists of the dissertation proposal (rewritten in past tense and revised to include updates to the literature review and methods) plus one or more journal articles.
7. The proposal defense presentation and the defense of the completed dissertation shall be open to the public. The thesis advisor shall notify the Graduate Studies Secretary at least 14 days in advance of defense, and the Graduate Studies Secretary shall notify KIN faculty and graduate students within 7 days in advance of the defense. Notification shall be via email and written notices posted on the Graduate Studies bulletin board by the Graduate Studies Secretary.
8. **Unbound copies of the completed dissertation must be filed with the Graduate School and the Department of Kinesiology. Bound copies of the completed thesis should be provided to the dissertation advisor and all members of the dissertation committee.**
- Electronic copies of the completed thesis must be filed with the Graduate School and the Department of Kinesiology. Electronic (bound, if requested) copies of the completed thesis should be provided to the thesis advisor and all members of the thesis committee.***
9. The student and dissertation committee must comply with MSU guidelines on *Research Data: Management, Control, and Access* (http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/regs/regs_index.htm). According to those guidelines, research data for projects conducted at MSU or under the auspices of MSU are the property of MSU. Therefore, students must insure that dissertation data remain at MSU. The student may take a copy of the data when s/he leaves the university. The *Research Data: Management, Control, and Access* guidelines provide additional information on this topic, including procedures for requesting transfer of data to a different institution.

The following information was provided by the MSU Graduate School in May 2007.

- Full time status for doctoral students is defined as a minimum of 1 credit for those students who: (a) have successfully completed all comprehensive examinations and are actively engaged in dissertation research or (b) are doing department-approved off-campus fieldwork related to preparation of their dissertation.

- The new publishing agreement for thesis/dissertations with ProQuest now provides an “Open Access Publishing Option” as an alternative to the traditional publishing option available to our students. The Open Access option gives ProQuest the authorization to make the electronic version of the document accessible to all via the internet, including the selling of the document by commercial retailers and the accessibility to the work via search engines. A student selecting the Open Access option will not be eligible to receive royalties. The pros and cons of selecting this new option differ significantly across disciplines and the graduate handbook could be a way to inform students of benefits and problems associated with each option. For more information visit: http://proquest.com/products_umi/dissertations/epoa.shtml
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The following information was provided by the MSU Graduate School in May, 2011.

- **ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS OF THESES & DISSERTATIONS:**

Graduate handbooks must indicate that MSU **only accepts** electronic theses and dissertations submitted via ProQuest. The instructions for electronic submissions are available from <http://grad.msu.edu/etd/>.

The target date for the **FINAL APPROVAL** of an electronic Thesis or Dissertation to the Graduate School for graduating the semester of that submission is FIVE working days prior to the first day of classes for the next semester (see future target dates below). **Be aware that a submission via ProQuest does not mean that the document has been ACCEPTED.** The review process is interactive and final approval can take anywhere from a few hours to weeks, depending upon the extent of the necessary revisions and how diligent the author is when making the necessary revisions.

Electronic Submission’s Approval Target Dates:

Summer 2011 – August 25

Fall 2011 – December 29

Spring 2012 – May 4

Summer 2012 – August 21

Graduation on the semester of the electronic submission is only guaranteed if the document is APPROVED on or before the target date for that semester

- **NEW EXIT SURVEYS:**

A new short online exit survey for all students graduating with a Plan A or Plan B masters or with a Doctoral degree was introduced May 9th of 2011. Only students who have applied for graduation will have access to the survey. The survey asks questions about educational experiences in MSU graduate programs, as well as about immediate professional plans. The Graduate School uses data from this survey when reviewing graduate programs and to guide decisions about services and initiatives for graduate students.

The identity of all respondents will be kept confidential and only aggregate (group) information will be made available to faculty and administrators. The students will receive an e-mail message from the dean of the graduate school with a link to the survey.

However, students do not need to wait for that e-mail message to complete the survey after applying for graduation. It takes about 5-10 minutes to complete the online survey. Below are the instructions for completing the survey and they are also available from <http://grad.msu.edu/etd/>

Instructions for students:

- Access the following website:
 - Doctoral Students: <https://www.egr.msu.edu/doctoral/survey/>
 - Master's Students: <https://www.egr.msu.edu/masters/survey/>
- Enter your MSU NetID (Login Name) and Password
- Complete all the items on the survey. When finished, click **Submit**.

If you cannot open this survey, please contact Katey Smagur by email at smagurka@msu.edu, and include your name, student ID #, degree level (PhD, MA/MS) and semester of graduation. You will then be notified when you are able to complete the survey.