

THE DISSERTATION

After Advancing to candidacy, under the direction of their doctoral committee, students complete a dissertation that represents an original contribution in a chosen field. Students enroll in Philosophy 599 while working on their dissertations. The dissertation is to be completed and filed by the end of the sixth year.

A Final Oral Examination or (Defense of Dissertation) is not required for all students. The decision as to whether a defense is required is made by the doctoral committee.

There is much to be said about the writing of a dissertation, and most if it will be said by your dissertation committee. Here are a few, largely administrative, comments: Students writing a dissertation work closely with the Chair of their dissertation committee. It is advisable, though, to show work in progress to the other members of your committee. Indeed, it is helpful, both for the development of your dissertation and as preparation for the job market, to receive wide and varied feedback from many sources.

The department offers a Dissertation Writing Seminar (Philosophy 260). This year-long graduate course is designed to help students make progress in the writing and oral presentation of their dissertation chapters. The department also offers an Ethics Writing Seminar (259), a year-long course which is designed to help students make progress in writing and oral presentation of dissertation work in ethics (broadly construed). Starting in Fall of the fourth year, all students in residence are expected and encouraged to enroll in the Dissertation Writing Workshop each quarter it is offered (enrollment in the Ethics Writing Seminar also satisfies this expectation). In addition, you might consider presenting work to the Albritton Society or at a conference. Students are also expected and encouraged to audit graduate seminars.

It is ideal if you have a complete draft of your dissertation in the Fall of (what is hopefully) your final year, as you engage the job market. Students who know exactly how their dissertation ends, because they have written it out, tend to perform better on the job market. In any case, your Chair must certify that you have at least two substantive (i.e., non-literature survey) chapters written and a draft of the majority of the entire dissertation done by the end of August, to engage the job market making use of our Placement services. You should not expect to have a lot of time for writing in the Fall or Winter of any year you are on the market, since being on the job market is very time consuming. (See the later section, "Placement and the Job Market.")

Even after the dissertation has been completed, there are certain final hurdles that must be cleared before the conferral of the Ph.D. (typically at the end of the Spring, though, if you are out of residence in the year you finish your dissertation, there is a financial advantage to filing for your degree during the Summer).

It will have been decided, when you advanced to candidacy, whether a Final Oral Exam is required for your Ph.D. If such an exam is required, it should be scheduled well in advance, since committee members will have complicated schedules. Two months in advance is not too soon.

Whether or not a Final Oral Exam is required, you need to give your committee time to read your entire dissertation before (taking your oral exam or) filing for the degree (three weeks seems a reasonable *minimum*). You should consult closely with your Chair, and with other committee members, about the schedule for the distribution of your final product.

There are many technical requirements that must be met in filing your dissertation with the University. Information about them all can be found here: <http://www.gdnet.ucla.edu/gasaa/library/thesisintro.htm>.

Finally, the department asks all its Ph.D.'s to supply a copy of their dissertation to our reading room. The department will reimburse the cost of printing.