



Department of Anthropology Graduate Handbook

University of Arkansas
Old Main 330
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
anthropology.uark.edu
Phone: 479.575.2508
Fax: 479.575.6595

Effective for the 2025/2026 Academic Year

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK	3
ANTHROPOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS.....	4
Department Administration.....	5
Related Programs and Facilities.....	5
GRADUATE TRAINING IN ANTHROPOLOGY	6
Goals of the Graduate Program	6
Academic Integrity	6
APPLYING TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM	7
Program Requirements.....	7
Application Process.....	7
Financial Assistance	8
ACADEMIC DEGREE REQUIREMENTS.....	10
Graduate Advisory Committee	10
Master of Arts Program	11
MA Thesis Committee.....	11
MA Coursework	11
MA Degree Options.....	12
Doctor of Philosophy Program.....	13
PhD Dissertation Committee	13
PhD Degree Requirements.....	13
PhD Coursework.....	14
Language Requirement.....	14
Qualifying Examination	15
Dissertation Proposal Defense.....	16
Dissertation and Dissertation Defense	17
Teaching Requirement.....	17
ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT REVIEW	18

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook describes admission and degree requirements for MA and PhD degrees in the [Department of Anthropology at the University of Arkansas](#). Students are expected to be familiar with its content as it applies to their departmental studies.

This handbook is a supplement to the [Graduate Catalog](#) that lists all courses approved for graduate credit, as well as requirements for all campus graduate programs. If there is a conflict between the Graduate School and departmental guidelines, the Graduate School rules take precedence. Likewise, changes in Graduate School rules may make it necessary to alter some departmental rules on short notice. Additional information related to the University of Arkansas Graduate School can be obtained from this website: <https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/>

Additional information about student life, responsibilities, and University of Arkansas policies governing student conduct can be obtained by visiting the [Student Affairs website](#).

Please note that material such as this handbook may inadvertently have contents that can appear ambiguous or that are intentionally left as a matter of judgment. Consult with your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies if you have questions.

ANTHROPOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

The Department of Anthropology at the University of Arkansas is part of the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences. We are dedicated to providing a quality graduate and undergraduate education in anthropology and the department offers many approaches to the various subfields and topics within anthropology.

Our mission is to develop and promote anthropological knowledge to move forward together in an increasingly complex world. At its core, this anthropological approach promotes a critical understanding of the many ways humans have shaped the world, past and present. We value inclusion in our community and pledge to meet the diverse educational needs of our students, providing them with a global and comparative foundation that will prepare them for success in anthropology and beyond.

The program draws upon the strengths of department-based faculty members and PhD archaeologists within the Arkansas Archeological Survey. Faculty are generally focused in one of three areas of specialization:

- **Archaeology**
 - The archaeology program focuses on providing training in environmental, landscape, and public archaeology. Public and applied archaeology are major emphases in collaboration with colleagues at the Arkansas Archeological Survey. Current faculty conduct research in eastern North America and the mid-South, Latin America, Central Asia, and Africa. Methodological approaches include ethnohistory and historical archaeology, ground-based geophysical and high-platform remote sensing, applications of geographical information systems, material culture analysis, archaeometry, stable isotope analysis, biomolecular archaeology, zooarchaeology, bioarchaeology and mortuary studies, and multispecies ecology.
- **Biological anthropology**
 - The biological anthropology program focuses on the present and past biology, ecology, and evolution of humans and other primates. Faculty research foci include the evolution of diet and social behavior, paleoanthropology, paleoecology and conservation paleobiology, biomechanics and functional morphology, comparative anatomy and morphometrics, and bioarchaeology and dental anthropology.
- **Cultural anthropology**
 - The cultural anthropology program focuses on issues such as gender and sexuality, class, religion, politics, and migration as shaped by history and the mobility of people and ideas. Faculty area specialties include North America, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa but the program is particularly interested in the transnational histories and global forces that connect and divide these regions. Training is offered in popular memory, material culture, religion, performance studies, medical anthropology, and political anthropology. The department provides students with excellent training in theory and methods

to enable them to pursue research and teaching careers within and beyond the academy.

