

PhD Timeline for Full-time Students

First Year

First Semester: Planning your Committee

- **Faculty:** Get to know the faculty in your area of interest as soon as you can:
 - Take a class
 - Make an appointment
- **Graduate Chair:** Talk to the Graduate Chair for suggestions for faculty in the areas you are interested in or for advice on choosing a permanent adviser.
- **Permanent Adviser:** Start making plans for your permanent adviser and think about other faculty as potential committee members.
- **Committee Members:** Work with the permanent adviser to identify additional committee members.

Second Semester: Finalizing your Committee

- **Appointment of Supervisory Committee:**
 - Finalize your Committee with the faculty who you choose to be the Adviser/Chair
 - Meet with them individually or as a group, if that can be arranged.
 - File your “Appointment of Supervisory Committee” form:
<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/degrees/doctoral.shtml>
- **Program of Studies (POS):**
 - **POS:** The POS is a contract with Grad Studies/English that outlines your plan to meet the credit requirements for PhD.
 - **Meeting:** Arrange to meet with at least 3 faculty members (chair and 2 English Faculty); include the outside member if you can. The outside member may be suggested by the Adviser/Chair.
 - **Discussion:** At the meeting with the full committee (or at least the 2 English faculty) you should go over your Program of Study:
<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/degrees/doctoral.shtml>
 - **Credit Requirements:**
 - You will need a *minimum of 90 credits* for the PhD.
 - The PhD Handbook recommends *24-34 credits* of course work at UNL if credits are transferred from MA or MFA.
 - *Up to 36 credits are allowed to transfer.*
 - The balance for the required 90 credits will be made up by *dissertation credits*.
 - You may end up taking *more than 90 credits*.
 - **Transcripts:** Be prepared with transcript copies for language requirement and courses you plan to transfer. Remember: you take the transcript with you –not the POS.
 - **When to File?** The POS must be filed by the student with the English Graduate Office and Graduate Studies office prior to completion of 45 credits. If you plan to use 36 transfer credits and you are enrolled full time the first semester (9

credits), you are already at 45 credits. This is the reason for completing your advising committee and the POS by the end of the second semester.

- **Remember:** Filing of the POS starts the “clock” for the eight-year limit to complete the PhD.

Second Year

- **Language requirement** should be determined and courses taken if necessary. Review the Handbook for language requirements. Once the student and supervisory committee have determined how the language requirement will be fulfilled, the adviser should inform the English Graduate Office **in writing** when the student has met the language requirement.
- **Complete all Coursework:** By the end of the second year, all coursework should be completed (those who are doing a specialization-Ethnic Studies, Great Plains, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Nineteenth-Century Studies, and Women’s and Gender Studies-may need additional time to complete courses).
- **Start Planning Reading Lists:** In preparation for your examinations, start working with your advisor on your reading lists.

Third Year

- **Dissertation Credits:** After the course work is completed, the student will register for dissertation credits as needed.
- **Reading Lists:** Reading lists should be approved by the student supervisory committee and the Graduate Committee prior to taking the Comprehensive Examination. See Handbook for more information.
- **Field, Focus, and Capstone Oral comprehensive exams:**
 - Exams should be completed in the third or fourth year of the program.
 - The Capstone Oral should be taken immediately after completing the Field and/or Focus exam and cannot be waived. At least three committee members should attend the Capstone Oral.
 - If a student is not on campus, the Capstone may be held as a phone conference meeting. The Graduate Office will help make the arrangements.
- **Application for Admission to Candidacy:** The “Application for Admission to Candidacy” form is usually presented at the Capstone Oral exam. This form requires the signatures of the entire supervisory committee including the outside member. The Capstone Oral exam is the best time to get the signatures when most of the committee members are attending the exam.

Fourth and Fifth Year

- **Examinations:** If the comprehensive exams haven’t been completed, the student should be making this a priority!
- **Candidacy (ABD):**

- **Gaining Candidacy:** The expectation is that a student will gain candidacy by the *end of the fourth year*.
- Gaining candidacy (all but dissertation) is important for many reasons. Graduate Studies will do a program check at this point by comparing the Program of Studies with the student's transcripts. Any discrepancies are noted on the memo confirming admission to candidacy. The student Adviser will contact Graduate Studies with any substitutions needed to clear the discrepancies satisfactorily.
- **Certification of Full-time Status:** Once in candidacy, the student will be required to register for one credit to remain active in the program. A student may apply online for certification of full-time status if full-time registration is required for financial aid, to defer student loans and to maintain student exemption status for taxes. See the webpage for requirements for the full-time status certification.
- **Timing:** A student must be in candidacy or have filed for candidacy **at least seven months** prior to the final oral examination for the dissertation. *Candidacy and defending the dissertation should not happen within the same semester!*
- **Dissertation**
 - **Prospectus:** The dissertation prospectus and a timeline for finishing the dissertation should be approved by the student's supervisory committee
 - **Plan Completion of Program:** Once the dissertation is near completion, drafts have been shared with committee members, and any changes made to the committee (if needed), the student should make plans for the completion of the program.
 - **Submitting Dissertation to Committee:** The student must give the final draft of the dissertation to his/her committee members at least a month before the deadline for approval of the manuscript. Designated readers should have the draft at least 7 weeks before the dissertation is due in Graduate Studies.
- **Completion of Program:** The semester the student plans to complete the program (graduate) there are several deadlines to be met.
 - 1. File the **Application for Degree** must be filed by the designated deadline: September for a December graduation or January for a May graduation.
 - 2. Student arranges/schedules the Final Oral with at least 3 faculty committee members (may include the outside member). The date/time of the final oral must be stated on the Application for Final Oral, which is filed at least 3 weeks before the date of the oral.
 - 3. The **Application for Final Oral Exam** form must be filed (seven months after achieving candidacy) three weeks before the final oral is scheduled to take place. See handbook for more detail and the Graduate Studies "Current Students" / "Forms and Deadlines" webpage.
 - 4. **Final Checklist:** The filing of the Application for Final Oral form will trigger Graduate Studies (Eva Bachman) to send the student the final packet information. This is a website containing a checklist of final forms required for the completion of the program. Information about the electronic filing, Report on Completion of Doctoral Form, and other information will help the student with the filing of the dissertation.

The Graduate Studies website has the deadlines for graduation each term:

<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/degrees/doctoral.shtml>

Brief Overview

First Year	
First Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan your Committee
Second Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File “Appointment of Supervisory Committee” form • File “Program of Studies” form
Second Year	
First Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue coursework as outlined on POS form
Second Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all coursework • Start planning reading lists
Third Year	
First Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings lists should be all approved
Second Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Field, Focus, and Capstone Oral comprehensive exams • File “Application for Admission to Candidacy” form
Fourth Year	
First Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on Dissertation
Second Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on Dissertation
Fifth Year	
First Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on Dissertation
Second Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Dissertation to Committee • File “Application for Degree” form • File “Application for Final Oral Examination” form • Complete Final Oral Examination (Dissertation Defense)