

Dissertation Committee Roles, Responsibilities and Checklist

This checklist is meant as a convenient reminder of faculty responsibilities related to dissertation committee roles. Please see the [Dissertation Handbook](#) for additional details on qualifying paper and dissertation policy and processes. There is also a [student checklist for the qualifying paper and dissertation](#).

Please note that all feedback on student work should be done in an electronic format which can be easily saved and shared, such as “track changes” and word processor rather than handwritten.

Dissertation Chair Responsibilities

- **Work with student and help them define their topic and methodology.** Students choose who they would like to be their chair. Once you agree to chair a student, help them define their topic and general research methodology. *This should occur before the student takes their final research course as they will draft their methodology chapter in that course.*
- **Consult on methodology chapter.** Read and respond to drafts of their emerging methodology chapter as it is written in the student’s final research course (either ESR616 or ESR618). Most students will need support to complete the chapter after the course is over.

Qualifying Paper

Assist with plan: Work with student to plan their qualifying paper.

- Collaborate with the student to construct a question or questions to reflect upon, investigate, and respond to in order to write a conceptual paper that in some way intellectually presages the dissertation. When possible, planning should begin before the term in which the student registers for their qualifying paper in order to allow the student to gather resources and be prepared to write.
- Students must address the criteria in the [Scholarly Writing Rubric](#).
- The chair should go over the rubric with the student so they are aware how the paper will be assessed.
- The student must obtain the approval of their dissertation chair for the paper’s focus and the start date.
- Students may work with their chairs to plan and draft their paper. However, *during the final writing of the qualifying paper, the student is not allowed to get help or feedback from faculty or other doctoral students.*
- **Student registers for qualifying paper as CBA.**
 - The student must register for “CCD696 Qualifying Paper” as a course by arrangement, with their dissertation chair as the instructor, for the term in which they intend to write.
 - The academic advisor will assist with this process.
- **Assess the qualifying paper.**
 - **Determine the rest of the committee.** Work with student to determine one member and dean’s rep. It is important to know who the committee member will be in order to have them assess the qualifying paper.
 - **A committee form should be completed** at this time and submitted to the doctoral office. [Committee Form](#)

- **The dean's rep** will only be asked to read if the chair and member disagree on if the student should pass.
- When the student completes the qualifying paper,
 - i. The chair sends it to committee member with the [scholarly paper rubric](#).
 - ii. Member provides feedback within 2 weeks so the student can register for the subsequent term.
 - iii. The chair meets with student to discuss both the member and chair's comments and recommendations.
 - iv. **Criteria for passing:** In order to pass their qualifying paper, 85% of the criteria needs to be at a level of "Proficient" or "Distinguished" on the Scholarly Paper Evaluation Rubric. This is based on an average of the member and chair's scores.
 - 1. **If the student passes**, notify student's advisor and submit the "P" grade for the CBA.
 - 2. **If the student does not pass**, submit an "I" grade, which will allow the student time to complete revisions. It is recommended that students are given 30 days to revise as revisions must be assessed by the chair and committee member again.
 - 3. **If the student does not pass again**, they are given one more opportunity to revise.
 - 4. The student has a total of **90 days** to complete all revisions.

Dissertation

- **General expectations of chair's work with student.**
 - **Meet regularly with student:** It is recommended that the chair and student meet at least once every two weeks while the student works on their proposal and dissertation. Scheduling regular check-in meetings helps keep students on track.
 - **Monitor student quarterly registration.** Chair checks in CAPP to see if student is enrolled each term in which they work with the student.
 - i. NLU requires students be continuously enrolled during doctoral work. This is particularly true if they are actively working on their dissertation with chair.
 - ii. Students must be enrolled in either CCD699 or CCD699X during the term they defend their proposal and final dissertation in order for the committee to be compensated.
 - **Exception to working with doc student.**
 - i. In general, dissertation compensation is done as overload and is not part of regular load each term,
 - ii. Therefore working with students **should continue** even in terms in which faculty chair is not otherwise working unless they notify the student before the term in which they will be unavailable.
 - iii. When students register for dissertation hours, they are paying to work with their faculty chair. **If the chair does not intend to work** with doctoral students during a particular term (for example they take a term off or take a sabbatical), the chair should notify the student before the term begins and advise them not to register

for dissertation during that term or make arrangements for them to work with their committee member during that time.