Department Administration

Chair: J. Michael Plavcan, PhD

Vice Chair: Lucas K. Delezene, PhD

Director of Graduate Studies: Claire E. Terhune, PhD

Related Programs and Facilities

The [Arkansas Archeological Survey](#) operates 11 state-wide stations for archaeological research, public education, and community service, both on- and off-campus.

In collaboration with the [Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies \(CAST\)](#), students have access to extensive computational facilities and informatics resources.

[The King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies](#) provides a limited number of graduate assistantships to students who have research interests in the Middle East.

The [MicroCT Imaging Center for Research and Outreach \(MICRO\)](#) provides access to microCT scanning services for students and faculty.

An endowed lecture series, [The Robert L. Stigler, Jr. Lectureship in Archaeology](#), brings distinguished scholars to campus every year.

GRADUATE TRAINING IN ANTHROPOLOGY

The Department of Anthropology at the University of Arkansas offers Master of Arts (MA) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees in Anthropology. About 40 students are currently enrolled in these degree programs, and each year the department admits 10-15 new students. Students entering the PhD program are expected to have already earned a master's degree in anthropology (or another related field). Students may receive both their MA and PhD from the University of Arkansas; however, formal admission to the PhD program is required following completion of the MA degree requirements.

Additionally, the department participates in the interdisciplinary [PhD program in Environmental Dynamics \(ENDY\)](#). Students may pursue a PhD in either anthropology or environmental dynamics. Students wishing to inquire about the Environmental Dynamics program should visit their website at <http://endy.uark.edu/>.

Goals of the Graduate Program

Graduate training in anthropology at the University of Arkansas is designed to provide a high quality, comprehensive graduate education that will prepare successful students for a range of career options, including academia, applied anthropology, and beyond. Students are expected to focus their studies in a particular subfield of anthropology but are encouraged to take courses in other complimentary areas of study both inside and outside of the department. Professional development and research ethics training is also a critical component of any graduate program. Students are encouraged to further their professional and academic development through participation in departmental activities, attendance at colloquia, and attendance at regional and/or national conferences.

Academic Integrity

Graduate students are required to be familiar with and abide by the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#). This includes refraining from all acts of academic and research dishonesty and reporting any acts of dishonesty witnessed to the department and/or Graduate School. The Graduate School requires that incoming students sign the following pledge: *"On my honor as a graduate student at the University of Arkansas, I certify that I will neither give nor receive inappropriate assistance on the work I do for my degree."* Students found to be in violation of the academic integrity policies of the university may be subject to dismissal following [Graduate School guidelines](#).

APPLYING TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

All eligible students are welcome to apply to the MA or PhD programs in the Department of Anthropology. The deadline for receipt of applications to both the Graduate School and the Department of Anthropology is **December 1** for admission in the following fall semester. Students are not typically admitted for the Spring semester. Students wishing to defer admission to the Spring would need to keep in mind that graduate assistantships are granted as an annual appointment, making it difficult to offer such financial support for only a single semester.

****Students are strongly encouraged to contact faculty with whom they are interested in working prior to submitting their application to the program****

Questions regarding the application process may be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies at anthgrad@uark.edu.

Program Requirements

Admission decisions are based on grade point average (GPA), letters of recommendation, Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, writing samples, and the department's ability to accommodate an applicant's interests. No student will be accepted if they do not have a faculty sponsor willing to provide program guidance.

All students interested in applying to either the MA or PhD programs in the Department of Anthropology must first be admitted to the Graduate School. Requirements for admission to the Graduate School are outlined on the Graduate School website (<https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/>).

Additionally, students applying to the Department of Anthropology must meet the following requirements:

- 1) Successful completion of a bachelor's degree by the first day of their first semester in the graduate program;
- 2) Satisfactory undergraduate preparation in anthropology (or another related field as determined by the graduate admissions committee);
- 3) Satisfactory GPA and/or GRE scores

Students who do not meet these requirements may be admitted conditionally. Students with course deficiencies may be required to enroll in undergraduate courses to make up for these deficiencies. Decisions regarding deficiencies will be made by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the faculty advisor.

