**Navigating the Paperwork Hoops of Grad School**

Policies sometimes change, so always double check with the Graduate College: <https://ou.edu/gradcollege>

Steps to degree and deadlines: <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/steps-to-degree>

List of faculty graduate status appointments: <https://webapps.ou.edu/gradweb/gradfaculty.cfm>

**GENERAL INFO**

1. **The Ph.D. tuition waiver covers 90 credit hours.** This includes any transfer credit. The Graduate College may have some leniency with this, but be aware regarding enrolling in unneeded hours beyond that or you may be charged.
2. **The Graduate College contact for Psychology is Lincoln Torrey (ltorrey1@ou.edu)**
3. **Enrollment minimums, as of Fall 2023:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Semester*** | **Full-time credit hour minimum** | **Full-time (with 0.5 FTE GA) credit hour minimum** | **Part-time credit hour minimum** |
| ***Fall/Spring*** | 9 | 5 | 5 |
| ***Final*** | 2 | 2 | N/A |

* A student enrolled in 2 credit hours during the semester they designate as the final semester will still be considered full-time by Financial Aid and the loan repayment clock will not start due to under-enrollment.
* The student is responsible for declaring the final semester with the Graduate College. This can only be done once using the “Graduate Assistant Final Semester Declaration” form, even if the student does not graduate during the semester indicated as final.

**THESIS PROPOSAL – Year 1/2**

1. **Apply to be officially admitted to the master’s program**
   * To file an application for Addition or Change of Program, go to <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/apply>
     + Select Addition or Change of Program Application option
     + All students should choose “Standard”
     + The term of entry is the current term you are in when filling out the form (you should complete this form at least one semester before your planned master’s defense date)
     + If you have any difficulty with the application, contact Lindsey Harper ([lharper@ou.edu](mailto:lharper@ou.edu)) in Graduate Admissions
2. **Select members of your thesis committee**
   * + Major Professor
     + Two other faculty members, usually from psych department
     + If your minor is Quant, including a minor member on the thesis committee is discouraged; you can include this person on the advisory/dissertation committee
3. **Paperwork**
   * Paperwork may be completed at the proposal meeting, but in some cases is completed prior to that to meet Grad College deadlines
   * Currently these forms are not completed through digital measures, but emailed signatures/affirmations are accepted; therefore you can cc all committee members and the Graduate Liaison as well as the Graduate College contact to gain approval for the forms
   * Complete and have all members AND the graduate liaison sign the *Master’s Thesis Topic and Committee Membership Form*
   * Complete the *Program of Study* form because they must be turned in together to the Graduate College (GC) early in the semester BEFORE you intend to graduate with your master’s (**see thesis defense section below**)
     + Important points for the *Admission to Candidacy/Program of Graduate Work* form
       - Select the “General” Psychology option
       - List only 30 hrs of coursework or slightly more (if you have taken more, save courses/credits for the Advisory Conference Report)
       - You must be enrolled in 2 hrs of masters research (5980) hours during the semester you plan to defend (plan carefully, because once enrollment in thesis research begins, it must continue until graduation)
       - Currently, students are able to enroll in up to 6 hours of 5980
     + You may need to contact a departmental staff member to request an “attribute” from the GC before you can enroll in 5980 for the first time
     + Submit *Master’s Thesis Topic and Committee Membership* and *Program of Study* forms by the appropriate deadline one semester before you intend to graduate
     + The deadlines generally follow this schedule but check here for specific semester dates: <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/steps-to-degree>

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| If you intend to graduate in: | **Summer** | **Fall** | **Spring** |
| Submit your forms **no later than:** | 1st Monday in March | 1st Monday in April | 1st Monday in October |

1. **Hold a thesis proposal meeting with committee**
   * + This meeting allows you to request approval from the committee for your project; if they do not approve you may need to do additional work to ensure they believe you have a well designed project that will make a contribution to the literature
   * The departmental policy states, “The Department requires that a prospectus (i.e., research proposal) be prepared by the student and then be evaluated by the members of the committee…The prospectus meeting typically involves a presentation of the research plan to the committee, followed by question/answer.”
     + Arrange a time when your committee can meet to for a formal prospectus meeting
     + Provide the committee with a written document (prospectus) two weeks prior to the meeting
     + If needed, have the committee sign the *Master’s Thesis Topic and Committee Membership* and *Program of Study* forms at the proposal meeting
2. **Get IRB approval if using human subjects**
3. **Run your study**