- **Proposal development**

- **Ongoing support:**

- i. Chair responsibilities include ongoing engagement with the student in which the chair provides: feedback, a close proofread for clarity, completeness, comprehension, and adequately addressing proposal topics. It is suggested that chairs **use track changes** in order to provide feedback to students.
 - ii. A general overview of what goes in the proposal can be found in the [doctoral handbook](#).
 - iii. Please note that there are also writing supports available to doctoral students through the CLAVE Grant [CLAVE](#) and [Learning Support](#)

- **Proposal defense/hearing**

- Send out to the committee: Once the proposal is drafted and the student and chair thinks it is ready, the chair sends the draft proposal to the member and dean's rep and provides possible dates for the defense. The member and dean's rep are given a minimum of two weeks to read the proposal before the defense.
 - The proposal hearing is often considered a "working meeting" because the student can still make significant changes to the proposal after the proposal defense. The proposal does not have to be in "polished" condition. For example, if a student is going to use an editor they can wait to do that before their final defense. The clear conveyance of their ideas is more important than perfect formatting at this phase.
 - Set up defense meeting: Once the date and place for the defense is set,
 - i. The chair requests a room. [Facility Request](#)
 - ii. The student has the option of inviting select graduate peers to the proposal defense. However, discuss with the student that the proposal defense is formative in nature, and it is an expectation that faculty be critical.
 - iii. The student should decide if they want to invite particular doctoral peers or if they prefer a private meeting their committee. (The final defense is a public event and is open to the university community and invited family and friends.)
 - iv. If not all committee members or guests can attend in person, the chair sets up zoom and sends the link out.
 - Facilitate meeting: Chair facilitates the proposal meeting.
 - i. It should begin with a 20 to 30 minute presentation of the proposal by the student,
 - ii. Followed by a discussion in which the committee asks questions, offers suggestions, and provides feedback.
 - iii. It is suggested that the student or chair records the meeting so recommendations may be reviewed by the student.
 - iv. It is the chair's prerogative to ask guests if they have comments or questions.
 - v. Once the discussion is finished, the chair and committee meet privately (usually student and guests leave the room). During this discussion a list of recommendations for changes is made.

- vi. If the committee agrees that the student has written a comprehensive proposal (even if there are changes required) and agrees to “pass” the student, the chair gathers signatures on the proposal signature sheet and turns the sheet into the doctoral office at ncedoctoraloffice@nl.edu within 5 days after the defense.
 - vii. However, if significant work needs to be done, the chair may gather signatures but hold their own until revisions are made and members have an opportunity to approve the revisions.
 - viii. On rare occasions in which there are significant problems with the proposal, another proposal defense will be scheduled at a later date.
- **IRB application.** Chair works with student on IRB application, and reads and provides feedback on all documents before signing off.
 - Student reviews homepage of the IRB, and the actual application form.
 - In addition to the IRB form, sample letters of informed consent can be found on [IRB Webpage](#) . (The IRB Board assumes the student has been coached in this process and sees their role as review.)
 - Student must also take the CITI course on research ethics before the IRB will review the application. This course can be accessed on the webpage at [CITI Training and Registration](#)
- **Support student during data collection, analysis and write up.** Once the IRB application is approved, the chair continues to meet regularly with the student and provides feedback and guidance as the student collects and analyzes data, and writes the final chapters of the dissertation. The chair must make sure that the writing comprehensively addresses the research questions and ethical guidelines, as well as provides a close proofread for clarity, completeness, and formatting. The chair may recommend that the student use a professional editor depending on the quality of the writing. Chairs are strongly encouraged to use track changes in order to provide feedback to students. A general overview of what goes in the dissertation can be found in the [Doctoral Handbook](#).
 - **Send out dissertation draft.** Once the dissertation draft is complete, the chair sends it to the member and dean’s rep to get feedback. A date for the defense will be set by the chair at least 3 weeks from the date of receipt of the complete dissertation. The committee member will read the *entire* dissertation closely, *and will provide feedback in writing, using track changes, and verbally* at the dissertation defense. (It’s important not to just read the final chapters because often there are changes to the proposal chapters after the proposal defense).