Application Process

Application for the Department of Anthropology is made through the University of Arkansas Graduate School. For guidelines on how to apply to the Graduate School, please visit the [Graduate School website](#).

To apply to the Department of Anthropology, the following items are required:

- 1) A completed application form (available at <https://applygsie.uark.edu/apply/>) including materials specific to the Department of Anthropology.
 - a. Please note that you will be asked to list up to two anthropology faculty with which you are interested in working. These faculty members should be either tenure or tenure stream faculty (i.e., assistant professors, associate professors, or full professors), or research faculty affiliated with the Arkansas Archaeological Survey. Please see the list of faculty provided on the departmental [website](#).
- 2) A statement of purpose (no longer than two pages in length) describing your interest in your chosen field and your research goals in the program.
- 3) A single writing sample demonstrating your ability to produce original, analytical work.
- 4) Three letters of reference from persons competent to judge your potential for graduate studies.
- 5) Official copies of transcripts from every college attended.
- 6) An official report of your GRE score(s) (optional, but required for PhD students to be considered for additional funding opportunities outside of the department).

Though GRE scores are not required to apply to the MA or PhD programs in anthropology, we strongly encourage students to submit GRE scores as part of their application packet to be considered for all possible funding opportunities through the graduate school (see below).

All application materials should be uploaded to the Graduate Application portal through the graduate school. All documents should be provided in Adobe pdf or Microsoft Word format. Letters of reference, official transcripts, and official GRE score reports should all be provided and uploaded to the application portal.

Financial Assistance

All admitted students will be automatically considered for a graduate assistantship (GA) in the Department of Anthropology. Awards are competitive, based on faculty evaluation of the academic abilities and professional promise of applicants, and the teaching needs of the department. Departmental graduate assistantships carry a stipend and tuition waiver, and partially cover health insurance fees. Applicants can inquire about current stipend levels by contacting the Director of Graduate Studies. Duties for GAs will vary depending upon the position but may include preparing and teaching courses, assisting faculty by developing classroom activities, grading, and holding review sessions. Students may be awarded funding for up to two years for MA students and up to four years for PhD students, although yearly renewal depends on department needs and the student's academic standing. Funding extensions after the initial two or four years will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

In addition to departmental funding, students may be eligible for [other sources of funding via the Graduate School](#). The most common of these additional awards, often offered in conjunction with departmental funding, are the Distinguished Doctoral Fellowships (DDF) and the Doctoral Academy Fellowships (DAF). These funding sources are available only to PhD

students; ***GRE scores are required to be considered for these awards.***

Other sources of financial support for anthropology graduate students may include:

- Arkansas Archeological Survey
- King Fahd Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies
- Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies (CAST)
- Other departments (e.g., Biological Sciences, Chemistry, etc.)

Students selected to receive financial assistance will be notified of their status by the Department following their acceptance to the program. Limited funds for travel to regional or national conferences and/or for graduate research are also available through the Graduate School and Department of Anthropology. For more information about possible funding sources can be found through the [Graduate School](#).

Students interested in other forms of financial assistance should contact the Office of Financial Aid, 114 Silas Hunt, (479) 575-3806, or online at <https://finaid.uark.edu/>.

ACADEMIC DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The student's advisor and committees are responsible for overseeing, directing, and evaluating the student's progress. The advisor and committee may recommend waiver or adjustment of departmental guidelines on required coursework or other issues as appropriate and necessary and shall consult with the Department Chair and Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) as necessary to ensure that any adjustments to departmental guidelines are in compliance with Departmental and Graduate School requirements and appropriately recorded. The student's advisor, advisory committee, the DGS, and Department Chair all work together to ensure that all requirements are completed for graduation as appropriate, formally document various stages in the graduate career (e.g., advancement to candidacy), interpret department rules as necessary, and generally provide support to graduate students. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Admissions Committee (which includes three tenured or tenure-stream faculty) also oversee the admissions process. Formal academic grievances follow the guidelines set forth in the [University of Arkansas Graduate Catalog](#).

