

I. Dissertation prospectus

A dissertation prospectus is a proposal for the topic and making of the dissertation, as well as a research plan necessary for the writing of the dissertation.

II. The Committee

1. The examining committee for the dissertation prospectus should be the same as the committee for the student's Doctoral Committee.
2. The committee should consist of five regular faculty members and the selection should be made by the DGS with consultation of the student.
3. Students are permitted to invite scholars from outside the program or from other institutions to serve on the committee. Three of the committee members, however, must be regular members of this department. Outside members have to be approved by the DGS and advisor, who will submit a [Report of Doctoral Committee Composition](#) for approval by The Graduate School.

III. Submission of the dissertation prospectus to the Committee

1. Students are expected to begin formal discussion with their advisor about their dissertation proposal during the preparation for the Doctoral Examination.
2. After a dissertation topic is proposed and approved by the advisor, the student should begin to draft a dissertation prospectus.
3. The prospectus should be carefully developed in consultation with the advisor. The student should inform the members of the student's dissertation committee about the development of the prospectus and solicit advice or questions for improvement before the exam.
4. A final draft of the dissertation prospectus should normally be submitted to the committee at least 2 weeks before the scheduled oral defense of the prospectus.

IV. Scheduling an oral defense for the dissertation prospectus

1. The defense of the dissertation prospectus can coincide with the preliminary oral exam. If the prospectus is not defended in the oral exam, this defense should take place within four months of the written exams of the Doctoral Examination.
2. Students who enter as MA students are advised to complete their exams and oral defense of the prospectus by the end of their 8th semester. For those who enter as PhD students, the exam and defense will take place by the fourth semester; if the PhD student has a minor, the exam and defense will be completed by the fifth semester.

V. The content of the dissertation prospectus

1. The dissertation prospectus should consist of a narrative description of the dissertation project in no more than 15 double-space pages, a substantial bibliography, and a list of images critical to the dissertation project with all images included as an appendix.
2. The prospectus must 1) present the thesis and questions to address in the dissertation project; 2) engage with relevant scholarship to explain why the proposed work needs doing and what the potential significance of the results might be; 3) elaborate the theoretical perspective(s) or methodology for the proposed research; 4) offer a chapter-

by-chapter overview of the dissertation; and 5) demonstrate the student's broad familiarity with research materials and relevant primary and secondary literature.

VI. Criteria for passing the dissertation prospectus

1. The prospectus should include the components outlined above with a clearly structured narrative and organization.
2. The prospectus provides a valid research topic in the proposed field(s) of study.
3. The proposed research must be practical in its scope, and it must be based on research materials that are largely attainable.
4. It shows potential to make contributions to the specific field(s) or art history in general.

VII. Approval or Disapproval of the dissertation prospectus

A. Approval:

1. A student passes the defense after the approval of a majority of the examining committee members. Committee members will then sign off on the report to be submitted to The Graduate School.
2. In the case that the prospectus has errors, problems, or missing components and should be revised, but in the judgment of the majority of the committee members, it meets the criteria, the defense should be considered successful. The committee, however, can request that the student submit a revision afterwards. OR, the committee may, at its discretion, require revision of the prospectus as a condition of final acceptance.

B. Disapproval:

1. A student fails to pass the defense if a majority of the examining committee members find the prospectus unacceptable.
2. If a student does not defend the dissertation prospectus successfully, the advisor will report the result to the DGS, who will file a document to be kept in the student's file.
3. A second defense may not be scheduled until at least three months after the first defense.
4. In order to be admitted to Ph.D. candidacy (becoming ABD), students must defend the prospectus successfully.
5. A student who fails to pass the defense the second time becomes academically ineligible to continue in the program.

Note:

For the University regulations related to the Dissertation Prospectus, see the section, Doctoral Degree Requirements, in the *Graduate School Handbook*. Here is the weblink to the section: <http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html>