

Department of Anthropology

Graduate Student Handbook

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Modifications during the COVID-19 pandemic

The global pandemic has resulted in many changes to Graduate College and Department of Anthropology policy and practice. Most notably, defenses can now be held remotely, and all documents can now be signed with electronic signatures or by emails indicating agreement. While the OU administration is anticipating a more traditional approach to graduation education in AY2023/2024, policies will change as public health needs dictate. As of May 2023, the university has [retired its COVID-19 Response Plans](#).

Degree Programs

Anthropology offers several graduate degree options. The OU General Catalog's listing for Graduate Study in the Department of Anthropology can be found [here](#), with courses listed [here](#). Descriptions of each specific degree are provided below.

MA in Anthropology (General)

Appropriate for any student pursuing a Master's in Anthropology. Most commonly selected by students in archaeology, HHB (Human Health and Biology), and some students in medical anthropology and sociocultural anthropology. Degree requirements include core courses in three of the four subfields, the Professionalization in Anthropology course, and electives. Students will complete 30 credit hours plus a thesis. General information about this program and the checksheet can be found [here](#).

MA in Anthropology with a Concentration in Sociocultural Anthropology

This program provides a specialized Master's curriculum for students in Sociocultural Anthropology. Degree requirements include two core courses in sociocultural anthropology, a course in sociocultural methods, an additional core course from one of the other three subfields, the Professionalization in Anthropology course, and electives. Students will complete 30 credit hours plus a thesis. General information about this program and the checksheet can be found [here](#).

MA in Anthropology with a Concentration in Linguistic Anthropology

This program provides a specialized Master's curriculum for students in Linguistic Anthropology. Degree requirements include two core courses in linguistic anthropology, a research methods class, the Professionalization in Anthropology course, and electives. Students will complete 30 credit hours plus a thesis. General information about this program and the checksheet can be found [here](#).

Master's in Applied Medical Anthropology (new!)

This program provides a specialized Master's curriculum for students in Applied Medical Anthropology. Degree requirements include four core courses in sociocultural, biological, and medical anthropology; courses on applied anthropological methods, ethnographic methods, statistical methods, and culture and health; the Professionalization in Anthropology course; one elective; and an internship in applied medical anthropology. There is no thesis for this degree, and students will complete 34 credit hours. General information about this program and the checksheet can be found [here](#).

Accelerated BA in Anthropology/MA in Anthropology with a Concentration in Sociocultural Anthropology

This is a program for OU Anthropology majors with a 3.5 GPA or higher interested in completing the BA in Anthropology and the MA in Anthropology with a Concentration in Sociocultural Anthropology in five years. Students will complete all of the requirements of the MA and count up to 13 hours from the MA towards the hours needed for the BA. Students interested in this track need to apply during the fall of their junior year. Students will complete 30 credit hours of graduate study plus a thesis, in addition to the undergraduate requirements for the BA. This is a sequential accelerated program, meaning that students will complete their BA coursework by the end of year four of their program, and will take only graduate coursework in their fifth year. During their final year, they are considered a graduate student and may be eligible to hold a graduate assistantship and receive graduate-level tuition waivers and health subsidy benefits. (See [here](#) for the distinction between simultaneous versus sequential accelerated programs.) General information about this program and the checksheet can be found [here](#).

PhD in Anthropology with a Concentration in Archaeology

Appropriate for students interested in a PhD in archaeology. Requirements include core courses in all four subfields, an advanced archaeological theory class, research design, and electives. Students will complete 90 credit hours plus a dissertation. General information about this program and the checksheet can be found [here](#).

PhD in Anthropology with a Concentration in HHB (Human Health and Biology)

Appropriate for students interested in a PhD in molecular anthropology, medical anthropology, skeletal analysis, and related fields. Requirements include core courses in all four subfields, Foundations of Biological and Medical Anthropology, at least two methods classes, and electives. Students will complete 90 credit hours plus a dissertation. General information about this program and the checksheet can be found [here](#).

PhD in Anthropology with a Concentration in Sociocultural and Linguistics

Note: The Department has submitted changes to the PhD in Anthropology with a Concentration in Sociocultural Anthropology and Linguistics, which are currently pending approval. These changes are expected to take place for the upcoming academic year, so the checksheet linked below will soon be out of date. Inquire directly to the Graduate Liaison if you would like more information about these changes.

Appropriate for students interested in a PhD in sociocultural anthropology or linguistic anthropology. Requirements include core courses in all four subfields, Contemporary Cultural Theory, the Professionalization in Anthropology course, and electives. Students will complete 90 credit hours plus a dissertation. General information about this program and the checksheet can be found [here](#).

Degree summaries

The following two tables summarize the requirements for our MA and PhD programs.

	General MA	Sociocultural MA	Linguistics MA	Applied Medical MA
Professionalization	yes	yes	yes	yes
Cores	3 of 4 subfield cores	ANTH 5223 Foundations of Social Thought + 1 other	ANTH 5363 Linguistic Anthropology	ANTH 5123 Contemporary Culture Theory ANTH 5223 Foundations of Social Thought ANTH 6633 Method and Theory in Biological Anthropology ANTH 6843 Foundations of Biological and Medical Anthropology
Other required		ANTH 5123 Contemporary Culture	ANTH/LING 5053 Morphology	One course on Culture and health
Methods		ANTH 5253 Anthropology of Communities OR ANTH 5213 Ethnographic Methods	ANTH 5153 The Anthropology of Communication	Applied anthropological methods Ethnographic methods Statistical methods
Electives	15-18 hours	12-15 hours	15-18 hours	3 hours
Internship	none	none	none	6 hours
Thesis	2-5 hours	2-5 hours	2-5 hours	none
Total	30 hours	30 hours	30 hours	34 hours

	Sociocultural PhD	Archaeology PhD	HHB PhD
Professionalization	yes	yes	yes
Cores	All 4	All 4	All 4
Other required	ANTH 5123 Contemporary Culture Theory	6803 Advanced Archaeological Theory and Research	Anth 6843 Theoretical Foundations of Biological and Medical Anthropology
Methods	5213 Ethnographic Methods or other methods course	Anth 5543 Research Design	2 Methods Courses (see list)
Electives	42 hours	42 hours	25-39
Dissertation	29 hours	29 hours	29-43
Total	90 hours	90 hours	90 hours

Prospective Graduate Students

Applications for Fall 2024 are due by December 15, 2023.

Please note that having a strong academic background and strong letters of recommendation are not sufficient to gain admittance to our graduate program. We are also looking for whether your academic and professional interests match ours, and specifically whether we have faculty with sufficient expertise to mentor you in your chosen research area. Nearly every year we receive applications from excellent scholars whom we do not admit because they want to study something that no one here has expertise in.

Applying to the MA or PhD Programs

Prospective applicants should apply through the [Graduate College application form](#). Applicants will need the following for their application:

- A statement of purpose explaining why the applicant wishes to pursue the degree, how this degree will help you reach your professional goals, what your qualifications are for the program, and why the University of Oklahoma is the best place to pursue your studies. Your statement of purpose should specifically address how your research interests fit in with those of our faculty.
- Names of two references, preferably from the applicant's professors. The referees should be people who can speak to the applicant's ability to pursue a graduate degree in Anthropology.
- A writing sample, which needs to be sole authored by the applicant. This could be an essay, term paper, seminar paper, thesis, or article, and should be related to anthropology or associated field.
- Prospective students must **contact at least one faculty member** in our department, in the subfield or area in which you plan to study, before applying. Ideally this would be someone you would like to work with.
- Transcripts from your undergraduate and any graduate institutions you have attended.

Faculty look for an appropriate fit between the applicants' intellectual interests and the research strengths of the Department. To that end, we require that applicants contact potential faculty advisors before submitting their completed applications. If you are unsure who those faculty might be, reach out to the Graduate Liaison for recommendations. This is especially important because some faculty may not be taking on new students. Having a discussion with faculty about whether OU is a good fit for you (and vice versa) may save you the expense of applying if you are unlikely to be admitted. Also, if you are a McNair scholar, please let us know promptly, as the deadline for McNair applicants is earlier than the OU graduate deadline.