Graduate Advisory Committee

Upon admission to the MA or PhD programs, students are assigned to an advisor who is normally the sponsoring faculty during the admissions process. Students wishing to change advisor should do so in consultation with the original faculty sponsor as well as the new advisor.

In consultation with their advisor, students must then form an MA or PhD Advisory Committee during their first semester in the program that includes a minimum of three eligible department members (including the advisor, who acts as the chair of this committee). The Graduate School requires you to file a form notifying them of your committee membership; these forms can be obtained from the [Graduate School website](#). Once completed, these forms should be submitted to the Graduate School, with a copy also sent to the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Chair.

Faculty members selected for these committees must be full-time faculty in the Department of Anthropology or research faculty affiliated with the Arkansas Archeological Survey with Graduate Status. Please see the list of faculty provided on the [departmental website](#) and/or consult with your primary advisor. In special cases, you may wish to add an additional person to your committee (e.g., an adjunct faculty member or faculty member from another department). Adjunct faculty are added to committees on a case-by-case basis and must be approved for graduate status before they can serve. Additional individuals outside of the University may serve in an *ex officio* role. Allow ample time for forms to be processed.

Typical MA advisory committees consist of three faculty members, while PhD advisory committees may include from three to five members. It is the responsibility of the advisor and advisory committee to meet periodically with students to make sure that they are making satisfactory progress toward the degree.

Master of Arts Program

The Master of Arts program is designed to provide advanced training in archaeology, biological anthropology, and cultural anthropology. Students are expected to complete their MA in four semesters (two years).

MA Thesis Committee

In consultation with their advisor, students enrolled in the MA program must form a MA Thesis Committee by the end of their first year of coursework. This committee may or may not be the same as the Graduate Advisory Committee. As with the Advisory Committee, students must complete a [Graduate School form](#) to officially create this committee; when completed, this form should be submitted to the graduate school with a copy also sent to the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Chair.

Responsibilities of this committee may include:

- Reading outlines and drafts of internship reports, thesis manuscripts, and offering constructive feedback
- Conducting oral and written examinations as appropriate
- Advising about career options and opportunities

MA Coursework

All students enrolled in the Anthropology MA program must complete the following as part of their coursework:

1. The 5000-level Method & Theory course in their area of specialization (ANTH 51003 for cultural, ANTH 52003 for archaeology, and ANTH 53003 for biological) These courses are designed to review the history of anthropological subfields, and review and discuss recent theories and practical implications/applications of various methods of acquiring, analyzing and interpreting anthropological data. Your advisory committee may identify additional Method and Theory courses for you to take.
2. At least one “core course” in each of the other two subfields of anthropology. A list of courses that will fulfill these requirements will be provided to graduate students each semester. Although course offerings will vary, a core course will typically include material that is considered foundational for that subfield.

No more than six hours of courses taken outside the Department of Anthropology may be used toward course requirements for the MA degree. Additional courses may be taken but will not count toward the degree requirements. MA students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.85 on all graded coursework at the University of Arkansas to be eligible for the MA degree. Courses where a grade of D or F were earned will not be counted toward the degree requirements.

Additional information regarding the courses listed above, as well as other courses provided in the department, can be found in the [Graduate Catalog of Studies](#).

MA Degree Options

In consultation with their advisor, students should choose one of the three options listed below to satisfy the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in Anthropology beyond the core coursework requirements listed above. [As stipulated by the Graduate Catalog](#), all requirements for the MA degree must be completed within six consecutive calendar years from the first date of enrollment in the MA program. Exceptions to this timeline will be considered on a case-by-case basis and extensions must be evaluated by the student's advisor and requested through and approved by the Graduate School in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies.

