

University Requirements for Ph.D.

There are three fundamental requirements for the Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins University: **dissertation, residence, and oral examination**. None of these requirements can be modified or changed without unanimous consent of the schools and the Provost.

1. **Dissertation:** All Ph.D. students must successfully complete a dissertation in accordance with relevant school and program guidelines prior to degree conferral.
2. **Residence:** All Ph.D. students must successfully complete one academic year (two consecutive semesters or four consecutive terms) of full-time study, on campus, prior to degree conferralⁱ.
3. **Oral Examination:** All Ph.D. students must successfully pass a required oral examination conducted by five faculty members. The oral examination must include at least two members from outside of the candidate's home department, one of whom serves as chair of the examination committee.

It is university policy that all program and university requirements for the Ph.D. must be completed in 9 years or less from start of the doctoral programⁱⁱ. The Doctor of Philosophy Board reviews all candidates for the Ph.D. prior to conferral to ensure that the fundamental requirements for the Ph.D. have been met within the timeframe delineatedⁱⁱⁱ.

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- i. In Fall 2020, the Board voted that as an accommodation for the special circumstances during COVID-19, the university's Doctor of Philosophy Board will deem any Ph.D. student enrolled full time in all of academic year 20/21 as having satisfied the residency requirement for the Ph.D.
 - ii. Maximum time to degree of 9 years becomes effective for students enrolled Fall 2019 or later. Students enrolled before Fall 2019 have a maximum time to degree of 12 years.
 - iii. In Spring 2020, the Board voted to accept any exceptions directly related to COVID-19 as endorsed and approved by the student's home school and academic board.

Section 1: Dissertation:

A. Fundamental Requirement: All Ph.D. students must successfully complete a dissertation in accordance with relevant school and program guidelines prior to degree conferral.

B. Approval of the Dissertation

- i. While schools may create policies requiring or allowing any number of faculty to serve on a final dissertation defense committee and/or to approve the final PhD dissertation, the university requires that the PhD dissertation *must be read and approved* by at least two readers.
- ii. The official dissertation readers must be JHU faculty at the rank of assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor. This may include JHU full time or JHU part time faculty, visiting faculty, or emeritus faculty if they also hold the titles of assistant, associate, or full professor.
 - a. Exceptions allowing a scholar external to the university to serve as an official reader for a particular student's dissertation must be approved by the relevant divisional process.
 - b. Divisions seeking to allow JHU faculty whose titles are different from above to routinely serve as or be eligible to be reader(s) must submit their proposed policy about composition of the final readers to the Doctor of Philosophy Board for approval.
- iii. The two official readers are responsible for submitting a signed document recommending acceptance of the dissertation. This document should testify that the work is a significant contribution to knowledge worthy of publication in its present form or with appropriate modifications and that it is worthy of acceptance in partial fulfillment of the University requirements for the Ph.D. It must contain the student's full name and the complete final title of the dissertation. The document must either be an official JHU form (created by the division) or must be on letterhead. It must be signed by both readers, and include the readers' ranks, titles, departments, and schools. For readers external to the university, the document must include their title and institution.

C. Guidelines for Preparation of the Dissertation

- i. Every student must submit their dissertation to the library in accordance with the formatting, fair use and copyright, and embargo guidelines found in [appendix].

Section 2: Residence

A. **Fundamental Requirement:** All Ph.D. students must successfully complete one academic year (two consecutive semesters or four consecutive terms) of full-time study, on campus, prior to degree conferralⁱ.

Section 3: Oral Examination

A. **Fundamental Requirement:** All Ph.D. students must successfully pass a required oral examination conducted by five faculty members. The oral examination must include at least two members from outside of the candidate's home department, one of whom serves as chair of the examination committee.

B. Composition of the Oral Exam Committee:

- i. The oral exam committee shall be comprised of five members.
- ii. Two or three of these members must be from the candidate's home department/program.⁴
- iii. Two or three of these members must be from JHU departments that are outside of the candidate's home department/program.
- iv. At least three of the five must be at the rank of assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor. This may include full time or part time faculty, visiting faculty, or emeritus faculty if they also hold the titles of assistant, associate, or full professor.
- v. The Chair of the Doctoral Oral Exam Committee must be a JHU faculty member who a) is from outside the candidate's home department/program and b) is either full-time faculty holding the rank of Professor or Associate Professor or faculty holding the rank of Emeritus Professor.
- vi. Two alternates must be selected such that, if someone on the exam committee should become unable to attend, above requirements will still all be met. These are suggested to be one from the candidate's home department/program, and one from a JHU department outside of the candidate's home department/program.
- vii. If a committee member, the student's advisor is considered an inside department/program examiner even if their primary faculty appointment is outside of the department/program sponsoring the candidate.
- viii. A committee member external to JHU is not prohibited by university rules; it is at the school's discretion whether to allow this. If schools allow this option, they must determine relevant criteria, as well as the procedure, by which external members are selected and approved.

⁴ Divisions may specify the administrative structure used to define "inside" and "outside" to be consistently applied across all Doctoral Oral Exams for the students in that Division.

C. Possible Outcomes of Doctoral Oral Exams:

- i. There are three potential outcomes that can be decided by the Doctoral Oral Exam Committee: (1) unconditional pass; (2) conditional pass, and (3) fail.
 - a. (1) Unconditional Pass means that the student has successfully completed the exam to the satisfaction of the committee.
 - b. (2) Conditional Pass means that the committee will require the student to remedy some knowledge gap, weakness, or error exhibited in the exam.
 1. Conditions will vary by student and program.
 2. Conditions must be specific and must be documented.
 3. Conditions must be submitted, along with the exam result, to the relevant academic committee per rules of the JHU School or Division.
 4. The deadline by which the condition must be met must be specified.
 5. Divisions must have rules about the maximum time allowed for a PhD student to meet such conditions.
 6. A member(s) of the oral exam committee who is not the student's advisor will be named as the person(s) to certify if the condition has been met.
 7. That member(s) must write a letter to the relevant academic committee citing if the student has (a) met the conditions and has effectively now passed the oral exam; or (b) if the student has more conditions to complete or (c) if the student has effectively failed the exam.
- ii. (3) Fail indicates that the committee has determined there is a serious deficit in the student's preparation and ability which cannot be remedied by conditions.
 - a. Students will be given the opportunity to retake the Doctoral Oral Exam only one additional time. If a student fails their Doctoral Oral Exam twice, they will be dismissed from the PhD program.