



Dissertation Guide



DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

What is it?

If you are a doctoral student and you have passed the admission to candidacy phase, you are eligible to begin your dissertation. Note that students should not register for DISS 799 until they have received notification that the Graduate School has approved their admission to candidacy. For all programs except for the doctor of audiology, a minimum of 10 hours of DISS 799 credit are required. If not registered for a course, students must be continuously enrolled in three credits of DISS 799 (excluding summers) until the final copy of the dissertation has been submitted to the Graduate School.

The type of doctoral degree you are pursuing helps to shape the topic of your dissertation:

1. If you are pursuing a doctor of education (EdD), your dissertation should be a study that contributes to solving an important educational problem.
2. If you are a doctor of philosophy (PhD) student, your dissertation should research a problem and contribute new knowledge or techniques.
3. If you are working toward a doctor of arts (DA), your dissertation should be an original contribution of new knowledge or a new technique, production and use of innovative teaching materials, or a composition or professional quality recording. No matter the approach, each dissertation must include a substantial written document.

Dissertation Committee

As a doctoral student you will have a committee of faculty members that guides your doctoral experience. This committee usually is appointed during the first year after you are admitted for doctoral study. Until committee members are appointed, the chairperson of your department or a delegated representative will be the director of your program.

Committee members have to be approved by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School with input from departmental program directors. The committee includes four or five members (approved for regular graduate faculty status), depending on your program of study.

All committees have two members from your major area and an at-large member from a field or department not already represented on the committee. If your program does not have a cognate, a fourth committee member will come from an appropriate area



related to your program of study. If your program has a cognate, your committee will include a representative for each cognate in your program of study.

If you are pursuing the doctor of arts degree, you will have a five-member committee with at least two members representing your area of primary emphasis, one representing the area of secondary emphasis, one or two representing the School of Music at-large, and one appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School to represent the university.

The committee chairperson will represent your primary area of study, unless there is a co-chair, and must meet the criteria for Dissertation Chair Endorsement in the department of your major. Please see specific degree program requirements for detailed policies about the appointment of doctoral committees.

Committee members work with you to determine your plan of study and guide your dissertation. If you are studying full time, you'll need to have your plan of study on file in your program area's department office and the Graduate School within one year of your committee formation. Some departments may have earlier deadlines. If you are studying part time, you'll need to have your plan of study on file in your program area's department office and the Graduate School within two years. If you do not meet this deadline, you may not be allowed to continue to register for courses.

At each stage of your doctoral study the committee will work with the Graduate School to determine when you are qualified to continue your studies.

Final Defense

You are required to successfully complete an oral defense of your dissertation, in defensible, final form, administered by your committee. The time and place of the defense will be announced at least 10 days in advance. All committee members need to attend your defense unless the Graduate School Associate Dean gives prior consent after consulting with the department chairperson and absent committee member.

At the defense, you should have the following forms prepared for your committee members to sign:

- 1) Academic Requirements Check Sheet
- 2) ETD Signature Form



If you receive two dissenting votes among members of the examining committee, you will fail your dissertation defense. If one member of the examining committee dissents, the dissenting examiner and, if appropriate, the chairperson of the examining committee will provide a letter to the Graduate School Dean detailing the circumstances of the dissent. If you fail the defense, the examining committee will prepare a report including reasons for failure and requirements you must meet. The chairperson of the examining committee or the Director of Graduate Studies will file this report with the Associate Dean of the Graduate School within seven days from the date of the defense. You'll need to obtain permission for a second defense from the committee chairperson and the Dean of the Graduate School. If you fail your second defense, you will need to terminate your doctoral studies.

Once you pass your final dissertation defense, you will be formally recommended to receive your degree. You must complete all degree requirements at least four weeks before the end of the semester or term in which you are certified for graduation.

Student Responsibility

It is the student's responsibility to read and fulfill the requirements presented in the Graduate Catalog and to submit a document of the highest quality. The Graduate School does not edit for content or grammar. Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling always should be used, and these aspects are the responsibility of the student. Please consult your department and the director of your graduate program for specific content requirements. Students are responsible for proofreading, accurate and consistent use of sources in a style appropriate to the discipline, and following ethical research standards.



