PhD Check List

Last Revised – 1 December 2011


Committee Meetings, Examination and Dissertation Requirements

First year

- First semester: Plan Program
  - Meet with your dissertation advisor to:
    1. Plan your program - dissertation topic and appropriate courses (these will need to be approved by your entire committee eventually, and before you schedule your written qualifying exam)
    2. Discuss possible committee members

- Second semester: Form Committee
  - Establish a committee of at least five members by the end of the first calendar year with the following requirements:
    1. The majority of the committee members must hold tenured, tenure-track, or research faculty appointments in ESE
    2. Other committee members may be members of other academic departments at UNC, or may be limited members of Graduate Faculty or special appointees. Special appointees must be approved by the Dean of Graduate School.
    3. Committee membership must be approved by the Graduate School
    4. If pursuing a formal minor, one faculty member must be a member from area of minor.

Subsequent years

- Meet with Advisor and Committee two times per year (1 time a semester)
- For each meeting with your Committee, fill out the General PhD Committee Meeting Form for the meeting: http://www.sph.unc.edu/images/stories/academic_programs/ese/documents/Students/phdmtg.pdf, and turn in to ESE Student Services

- Doctoral Written Examination
  - Before you may schedule the Doctoral Written Exam you must have completed:
    1. All required coursework or be in the final semester of required coursework as decided by you and your Committee
    2. Research skill requirement
    3. Residency requirement and any conditions attached to admission
  - Meet with Advisor to get approval to take written examination.
  - Schedule meeting with committee

If you have any questions, discuss first with your advisor and then bring remaining inquiries to ESE Student Services.
Bring the following items to this meeting (and should be sent to your committee prior to the meeting):
1) A list of all your coursework, identifying research skill courses
2) Brief outline/description of dissertation topic
3) Timeline for your research

Forms needed for the meeting
- Fill out this form to schedule your written examination. You will need to get your advisor’s signature to certify that your Committee agrees your coursework is complete. Turn in the form to ESE Student Services.

The preparation, scheduling, administration, and review of your written exam are the responsibility of your PhD committee chair (your Advisor). Various exam formats may be used and it is up to you and your Committee to decide how to administer the exam.

- **Doctoral Dissertation Proposal**
  - Discuss your dissertation proposal with your advisor. Decide on the format you should use. Many students write a proposal using the guidelines for research proposals set by funding agencies such as EPA, NIH or NSF. Agree on the extent to which you may consult with committee members and others as you write your dissertation proposal.
  - Write the proposal.

- **Doctoral Oral Examination**
  - Defend your proposal as soon as is reasonably possible, generally within no more than six months after successful completion of the Doctoral Written Examination.
  - Schedule a time for your Oral Examination (which is actually an oral defense of your dissertation proposal). Coordinate with your committee to schedule a date. Once a date is determined, you will need to schedule a room and ensure the appropriate technology is available. (http://www.sph.unc.edu/iis/ims/classroomtechnology.htm).
  - Once you have set your date fill out following form, which requires your dissertation advisor’s signature: http://www.sph.unc.edu/images/stories/academic_programs/ese/documents/Students/phdoral.pdf. Turn in form to ESE Student Services.
  - Send out a copy of your proposal to your committee a week to 10 days before this defense.
  - The Doctoral Oral Examination is administered by your Doctoral Dissertation Committee with your Advisor as chairperson – all Committee members must be present.

If you have any questions, discuss first with your advisor and then bring remaining inquiries to ESE Student Services.
Conduct Research with Guidance from Advisor and Committee

- Meet with your Committee two times per year (1 time a semester)
- Document each meeting with your Committee using the departmental form available at: http://www.sph.unc.edu/images/stories/academic_programs/ese/documents/Students/phdmtg.pdf and turn in to the ESE Student Services Office.
- Your committee is there to help you. Keep your committee informed of your progress and draw on members’ expertise whenever appropriate, to help you during this important phase of your program.

- **Final Oral Examination and Defense of the Dissertation**
  - Advisor must review and approve dissertation draft before distribution to Committee.
  - Committee must review and approve a draft of your dissertation prior to scheduling your Defense.
  - Coordinate with your Committee to schedule a date and time for your Defense. The public announcement of the Defense must go out at least three weeks before the Defense.
  - Once a date is determined, you will need to schedule a room and ensure the appropriate technology is available. (http://www.sph.unc.edu/iis/ims/classroomtechnology.htm).
  - Formally request to have the Defense and fill out form: http://www.sph.unc.edu/images/stories/academic_programs/ese/documents/Students/phdoral.pdf. Turn in this form to ESE Student Services.
  - This examination is a defense of your research and is open to the public.
  - At the time of your Defense, your committee may require additional edits to your dissertation. These must be made and accepted by your Committee prior to handing in your dissertation.
  - **Note: if your dissertation does not meet The Graduate School guidelines, you will be alerted via email following your electronic submission.**
  - Final, approved dissertations are submitted electronically via the Graduate School website: http://gradschool.unc.edu/student/etd/. As a courtesy, please forward the confirmation email (approved submission) to the ESE Student Services Office.

- **After Completion of the Final Defense**
  - Consult University Registrar’s Calendar, http://registrar.unc.edu/AcademicCalendar/index.htm, for the last day to turn in dissertation to graduate in the current semester.
  - (note: this date is usually about a month before graduation)
    - If you miss this date, graduation will be in the next semester
    - If the dissertation is not turned in by the deadline, but the defense is finished before the first day of classes of the next semester, you do not have to register for next semester
  - Must apply for graduate degree for a specific graduation term, http://cfx.research.unc.edu/grad_appOnline/


Academics

Course program

- Must be approved before taking the doctoral written examination

Department Requirements

- ENVR 400, ESE In-House Seminar
- ENVR 401, Unifying Concepts

Graduate School Requirement

- ENVR 994, Doctoral Dissertation
  Must have registered for a minimum of 6 hrs total. Must be registered for a minimum of 3 hours of ENVR 994 in the semester in which you defend.
  (Note: At the approval of the Department Director of Graduate Studies after successfully defending the proposal and nearing the few semesters of research, may be considered full time for both funding and visa purposes with just 3 hours of 994 registration.)

Coursework

Most courses are formally selected from within the department

- Program of study determined by student and Advisor, and course program must be approved by your Committee
- No specific minimum course requirement; however, decision on number and content of courses is determined by your Committee based on your background and research needs.

Minor

- Not required, but may be completed by meeting requirements of Graduate school for a formal minor
  - Must be approved by both the major and minor programs
  - Requires a minimum of 15 semester hours.
  - Must not be in courses counted in major
  - Must not include courses from more than 2 different programs
  - If from 2 different programs must include at least 6 credit hours from each

Research Skill Requirement

- Two courses required (6 hours minimum)
  - Possible areas include computer science, biostatistics, statistics, mathematics, and others
  - Foreign language proficiency may be substituted for the research skill requirement (on the recommendation of the Dissertation Committee)
    - Requirement met by passing examination or successful completion of second semester of a special 2-semester course series numbers 101X, 102X
    - Languages include French, German, Spanish, or Russian
    - Foreign students whose native tongue is not English may not use their native tongue for the requirement

Dissertation

- Must register for “Dissertation for Credit” (ENVR 994) at least once for a minimum of six hours (usually not taken until passing the Doctoral Oral Examination)

Other Requirements

- Must obtain on-campus residence credit for four semesters, with at least two semesters earned in continuous registration on campus, see the Graduate School Handbook.