The Department of Anthropology does not require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Any GRE scores sent to us will be redacted from the student's application file when reviewed by faculty.

Direct any questions about the Department or the application process to the [Graduate Liaison](#). Further information about graduate degrees in Anthropology, including faculty and research interests associated with each program, can be found on our [Department web page](#).

Applying to the Accelerated 3+2 Program in Sociocultural Anthropology

The Accelerated 3+2 program is designed for current OU Anthropology majors who want to finish in five years with both a BA in Anthropology and an MA in Anthropology with a Concentration in Sociocultural Anthropology. Students must have at least a 3.5 GPA to be considered for the program.

Please read the [Graduate College's guidelines for accelerated degree programs](#) (note that as of 2022, our 3+2 BA/MA is a sequential degree – you finish your BA first and take only MA courses in your final year).

Students who are interested should observe the following steps:

STEP 1 – Talk to your advisor and plan. If you are interested in this program you should talk to the Department's [undergraduate advisor](#) as soon as possible. It is important to take the appropriate level of coursework during your first three years to be eligible for the program. You should also talk to one or more faculty in Sociocultural anthropology about your potential interest in the program.

STEP 2 – Meet with the undergraduate advisor in the fall of junior year to get permission to apply. During the fall of your junior year, you will need to have a discussion with the [undergraduate advisor](#) about whether you are a candidate for this program. The advisor will confirm you have the minimum 3.5 GPA and that you have the proper coursework to be considered. If approved to apply, your Major Concentration Code will be modified from BA in Anthropology (B025) to Accelerated BA in Anthropology (A025). This can take a few weeks to process and must be completed before you can apply online.

STEP 3 – Prepare your application materials. The application deadline for the Accelerated MA program is the same as for the other graduate program degrees, December 15. To formally apply for the program, you will need these materials at hand:

- A CV/Resume
- A copy of your Undergraduate Transcript
- A Statement of Goals/Statement of Purpose
 - This should be a 1-2 page statement that addresses (1) the research questions that motivate your interest in graduate study, (2) the skills you have developed that will allow you to succeed in graduate school, and (3) how the University of Oklahoma can contribute to the realization of your goals.
- Names for Letters of Reference
 - The names of two people who have agreed to write letters of reference. It is recommended that both be professors that can speak to the quality of your work, and ideally one or both are Sociocultural faculty at OU. You simply need their names and contact information for the next step, and the system will contact them on your behalf for their letters.
- The GRE is not required.

Step 4 – Apply Online: This is done by accessing the Change of Program application through the [OU application portal](#). But do not do this without first speaking with the [Department's undergraduate advisor](#) and with the [graduate liaison](#).

Applying to the PhD Program as an OU Anthropology MA Student

If you are a current MA student planning to defend your thesis and interested in entering the OU Anthropology PhD program, these are the steps you must follow.

STEP 1 – Talk to your committee chair. Find out if they are supportive and if a PhD makes sense for you.

STEP 2 - Submit a Change of Program (COP) Application. This is done through [the regular application portal](#). You will need a CV, a Statement of Purpose, and a list of faculty you are interested in working with. You do not need to ask for letters of recommendation.

Change of Program applications will be considered any time of year. But to be considered for funding by the Department the following academic year, you must submit the Change of Program application before February 1.

As per Department policy, no final decision on admission from the MA to PhD is made before the completion of the thesis. After the faculty meeting where admissions decisions are made (typically in early February), COP applicants will only hear one of two results. Either your COP application will be denied, or the decision will be deferred until after the thesis has been defended.

Admission to the PhD program is not automatic from the MA. The PhD program is not appropriate for all MA students based on their career plans, the match between their research and the faculty, their abilities, etc. This is why it is important to talk to your chair and committee about whether the PhD program makes sense for you.

Funding

The Department of Anthropology, and associated units including the Oklahoma Archeological Survey, Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, and the Laboratory of Molecular Anthropology and Microbiome Research, offer funding to students in the form of Graduate Assistantships, either for teaching or research. Students do not need to apply these separately. All newly admitted and current students will be considered for funding by the Department and associated units unless they specifically ask not to be considered for funding on their Annual Evaluation. If these are awarded, students will be granted a stipend, tuition waiver, and health benefits for the semester of employment. (Note that while tuition is waived, students are still required to pay fees.) In exchange, students will be expected to carry out the duties of the job they are assigned. These jobs typically involve teaching an online or in-person class, supporting a class as a graduate teaching assistant, or working as a research assistant. More information about funding limits and duties and expectations of Graduate Assistants can be found later in this document. If you are not offered funding through the department, you should go to jobs.ou.edu and search for student jobs with a tuition waiver.

As of summer 2022, the Accelerated BA in Anthropology/MA in Anthropology with a Concentration in Sociocultural Anthropology is now a sequential program, meaning that students complete all of the requirements for their BA by the end of year four, and take only graduate coursework in their final year. As a result of this change, Accelerated BA/MA students are now eligible for Graduate Assistantships.

Starting the Graduate Program

Students who are admitted to the program will be assigned a first semester mentor. This will be an Anthropology Department faculty member who is tenured or tenure-track. Faculty from the Oklahoma Archeological Survey who have SM graduate faculty status with the ability to chair MA and PhD committees may also serve as first semester mentors.

The first semester mentor is someone in your subfield who can help provide personalized mentoring. Their job is to help you get started in the graduate program, help you select the right classes for your first semester, and help you navigate the program this fall. By the end of the fall semester, you will need to select a committee chair for your thesis or dissertation, and your first semester mentor will help you select one. Your first semester mentor might become your committee chair, or you may end up selecting someone else.

New students should consult with their first semester mentor about which courses to choose. They should use the checksheets listed above to understand the degree requirements. Students can use <http://one.ou.edu> to find courses that are available for the upcoming semester and to register for courses.

What Classes Should First Semester Students Enroll In?

Incoming graduate students should consult the [New Student Portal at the Graduate College's Student Resources page](#). In particular, you cannot enroll in courses until you have completed the [required online sexual misconduct/Title IX training at onpoint.ou.edu](#). Also, make sure to read the guide available through the [New Graduate Student Welcome Portal](#).

ANTH 5001: All starting graduate students need to enroll in ANTH 5001 Professionalization in Anthropology. This is a one credit hour class that provides an orientation to the program and provides professional and career skills.

Core class(es): Almost all students should also take at least one of the required core courses in their first semester. The two core courses taught every fall are:

Sociocultural Core I: ANTH 5223 Foundations of Social Thought

Archaeology Core: ANTH 6713 Archaeological Theory

All students on the SC/Linguistics track should enroll in ANTH 5223 their first semester. All students in an archaeology track should enroll in ANTH 6713 their first semester. Students on an HHB track should talk to their first semester mentor about which of these they should take. (Note that the other two cores, Anth 5363 Linguistic Anthropology and Anth 6633 Method and Theory in Biological Anthropology, are taught every spring.)

Note that the HHB core, Anth 6843 Theoretical Foundations of Biological and Medical Anthropology, is offered in the fall every two to three years. This class is required for HHB PhD students and students in the Applied Medical Anthropology MA, and is strongly recommended for HHB MA students in the general anthropology track.

Electives: Details vary by degree, but most of you will take 15 hours of electives for the MA, more for the PhD. Many of the non-core graduate courses we offer fulfill elective requirements. Some of them are offered only every 2 to 3 years, so check with your first-year mentor to find out if any classes offered your first semester are ones you should take because they won't be offered again for a while.

How Many Courses is Appropriate for the First Semester?

Most students in an MA program or starting a PhD program after finishing an MA plan to take two years of coursework. You can be on track to finish in two years if you take 7 or 10 credit hours in your first semester (two or three courses plus ANTH 5001). Talk to your first semester mentor about what is an appropriate number of hours for you based on your program and background.

Note: sometimes the system will not let students enroll for a course which they have every right to enroll in (and may be required to take). If that happens, contact the graduate liaison, who can issue an override which will allow you to register.