Research Ethics and Compliance

RESEARCH ETHICS

Students should conduct and report the results of their research in an ethical manner. Ethical misconduct in research is any falsification, fabrication, and/or plagiarism in proposing, conducting or disseminating research or other creative activities.

Fabricating research findings entails making up results, and falsifying research results refers to changing, misrepresenting, or selectively reporting findings. These acts violate the integrity of the research process and are serious breaches of accepted ethical standards. Students at all stages of the research process are required to conduct their research in an open and honest manner and make every effort to ensure the accuracy of their findings.

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of the phrasing, ideas, and depictions of publicly available work without appropriately acknowledging their sources. Using the work of another without acknowledgment of the original sources constitutes plagiarism and is subject to penalty. Students at the Ball State University are expected to maintain the ethical standards in proposing, conducting, and reporting their research in the research project, thesis, creative project or dissertation.

RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

The Office of Research Integrity (ORI) handles most research-related regulatory activities at BSU, including administering the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), Radiation Safety (RSC), Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), Laboratory Safety and Security (LSSC), Federal Significant Conflicts of Interests (SFCI), and so forth. Any questions concerning these areas should be directed to the Office of Research Integrity. Research involving human participants, animals (lab and field), certain biological agents, and/or radioactive materials must receive the appropriate committee's approval before any research with these can begin. In some cases, multiple committee reviews may be needed.



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SUBMISSION

IRB approval must be obtained prior to any data being collected in research including human participants in any way.

IRB Approval: Step-by-Step

1. Complete CITI Training.
 - Principle Investigator (PI) and all team members must complete all required CITI trainings before approval can be granted.
 - PI and all team members should complete the CITI training course that most closely aligns with their research area (i.e. Social and Behavioral or Biomedical)
 - If the research is supported by National Science Foundation (NSF) funds, the PI and all team members must also complete the CITI RCR courses.
2. Register on IRBNet.
3. Review submission deadlines for the Institutional Review Board.
4. Complete all pieces of the application. This will include the **Human Subjects Research Application and Narrative form**, along with any additional relevant documents. This might include informed consent documents, surveys, recruitment letters or e-mails, and so forth. You may want to review some of the **IRB resources**.
5. Upload your project to IRBNet.
6. Share your project with your advisor and team members (if applicable).
7. The Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisor (if PI is student) must electronically sign off on the project.
 - If the research is for a dissertation, then only the Faculty Advisor needs to complete CITI and e-sign the protocol. The entire Dissertation committee does not need to do these.
 - If the research will take place off-site, at another organization, etc. you will need to get letters of support from those site/organizations. This needs to be on their letterhead and signed by someone in a position of authority to grant you permission to conduct your research there. (i.e. If you wish to collect data at a high school you must receive written permission from the superintendent of the school corporation.)

*NOTE: *** Following the initial submission of your protocol, you may be asked to make some revisions before your project will be reviewed. If these pre-review revisions are not made and submitted within 30 days, your project will be withdrawn and must be re-submitted as a new project. ****



Formatting

*****NOTE: The following requirements are specific to the Graduate School. Programs may have additional formatting requirements. Make sure to see your department chair or the director of your program for program-specific details.*****

Formatting requirements are based on the needs of ProQuest and Ball State University's online submission site.

Margins

Left. 1”

Right. 1”

Top. 1”

Bottom. 1”

These apply to all material except page numbers, figures, headers/footers, footnotes/endnotes, and full-page images.

Page Numbering

Page numbers must be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ ” from the edge of the paper.

Spacing

- Double-Space: abstract, dedication, acknowledgements, table of contents, body of manuscript, except for quotations as paragraphs, captions, items in tables, lists, graphs, charts.
- Single-Space: footnotes/endnotes, bibliographic entries, lists in appendices.

Font

- Font size for body text may be from 10 to 12 point and should remain consistent throughout the front matter and main text and must be easily legible.
- Font size and type may differ for footnotes, figure captions, table data, references, and material in an appendix and may be as small as 9-point.

Document Type

All papers must be saved as a PDF file.

Attachments

- No embedded media files in your PDF are allowed.
- Upload media files as supplementary files: During online submission, you will be asked to upload any supplementary files.
- Describe files in your abstract: Add a description of each supplementary file in your abstract.

