February 7, 2012
( Last update: 01/24/12)

Handouts of the Graduate Faculty Council
Doctor of Philosophy

The doctor of philosophy degree is a research degree. It is awarded in recognition of demonstrated mastery of subject matter in a chosen field of study and demonstrated competence in the conduct of an individual research investigation that represents a significant contribution to the cumulative knowledge of the field. The program of study and research will be planned and supervised by an advisory committee. Each candidate’s course work and research topic must be approved by the advisory committee as meeting the standards generally associated with the doctoral degree.

The doctoral student must comply with the requirements on this page, the requirements of their program, and complete any necessary forms to document their progress with the Graduate School.

Individual programs may have higher standards, and students are expected to know their program’s requirements.

Residency Requirements

- A minimum of two-thirds of the required non-research course-work credits required for the degree must be taken through Michigan Tech. PhD students must take at least 20 credits beyond the masters or 50 credits beyond the bachelors through Michigan Tech.
- Research credits used to satisfy degree requirements must be taken through Michigan Tech and must be supervised by a member of Michigan Tech graduate faculty.

Courses which meet the "through Michigan Tech" requirement are defined as courses listed in the Michigan Tech course catalog and taught by Michigan Tech faculty.

Credit Requirements

Minimum requirements

Programs may have stricter requirements than listed here and may require more than the minimum numbers of credits listed here.

- Thirty credits beyond the bachelor’s degree are required for a master’s degree.
- Thirty credits beyond the master’s degree are required for a PhD.
- Maximum of 12 credits may be at the 3000 or 4000 level (with program approval).
- One-third of the non-research credits may be transfer credits as long as they were not applied toward another degree.
- Research credits are the only non-graded classes that may be counted toward a degree.
Unallowable credits

- Courses numbered below 3000
- Audited courses
- Continuous enrollment courses (ex: UN5951, UN5953)
- Non-research courses taken for a pass/fail grade
- Credits applied toward another degree (see exceptions below)

Special Exceptions

- Peace Corps Master’s International students may use 2 credits of language courses below the 3000 level.
- One-third of the non-research/non-practicum credits earned at Michigan Tech may be reused to earn an additional master’s degree in accordance with Graduate School policy.
- Students in an accelerated master’s program may apply up to 6 of the credits earned while an undergraduate toward both their bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accordance with University policy.

Academic Progress

Students must be in good standing to earn a graduate degree.

Time Limits

All work for the master’s degree must be completed within five calendar years of the first enrollment in the degree program or earliest course listed on the degree schedule, whichever is earliest. All work for the PhD must be completed within eight calendar years of the first enrollment in the degree program or earliest course listed on the degree schedule, whichever is earliest. Requests for extension must be made by the advisor to the Graduate School.

Advisor

Faculty who advise graduate students must be members of the Michigan Tech graduate faculty. These individuals advise students on course selection and supervise the students’ research. All graduate students must have an advisor.

Each student’s advisor must hold a regular or adjunct appointment in the student’s administrative home department or school. At least one of the co-advisors must hold a regular or adjunct appointment in the student’s administrative home department or school.

- While one co-advisor may be from outside the student's administrative home department or school, it is recommended (but not required) that this co-advisor not also serve as the external member of the student's committee.
- Before recommending a sole advisor who holds an adjunct appointment in the student's administrative home department or school, the appropriate graduate program director

Comment [J H1]: Question for the GFC - do we want to keep this? Do we want to allow faculty with adjunct appointments in a unit to be the primary advisor for a student in that unit or not? Currently we do. I recommend this continue, but would like the GFC's advice.

Comment [J H2]: Ditto
should ensure that this person is sufficiently familiar with the department/school standards for research and with applicable university policies/procedures and that this person can maintain adequate contact with the student.

Students who enter the University may initially be advised by the graduate program director for their degree program.

A permanent advisor should be chosen prior to the end of the second academic semester in residence.

Advisory Committee

The advisory committee consists of at least three members of the graduate faculty in addition to the advisor. The membership of the committee is recommended to the dean of the Graduate School by the advisor and the chair/graduate program director of the student’s academic home department or school or program using the Advisor and Committee Recommendation form. At least one member of the committee must be external to the student’s academic home department or school. For students in non-departmental graduate programs, the external member must not be affiliated with the non-departmental program. If co-advisors are chosen and one co-advisor is from outside the student's home department or school, it is recommended, but not required, that an additional external member be chosen.

The advisory committee typically administers the student’s final oral examination and may administer the preliminary comprehensive and candidacy exams. The advisory committee should be appointed prior to the end of the student’s third academic semester in residence.

Comprehensive Examination

A comprehensive examination will be given to determine each student’s ability to apply general concepts and methods in their chosen field. This examination must include a written component and may also include an oral component.

The examination will be prepared and administered by members of the Graduate Faculty who are familiar with the examinee’s chosen field of study. The examining committee may be a standing committee appointed by the academic home department or school or it may consist of a student’s advisory committee. Any member of the graduate faculty may attend the oral examination as an observer.