I have an MA from another institution and am joining the PhD program at OU. Can I be exempt from any required courses based on previous coursework?

Students may transfer up to 30 hours from their MA program towards the 90 hours needed for PhD. The exact number will depend on discussion with your committee.

If you have taken a graduate course at another institution that you think is equivalent to a required course at OU, such as a core course in a subfield, send the syllabus and reading list to the Graduate Liaison. They will ask the faculty responsible for supporting the course whether they see this as equivalent based on the similarities in content and rigor.

Forming a Committee

What does a graduate committee do?

A graduate committee is the group of faculty appointed to review your thesis or dissertation and PhD exams and decide whether you pass your defense. They are also the mentors who help with designing the research and guide the writing of the work. All committees have a faculty member designated as the chair, who is usually the student's primary advisor and the one with the most responsibility for guiding the research.

How large is the committee?

Master's committees must have at least 3 faculty; PhD committees must have at least 5. Committees may be larger, but this is discouraged (see below).

How do I choose a committee?

Ultimately it is the student's responsibility to form their committee and it is the student's right to choose their committee members. Committee formation starts with the selection of a committee chair. This is often the person best positioned to sponsor and advise the research the student is conducting. The rest of the committee formation should be done in consultation with the committee chair, although it is ultimately the student's choice about who serves.

There are several rules in the Department and the Graduate College that affect who can serve on the committee and in what capacity.

When do I form my committee?

Most students should form their committee by the end of their first semester in their program. In rare cases, committee chairs may delay this slightly while the student and chair work out more details of the research direction. However, to stay on schedule for timely completion of the degree, forming a committee by the end of the first semester is ideal.

How do I go about forming a committee?

The first step is identifying a committee chair and asking them if they will serve as your chair. Once you have found a chair that will serve, talk to them about the rest of the committee and come up with a plan. It is up to the student to invite the other committee members. Typically, students email faculty to set up a meeting to ask if they will serve. Students should offer to meet with the faculty in-person to discuss their research. The faculty can then decide whether or not to serve.

What is Graduate Faculty status?

All faculty have to be certified by the Department and the Graduate College to serve on a graduate committee. Faculty are assigned one of five statuses described below. The current list of the [status of all OU faculty can be found here](#). This document also lists which department(s) the faculty have their graduate faculty appointments in.

Before April 2020, graduate faculty appointments used the five levels of status (M0 – M3 + SM) described in the first table below. Beginning in April 2020, new and renewed graduate faculty appointments were made using the six-level system (RM0 – RM4 + SM) described in the second table below. Through 2024 both systems will be in use, until the older system is eventually replaced as graduate faculty appointments are renewed using the new system. Further details are available [here](#).

Appointment (before 2020)	Privileges
M0	May teach graduate-level classes
M1	All the privileges of M0 and may serve on and/or chair master's degree committees
M2	All the privileges of M1 and may serve on doctoral committees
M3	All the privileges of M2 and may chair doctoral committees
SM	Special Membership status. May be granted the privilege to teach graduate-level classes, to serve on graduate examination committees, or to serve on thesis or dissertation committees, at the discretion of the academic department and subject to the approval of the graduate dean. <u>May not chair graduate committees or serve as the outside member of dissertation committees, unless their graduate faculty status notes special privileges to do so.</u>

Appointment (since 2020)	Privileges
RM0	May teach graduate-level classes
RM1	All the privileges of RM0 and may serve on Master's degree committees
RM2	All the privileges of RM1 and may chair non-thesis Master's committees <i>[Note that Anthropology does not currently have non-thesis Master's committees]</i>
RM3	All the privileges of RM2 and may chair Master's thesis committees and serve on doctoral committees
RM4	All the privileges of RM3 and may chair doctoral committees
SM	Special Membership status. May be granted the privilege to teach graduate-level classes, to serve on graduate examination committees, or to serve on thesis or dissertation committees, at the discretion of the academic department and subject to the approval of the graduate dean. <u>May not chair graduate committees or serve as the Graduate College Representative of dissertation committees.</u>

Some other terms are important below because they are referenced by Graduate College or Department policy:

- A “regular faculty in Anthropology” refers to tenure/tenure-track faculty with instructional appointment in the Department. The list of “Core Faculty” [on this page](#) largely lists these faculty (although the purpose of that list is not to only list “regular” faculty, so that is not a precise list for this purpose).
- An Affiliate Faculty in Anthropology is someone with an appointment at OU outside of Anthropology, but which the Department has designated as an Affiliate faculty. They are listed as Affiliate Faculty [on this page](#).

- Faculty with Affiliate appointments from the Oklahoma Archeological Survey can be issued all of the privileges of other Affiliate faculty, and may also be issued permission to chair M.A. and Ph.D. committees, as per the Graduate Faculty and Affiliate Status Policies for Anthropology, adopted September 2020. Survey faculty must have served as a committee member before they chair.
- Affiliate faculty in Anthropology count towards the majority rule of the Graduate College but Regular Faculty members cannot be in the minority on any M.A. or Ph.D. Committee in Anthropology. Faculty who retire or resign lose their current graduate faculty status and may be considered by the Graduate Dean for Special Member, Member at Large, or Ex Officio status. It is the preference of the Department that after a year of retirement, emeritus faculty no longer serve as sole chairs of any committees, and they take on roles as member or co-chairs, based on circumstances and discussions between the Graduate Faculty Committee and the Graduate Dean.
- Research Affiliate status is used to recognize researchers with a graduate degree in Anthropology or related field who have a close, active tie to the Department, but who do not otherwise qualify for Affiliate faculty status.

What are the rules for composition of a master's committee?

The chair of the committee must be M1, M2, M3, RM3 or RM4 with graduate appointment in Anthropology, or a member of the Oklahoma Archeology Survey with SM status with privilege to chair MA committees. Also, by Graduate College rules and Department policy, the majority of the committee must have their graduate faculty appointments in the Department of Anthropology and must be regular faculty in the department with an instructional appointment in the Department. Affiliate faculty in Anthropology count towards the majority rule of the Graduate College but Regular Faculty members cannot be in the minority on any M.A. Committee in Anthropology. Thus, an MA committee will have the following composition:

Position	Description and Rule
Chair	Must be RM3 or RM4 (M1, M2, or M3) in the Department of Anthropology, or a member of the Oklahoma Archeology Survey with SM status with privilege to chair MA committees.
Anthropology Committee Member	Must be RM1, RM2, RM3 or RM4 (M1, M2, or M3) in the Department of Anthropology.
Third Committee Member	Can be in the Department of Anthropology, can be Affiliate Faculty, can be in another Department at OU, or be outside of OU but issued graduate faculty status at OU. Must be RM1, RM2, RM3 or RM4 (M1, M2, M3), or SM with privileges of serving on MA committees.

What are the rules for composition of the doctoral committee?

Note: While the Graduate College has reduced the minimum doctoral committee size from five to four, the Anthropology Department voted in Fall 2020 to keep the required doctoral committee size at five.

Per [Graduate College rules](#), the doctoral committee must consist of a committee chair, a Graduate College representative (formerly the Outside Member), and at least two other members of the graduate faculty. Per Department policy (adopted in Fall 2020), the required minimum doctoral committee size is five members. The chair of the committee must be RM4 with graduate

appointment in the Department of Anthropology, or a member of the Oklahoma Archeology Survey with SM status with privilege to chair PhD committees.

A doctoral committee also has a Graduate College representative (formerly known as the outside member). This is a person who is not in the Department who can observe the process. Often they make an intellectual contribution to the committee, but this is not always the case. From the University's point of view, they help make sure the process is observed and followed, and they are there as an outside observer to protect the student, the faculty, and the University. By Department policy, this person cannot be an [Affiliate faculty of Anthropology](#), nor can they be faculty in the Laboratory of Molecular Anthropology and Microbiome Research with appointments outside of Anthropology. The Graduate College representative must be M2, M3, RM3 or RM4 with a Graduate faculty appointment that is not in Anthropology and is also not an Affiliate faculty member of Anthropology.