**ADVISORY CONFERENCE**

1. **The ACR may be completed before or after your master’s defense, depending on timing; for thesis defense information, skip to the next section**
2. **Complete the *Report of Advisory Conference* (ACR) document** 
   * The student and all committee members are expected to attend the advisory conference meeting
     + This document lists every course you have taken or plan to take
     + If there are any changes to your coursework or committee members, you’ll need to submit changes to the GC through the digital form
     + **The ACR must be approved by the advisory/dissertation committee through the digital form**

* Total of 4 or more members (could be the same three from thesis, plus one)
* The majority of the committee members must hold an M2/RM3 or M3/RM4 graduate faculty appointment through Psychology
* Major professor
* One faculty member from your minor
* One faculty member from outside the department, called the “graduate college representative”
* One or more other faculty members (usually from the Psychology Department)
* Specific requirements also exist for CBN degree
  + **The Advisory Committee should also sign/affirm the departmental *Minor and Breadth Course Document***
    - This is a departmental document (rather than a Graduate College document) and should be submitted to the Graduate Liaison, not to the Graduate Counselor
  + **The Advisory Committee may also want to discuss your progress**
    - Prepare a clear breakdown of your coursework based on departmental requirements, in case any questions arise
    - Also be ready to discuss your career goals, what you are thinking about for your dissertation, and timing of your next program milestones
  + **Think carefully (and speak to your major professor) about timing**
    - The ACR should be completed by the semester after the thesis defense
    - If you are close to 45 credits around the time of your thesis defense, you may be able to have the committee approve the form during or around the time of the thesis defense meeting, but remember that the thesis committee is made up of only three of the four advisory committee members
  + If you have not received your master’s degree before completing the ACR, all of the coursework you list should go in the section “Required Coursework Taken While Enrolled in OU Doctoral Program” and not in the section “Graduate Coursework Forming Master’s Degree to be Applied to the Doctoral Degree”
    - For students who arrived at OU with relevant master’s degrees, the Advisory Conference is the most common point at which decisions about what courses will transfer are made
    - In general, it is best to transfer those courses that meet requirements (e.g., breadth classes and thesis credits), but to choose carefully because transfer credits are included in the 90 allowed by the GC, and thus transferring more than the minimal number of credits may restrict flexibility in future courses and timing of graduation
    - Check the departmental policy for the process by which courses not on the approved list can be approved to fulfill a requirement, such as a breadth course, if needed

**THESIS DEFENSE – Year 2/3**

1. **Start planning your defense**
2. **File for graduation**
   * + Complete the “Application for Graduation” on the Academics tab at one.ou.edu
     + Generally deadlines follow the schedule below, but also double check here: <https://www.ou.edu/registrar/graduation>

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| If you intend to graduate in: | **Summer** | **Fall** | **Spring** |
| Submit your form **no later than**: | July 1 | September 15 | February 15 |

1. **Plan for Defense**
   * + Be sure to format the document using the thesis/dissertation formatting instructions: <https://www.ou.edu/content/dam/gradcollege/docs/gc-thesis-dissertation-instruction-packet.pdf>
     + Timeline for defense changed beginning Spring 2022
     + Within first two weeks of semester: submit *Request for Degree Check*to the Graduate College.
     + 4 weeks prior to the last day of finals and at least 10 working days prior to the defense: submit a reading copy of the thesis to the committee and submit the *Report of Reading Copy Submission and Request for Authority to Defend*to the Graduate College.
     + Consult your committee about scheduling a defense date (be aware of the deadline for defense dates for the semester)
     + Schedule a room in which to hold your defense if it is not on zoom
     + 3 weeks prior to the last day of finals and at least 5 working days prior to the defense: deadline for the committee members to sign the *Report of Reading Copy Submission and Request for Authority to Defend*.
     + If your project uses human subjects you will need to include a copy of the IRB approval letter
     + Once approved, the GC will give you the *Authority Report Form of the Thesis Defense* that you will take to the defense meeting
     + 2 weeks (10 working days) prior to the last day of finals: Deadline to defend the thesis.
     + 1 week (5 working days) prior to the last day of finals: Deadline to submit the thesis to SHAREOK to graduate in the current term.
     + Prepare Powerpoint slides or other defense materials as instructed by your major professor
     + If you plan to have committee approve the *Report of Advisory Conference* during your thesis defense meeting, ensure that the document is ready
     + Send committee a reminder a day or so before you defend
     + According to the departmental policy, the defense should be open to the public. Thus, students should send out an email or post a flyer with details.
     + The committee will report the outcome of the defense on the *Authority Report Form for the Thesis Defense*