If the committee member has significant concerns about the quality of the dissertation, they should let the chair know at least one week prior to the defense date. The chair and committee member will confer, and on rare occasions, the defense may be postponed to allow the student to respond to recommendations from the member. However, it is expected that under most circumstances that some recommendations for changes and edits will be made at the final defense, which will be completed after the dissertation defense.

Once the **final draft** of the dissertation is sent out to the committee member and dean's representative, the Chair:

- completes the "Organizer for Doctoral Dissertation Hearing" form by the last Friday of the month just prior to the month in which the defense will take place and send, along with the abstract to the Doctoral Office and to the Chair of the EDD T&L [Organizer for Dissertation Hearing Form](#)
- schedules the defense
- schedules the room by filling out the [Facility Request Form](#)
- sets up a zoom link for the meeting
- completes a "dissertation announcement" of the defense (include a zoom link in the announcement) which should be shared with the Chair of the EDD T&L so it can be sent out to other students in the program. In addition, it should be shared with the student who will defend so they can forward to others they would like to invite. [Dissertation Announcement](#)
- **Dissertation Defense.** Dissertation defenses last approximately two hours, and may be done in person or through Zoom if conditions warrant. The Chair facilitates the meeting, which should begin with a 20 to 30 minute presentation by the student. The presentation should briefly review research questions and methodology, but focus primarily on findings and recommendations. This is followed by a discussion in which the committee asks questions, offers suggestions, and provides feedback. It is the chair's prerogative to ask guests if they have comments or questions. It is recommended that the student or chair record the meeting, to facilitate the student reviewing feedback after the meeting.

Once the dissertation discussion is complete, the chair and committee meet privately (usually student and guests leave the room) to discuss any concerns, issues, or recommendations. The group agrees upon recommended changes and edits, and the dean's representative makes a formal list which is shared with the student and included in the dean's rep's report.

If the committee agrees that the student has successfully defended their dissertation (even if there are minor changes required) and "passes" the student, the chair gathers all signatures on the proposal signature sheet and turns the signature sheet in to the doctoral office at nceddoctoraloffice@nl.edu along with the abstract shortly after the meeting or the following day. The doctoral program assistant will procure the dean's signature and return a copy to the student and chair.

However, if substantial changes need to be made, the chair may gather signatures *but hold their own signature until revisions are made and members have an opportunity to approve the revisions*. On the rare occasions when changes are significant, another dissertation defense will be scheduled at a later date so the entire committee can review changes and discuss.

- **Finishing up after the defense.** After the dissertation defense, the chair is responsible for checking that all edits are made, and that the document is properly formatted and of high quality. It is recommended that the student highlights all changes made after the dissertation hearing so the chair can more easily make sure all edits and suggestions have been addressed adequately.

Once the chair approves the final edit, the dissertation is returned to the student with a copy of the completed signature sheet. All revisions and edits must be completed by the end of the subsequent 10-week term. The student is responsible for contacting the library and posting the dissertation in Digital Commons. The chair should request verification that this has been done. (Students do have the option to decline publication in Digital Commons or delay it for a set period time if circumstances warrant this.)

Committee Member Responsibilities

- 1) **Assess the qualifying paper.** When the student completes the qualifying paper, the chair sends it to committee member with the Scholarly Paper Rubric. [Scholarly Paper Rubric](#) Once the member completes the rubric and provides written feedback (within 2 weeks of receiving, if possible) they send it to the chair who meets with the student to discuss comments and recommendations from both the member and chair's feedback. Often, the student will meet with the member after this if they have any questions or need clarification.

In order to pass their qualifying paper, 85% of the criteria needs to be at a level of "Proficient" or "Distinguished" on the Scholarly Paper Evaluation Rubric. If the student does not pass, they will be allowed to complete revisions based on feedback. It is recommended that students are given 30 days to revise from the date of receiving from chair, as revisions must be assessed by the chair and committee member again. If the student does not pass again, they are given one more opportunity to revise. The student has a total of 90 days to complete all revisions.

Provide in depth feedback on proposal. The committee member is responsible to read the entire proposal and provide *written and verbal* feedback at the proposal defense. All written feedback should be done in an electronic feedback such as "track changes" and word processor so it can also be shared with the chair. If the chair requests, the member may be asked to read earlier in the process and provide feedback. For example, the member may have expertise in research methods or in the subject area of the dissertation and may be asked to work closely with the student related to developing specific parts of the proposal or provide insights on appropriate literature to review. The committee member should read for clarity, accuracy, conceptual depth, proper organization, etc.