Also, by Department policy, at least one committee member must be in the Department, but outside of the student's subfield.

One other important rule of the Graduate College also applies, and is intended to keep the committee balanced: the *majority* (3 out of 5) of the committee members must have a RM3 or RM4 (M2 or M3) appointment in Anthropology. Affiliate faculty in Anthropology count towards the majority rule of the Graduate College but Regular Faculty members cannot be in the minority on any Ph.D. Committee in Anthropology.

For most doctoral committees, a committee follows this template:

Position	Description and Rule
Chair	Must be RM4 (M3) in the Department of Anthropology, or a member of the Oklahoma Archeology Survey with SM status with privilege to chair PhD committees.
Anthropology Member	An RM3 or RM4 (M2 or M3) faculty member in Anthropology who can make a major intellectual contribution to the dissertation.
Anthropology Outside Subfield Member	Must have a graduate appointment in Anthropology, be RM3 or RM4 (M2 or M3), and not be in the student's subfield.
Flexible Position: Anthropology Member, Affiliate Member, or Other	Typically, another faculty member in Anthropology who can make a contribution to the dissertation, but could also be an Affiliate Faculty, or another faculty (inside or outside OU) that has been approved by the Graduate College to serve on doctoral committees.
Graduate College representative	Must be RM3 or RM4 (M2 or M3) with a Graduate faculty appointment that is not in Anthropology and is also not an Affiliate faculty member of Anthropology nor a member of the Laboratory of Molecular Anthropology and Microbiome Research with an appointment outside of Anthropology.

Can I have a co-chair on my thesis or dissertation committee?

Yes, in some cases it makes sense to have co-chairs. For purposes of the Graduate College however, one of the dissertation committee members must be designated "Chair" and the other person is "Co-chair." For thesis committees, there is officially no such thing as a co-chair. The "Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Membership" form acknowledges only a chair and two committee members.

You may informally have co-chairs but for the purposes of the form, one person must be designated the chair.

Can I have a committee member who is not at OU?

Certainly. They will need to be granted Research Affiliate status in the department and Special Member status in the graduate college. This process takes time, so if you want to add someone outside of OU to your committee, think ahead and do not do it at the last minute. (Note that you cannot change committees within 30 days of a dissertation or PhD exam defense, or 14 days for a thesis defense.) You might also need to adjust the size of your committee to maintain an Anthropology majority.

Can I have a committee that is larger than normal?

Yes, although it is discouraged. A master's committee is usually 3 and a doctoral committee is usually 5. Students are discouraged from forming larger-than-usual committees. It creates more work for the student and for the faculty. It also means there are more faculty that must approve the student's work in order to pass, more faculty who can request an increase to the scope of the project, and increased odds of conflicting requests. It also makes scheduling committee meetings and defenses much more difficult.

In addition, in our experience, the most frequent reason a student makes the request for a larger committee is to add an additional affiliate or outside committee member. This usually creates an unbalanced committee (the majority of the committee no longer has a graduate appointment in Anthropology) and so requires the addition of not one, but two additional members, which exacerbates the problems above.

Students should keep in mind that some faculty are happy to advise on topics or methods even if they are not formally on a committee, and so you may be able to gain access to additional expertise in that way.

If after reading this you are still convinced a larger committee is needed in your case, talk this over with your committee chair and the Graduate Liaison.

In recent years (2017-2022), 94% of MA committees have had three members, while 78% of PhD committees have had 5 members.

What paperwork is involved in forming a committee?

The Graduate College changes their website regularly. Currently all of the required forms may be found on their [Forms](#) page.

Master's Students submit a "[Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Membership](#)" form. This is required to be submitted the semester before the student plans to defend along with the "Program of Study" form. Some students with funding may be required to submit these forms earlier.

If MA students change their committee, they just submit the [Request for a Change in Committee](#)" form.

PhD students submit the "[Advisory Conference Report](#)" form. (Note that this also exists [as a Word document](#), which is handy for filling out before you submit the online dynamic form.) This is usually due the semester before students intend to take their doctoral exam, but can sometimes be required earlier. If there is a change to the committee, there is a separate "[Request for Change in Committee](#)" form.

Can I make changes to my committee?

Yes. It is common for students to make changes in their committee for various reasons. Perhaps the direction of their research has changed and the expertise of a different faculty member is needed or perhaps committee members retire or leave the University. It is again the student's right and responsibility to form their committee. Students have a right to not have faculty on their committee that the student does not want.

The main restriction with changing a committee has to do with the timing of the change. There are Graduate College rules which prohibit dissertation exams or defenses within 30 calendar days of a change to the committee, or 14 days for a thesis defense.

Students are often nervous about telling a faculty member that they are no longer on a committee. In most circumstances, faculty are fine with stepping down as this represents one less obligation for them.

What happens if I can't form a committee?

[Under Graduate College rules](#), a department can set a deadline for a student to be accepted by an advisor and recommend disenrollment if the student has not formed a committee that meets the Graduate College and department rules by the deadline.

It is the "Student's Right and Responsibility" to form a committee. What does that mean?

The student has the right to have whom they want on the committee, given the restrictions of the rules discussed above and the available faculty. Faculty also have the right to serve or not serve on any committee.

It is the student's responsibility because they need a valid committee to progress, and it is up to the student to make sure the committee gets formed. The Department may set a deadline by which a student must form a full committee.

Annual Evaluations

All graduate students are expected to participate in the Annual Evaluation process. This process occurs every spring. The Graduate Liaison will send the Annual Evaluation form and instructions, and students are required to return that form by February 5, 2024.

As part of the annual evaluation process, all students in residence are expected to meet with their committees, either in person or through remote meeting software such as Zoom. These meetings are important, as they provide a chance for you to share your progress with your committee and get feedback on your research. Lack of communication between students and their committee is commonly seen among students who leave (or are asked to leave) the graduate program. **Students are strongly encouraged to hold their annual committee meeting during the fall semester, as time is very limited in January to hold the meeting before the February 5, 2024 deadline.**

At the conclusion of the Annual Evaluation process, all students will receive an official letter (typically by the end of March) assessing them on performance in coursework, progress in research and in writing the thesis or dissertation, presentations or publications, and other scholarly activity, including outreach and science communication. This letter will indicate whether the student is making Satisfactory progress towards the degree, Unsatisfactory progress, or it may be a Letter of Concern. An Unsatisfactory letter will spell out what needs to be done to improve the student's standing, and a reevaluation will typically occur the following semester, though shorter or longer

intervals may be used. If a student is making unsatisfactory progress, they might receive an Unsatisfactory letter at any point in the year, not just during the spring semester. Unsatisfactory letters are shared with the Graduate College, and two Unsatisfactory letters may result in disenrollment from the program. Under some circumstances the Department may evaluate students at other times of the year.

Thesis and Dissertation Hours

What are Thesis and Dissertation Hours?

ANTH 5980 is the class for thesis hours for Master's students and ANTH 6980 is the class for dissertation hours for doctoral students. These are required for your Master's and doctoral degrees and act like an Independent Study for doing thesis or dissertation work. All Anthropology students (apart from students in the Applied Medical Anthropology MA) need a certain number of these to graduate and there are several rules that apply:

- You must be enrolled in thesis or dissertation hours the semester you defend your thesis or dissertation.
- By the end of your program, you must have the required number of thesis or dissertation hours for your degree. (See specific degree requirements for details.)
- Once you begin enrolling in thesis or dissertation hours, you must enroll in at least 2 hours every Fall or Spring semester until you defend.
 - Students who are enrolled in dissertation/thesis hours typically receive a grade of X, which is later converted to S after their degree defense. But a student making unsatisfactory progress might receive a U instead of an X. A student who receives two consecutive U's will be unable to enroll for classes the subsequent semester.

How Many Hours Do I Need to Graduate?

MA students need 2 to 5 thesis hours and PhD students need 29 dissertation hours, apart from students in the HHB PhD program who need 29 to 42 dissertation hours. (Students under older degree programs will need 3 thesis or 30 dissertation hours, respectively.)

