

# DOCTORAL DISSERTATION POLICIES

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## Dissertation Definition

A dissertation is a written coherent treatise culminating from original in-depth research, that is of publishable quality for a peer-refereed journal, and is a requirement of the highest academic degree, a Doctor of Philosophy. The work should move the field forward by making significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge. It may include statement of goals, an in-depth review and critical analysis of the existing literature and background information, a plan of research or methodology, collection and analysis of data to present as results, a discussion of the findings, and citations.

## Doctoral Dissertation Requirement

All UMKC Ph.D. degrees and the Ed.D. degree require a dissertation as the final component of the program. The dissertation is also a requirement in some D.M.A. programs and an option in others. The doctoral faculty view the dissertation as one of the most important aspects of the student's experience because:

- It is a work of original research or scholarship that makes a contribution to existing knowledge.
- It is an educational experience that demonstrates the candidate's mastery of research methods and tools of the specialized fields.
- It demonstrates the candidate's ability to address a major intellectual problem. For regulations pertaining to formatting the dissertation and the process for approval, the reader is directed to the Graduate Thesis/Dissertation Preparation and Approval Policy.

## Final Dissertation Examination

Final examinations in defense of the dissertation are generally open to all members of the public. The format and procedures of the defense are determined by the program and communicated to the student prior to the defense. The date, time, and location must be announced and published at least two weeks before each final examination takes place. This examination may be conducted only after the dissertation has received preliminary approval by the student's supervisory committee. The student and all members of the dissertation committee, or substitutes approved in consultation with the chair of the committee by graduate officers in the academic units where the degree or primary discipline resides, are required to attend the entire examination. Synchronous electronic modes of communication are allowed for both the student and committee members when physical presence conflicts with a major commitment upon approval of the unit graduate officer.

The defense of the dissertation is approved when a majority of the supervisory committee recommends approval and signs the final evaluation/report forms and the supervisory committee chair submits them to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS). Within 48 hours (2 business days) of the defense, the supervisory committee chair will report the results of the final dissertation examination in writing to the candidate and the SGS. Students are required to submit their final dissertation document to the SGS. (See the Graduate Thesis/Dissertation Preparation and Approval Policy for more information). The supervisory committee is required to complete the final dissertation report forms, which the supervisory committee chair submits to the SGS by the deadlines indicated on the forms and/or posted on the SGS website. The SGS reports the final approval of the dissertation to the Registrar.