Signatures

As a precaution, pages or forms with signatures are not to be included in the uploaded file.



Electronic Submission

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OVERVIEW

Ball State University has implemented a policy that all doctoral dissertations are to be submitted electronically. The goals of the Graduate School in requiring electronic submission include seeking to instruct graduate students about electronic document preparation and how to use digital libraries. Moreover, many research projects go beyond the traditional text-only format, which cannot be captured in paper copy alone, and this initiative will allow worldwide accessibility to Ball State student research.

STEPS

Your account will be activated about four weeks prior to the final submission deadline. The Graduate School recommends you upload your project at least 1 week before the submission deadline.

The following are instructions for final submission:

1. Create two PDF files. The first PDF file will contain your abstract only. The second PDF file will contain the body of the paper, including the Title Page, Acknowledgements, Bibliography, and Appendices (if any).
2. Have your committee chair or program advisor review and approve of the formatting before uploading the document.
3. Prepare additional attachments to be uploaded (if any). These could include videos, pictures, and musical compositions. These attachments do not have to be in PDF form, but should be in a form appropriate to the type of attachment.
4. Your dissertation chair and department chair are notified once you've completed the submission process, and they must electronically sign off on the documents as well.

As a consideration for busy schedules, make sure to give a full week for them to review your uploaded project and approve it. This also gives you time to resubmit the project if you need to do so.

******Note: All materials MUST be formatted following the Graduate School Requirements detailed in the previous section. *******



PUBLICATION AND COPYRIGHTING

You will submit your final dissertation to the electronic submission database, and once it has been approved by the Graduate School, you will also be asked to submit to ProQuest and it will become available through ProQuest databases. Depending on the permissions you granted, database users may be able to access full electronic or printed copies of your dissertation. While the university values making your dissertation available to the public to advance the literature in your field, authors may request an embargo or delay of release of their dissertations as part of the ETD submission process. Exercising this option may be prudent in cases involving patent applications, proprietary data, and article and monograph publishing.

Please keep in mind that exercising a restriction will prevent copies of your dissertation from being made available to others outside Ball State University who wish to read about your research in a timely fashion. If you are considering a delay of publication, please discuss the matter with your committee chair or program director. See the ETD Signature form for more information regarding the release or delay of publication of your work.

DUE DATE FOR SUBMISSION

All papers and projects must be received in the Graduate School at least 1 month prior to the intended date of graduation. It is recommended that you schedule your dissertation defense no later than 3 weeks prior to the submission deadline. Some programs have additional defense scheduling requirements. Note that faculty members are more likely to be away from campus in the summer, which may present additional difficulties with scheduling a defense. Start planning a time line for your defense and ask about committee member availability as soon as possible.

See the Graduate School website for submission deadlines

******Note: It is best to discuss setting deadlines for your work with your committee chair rather than estimating them yourself.******



Responsibilities for Graduation

APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION

Please remember, graduation is not automatic. You must apply to graduate whether or not you plan to participate in the ceremony. You will need to complete the application within the first four weeks of the semester in which you plan to graduate or the first two weeks of the summer semester. All graduate students who plan to graduate and participate in a ceremony must complete the following two-step process:

Step 1 - Eligible students must complete an application to graduate for each degree and/or certificate. Log into Self-Service Banner (SSB) at my.bsu.edu and click on the "Student" tab, then click on "Student Records", and then "Apply to Graduate." Your account will be charged \$25 per graduation application and will appear on your e-bill.

Step 2 - Participants will need to order the necessary materials such as the cap, gown, and tassel. We ask that you get all your materials early in case something needs to be returned or exchanged.

CHECKLIST FOR GRADUATION

All of the below items must be completed to be considered for degree conferral!