When Should I Start Taking Thesis or Dissertation Hours?

At any level, it is generally not to the student's advantage to take thesis/dissertation hours sooner than you need to, since they are obligated to maintain enrollment in thesis or dissertation hours once they start until they defend.

The majority of MA students should plan to take thesis hours only during the semester they defend, but some students may need to start enrolling before that because of some of the factors listed below. Some MA students make the mistake of starting thesis hours too soon, requiring them to enroll, and frequently pay for, more thesis hours than is minimally required for the degree. Make a plan with your advisor about when to start thesis hours based on a reasonable defense date expectation.

PhD students typically start dissertation hours once they are done with coursework and during the term when they take their exams. Before they can start dissertation hours, they may be required to file the *General Exam Application for the Doctoral Degree* form with the Graduate College.

How Many Thesis or Dissertation Hours Should I Take This Semester? (What About Eligibility for GA/RA-ship? What About Financial Aid?)

That is a really good question, and will depend a lot on your individual circumstance. We recommend making a plan between now and the semester you plan to graduate of the classes you plan to take and the number of thesis/dissertation hours you plan to take each semester. Keep in mind these requirements:

- Check that your plan ensures that by the time you graduate you will have at least 2-5 thesis hours or 29 dissertation hours.
- Keep in mind that every semester after you start enrolling in thesis/dissertation hours, you must enroll in at least 2 thesis/dissertation hours every Fall and Spring semester.
- Make sure you are sufficiently enrolled based on your funding and financial aid status (see below).

What is Considered Full-Time and Half-Time Enrollment?

If you have a tuition waiver through the University because you are a GA or RA, you are obligated to enroll in at least 5 credit hours each semester, unless it is your final semester. In your final semester you are considered full-time for purpose of a tuition waiver with just 2 thesis or dissertation hours. Also, in your final semester you are eligible for a one-semester exemption from the FICA tax. You need to apply by December 31 for this to impact your January paycheck, and by July 24 to receive this exemption for your August paycheck. Full details are available [here](#). under “Final Semester Enrollment for Graduate Assistants” Note that you can fill out this form one time only; if you fill it out and do not graduate, you will resume paying FICA taxes the following semester.

If you get financial aid, [most students will need to take 5 hours](#), which qualifies you as half-time for federal financial aid and qualifies you for aid and loans. It takes 9 hours to be considered full-time for federal financial aid, but according to the Office of Financial Aid, there are few benefits to being full-time instead of half-time, since you qualify for similar aid. Details on the aid available to half-time and full-time students are available from the Financial Aid Office.

Any level of enrollment will maintain your student status, get you access to email and the library, etc. If you wish to be eligible for student health insurance, [you must enroll in at least 5 hours](#).

How Do I Enroll in Thesis or Dissertation Hours?

Likely if you try to enroll through One, you will be told you need Department/College permission. To get that permission, contact the Graduate Liaison. Your email should include:

- Your student ID
- The name of your Committee Chair, who you will be taking the thesis/dissertation hours with.
- The section number associated with your advisor for ANTH 5980 or 6980. This can be found in the course catalogue in Banner. If your advisor does not have a section number, let the Graduate Liaison know, and they will initiate the process for creating one.

The Graduate Liaison will then enable you to enroll in thesis/dissertation hours in One.

Important Forms Needed For Graduate College

At some point during your graduate career, you will need to fill out and send to the Graduate College a form describing the classes you are using to fulfill the degree requirements and document your committee. The Graduate College no longer requires paper copies of any of their forms; all submissions can be done electronically.

For MA students the Program of Study and Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Form are due the semester before you defend. But this is also due before you can be eligible for more than 15 tuition waiver hours.

For PhD students, the Advisory Conference Report is due the semester before you take the PhD exams or before you qualify for more than 45 tuition waiver hours.

MA Students: How to Fill Out Your Program of Study AND Thesis Topic and Committee Form

The Program of Study form can be found [here](#). Put "anthropology" into the search bar, then pick the form corresponding to the degree program you are in. The Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Form can be found [here](#). Some important tips:

- Please fill these out electronically, and send it to the Graduate Liaison first for comments *before* you submit them.
- Read the instructions carefully to let you know how the form should be filled out.
- List courses you plan to take before you are done in order to get you to the required number of credit hours.
- Note that only six hours can be taken from outside of Anthropology.
- If you have taken more courses than are required, only list the courses you want to count towards your degree. This is not a complete record of your graduate coursework (that is what your transcript is for), but a document which shows you have met the requirement for the MA degree. In other words, the total hours should be 30, not 33 or 36. In rare cases, students might take an odd 2 or 4 credit hour class (often in another department), in which case a total of 31 or 32 hours is possible and acceptable.
- If you are listing courses to take in the future, you have to list actual courses, not something like "Elective TBD." It is okay to update the form later to reflect changes in plans and enrollment.
- The Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Form asks for Department/Status and Expiration Date for each member of your committee. This refers to the graduate [faculty status that can be looked up here](#).

Once the Graduate Liaison approves over email that the forms are ready, you will need to get signatures from all of your committee members. This can be done via email. Once you have all of the signatures but that of the Graduate Liaison, get the forms to the liaison to complete and to submit them to the Graduate College.

PhD Students: How to Fill Out Your ACR (Advisory Conference Report)

[The ACR form can be found here \(under Doctoral forms\)](#).

Some important tips:

- There is both a Word version and a dynamic forms version of the ACR. Please fill out the Word version first, and email it to the Graduate Liaison for comments *before* you submit the dynamic forms version.
- Read the instructions carefully to let you know how the form should be filled out.

- List courses you plan to take before you are done in order to get you to the required number of credits.
- If you have taken more courses than are required, only list the courses you want to count towards your degree. This is not a complete record of your graduate coursework (that is what your transcript is for), but a document which shows you have met the requirement for the PhD degree. In other words, the total hours should be 90, not 93 or 96. In rare cases, students might take an odd 2 or 4 credit hour class (often in another department), in which case a total of 91 or 92 hours is possible and acceptable.
- The ACR asks for Department/Status and Expiration Date for each member of your committee. This refers to the graduate [faculty status that can be looked up here](#).

Once the Graduate Liaison approves the forms are ready over email, you will need to submit the ACR using the dynamic forms version. The graduate college will take care of getting signatures from your committee.

Master's Thesis Timeline and Procedures

The Master's thesis is the culmination of your Master's degree. For most students, it is the longest and most complex project they have undertaken to date. [The Graduate College says the thesis](#) "is the product of individual research. It should represent an original contribution to the academic field of knowledge, and it must represent original research by the student."

As part of this process, it is the responsibility of the chair and student to be familiar with relevant policies and deadlines. The Graduate College has a very useful set of checklists for the [thesis Master's degree](#). Please double check those to make sure you are completing the things you need to. For instance, students should file their Program of Study AND Thesis Topic and Committee Form with the Graduate College early in the semester before you intend to defend. [The deadlines in any given semester are listed here](#). And the Graduate College Bulletin is the [definitive source of rules on the thesis](#).

MA Thesis Timeline

This timeline assumes an intent to finish in two years, which applies to most, but not all, of our students.

First Year: You will form your committee and work with the committee to pick a research focus and methodology for your thesis. Most students will begin gathering data on or before the summer between their first and second years, but timelines will vary.

Written Research Plan: Before beginning data collection and research, students must circulate a written plan of research to the whole committee. Committee members need to respond in writing that they support the plan. It is up to the committee to dictate the length and detail of the plan but minimally this must include a research question and methodology.

Third Semester: For most students, the writing begins in the third semester. No matter what, the student should be in communication with their committee chair and committee about a timeline for completion of the thesis. The Graduate College on formatting the thesis can be found [here](#).