- 2) **The proposal defense.** The committee member is expected to come to the proposal defense prepared to share substantial feedback, ask questions and make suggestions. Minor changes, like typos and grammatical errors should not be discussed at the meeting, but covered in track changes as to leave time for discussion of more substantial issues. The proposal hearing is often a "working meeting," because the student can still make significant changes to the proposal after the proposal defense. The proposal does not have to be in "polished" condition. For example, if a student is going to use an editor they can wait to do that before their final defense. The clear conveyance of their ideas *is more important* than perfect formatting at this phase. The committee member is expected to use tracked changes and word processor rather than handwritten comments so these can be shared

with the student and chair electronically. The member will meet privately with the dean's rep and chair near the end of the proposal meeting and work collaboratively to determine recommendations.

- 3) **Provide in depth feedback on dissertation:** Once the chair and student believe the dissertation is complete and ready to defend, it will be sent to the committee member and dean's rep review. A date for the defense will be set at least 3 weeks from the date of receipt of the complete dissertation. The committee member will read the entire dissertation (not just the final chapters because often there are changes to the proposal chapters after the proposal defense). The committee member reads the entire document closely and provides feedback in writing and verbally at the dissertation defense. However, if the committee member has significant concerns about the quality of the dissertation, they should let the **chair know at least one week prior to the defense date**. The chair and committee member will confer and on rare occasions the defense may be postponed. However, only significant changes or problems should be addressed before the defense. It is expected that there will be some minor recommendations for changes and edits after the dissertation defense.
- 4) **Complete the EDD T&L Research Rubric.** The committee member is responsible to complete the EDD T&L Research Rubric as a formal assessment of the dissertation before the dissertation defense. This will be shared with the dissertation chair and the chair of the major. It may also be shared with the student as one means to provide feedback. *The committee's decision is what determines if the student passes, not the rubric.* However, the rubric is the final point of our assessment system and needs to be completed and submitted to the Chair of the EDD in T&L doctoral program. [Research Rubric](#)
- 5) **Attend final defense.** The committee member is expected to come to the final defense prepared with questions, suggestions and feedback. Do not discuss minor changes at the meeting, these can be communicated with the student and chair through track changes. At the end of the meeting the chair, committee member and dean's representative will confer in private and create list of required changes and recommendations.

Dean's Representative Responsibilities

1. **Read the proposal.** The dean's representative is provided a copy of the proposal at least two weeks before the proposal defense. They are not expected to do a close read of the proposal, nor provide extensive feedback. However, they should read over the proposal in order to familiarize themselves with it.
2. **Attend the proposal hearing.** The dean's representative attends the dissertation defense prepared to ask questions and make suggestions. After the public discussion, they confer with the chair and committee member privately to delineate request for edits, changes and additions.
3. **Read the dissertation.** The dean's representative should skim back through the proposal chapters and read over the final chapters of the dissertation. They are not required to provide

written feedback, but should be familiar enough with the dissertation to ask questions and provide suggestions at the defense.

4. **Attend the dissertation defense.** The dean's representative attends the dissertation defense prepared to ask questions and make suggestions. However, in addition to participating in the dissertation defense and conferring with the committee on final recommendations, the dean's representative is required to complete the dean's rep report (DRR). The dean's rep should read over the DRR template *before* the dissertation defense in order to be sure they ascertain the information needed to complete the form at the defense. [Dean's Rep Report Template](#) . The dean's rep report includes a list of attendees, a summary of the dissertation, the results of the meeting, and a list of changes or recommendations from the committee. It suggested that the dean's rep download a copy of the template before the meeting so they are aware of the information that needs to be addressed.
5. **Dean's Rep Report.** The dean's rep report should be written *within 2 business days after the defense* as it is needed to finalize the degree. All parts of the report must be filled out. Once it is complete, it is send to the NCDdoctoraloffice@nl.edu and cc the Chair of Doctoral Committee.

Director of each Major:

- 1) Posts grades each term that students are registered for CCD699 (Dissertation) and CCD699X (Continuation). Grades should be entered as Xs until successful dissertation defense.
- 2) Change grade to P after final defense. These can be changed with one grade change form.