

# Doctoral Degree Academic Program Overview

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The doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) degree is awarded in recognition of high attainment and ability in a special subject field. Candidates are required to pass examinations that cover general and specific knowledge in their area of expertise and prepare and successfully defend a dissertation based on independent, original and high-quality research that makes a significant contribution of knowledge to the field. Doctor of nursing practice (D.N.P.) students are not advanced to candidacy and do not complete a dissertation. D.N.P. students should reference this bulletin to view the requirements of their program of study.

## Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program

Faculty from both doctoral and non-doctoral departments may propose interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs for individual students to the University Board of Graduate Studies. This provides students and faculty with opportunities for creative academic programming and research opportunities that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries. Since there is no departmental structure to support these programs, certain understandings, commitments, and restrictions, beyond those required in regular doctoral programs, are necessary. Additional information appears in the Programs section of this bulletin. Direct specific questions to the Graduate School.

## Doctoral Program Planning and Advisement

Students must prepare a program of study with their advisers, which should be kept on file in the department. Students and programs should refer to the requirements in the University Bulletin under which the student was admitted and track progress using the advising function in CheckMarq. Discrepancies in CheckMarq must be resolved with the Graduate School promptly.

## Credit Requirements Overview

Depending on previous preparation and the nature of the research undertaken, the number of credits required for individual students, even within the same program, may vary considerably. Minimum credit requirements have, however, been established by the university and the Graduate School.

The doctoral degree is the highest degree conferred by Marquette University. There are significant differences in degree requirements between the physical/natural sciences and other fields, and these are addressed below. However, in all cases, Ph.D. students must complete 12 dissertation credits and must satisfy the university's residency requirements. The credit requirements listed below are the minimum established by the Graduate School. Individual departments may set their own requirements that meet or exceed these minimums.

## Biological Sciences and Chemistry Credit Requirements

A minimum of 24 credits of course work beyond the bachelor's degree is required, plus 12 dissertation credits. In cases in which students enter the program with a master's degree in the same or closely related field, students may request the department and the Graduate School to allow the master's degree to satisfy up to 25% of the 24 required credits. In all cases, a minimum of 18 credits of course work exclusive of the dissertation must be taken at Marquette while in the doctoral program.

Any exceptions to the total credits and minimum grade point average requirements for any degree and/or certificate must be approved by the provost.

## All Other Programs Credit Requirements

A minimum of 45 credits of course work beyond the bachelor's degree is required, plus 12 dissertation credits. In cases in which students enter the program with a master's degree from another institution in the same or closely related field, students may request the department and the Graduate School to allow the master's degree course work to satisfy up to 50% of the required credits. For such cases, a minimum of 21 credit hours of course work exclusive of the dissertation must be taken at Marquette while in a Ph.D. or D.N.P. program. For cases in which students enter the program with a master's degree from Marquette University in the same or closely related field, students may request the department and the Graduate School to allow up to 30 credits of course work from the Marquette master's degree to satisfy the Ph.D. course credit requirement. Thus, in this latter case, a minimum of 15 credit hours of course work exclusive of the dissertation must be taken at Marquette while in a Ph.D. or D.N.P. program.

Any exceptions to the total credits and minimum grade point average requirements for any degree and/or certificate must be approved by the provost.

## Ph.D. Career Skills Requirements

In order to graduate, students enrolled in all Ph.D. programs at Marquette University must complete career skills requirements: Career Discernment; Communication; and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Students meet these requirements by completing one or more approved courses, workshops, or practical experiences in each category, as approved by the Graduate School. Specific course requirements for each Ph.D. program are located in this bulletin, on each program's Requirements tab.

Completion of each skill will be noted on the student's transcript. Detailed information can be found on the Career Skills Requirements for Ph.D. Students (<https://www.marquette.edu/grad/phd-career-skills.php>) web page.

## Second Language Requirements

Some programs require reading comprehension in one or more additional languages. This requirement is used as an important tool to advance the scholarly and research efforts of students. To determine language requirements for a specific doctoral program, consult the Programs section of this bulletin. If required, students must select one (or more) language(s) in which there is significant scholarly literature in their program field.

There are a number of ways by which students can complete the language requirement(s), including: taking a second language proficiency examination administered by the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures; taking a three-credit, semester-long second language reading knowledge course (course number xxxx 6204) offered by the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures; proving to students' departmental faculty that they have the necessary second language proficiency as evidenced by prior language study; or by taking an exam prepared and graded by students' academic departments. The 6204 reading knowledge courses may only be taken for credit and may not be audited.