Graduation applications must now be filled out the semester **before** you intend to graduate. Apply for graduation through [ONE](#) by the deadline for the semester you intend to graduate:

Fall graduation – apply to graduate by May 1

Spring graduation - apply to graduate by December 1

Summer graduation - apply to graduate by March 1

Final Semester: There are a series of steps (listed below) that must be done sequentially before you can defend your thesis. Remember that weekends and holidays are not working days, so a phrase like “five working days” generally means one week, and “ten working days” generally means two weeks, but can be longer due to Thanksgiving and other holidays.

The online [Request for Degree Check form](#) is due by the first two weeks of the semester you intend to defend.

During the final semester, the student should circulate all dissertation and/or thesis drafts to their committee chair based on the plan they have established. Once the chair has approved the thesis draft, it can be sent to the full committee. **The full thesis must be sent to the whole committee four weeks before the intended defense date (possibly earlier in the fall semester, depending on the timing of Thanksgiving).**

Scheduling the Defense: Sometime during the final semester, the chair may authorize you to work with your committee members to find a time and date that would potentially work for the defense and pencil in this time and date. Taking this step prior to full committee authorization to proceed to the defense does not necessarily mean that you will be permitted to defend on that date, it merely blocks out a potential time because defenses often occur during a busy time of year. Typically, this scheduling step happens sometime between when the full draft goes to the chair and when the whole committee authorizes the defense. The chair decides on this timing based on the state of the drafts, the time of year, and the likelihood of scheduling conflicts. Once a date is chosen, arrange with office staff to schedule a room for the defense. Most Anthropology defenses are scheduled for two hours, but your committee may make a different request.

Summer defenses, while possible, are discouraged by the Graduate College and the Department. Most faculty are on a 9-month contract and are unpaid during the summer. Many focus on their own research activities during the summer months. Thus, many faculty are unable to commit to reading a thesis and holding a defense during the summer. You should aim to defend during the spring or fall semester.

Scheduling the defense does not mean the defense will happen. Your committee must agree that your thesis is in good enough shape to proceed to the defense. **This next point is important: you can defend only once and must pass or fail. There are no second chances.** Thus, you definitely do not want to proceed to the defense with a thesis that is in poor shape and which your committee might fail!

Effective spring semester 2022, students have until three weeks before the last day of classes to request authority to defend, until a week before the last day of classes to defend their thesis, and until the last day of classes to submit their thesis to ShareOK. As always, check the [Steps to Degree](#) page for confirmation of all deadlines.

Once a draft is circulated to the committee: The committee must review the thesis and decide whether to authorize moving towards the defense. They have until 10 working days (typically two weeks) before the thesis defense to render decision.

Committee members should not sign off on the request for Authority to Defend if they have not had sufficient time to read the thesis, or if they feel it has major shortcomings that would prevent the student from passing their defense. We don't want the student to fail the defense, and we don't want faculty to feel obliged to pass a substandard thesis.

10 Working Days (typically two weeks) before the defense: If the committee has communicated to the committee chair that they are comfortable moving forward with the defense, the student must request Authority to Defend from the Graduate College. The Authority to Defend form will require the signature of the entire committee and the Graduate Liaison. As of spring 2022, this form will require the student to verify that they have sent a reading copy to their committee. **This form is due to the Graduate College ten working days (typically two weeks) before the defense.** *If the Graduate College has not authorized your defense, any defense you hold will not be considered valid.*

Once Authority for Defense is Granted: When the Graduate College grants the Authority for Defense, they will send you and your committee an email. Read all those instructions carefully. The email will have an attachment called the "Authority Report Form," and will also contain a link to a form named "Approval for Thesis/Dissertation Submission to SHAREOK." Your committee will need to sign and submit these forms after your defense.

<i>Student submits reading copy to Committee</i>	<i>Student files request for Authority to Defend</i>	<i>Committee signs request for Authority to Defend</i>	<i>Defense date</i>
19-Oct	2-Nov	9-Nov	16-Nov
20-Oct	3-Nov	10-Nov	17-Nov
23-Oct	6-Nov	13-Nov	20-Nov
24-Oct	7-Nov	14-Nov	21-Nov
30-Oct	13-Nov	20-Nov	27-Nov
31-Oct	14-Nov	21-Nov	28-Nov
1-Nov	15-Nov	22-Nov	29-Nov
2-Nov	16-Nov	23-Nov	30-Nov
3-Nov	17-Nov	24-Nov	1-Dec

<i>Student submits reading copy to Committee</i>	<i>Student files request for Authority to Defend</i>	<i>Committee signs request for Authority to Defend</i>	<i>Defense date</i>
18-Mar	1-Apr	8-Apr	15-Apr
19-Mar	2-Apr	9-Apr	16-Apr
20-Mar	3-Apr	10-Apr	17-Apr
21-Mar	4-Apr	11-Apr	18-Apr
22-Mar	5-Apr	12-Apr	19-Apr
25-Mar	8-Apr	15-Apr	22-Apr
26-Mar	9-Apr	16-Apr	23-Apr
27-Mar	10-Apr	17-Apr	24-Apr
28-Mar	11-Apr	18-Apr	25-Apr
29-Mar	12-Apr	19-Apr	26-Apr

The previous table shows a sample schedule for the final semester, using dates for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. The final day to defend is 12/1/23 or 4/26/24. Everything else works backward from the defense date. Once you have your defense date set, the student must request Authority to Defend at least 10 working days (two weeks) earlier. And the committee has until five working days (one week) before your defense to sign the request for Authority to Defend. Note that you cannot hold a defense without being granted authority to defend, so make sure to follow these deadlines! (Also note that the dates are a bit more complicated in the fall, due to the Thanksgiving holiday, which in 2023 is November 22-26.)

Now you should publicize the defense. By University and Department policy, the defense is public. You should email the whole Department to announce the time and place. You are also welcome to put up fliers or announce the defense more widely through social media. These are joyous occasions, and it is great to get support for these events! The College of Arts and Sciences has a template thesis defense announcement [here](#).

After the defense: The Authority Report Form is due to the Graduate College within 72 hours of the defense. This can be sent by email to the graduate college academic counselor assigned to the Department.

Most successful defenses will require some edits to the thesis before the final document is submitted. You have 60 days from your defense to file your thesis with ShareOK. However, if you wish to graduate in the same semester you defended in, you must file your thesis by the last day of classes. Should you file it after then, you will be required to enroll in the next term and graduate. Follow the instructions in the Authority for Defense email carefully. Note that minor formatting compliance requests for ShareOK are commonplace, so please check your email in the days following the submission. Also, note that the standard embargo period for a Master's thesis in Anthropology is two years. However, you can request up to three years at the time you submit your thesis to ShareOK. If you wish to take advantage of this embargo, you must opt into it when you submit your thesis to ShareOK. It may take 5-6 weeks after graduation for your degree to be reflected on your official transcript. If you need official documentation of degree completion sooner, you can request a letter of completion from the university.

PhD Exam Procedures

The PhD general exam is generally taken when the student is enrolled in or has completed their final semester of coursework. Per Graduate College rules, students are expected to pass their general examination within five years of entering the graduate program if they entered with a bachelor's degree, or within four years if they entered with a master's degree. [Make sure to read the regulations and procedures for the general examination in the OU Graduate Bulletin](#). After passing the exam, the student is ready to begin enrolling in dissertation research hours and focusing on their dissertation. At this point the student is a doctoral candidate, and is considered "ABD" or "all but degree" (something of a misnomer as there is still considerable work to be done before the degree is granted, but this term indicates that they have completed all of their required coursework). Many faculty and students will refer to the general exam as the comprehensive exam or comps, but note that neither of those phrases appear in the Graduate Bulletin or anywhere else in the Graduate College's documentation.

Per department policy, the exam consists of five questions (or sets of questions), each administered on a different day. The committee chair is responsible for coordinating the questions across the

committee. The Graduate College Representative may or may not contribute an exam question. If they do not, it is the chair's responsibility to make sure a full set of questions is prepared.

Planning with the Committee Chair: Meet with your committee chair to develop a plan of five topics to cover on your exam, and how to integrate your committee members into assisting with those questions. This planning typically starts a semester before the student intends to take the exams.

