

“I’ve passed my doctoral qualifying exams! Now what?”
Some helpful advice from your Graduate Coordinator in the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Program of Work

Next step will be to have your program of work approved by the C&I Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). You ***MUST*** be in the final semester of coursework before your program can be circulated for approval. In other words: required courses for which you do not yet have a grade may be marked “IP” (in progress) but may *not* be listed as “to be taken” in a subsequent semester. The program of work form¹ should be signed by your Program Area Adviser, then submitted to the Graduate Coordinator who will circulate it among the GSC for approval. This balloting process takes at least 2 weeks. During this time, you should familiarize yourself with all the information on the following Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) website:

<http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/pdn/candidacy.html>

Application for Doctoral Candidacy

Now that you have read and understand all the candidacy instructions, you may start the online application process. Hopefully, you’ve already lined up your dissertation committee². If not, you should consult with your dissertation supervisor about potential committee members. Once you have your dissertation committee in place—i.e., they’ve each expressed interest and willingness to serve—you may submit the online application for candidacy. *Note: you **MUST** be currently enrolled at the time you submit the application.* Into the application, you will be asked to copy and paste a brief description of the dissertation proposal. It’s generally helpful to get feedback from your supervisor in writing this description as the application will ultimately require his/her approval. Other electronic approvals include those of C&I Graduate Advisor and GSC Chair who certify departmental standards in the proposed committee and the program of work, as well as a Doctoral Degree Evaluator in OGS, and finally, Graduate Dean. The entire chain of approval can 2 to 4 weeks, even longer if you factor in holidays.

The Dissertation Course

After (and not until) you are advanced to doctoral candidacy, you may register for the dissertation course in the next available Fall or Spring semester. If you want to take advantage of early registration, but are not yet advanced to candidacy, it is recommended that you register for some type of individual instruction with your supervisor (e.g., independent study or directed research, as opposed to an organized course), with the goal of dropping and adding into dissertation post-candidacy and before the 12th class day. You *must* be consecutively registered for dissertation during each Fall and Spring semester from the time you are advanced until the semester in which you defend the dissertation and graduate³.

¹ Program of work must be typed or word-processed in a pre-formatted document. See Graduate Coordinator for details.

² The dissertation committee is often, but not necessarily, the same as your qualifying committee. Be sure to review the OGS candidacy website for guidelines about committee constituency.

³ Summer registration is not required unless you a) want to work closely with your supervisor during that time, b) intend to meet with your committee to present the proposal or defend the final dissertation, or c) want to graduate in that semester.

The Dissertation Course (cont.)

You will find in the course schedule six different variations on the dissertation course, each with its own unique number:

EDC 399R	EDC 399W
EDC 699R	EDC 699W
EDC 999R	EDC 999W

The first distinction is between ‘R’ and ‘W’. These are sequential (think ‘R’ for “research” and ‘W’ for “writing”). You will take the dissertation ‘R’ course (EDC _99R) first and only once.

NOTE: You are expected to present a formal dissertation proposal to your committee for approval during the ‘R’ semester. Every semester thereafter, regardless of your proposal status, you should register for the dissertation ‘W’ course.

Furthermore, you will notice that each designation is offered in three, six, and nine-hour increments every Fall and Spring semester⁴. Our department (C&I) requires a minimum of six-hours of registration each long semester beyond candidacy. If you are employed full-time (40 hours or more) off-campus, you may petition to drop your registration to three hours; a letter of employer verification is required. If you are appointed with a graduate assistantship (TA, AI, GRA), or if you hold a scholarship, fellowship, or other form of financial aid, you may be required to register for nine hours.

The Dissertation Proposal

A proposal should be formally presented to your committee during your first semester of dissertation (i.e., EDC _99R). You are responsible for coordinating a suitable date and time with your committee members. *At least 4 committee members must be present.* Once the date and time are agreed upon, you should contact the Graduate Coordinator who will find and reserve a room for the meeting. At that time, the GC will post notices around the Department making the meeting public⁵. The GC will also notify your supervisor and provide the Approval of Dissertation Proposal form. The supervisor should bring this approval form to the meeting.

If you wish to utilize audio/visual media (e.g., PowerPoint) in your presentation, or if one of your committee members will attend remotely by conference call, you will need to request the necessary equipment from the Learning Technology Center via their website:
<http://reservations.edb.utexas.edu/welcome.htm>

If you need additional time to present the proposal beyond your first semester of dissertation, you should petition the C&I Graduate Adviser. If you were allowed to register for EDC 399R by virtue of full-time employment, that privilege may be revoked and you may be required to register for 6 hours until your proposal is finally approved. If after 2 semesters, you still have not presented a proposal to your committee, it may be determined that you are making unsatisfactory progress and you could be dropped from the program by vote of the C&I GSC.

⁴ Summer dissertation courses are only offered for the *whole* summer session (i.e., not as *first* or *second* session.) Three hours (any session) is considered full-time registration for summer.

⁵ By vote of the GSC in 1988, proposal meetings must be posted and made public within the department. Please provide a working title of the dissertation to be included in the posting.