

Procedures for Doctoral Dissertation

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Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Approval: After the student completes all graduate coursework as described in the Academic Advising Handbook and passes the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam, he/she is officially admitted to Candidacy. The chair endorses the student's candidacy in Part 4 of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination and Admission to Candidacy form (Form SOE-C1) and sends it to the dean's office for approval. Then the candidate must identify a major professor and a topic for the doctoral dissertation. Working with the major professor, the candidate prepares a proposal for the dissertation and seeks approval following the procedure outlined below:

- a. The candidate finishes the dissertation proposal using the approved format. The major professor then assembles and proposes a group of 2-3 readers for the dissertation which must be approved by the department chair in advance of the public proposal presentation as documented on the engineering doctoral dissertation checklist form. The major professor and readers then constitute the *doctoral dissertation committee*. Guidelines for the composition of the dissertation committee are as follows:
 - i. The *major professor* must be a full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty within the School of Engineering.
 - ii. Normally, readers are selected from full-time, tenure-track faculty within the School. However, to take full advantage of research resources at CUA and within the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, some *readers* may be external members to the School. However, in these cases, the full committee (major professor + readers) MAY NOT be comprised of a *majority* of external members. All readers should be active researchers in the area of the dissertation topic. Curriculum vitae for external members including a list of publications in the last few years should be submitted to the department chair for review. Adjunct faculty are considered external faculty.
 - iii. The candidate fills out the Doctoral Dissertation Topic and Committee: Request for Approval Form and submits it to the department chair for preliminary endorsement (on checklist form).
- b. Only after the dissertation is approved by the department chair, the candidate presents the dissertation proposal at a public meeting attended by graduate students, faculty, and the dissertation committee. The audience will have an opportunity to question the candidate regarding the *dissertation topic*. After the presentation, taking into account the comments of the examining committee, the candidate will modify the proposal and/or the dissertation's scope, as appropriate. If needed, another presentation may be required. Then, a finalized dissertation proposal is submitted to the dissertation committee for its approval.
- c. After the dissertation proposal is approved by the dissertation committee, the major professor submits the proposal to the faculty of the department and presents the proposal on behalf of the candidate at a departmental meeting. The major professor requests the faculty to approve the dissertation proposal.
- d. After the faculty approves the dissertation proposal, the candidate submits the Doctoral Dissertation Topic and Committee: Request for Approval Form to the department chair and the dean for their final endorsements. After the dean's endorsement, the form is submitted to the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. The candidate cannot begin work on the dissertation until its topic is approved by the vice provost and dean of graduate studies.