Working with Committee Members: Make an appointment with each member of your committee or meet with them as a group. At the meetings, be prepared to discuss the areas on which you are prepared to be examined. The student should establish with each committee member a bibliography of works on each topic on which the student will be examined. After the initial and possibly subsequent appointments with each member of your committee, you and the faculty should be in agreement about a range of possible questions on your topic (in the general if not the specific sense). Each member of your committee should approve in writing the bibliography (your original list and any additions suggested by the faculty member) related to the question(s) they will provide. The chair is responsible for making sure questions and bibliographies do not overlap more than is desired.

Scheduling the Examination: You should confer with the chair of your committee to set a date for the written and oral exams. The oral exams should be scheduled at least two weeks after the end of the written exam (though committees may approve a shorter window if circumstances merit, for example due to unavoidable scheduling conflicts). You and your chair are responsible for meeting deadlines and procedures set by the Graduate College and for making sure that you complete the steps above. This includes filing a form called "General Exam Application" no later than the second week of classes in the semester you intend to take the exam. You should also make arrangements with the Department staff to schedule the defense. They will help arrange for examination rooms and clean laptops for use during the exams on which to type the answers.

Written Exam Format: The written exam will be in five parts. Each part will last 4 hours. The exam will be closed book. The exam takes place on campus, in Dale Hall Tower, and the student will be provided with a clean laptop without internet access. It is up to the student and committee chair to schedule the exam days. The questions can be done on consecutive days, or spread out, such as examination every other day. The chair and the student can decide on the order of examination topics. The chair of the committee will arrange personally, or with the staff, to provide questions each day and to forward the answers each day to the committee members.

After the Written Examination: The committee is responsible for returning written comments within two weeks of completion of the written exam. [By Graduate College rules](#), after the written portion is complete, the committee can decide whether the written portion is satisfactory and proceed to the oral part as scheduled. Or the committee can decide that the written portion is marginal, but not unsatisfactory, and either proceed to the oral defense and make a determination of the result after the oral portion is complete or request an abeyance for the student to complete additional work. Or the committee can decide the exam is unsatisfactory, in which case the student has failed the exam and may not proceed to the oral portion.

Oral Examination: The oral portion of the general examination generally takes place two weeks after the written examination. The oral defense is not open to the public, and the entire committee must be present. At the conclusion of the oral part of the exam, each committee member will report whether the examination was satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If the committee is not unanimous, the committee should follow the [procedure in the Graduate Bulletin](#) and the Graduate Dean will review the case and make a verdict. If the committee is unanimous that the oral examination was

satisfactory, each member must sign the Authority Report Form for the General Examination, which must be returned to the Graduate College within 72 hours of the exam. If the result of the oral portion is satisfactory, the dean of the Graduate College will admit the student to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

Doctoral Dissertation Timeline and Procedures

The dissertation is the culmination of your degree. It is a significant milestone. For most students, it is the longest and most complex project they have undertaken to date. [The Graduate College says the dissertation](#) "is the final and most important component of the series of academic experiences that culminate in the awarding of the doctoral degree. Three major functions are fulfilled by the dissertation experience: (1) it is a work of original research scholarship that makes a contribution to existing knowledge, (2) it demonstrates the student's mastery of research methods of the special field, and (3) it demonstrates the student's ability to address a significant intellectual problem and arrive at a successful conclusion."

As part of this process, it is the responsibility of the chair and student to be familiar with relevant policies and deadlines. The Graduate College has a very useful set of checklists for the [PhD program](#). The deadlines in any given semester are listed [here](#). And the [Graduate College Bulletin](#) is the definitive source of rules for the dissertation.

Dissertation Timeline

Planning Stages: You will form your committee and work with the committee to pick a research focus and methodology for your dissertation. Exact timelines for work vary tremendously between students and between specializations.

Plan of Research/Prospectus: Before beginning data collection and research, students must circulate a written plan of research to the whole committee. Committee members need to respond in writing that they support the plan. It is up to the committee to dictate the length and detail of the plan/prospectus, but minimally this must include a research question and methodology. The committee can request an in-person meeting with the student to discuss the plan/prospectus.

Writing Stage: The student should be in communication with their committee chair and committee about a timeline for completion of the dissertation. The Graduate College requirements on formatting the dissertation can be found [here](#).

Graduation applications must now be filled out the semester **before** you intend to graduate. Apply for graduation through [ONE](#) by the deadline for the semester you intend to graduate:

Fall graduation – apply to graduate by May 1

Spring graduation - apply to graduate by December 1

Summer graduation - apply to graduate by March 1

Final Semester: There are a series of steps (listed below) that must be done sequentially before you can defend your thesis. Remember that weekends and holidays are not working days, so a phrase like "five working days" generally means one week, and "ten working days" generally means two weeks, but can be longer due to Thanksgiving and other holidays.

The online [Request for Degree Check form](#) is due by the first two weeks of the semester you intend to defend.

During the final semester, the student should circulate all dissertation chapter drafts to their committee chair. Once the chair has approved the dissertation draft, a reading copy can be sent to the full committee. **The full dissertation must be sent to the whole committee four weeks before the intended defense date, and possibly earlier in the fall semester (to allow for Thanksgiving).**

Scheduling the Defense: Sometime during the final semester, the chair may authorize you to work with your committee members to find a time and date that would potentially work for the defense and pencil in this time and date. Taking this step prior to full committee authorization to proceed to the defense does not necessarily mean that you will be permitted to defend on that date, it merely blocks out a potential time because defenses often occur during a busy time of year. Typically, this scheduling step happens sometime between when the full draft goes to the chair and when the whole committee authorizes the defense. The chair decides on this timing based on the state of the drafts, the time of year, and the likelihood of scheduling conflicts. Once a date is chosen, arrange with office staff to schedule a room for the defense. Most Anthropology defenses are scheduled for two hours, but your committee may make a different request.

Summer defenses, while possible, are discouraged by the Graduate College and the Department. Most faculty are on a 9-month contract and are unpaid during the summer. Many focus on their own research activities during the summer months. Thus, many faculty are unable to commit to reading a dissertation and holding a defense during the summer. You should aim to defend during the spring or fall semester.

Scheduling the defense does not mean the defense will happen. Your committee has to agree that your thesis is in good enough shape to proceed to the defense. **This next point is important: you can defend only once, and must pass or fail. There are no second chances.** Thus, you definitely do not want to proceed to the defense with a thesis that is in poor shape and which your committee might fail!

Effective spring semester 2022, students have until three weeks before the last day of classes to request authority to defend, until a week before the last day of classes to defend their thesis, and until the last day of classes to submit their thesis to ShareOK. As always, check the [Degree Milestone Deadlines](#) page for confirmation of all deadlines.

Once a draft is circulated to the committee: The committee must review the dissertation and decide whether to authorize moving towards the defense. They have until 10 working days (typically two weeks) before the dissertation defense date to render decision.

Committee members should not sign off on the request for Authority to Defend if they have not had sufficient time to read the dissertation, or if they feel it has major shortcomings that would prevent the student from passing their defense. We don't want the student to fail the defense, and we don't want faculty to feel obliged to pass a substandard dissertation.

10 Working Days (typically two weeks) before the defense: If the committee has communicated to the committee chair that they are comfortable moving forward with the defense, the student must file Authority for Defense paperwork with the Graduate College. The Authority for Defense form will require the signature of the entire committee and the Graduate Liaison. As of spring 2022, this form will require the student to verify that they have sent a reading copy to their committee. **This form is due to the Graduate College ten working days (typically two weeks) before the defense. If the Graduate College has not authorized your defense, any defense you hold will not be considered valid.**

Once Authority for Defense is Granted: When the Graduate College grants the Authority for Defense, they will send you and your committee an email. Read all of those instructions carefully. The email will have an attachment called the "Authority Report Form," and will also contain a link to a form named "Approval for Thesis/Dissertation Submission to SHAREOK." Your committee will need to sign and submit these forms after you defense.