MA Option 1: Thesis

- A total of 30 semester hours (24 hours of coursework and 6 thesis hours [ANTH 6000V]), including the required courses listed above
- A thesis plan that will be submitted to your thesis committee by the time you have completed 18 hours of graduate courses (typically in the fall of the second year)
- An MA thesis
 - After completing the necessary research, you will write the thesis in the format as described in the [University of Arkansas Guide to Theses and Dissertations](#), and submit it to your major advisor for feedback and approval. You must distribute your thesis to the rest of your thesis committee at least two weeks before the final oral examination.
- An oral thesis defense conducted by your thesis committee
 - Students should consult the Graduate School deadlines for thesis defense and graduation; scheduling of the defense should be conducted in conjunction with the student's primary advisor and their MA Thesis Committee.
 - After passing this examination and negotiating any necessary final requirements or revisions with your committee, you should prepare the final thesis document and obtain approval signatures from your advisor and thesis committee. Consult the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School for proper guidelines for submitting final degree paperwork.

MA Option 2: Internship

- A total of 36 semester hours (30 coursework and 6 hours of internship [ANTH 6100V]), including the required courses listed above.
- A successfully completed internship (i.e., CAST, Arkansas Archeological Survey or other organization approved by the department).
- An oral examination conducted by your advisory committee.

MA Option 3: Non-Thesis

- A total of 36 semester hours of coursework, including the required courses listed above.
- An oral examination conducted by your committee.

If you choose options 2 or 3, we urge you to develop a portfolio to structure your oral examination. Your portfolio should include these items:

- Summary of graduate education, including courses taken
- Career objectives
- Bibliography (articles and books read during graduate program)
- Samples of original research papers and reports

Updates regarding progress on MA degree requirements, and especially records of MA thesis defenses and/or graduation should be provided to the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Chair in writing via email.

Doctor of Philosophy Program

The PhD program is designed to help students develop the skills necessary for independent and original research. Under the supervision of a faculty advisor and committee of their choosing, students will develop a course of study to successfully complete their PhD. Students are encouraged to complete all requirements for the PhD in four to six years. [As stipulated by the Graduate Catalog](#), all requirements for the PhD degree must be completed within seven consecutive calendar years from the first date of enrollment in the PhD program. Exceptions to this timeline will be considered on a case-by-case basis and extensions must be evaluated by the student's advisor and requested through and approved by the Graduate School in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies.

PhD Dissertation Committee

In consultation with their advisor, students enrolled in the PhD program must form a PhD Dissertation Committee. This committee may or may not be the same as the Graduate Advisory Committee. As with the Advisory Committee, students must complete a [Graduate School form](#) to officially create this committee; when completed, this form should be submitted to the graduate school, with a copy also sent to the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Chair.

Responsibilities of this committee may include:

- Reading outlines and drafts of internship reports, dissertation manuscripts, and offering constructive feedback
- Conducting oral and written examinations as appropriate
- Advising about career options and opportunities

PhD Degree Requirements

Requirements for the PhD in Anthropology include:

- 24 graduate hours of coursework beyond the MA degree
- 18 graduate hours of dissertation research credit (ANTH 7000V)
- A cumulative GPA of at least 3.0
- Demonstrated competence in a language other than English
- Completion of written and oral qualifying examinations
- Successful defense of the dissertation proposal
- Completion and successful defense of a doctoral dissertation

PhD Coursework

All students enrolled in the Anthropology PhD program must complete a total of 24 hours of graduate coursework beyond the MA degree including the following courses:

1. The 5000-level Method & Theory course in their area of specialization (ANTH 51003 for cultural, ANTH 52003 for archaeology, and ANTH 53003 for biological). These courses are designed to review the history of anthropological subfields; recent theories and practical implications and applications of various methods of acquiring, analyzing and interpreting anthropological data. Your advisory committee may identify additional Method and Theory courses for you to take.
2. At least one “core course” in each of the other two subfields of anthropology. A list of courses that will fulfill these requirements will be provided each semester. Although course offerings will vary, a core course will typically include material that is considered foundational for that subfield.