- Remove any incompletes (departmental responsibility).
- Upload and electronically submit the final dissertation to the Graduate School. This includes the abstract, title page, and acknowledgement page.
- Upload and electronically submit the final dissertation to ProQuest. Graduation Coordinator will send instructions via e-mail.
- Submit completed form for the National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates. (Omit for Doctor of Arts and Doctor of Education)

ESSENTIAL FORMS NEEDED TO GRADUATE

- Title Page- to be included in online submission
- Abstract - to be included in online submission
- Acknowledgement- to be included in online submission
- ETD Signature Form- to be turned in to Graduate School office in WQ 203
- Doctoral Degree Check Sheet or Plan of Study showing all graduate courses used for the doctoral degree signed by your committee chairperson- to be turned in to Graduate School office in WQ 203



Doctoral Degree Conferral

You will be awarded your doctoral degree when, in the judgment of your committee, you have qualified in all respects for the degree and you have:

- Applied for graduation.
- Completed all course work leading to the degree with an outstanding graduate scholastic record.
- Passed the dissertation defense.
- Submitted the dissertation electronically and received approvals from the department and the Graduate School.
- Submitted all required paperwork to the Graduate School.

If you took any courses required for your degree before you were admitted to a doctoral program, your committee will have to approve using the courses. You also may need to provide evidence of current knowledge.

If needed, you might be granted an extension of one year if your department chairperson and the Associate Dean of the Graduate School approve. Extensions are based on academic considerations and are limited. You may be required to repeat preliminary examinations, to take additional course work, or both.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

FAQs

I'm not sure if my project requires IRB/Research Compliance review. How do I determine this?

If you have any questions, please contact the office of Research Integrity.

Do I have to submit my research protocol to IRB/Research Compliance before turning in my Admission to Candidacy Form to the Graduate School?

You must evaluate whether your project needs research compliance (IRB) approval before turning in your topic approval form to the Graduate School. If your protocol requires research compliance approval but it has not been submitted, you may turn in your admission to candidacy form to the Graduate School as long as you attach an explanation of why your protocol has not been submitted and discuss your timeline for submission.

I've submitted a Doctoral Committee Form, but one of the committee members has since left Ball State. What do I do?

You will need to submit a new Doctoral Committee Form to the Graduate School with the new committee member's name. Be sure to write revised at the top of the form.

How do I know if I have completed my degree requirements?

Coursework and degree requirements are determined by your department. Contact your department or committee chair to inquire.

I've submitted my Application for Graduation and I'm ready to upload my dissertation. When can I upload?

You will receive an email to your Ball State email account from the Graduation Coordinator when you are able to upload. The email will include the link to the site as well as instructions for uploading. Generally, this email is sent six weeks before the end of the fall/spring semester and four weeks before the end of a summer semester. You will only receive an email if you have applied to graduate for that semester. If you don't receive an email, please contact gradschool@bsu.edu.



Are there any tips to follow that will help make the electronic upload of my dissertation, go smoothly?

Please make sure that you upload your document as a PDF. If uploading accompanying files, please upload as follows: music file-.mp3 format, video-.mp4 format.

Can I fax or email a copy of the completed ETD Signature Form to the Graduate School?

These forms can be accepted via email if special permission has been granted by the Graduate School and the form and signatures are legible or have the digital signature stamp. It is the student's responsibility to see that the forms with all required signatures are submitted to the Graduate School, West Quad, Room 203, by the appropriate deadline. Please reach out to gradschool@bsu.edu for additional questions.

I've submitted my Application for Graduation for the current semester but realize I'm not going to meet the deadline for completing degree requirements. Can I change my graduation date?

To change your graduation date, send an email to the Graduation Coordinator requesting that your application for graduation be canceled for the current term. You will then need to submit a new graduation application through Self Service Banner for the appropriate term. Be sure to also notify your department/program director. If you postpone graduation to a later semester, you will be required to submit a new application for graduation and pay the application fee again.

After I have submitted the Application for Graduation, how do I pay the \$25 application fee?

The application fee is assessed by the Bursar's Office and will appear on your student account. Be sure to monitor your student account to make payment by the due date. Student account questions may be addressed to the Bursar's Office at (765) 285-1643 or bursar@bsu.edu.

When will I receive my diploma?

Doctoral and Specialist in Education students who attend commencement will receive the diploma during the ceremony. Doctoral and Specialist in Education students who choose not to attend commencement will receive the diploma in the mail. Diplomas are mailed from the Commencement Office and take approximately 4-6 weeks to arrive to the student. It may take longer to arrive, if the destination is outside of the United States.