



Procedures and policies for Ph.D. dissertation proposal hearing application:

Proposal hearing is conducted by the Ph.D. student's dissertation committee, which includes the first mentor, the second mentor, the Ph.D. program director, and an external reader* (the external reader may or may not be present at the hearing).

Once the student's dissertation proposal is approved by his or her first mentor, the student is qualified to apply for the proposal hearing. The following are the procedures for the hearing:

1. The student is responsible to request a dissertation proposal hearing from the academic office.
2. Once the request is granted, the student is to submit his or her proposal in both Word file and PDF file to the academic office for distribution. The proposal is going to be distributed by the academic office to the student's dissertation committee for review.
3. Upon receiving the copies of the proposal, the academic office is responsible for scheduling the proposal hearing as soon as possible.
4. At the scheduled time, the student should bring his/her copy of the dissertation proposal to the hearing (brief notes and a pen/pencil are allowed at the hearing). No recording of any kind during the hearing process is permitted. The proposal hearing will last for approximately one hour.

The proposal should specify the area of your proposed research and should include an introduction, research methodology, and sources of data. On the day of proposal defense, the student will make a brief and succinct overview of the proposal and address the significance of the proposed research. The student should establish the rationale for his or her research based on a reading of the relevant academic literature and its contribution to the subject area.

5. After the student's presentation, each committee member will present questions to the student and probe the student's understanding of the proposal and to clarify information which has been presented. Committee members may also suggest changes in any aspect of the proposal. After the hearing, the student is to make revisions according to the suggestions made by his or her dissertation committee,
 - a. if the external reader is present at the hearing either in person or online, the student can proceed directly to procedure number 6 below;

- b. if the external reader is not present at the hearing, the student is to make revisions according to the suggestions made by his or her first and second mentors, and by the Ph.D. director. After the revised proposal is approved by the first and second mentors, the academic office will send the revised proposal to the external reader for review. The student needs to make revisions according to the external reader's suggestions.
6. After the revised proposal is approved by the entire dissertation committee, the student is to send a final copy to the academic office for record keeping purpose.
7. Upon completion of steps 1-6, the student will be granted the Ph.D. candidacy status, and then he or she can move forward with the dissertation writing.

Policies for finding and contact an external reader:

1. The external reader must be an expert in the field of the student's research area;
2. Within the student's research area, the first mentor and the student have the freedom to choose from the available external readers according to their preference;
3. Once the external reader is designated, the academic office is to contact the external reader to sign an agreement. Usually, the student is not supposed to contact the outside reader directly.