**IV. PASS DEFENSE!**

* + - Turn in signed *Authority Report Form* to the GC within 72 hours of your defense
    - Within 60 days (or by the deadline to deposit thesis for that semester) you must turn in the final thesis document
      * At the time of the defense, or after any changes required by your committee have been completed, ask each committee member to sign the *Approval for Thesis/Dissertation Submission to SHAREOK* form
      * The shareOK form asks you to upload documentation from the IRB that your study is complete
      * Do NOT attach the IRB outcome letter that approves your study
      * Follow the inactivation process and attach the resulting documentation to the ShareOK form
        1. If your involvement in the study is truly complete, meaning that it is not a larger study in which you will continue to be involved in some way, go to Iris to inactivate:

Expedited & Full Board – complete the *Continuing Review/Final Report* form

Exempt – complete the *Exempt Study Progress/Closure Report* form

NOTE:  The process does take some time to complete so avoid waiting until the day of final deposit.

If you are listed as Key Study Personnel rather than a PI, you may need to get the PI to close the study or file a Modification to remove you from the study.

* + - * 1. If you are continuing involvement in the study/project after completing a thesis or dissertation, contact the IRB directly ([irb@ou.edu](mailto:irb@ou.edu)) to get the necessary approval, in the form of a “continuation” letter, which fulfills the requirements of the ShareOK form but allows you to continue your involvement in the study
      * Follow GC instructions for submitting an electronic copy of the final thesis to the SHAREOK institutional repository at https://www.shareok.org
      * ***YOU’RE DONE!.... now you get to start studying for generals!!***

**GENERALS – Year 3**

1. **Begin planning for generals & dissertation committee**
   * **If you have not already, select faculty members for advisory and dissertation committee**

* Total of at least 4 members
* The majority of the committee members must hold an M2/RM2 or M3/RM4 graduate faculty appointment through Psychology
* Major professor
* One faculty member from your minor
* One faculty member from outside the department, called the “graduate college representative”
* One or more other faculty members (usually from the Psychology Department)
* Specific requirements also exist for CBN degree
  + **Ensure you understand the details of the major/minor exam in your area**
  + **Prepare your generals reading list (there is some variation by sub-field)**
  + Discuss content with your major professor
  + The committee will provide additional input and suggest changes
  + Remember that the list is just a guide; your committee can ask questions beyond the scope of the list
  + **Your Advisory Conference Report should be approved the semester prior to applying to take the exam**
  + **In addition, if the courses you have taken do not follow the Advisory Conference Report exactly, you will need to use digital forms to submit a revised ACR for approval before submitting the application to take the exam (if not, the graduate college will ask you to do this)**
  + **If you need to change any members of your committee, these changes must be approved 30 days before the written exam**

1. **Take the departmental qualifying exam** 
   * Read the departmental policy about general exams (in short, during the course of one semester 1) students take a written departmental qualifying exam focused on methods and statistics, then 2) take a written exam focused on their major, minor, and general knowledge written by their advisory committee, and finally 3) orally defend the major/minor exam in front of the advisory committee)
   * Pay attention to emails from the graduate liaison on when departmental qualifying exam will be and indicate your intention to take the exam
     + Qualifying exams are offered in spring and fall
     + Usually approximately one month into the semester
     + There will only be one date for the whole department
   * You will receive notice from the Graduate Liaison about whether you have passed the qualifying exam
2. **Complete paperwork related to the major/minor (general) exam** 
   * Complete the *General Exam Application for the Doctoral Degree* document
     + The GC guidelines say to complete this form within the first two weeks of the semester in which you will take the exam, but this policy does not apply to Psychology
     + Do not seek out signatures or turn in the form until after you have been informed that you have passed the departmental qualifying exam
   * **If your ACR is not up to date, you will be required to fix this by submitting a revised ACR via digital forms before authority will be given by the GC to take the general exam**
   * **Once approved, the Report of *General Exam* form will be emailed to you**
     + Schedule your written exam date and oral defense date based on consulting with your advisory committee
     + Make sure you adhere to GC deadlines for the last date to schedule an oral defense
3. **Take major/minor (general exam)**
   * After taking written exam, wait for approval from your committee to schedule oral defense
   * After passing your oral defense, have your committee sign the *Report of General Exam* form
   * Turn in the form to the GC within 72 hours after your defense
   * Once submitted you will officially be “admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree”!!