No more than six hours of courses taken outside the Department of Anthropology may be used toward course requirements for the PhD degree. Additional courses may be taken but will not count toward the degree requirements. PhD students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on all graded coursework at the University of Arkansas to be eligible for the PhD degree. Courses where a grade of D or F were earned will not be counted toward the degree requirements.

Additional information regarding the courses listed above, as well as other courses provided in the department, can be found in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Students must also complete 18 hours of dissertation research credit (ANTH 7000V) beyond the above listed requirements. These credits may be completed after the dissertation proposal has been successfully defended (i.e., after the student has advanced to candidacy).

If you begin your doctoral study at the University of Arkansas with an MA from another university, you must take the required courses as listed above. However, a doctoral-level student that enters the program with an MA in anthropology may request a waiver for core courses outside of their subfield. They may not request a waiver for the 5000-level Method and Theory in their subfield. Students interested in requesting a waiver should contact the Director of Graduate Studies.

PhD students that previously completed their MA in anthropology at the University of Arkansas are not required to retake the core courses or Method & Theory course necessary for their subfield. However, if students switch subfields between MA and PhD, they may be asked to complete additional courses relevant to their new focus.

Language Requirement

PhD students are required to demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English. This may be a language necessary for understanding international scholarship and literature in their field or a language that is necessary for the student to successfully undertake fieldwork or other

aspects of their research.

This requirement can be satisfied in one or more of the following ways, as determined by the PhD advisory committee:

1. Coursework
 - Coursework options may include successful completion (B or higher) of two years (four semesters) of college coursework focusing on oral or written proficiency in the relevant language, a summer language immersion course, and/or other options as deemed appropriate by the student's advisor and committee. Depending on the level of the course taken, any credit hours earned may not be eligible to be applied to the student's degree requirements.
2. Native language competence
 - Students whose native language is not English may use that language as their required language. However, if a language other than English or the student's native language is required for fieldwork, the student may be required to demonstrate proficiency in that language via coursework or examination.
3. Written and/or oral examination
 - Examinations may be offered by faculty in the Department of Anthropology if expertise is available. If no one in the Anthropology faculty is proficient to evaluate the candidate, another individual fluent in the language may be selected with consent of the advisory committee. The language competency exam will typically include the translation of some or all of a scholarly publication in the chosen language over the course of one or two hours, with a dictionary available to the student during the exam. Other types of exams may be administered depending on the needs of the student and the wishes of the advisory committee.

Qualifying Examination

A student must complete departmental course requirements and the language requirement before they are eligible for their qualifying exams. Depending on the wishes of the advisory committee, the student may complete the examination first and then defend their PhD proposal, or the reverse may happen. In either event, students will only fully advance to candidacy when they have successfully both passed their exams and defended their PhD dissertation proposal.

Students will notify their committees of their intention to take the examination, and their committee will construct the examination questions based on a reading list developed by the student and approved by the committee. The exam will be taken on campus over three consecutive days, with four hours allotted per day for the exam.

Each of the three days will include questions generally organized as follows (order and structure/content of these sections may vary depending on your committee):

- One set of questions will cover theory and method in your subfield of anthropology

- One set of questions will pertain to the subject area that you plan to pursue for your dissertation research
- One set of questions will examine research methods/ analytical techniques and/or the geographical area that you will need to know to successfully conduct your dissertation project

The student's committee will evaluate the written answers. The committee chair will then schedule an oral exam with the student's committee.

After the oral exam, the committee will meet and make one of the following recommendations:

1. The student has sufficiently demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to proceed with their dissertation research.
2. The student fails to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to proceed with their dissertation research.

If the student fails the exam, they will be given the option to retake the exam within six months and/or during the next semester in which they are enrolled immediately following the original exam. The content and structure of the second exam will be determined by the student's committee. Students will only be given one opportunity to retake the exam; if they fail a second time they will be dismissed from the program.

The committee recommendations and exam outcome should be communicated in writing to the student, Director of Graduate Studies, and the Department Chair within one week of the oral examination. Students wishing to appeal their decision may first consult with their advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Department Chair. If no resolution is reached, the student must follow the formal academic grievance policy set forth in the [University of Arkansas Graduate Catalog](#).