If students choose to take a second language reading knowledge course, the tuition for the course is charged at the normal Graduate School tuition rate in effect at the time the course is being taken, and the language credits are in addition to regular course credits required for that academic program and degree. The grades earned in the second language reading knowledge course are included in the students' term and cumulative credits and grade point average.

Students also have the option of taking a two-hour exam to fulfill a graduate degree program's language requirement. The exam, graded SNC/UNC, assesses students' reading proficiency in a particular language through translation and comprehension questions about a second language passage. Students must register for the exam just like a regular course, and a \$100 fee is assessed. If students receive an unsatisfactory grade assessment, it is recommended that they complete the corresponding 6204 reading knowledge course. If students decide to retake the exam outside of the course, they have to re-register for the exam and pay the \$100 exam fee.

Whatever method is chosen, it is the responsibility of the students' home departments to determine what level of language proficiency is sufficient. It is also the departments' responsibility to notify the Graduate School of each student's completion of second language requirements.

## Specializations

A specialization (or sub-plan), consisting of a minimum of twelve credits of course work in a specific field, may be required for some doctoral programs. A specialization must be selected from those currently active within the approved Marquette University program in which the student is active/admitted. The specialization must be communicated to the Graduate School by the department if it is being added or changed after the student has begun their program of study. For additional information, consult the Programs section of this bulletin.

## Residency Requirement

The residency requirement is designed to immerse doctoral students in the campus community of scholars. It must be satisfied in the department in which students are seeking a doctoral degree. The residency requirement is met when students complete one of the three options below:

1. Nine credits of course work, dissertation credits, or its equivalent per term, for two terms within an 18-month period, or alternatively, completes at least 6 credits of course work, or its equivalent per term, for three terms within an 18-month period. The credit load necessary to meet the nine- or six-credit requirement may be met by course work alone or course work in conjunction with dissertation credits.
2. Alternative requirements as defined by the department in which students are seeking a doctoral degree. Alternative requirements by the department must be filed with and approved by the dean of the Graduate School.
3. In exceptional situations, waivers may be granted on a case-by-case basis with the recommendation from the department in which students are seeking a doctoral degree and with the approval from the dean of the Graduate School. In such cases, the department must make a credible case that students have obtained the intended impact of the residency requirement (i.e., creating an immersion in the campus community of scholars) and stated the experiences through which that impact was achieved.

## Doctoral Qualifying Examination (DQE)

The DQE is an exploration of the student's understanding of the program field and may be written, oral or both. It may also include an explanation of the proposed dissertation. Some departments require students to pass cumulative examinations. Required elements for the DQE are defined by the student's program department. Students must be classified by the university as an active Ph.D. student in the term in which the exam is taken. The DQE is typically scheduled after all course work, language and residency requirements have been completed. Taking the DQE before all requirements have been satisfied requires written permission from the student's department, which must be filed with the Graduate School.

The exam is conducted by a committee made up of at least three faculty members from the students' program. If the committee includes a non-Marquette member, the department must note this exception in writing and submit a request and a curriculum vitae for that person to the Graduate School.

Students who fail the examination may, with the consent of the academic department, be eligible to take a second examination after fulfilling all conditions stipulated by the doctoral examining committee. If the second examination is unsatisfactory, no further examination is permitted. A second failure will result in academic censure review, which may include dismissal from the program and the university.

## Official Doctoral Candidacy

Students advance to doctoral candidacy upon recommendation of their department, having completed all course work, language, and residency requirements, and passing the DQE. The departments shall notify the Graduate School in writing, using either the Doctoral Qualifying Examination Chairperson's Summary/Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy, or for departments who decouple the DQE from candidacy, the Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy form found online at the Graduate School forms website ([http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms\\_index.shtml/](http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/)) for students recommended for candidacy.

## Dissertation Process

### Assembling a Dissertation Committee

Candidates select their dissertation committee with the assistance of their adviser. The committee must be comprised of a minimum of three voting members, two of whom must be Marquette tenured or tenure-track faculty; committees may contain fewer Marquette faculty pending approval by the Graduate School dean or their designee. The names of the members, including the chairperson, must be on the Outline for Dissertation, Thesis, Professional Project or Essay form, available online at the Graduate School forms website ([http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms\\_index.shtml/](http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/)). Emeriti faculty may be considered as Marquette or department committee members as specified by department guidelines. Emeriti faculty may be considered to serve in the role of co-chair or committee members as specified by department guidelines. At least one of the co-chairs must be a regular tenured or tenure track faculty member. If the committee includes a non-Marquette member, the department must submit a recent curriculum vitae for that member to the Graduate School with their Outline for Dissertation, Thesis, Professional Project or Essay form. The dean of the Graduate School appoints the dissertation committee by approving the outline form.