**DISSERTATION – Years 4/5**

1. **Dissertation Proposal** 
   * **Work on a dissertation idea**
     + The departmental policy states, “The steps in the dissertation include: 1) a formal, written prospectus; 2) a formal prospectus meeting, at which time a decision is made to approve the prospectus or have the student revise his/her project; 3) a written dissertation based on the prospectus; and, 4) an oral defense of the dissertation, open to the public.”
     + Advisors mentor students differently regarding the dissertation, but in general it is much more independent than your thesis
     + If you intend to pursue an academic career, consider how your dissertation can be a step toward a broader research trajectory
   * **Schedule a proposal** 
     + This meeting allows you to request approval from the committee for your project; if they do not approve you may need to do additional work to ensure they believe you have a well designed project that will make a contribution to the literature
     + Arrange a time when your committee can meet to for a formal prospectus meeting
     + Provide the committee with a written document two weeks prior to the meeting
     + Sometimes students hold the proposal directly following their oral defense during generals if the committee agrees, but the meeting is frequently separate
2. **Conduct your dissertation**
   * Receive IRB approval if needed
   * Consult your ACR about the number of dissertation credits that you plan to enroll in; once you begin enrolling in dissertation hours (6980), you must continue each semester (excluding the summer, unless you are defending in the summer) until your doctoral degree is done
     + You may need to contact a departmental staff member to request an “attribute” from the GC before you can enroll in 6980 for the first time
   * Complete your written dissertation as specified by your major professor and committee
   * Be sure to format the document using the thesis/dissertation formatting instructions: <https://www.ou.edu/content/dam/gradcollege/docs/gc-thesis-dissertation-instruction-packet.pdf>
3. **Apply for graduation**
   * When your major professor believes you are nearly ready to defend your dissertation complete the “application for graduation” on one.ou.edu the semester you plan to graduate
     + Students graduating in the fall must turn it in by September 15, spring by February 15, and summer by July 1

**IV.** **Planning for Defense**

* Within first two weeks of semester: submit *Request for Degree Check*to the Graduate College.
  + - Make any needed changes to the courses you listed on your advisory conference form (ACR)
    - Note that changes to the dissertation committee are not allowed within 30 days of the defense.
    - Schedule defense date and room (if needed)
    - Be sure to adhere to GC deadlines about the last date in the semester that defenses may be held
* 4 weeks prior to the last day of finals and at least 10 working days prior to the defense: submit a reading copy of the dissertation to the committee and submit the *Report of Reading Copy Submission and Request for Authority to Defend*to the Graduate College.
  + - If your project uses human subjects you will need to include a copy of the IRB approval letter
    - You will receive the *Authority Report Form* once your request has been approved and should take this document to the defense
* 3 weeks prior to the last day of finals and at least 5 working days prior to the defense: deadline for the committee members to sign the *Report of Reading Copy Submission and Request for Authority to Defend*.
* 2 weeks (10 working days) prior to the last day of finals: Deadline to defend the dissertation.
* 1 week (5 working days) prior to the last day of finals: Deadline to submit the dissertation to SHAREOK to graduate in the current term.
* Prepare Powerpoint slides or other defense materials as instructed by your major professor
* Send committee a reminder a day or so before you defend
* According to the departmental policy, the defense should be open to the public. Thus, students should send out an email or post a flyer with details.
* The committee will report the outcome of the defense on the *Authority Report Form for the Dissertation Defense*

1. **Defend your dissertation** 
   * Submit the *Authority Report Form* to the graduate college within 72 hours of the defense
   * Make the corrections required by your committee
   * No later than 60 calendar days after your defense (and before the graduate college deadline for the semester), you must submit the final revised dissertation
     + At the time of the defense, or after any changes required by your committee have been completed, ask each committee member to sign the *Approval for Thesis/Dissertation Submission to SHAREOK* form
     + The shareOK form asks you to upload documentation from the IRB that your study is complete
     + Do NOT attach the IRB outcome letter that approves your study
     + Follow the inactivation process and attach the resulting documentation to the ShareOK form
       - If your involvement in the study is truly complete, meaning that it is not a larger study in which you will continue to be involved in some way, go to Iris to inactivate:
         1. Expedited & Full Board – complete the Continuing Review/Final Report form
         2. Exempt – complete the Exempt Study Progress/Closure Report form
         3. NOTE:  The process does take some time to complete so avoid waiting until the day of final deposit.
         4. If you are listed as Key Study Personnel rather than a PI, you may need to get the PI to close the study or file a Modification to remove you from the study.
       - If you are continuing involvement in the study/project after completing a thesis or dissertation, contact the IRB directly ([irb@ou.edu](mailto:irb@ou.edu)) to get the necessary approval, in the form of a “continuation” letter, which fulfills the requirements of the ShareOK form but allows you to continue your involvement in the study
     + Follow GC instructions for submitting an electronic copy of the final thesis to the SHAREOK institutional repository at https://www.shareok.org
2. **GRADUATE!**