Dissertation Proposal Defense

Following successful completion of the qualifying examination (or before the examination depending on the advice of the advisory committee), the student is expected to prepare a PhD proposal that will outline the research to be conducted for the dissertation. To demonstrate competence and preparedness for the dissertation, the dissertation committee will conduct an oral proposal defense. This proposal defense must take place within one semester after completing the written qualifying examinations; exceptions to this timeline will be made on a case-by-case basis. Only after the successful completion of the exams **and** dissertation proposal defense will the student be considered a PhD Candidate.

The outcome of the proposal defense should be communicated in writing to the student, Director of Graduate Studies, and the Department Chair within one week of the defense.

At this time the student should also submit their [Thesis/Dissertation title to the graduate school](#).

Dissertation and Dissertation Defense

Following the dissertation proposal defense, the student will undertake their proposed research and prepare an original dissertation on a topic within their subfield of specialization. The completed dissertation should be submitted to the dissertation chair and dissertation committee within [time limits specified in the Graduate Catalog](#); for a PhD student, this typically means that all requirements for a doctoral degree must be completed within seven consecutive calendar years from the date of admission to the program. Exceptions to this timeline will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The dissertation committee is responsible for evaluating the research quality and ensuring it meets departmental, university, and professional standards. The advisor is responsible for overseeing and following the research progress. Once research is completed and the dissertation is written in the proper format, the student should submit their dissertation to the dissertation advisor for comments and suggestions. After making appropriate modifications and upon approval of the advisor, the dissertation should be distributed to the remaining members of the dissertation committee. The dissertation defense should then be scheduled in consultation with the dissertation advisor and with the consensus of the committee.

Once the dissertation defense is scheduled, and at least two weeks prior to the date of the defense, the [Graduate School must be notified](#). Also at this time, and with prior consent from your dissertation committee, you will prepare a memorandum announcing the time and location of your final examination and submit this memorandum to the department office and Director of Graduate Studies to be circulated to the department. This memorandum should include a short (less than 250 word) abstract of your dissertation, and a list of your committee members and dissertation chair. This announcement must be distributed no later than ten days before the final examination.

The final PhD examination is oral and primarily a defense of your dissertation, but it may also include other aspects of your graduate study. After passing the defense and negotiating any necessary final requirements or revisions with your committee, you should prepare the final dissertation and obtain approval signatures from your advisor and dissertation committee. Consult the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School for proper guidelines for submitting final degree paperwork.

If the final PhD examination is failed, the student may petition in writing for an appeal with their primary advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, and Department Chair. If no adequate resolution is reached, the student must follow the formal academic grievance policy set forth in the [University of Arkansas Graduate Catalog](#). If the student does not wish to appeal they will be dismissed from the program following the procedures set forth in the Graduate Catalog.

Teaching Requirement

Although the PhD is primarily a research degree, communication skills are critical to professional development. Therefore, students will be required to engage in teaching activities within the department before completing the program.

ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT REVIEW

Each MA and PhD student will be reviewed annually based on (1) course completion, (2) GPA, and (3) progress in completing additional requirements (i.e., exams, theses, dissertations, etc.). If possible, the review will be conducted face-to-face with your advisor. If this is not possible, your advisor will conduct the review by email or phone. Results of this review are required to be documented via annual review forms filed with the graduate school.

Students will be identified as having made either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” progress toward their degree; if a student receives two consecutive reviews indicating they are not making satisfactory progress, the program and Graduate School have the option to dismiss the student. Students with GPAs that fall below Graduate School requirements (typically 2.85) may also be placed on academic probation.

Students that have exceeded the time to degree requirements set forth by the graduate school (six consecutive calendar years for the MA and seven for the PhD) must work with their advisor and committee to form a plan to complete their degree and request a time extension via the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School.

Students will need to complete an annual review and time extension request (where relevant) to register for classes the following semester.

[Details of the Graduate School’s policy on Academic Dismissal, Academic Probation, and Annual Review can be found in the Graduate Catalog.](#)