Satisfactory performance on the comprehensive examination is required for students to maintain good progress toward completion of their degree.

The comprehensive examination should be administered prior to the end of the fourth academic semester in residence at Michigan Tech. It must be given no later than five years after enrollment. It must be given at least two terms before the final oral defense.
Candidacy Examination

A candidacy examination will be given to determine each student’s readiness to conduct and complete an independent research project that will contribute to the body of knowledge in their chosen field. This examination must include an oral component and may also include a written component.

The examination will be prepared and administered by members of the Graduate Faculty who are familiar with the examinee’s chosen field of study. The examining committee may be a standing committee appointed by the academic home department or school or it may consist of a student’s advisory committee. Any member of the graduate faculty may attend the oral examination as an observer.

Satisfactory performance on the candidacy examination is required for students to maintain good progress toward completion of their degree. Completion of the candidacy examination is required prior to students entering research-only mode.

The candidacy examination should be administered prior to the end of the sixth academic semester in residence at Michigan Tech. It must be given no later than six years after enrollment. It must be given at least one term before the final oral defense.

Dissertation

The research undertaken as part of the doctoral degree program will be presented in the form of a dissertation that will be a permanent acquisition of the library. Any classified or proprietary material that cannot be made available to the public is not acceptable as a dissertation. Completing the dissertation requires preparation of the document according to Graduate School guidelines, and submitting the completed (and successfully defended) dissertation to the Graduate School.

A completed draft of the dissertation must be approved by the advisory committee chair two weeks prior to the final examination.

Final Oral Examination

At a public final oral examination, primarily concerning the research and doctoral dissertation, the candidate should justify the validity of the methods and conclusions contained in the dissertation and should demonstrate familiarity with the significance of the study in relation to the existing body of knowledge.

The examining committee will be appointed by the Graduate School in consultation with the department chair or school dean of the student’s academic home unit. The student’s advisory committee will typically serve as the examining committee. In all cases the examining committee will consist of at least four members of the graduate faculty. At least one of these will be from outside the student's administrative home department or school. The primary advisor, or a co-advisor who serves as chair of the committee, must be from the student's home department or...
school. While one co-advisor may be from outside the student's administrative home department, it is recommended, but not required, that this co-advisor not fill the role of sole external member on the student's committee. For interdisciplinary and non-departmental programs, the outside examiner may not be affiliated with the interdisciplinary or non-departmental program. A person external to Michigan Tech may be appointed as an ad hoc member of the Graduate Faculty to serve as the outside examiner. Persons who are not members of the Graduate Faculty may not serve as voting members of doctoral examination committees.

The examination will be scheduled by filing a Pre-defense form with the Graduate School.

The date of the examination must be at least two weeks following the approval of the completed draft of the dissertation by the advisor and distribution of the completed draft of the dissertation to the examining committee.

The examination may be given two terms following successful completion of the comprehensive examination and one term following successful completion of the candidacy examination. The student’s examination results must be reported to the Graduate School on the Report on Oral Exam form (D8).
Select Advisor

Purpose: Advises student on courses/research
Requirements:
• Member of Graduate Faculty
• Regular or adjunct appointment in student’s administrative home department
Recommended Timing:
• At start may be Graduate Program Director
• Permanent advisor chosen within 1 (post master’s) or 2 (post bachelor’s) academic semesters after start

Select Advisory Committee

Purpose: Advises student on courses/research
Provides cognate expertise
Contributes diverse perspectives
Promotes cross-disciplinary communications
Requirements:
• Members of Graduate Faculty
• Minimum of one from outside student’s academic home department
Recommended Timing:
• Appointed within 2 (post master’s) or 3 (post bachelor’s) academic semesters after start

Pass Comprehensive Examination

Purpose: Test of disciplinary knowledge
Examiners: Standing Committee or Advisory Committee
Format: Written and/or oral
Timing:
• Recommended: Within 3 (post master’s) or 4 (post bachelor’s) academic semesters after start
• Required: No more than 5 years after start

Pass Candidacy Exam

Purpose: Test of capability to conduct independent research
Examiners: Standing Committee or Advisory Committee
Format: Written and/or oral
Timing:
• Recommended: Within 4 (post master’s) or 6 (post bachelor’s) academic semesters after start
• Required: No more than 6 years after start

Prepare Dissertation

Purpose: Written description of research
Recommended timing for completion:
• Within 6 (post master’s) or 10 (post bachelor’s) academic semesters after start

Pass Final Oral Defense

Purpose: Public defense of research
Recommended timing for completion:
• Within 6 (post master’s) or 10 (post bachelor’s) academic semesters after start

Complete Degree Requirements

Purpose: Leads to awarding of degree
Requirements:
• Final dissertation approved
• All paperwork
Recommended timing for completion:
• Within 8 years after start
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Time Limit for Comprehensive Exam

Time Limit for Candidacy Exam

Time Limit for PhD Completion