### Doctoral Dissertation Outline Form

Students must submit an outline for the proposed dissertation on the Outline for Dissertation, Thesis, Professional Project or Essay form, typically within the first term that dissertation credits are taken, but no later than the deadline listed in this bulletin. The form is available online at the Graduate School forms website ([http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms\\_index.shtml/](http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/)). Outlines must be approved by the students' adviser, the department chairperson, and the Graduate School. If the proposed research involves a real or apparent conflict of interest on the part of students, the dissertation director, or the committee members, it must be declared at the time the outline is submitted.

### Dissertation Credits

Students must register for 12 hours of dissertation credits and may enroll for these while working on their doctoral dissertation outline or dissertation. Each department determines the number of credit hours that a candidate may take during any one term. Students who enroll in, and pay for, dissertation credits are not entitled to a refund of tuition of these credits even if they should subsequently drop out of or are withdrawn from their program.

### Dissertation Directives

Directions for writing the dissertation and the dissertation submission checklist are available online at the Graduate School forms website ([http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms\\_index.shtml/](http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/)). Students are strongly encouraged to consult both and to check with their departments for additional guidelines. The Graduate School updates the directives periodically and students are responsible for using the most recent version. Dissertations that do not conform exactly to the most recent directives will not be accepted by the Graduate School.

### Writing the Dissertation

A dissertation demonstrates a students' familiarity with the tools of research and scholarship in the field, shows thorough knowledge of the subject covered and reflects independence of thought, critical insight and originality. The dissertation must exhibit the students' mastery of the literature of the subject and familiarity with the sources and be presented with a satisfactory degree of literary skill. Students are required to follow the instructions in the Dissertation Directives. Dissertations not conforming to the directives, including format specifications, are not accepted by the Graduate School.

An electronic copy of the completed dissertation must be submitted online through ProQuest, and the original, completed Dissertation Approval Form must be turned into the Graduate School office by the date listed in the online Academic Calendar. Students must consult the dissertation submission checklist prior to submitting the dissertation and must consult the Dissertation Directives for a complete list of forms and other requirements that must be turned in to the Graduate School at the time of submission of the dissertation. Although the student retains ownership and copyright privileges, a copy of the approved dissertation is considered the property of Marquette University. Bound or electronic copies may be made available to the public at the Marquette University library unless restricted by the author. See the electronic theses and dissertations website (<http://www.marquette.edu/grad/etd.shtml/>) for details.

### Public Defense of the Dissertation

A public defense of the dissertation is conducted after candidates have completed all other formal requirements for the doctoral degree. The examination is primarily a defense of the dissertation. It also includes material relevant to the general field in which the dissertation is written, with particular attention to the more recent and significant developments.

The candidate and adviser select a date, during weekday working hours and avoiding public or religious holidays, for the public defense of the dissertation. If students want to graduate the same term the defense is made, the defense must be held before the deadline listed in the Academic

Calendar. At least two weeks prior to the scheduled date for the dissertation defense, a completed and fully signed Announcement for Public Defense of the Dissertation form must be received in the Graduate School. The form is available at the Graduate School forms website ([http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms\\_index.shtml/](http://www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml/)). All committee members must sign this form indicating their agreement to the date of the public defense.

The defense is considered successful, and candidates passed, if a majority of the voting members of the dissertation committee vote to approve the defense and if the department chair signs to accept any non-unanimous vote. In the case of an unsuccessful defense, disposition is decided upon after consultation between the academic department or college and the Graduate School. Failed defenses may result in academic censure, which may result in the student being dismissed from the program and the university.

## **Recording Dissertation Defenses**

In order to facilitate an open and honest dialogue, dissertation defenses are not normally recorded. However, it is the policy of the Marquette University Graduate School to allow, with prior permission, the audio and/or video recording of a students' dissertation defense.

Common courtesy requires that the dissertation committee chair and all committee members must be made aware, in advance of the defense, of the students' desire to record the proceedings. Additionally, the chair and all committee members must assent to such a recording. Such written approval must include the signatures of the chair and all committee members, and the signed approval must be submitted to the assistant director for student records in the Graduate School prior to the recording being made.

If a dissertation defense is recorded, all questions, statements or other comments, whether verbal or written, remain the property of the person who spoke or wrote them, and any future use of the recording is subject to applicable copyright laws.