The following tables show a sample schedule for the final semester, using dates for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. The final day to defend is 12/1/23 or 4/26/24. Everything else works backward from the defense date. Once you have your defense date set, the student must request Authority to Defend at least 10 working days (two weeks) earlier. And the committee has until five working days (one week) before your defense to sign the request for Authority to Defend. Note that you cannot hold a defense without being granted authority to defend, so make sure to follow these deadlines! (Also note that the dates are a bit more complicated in the fall, due to the Thanksgiving holiday, which in 2023 is November 22-26.)

<i>Student submits reading copy to Committee</i>	<i>Student files request for Authority to Defend</i>	<i>Committee signs request for Authority to Defend</i>	<i>Defense date</i>
19-Oct	2-Nov	9-Nov	16-Nov
20-Oct	3-Nov	10-Nov	17-Nov
23-Oct	6-Nov	13-Nov	20-Nov
24-Oct	7-Nov	14-Nov	21-Nov
30-Oct	13-Nov	20-Nov	27-Nov
31-Oct	14-Nov	21-Nov	28-Nov
1-Nov	15-Nov	22-Nov	29-Nov
2-Nov	16-Nov	23-Nov	30-Nov
3-Nov	17-Nov	24-Nov	1-Dec

<i>Student submits reading copy to Committee</i>	<i>Student files request for Authority to Defend</i>	<i>Committee signs request for Authority to Defend</i>	<i>Defense date</i>
18-Mar	1-Apr	8-Apr	15-Apr
19-Mar	2-Apr	9-Apr	16-Apr
20-Mar	3-Apr	10-Apr	17-Apr
21-Mar	4-Apr	11-Apr	18-Apr
22-Mar	5-Apr	12-Apr	19-Apr
25-Mar	8-Apr	15-Apr	22-Apr
26-Mar	9-Apr	16-Apr	23-Apr
27-Mar	10-Apr	17-Apr	24-Apr
28-Mar	11-Apr	18-Apr	25-Apr
29-Mar	12-Apr	19-Apr	26-Apr

Now you should publicize the defense. By University and Department policy, the defense is public. You should email the whole Department to announce the time and place. You are also welcome to put up fliers or announce the defense more widely through social media. These are joyous occasions,

and it is great to get support for these events! The College of Arts and Sciences has a template dissertation defense announcement [here](#).

After a successful defense: The Authority Report Form is due to the Graduate College within 72 hours. If you printed a hard copy for your committee to sign, please scan the signed form for Department records before it is taken over to the Graduate College. (This is a good precaution if the form gets misplaced.) This step is not necessary if you have the form signed electronically.

Most successful defenses will require some edits to the dissertation before the final document is submitted. You have 60 days from your defense to file your dissertation with ShareOK. However, if you wish to graduate in the same semester you defended in, you must file your dissertation by the last day of classes. Should you file it after then, you will be required to enroll in the next term and graduate. Follow the instructions in the Authority for Defense email carefully. Note that minor formatting compliance requests for ShareOK are commonplace, so please check your email in the days following the submission. Also, note that the standard embargo period for a doctoral dissertation in Anthropology is three years. If you wish to take advantage of this embargo, you must opt into it at the time you submit your thesis to ShareOK.

Internal Grants and Funding Opportunities

Students in the Department of Anthropology have numerous sources of funding for travel and research. Students are responsible for researching these opportunities and for determining eligibility requirements and deadlines.

The table below lists the major funding sources available at OU. Note that accelerated BA/MA students are not eligible for graduate funding until their final year, once they have completed their BA requirements and are considered full time graduate students. Accelerated BA/MA students in their fourth year are eligible for sources of funding open to undergraduate students and may wish to research those.

Award Source	Award Name	Award For	Degree Program	Deadline	Details
College of Arts & Sciences	Student Travel Assistance Program	Travel	BA/BS MA/PHD	No fewer than 30 days prior to travel	Link
	CASH (Centralized Academic Scholarship Hub)				
Graduate Student Senate (GSS)	Conference Grant	Travel	Graduate Degree	October	Link
	Research Support	Research	Graduate Degree	October	Link
Grad College	Robberson Travel Awards	Travel	Graduate Degree		Link
	Robberson Research Award	Research	MA/PhD		Link
	Robberson and Wethington Scholarships	Training/Courses	MA/PhD		Link
	Alice Mary Robertson Award	Stimulate interest in Contributions by Women to Oklahoma Culture	MA/PhD		Link
	Eddie Carol Smith Scholarship	Research	MA/PhD		Link
DISC (Data Institute for Society Challenges)	Graduate Student Seed Funding Program	Research projects related to data-enabled research or data science	MA/PhD	Monthly	Link
Anthropology	M.E. and L.R. Opler Endowment	Travel	MA/PhD	Oct 1, March 1	Link
	M.E. Opler Scholarship	Research	MA/PhD	Oct 1, March 1	Link
	Rain Vehik	Travel	MA/PhD	Oct 1, March 1	Link

	Gilman and Minnis	Research	MA/PhD	Oct 1, March 1	Link
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Grades, Funding Limits, and Assistantship Duties

Grades

In graduate school, students should strive for an A in every course. Grades of B indicate students are falling below expectations, and grades of C or lower indicates students are far below expectations.

According to the [Graduate Bulletin](#), you must score a C or higher in a graduate course to get credit. However, the Department requires that in the MA programs, students must get a grade of B or higher in core courses to get credit. See your degree checksheet to see which courses this applies to.

Students must have at least a 3.0 GPA to file for graduation. If a student's grades fall below a 3.0 average after any given semester, they will be contacted by the Graduate College and [placed under academic probation](#) with terms to meet for continuation in the program.

Funding Limits

The Department and the Graduate College both place limits on the amount of funding a student can receive. These limits will never be exceeded if the student finishes the degree program in the time allotted by the Department and does not take more credits than are required for the degree.

The Department prioritizes funding to two years (four semesters) for MA students, four years (eight semesters) for PhD students entering with an MA, and six years (twelve semesters) for PhD students entering without an MA. What this means is that students within those time frames (first four semesters for MA students, etc.) will be ranked higher and are more likely to receive funding. You can still request funding if you have exceeded those time limits, but you will likely be ranked below students who are still within those limits. If you remain in grad school beyond those limits, this does not mean you are ineligible for department funding, but your chances of funding decrease as priority is given to students who are within those limits. Funding is competitive, and being in the higher-priority phase of your degree does not guarantee you funding.

The Graduate College limits students to funding for the number of hours needed for the program. That is, if your degree program requires 30 hours, the Graduate College does not want to extend tuition waivers for the 31st hours, 32nd hour, etc. of the degree, regardless of whether a student has been previously funded. However, the Graduate College rules can be appealed in some circumstances.

Graduate Assistantship Job Duties

As one of the primary purposes of becoming a graduate assistant is to aid the student in the successful completion of a graduate program, graduate assistants may not be appointed for more than one-half (0.5 FTE) employment without special permission of the Graduate Dean. The Department must submit written justification for all appointments greater than 0.5 FTE.

A 0.5 FTE graduate assistantship normally involves 20 hours per week. A teaching assistantship includes time spent in the classroom, preparations, and office hours. In general, it is expected that three office hours per week be scheduled for each course taught.

Other duties may be assigned in lieu of teaching. Research assistants' nonteaching duties should occupy approximately 20 hours per week for a 0.5 FTE nonteaching assistantship. Note that the

Department of Anthropology will not adjust to a schedule of convenience for the student whose outside commitments conflict with University and Department schedules.

The primary responsibility of the graduate assistantship is to the University of Oklahoma and to the unit such as the Department of Anthropology that hires them. If anything interferes with this primary responsibility, the assistantship can be terminated. Any outside employment is strongly discouraged.

The Department uses evaluation and performance in graduate assistantship duties to decide on future assignments and funding. If performance issues arise, then a person's assistantship will not be renewed.

Other Graduate Policies and Resources

The Graduate College website has all the [forms](#) needed to navigate the program. The [Graduate College Bulletin](#) provides the main policies and procedures of the College. And [the Department of Anthropology website](#) may contain additional information.