

Ph.D. Dissertation Policy

Department of Kinesiology • Michigan State University • East Lansing MI 48824 •
<http://www.education.msu.edu/kin>

Last Approved 4/10/15.

Policies

1. The dissertation is the culminating experience of the PhD program. The dissertation is a demonstration of the student's ability to conceptualize, conduct, and communicate independent, original research focused on physical activity kinesiology. Original research is research that adds new knowledge to the discipline of kinesiology. A dissertation shall consist of a written report of original research. The format of the dissertation is prescribed by the Graduate School (<http://grad.msu.edu/format.htm>).
2. A traditional dissertation includes: (a) front matter – title page, acknowledgments, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, and abstracts (see description below); (b) introduction; (c) review of literature; (d) methods; (e) results; (f) discussion; (g) recommendations; (h) references; and (i) appendices with information such as human subjects approval, copies of instruments, and raw data.
3. A multiple manuscripts presentation of the dissertation may be used for the written dissertation if approved by the dissertation committee at the time of the dissertation proposal defense. A multiple manuscript presentation of the dissertation needs to adhere to the following criteria:
 - a. The publishable manuscripts need to be related (e.g., a common theme, qualitative and quantitative reports from the same study, different sets of variables from the same study, the same general population group, etc.).
 - b. Each of the manuscripts stands on its own – i.e., the manuscripts must be discrete – each with its own Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, and Discussion sections, Figures, Tables, and References, as appropriate.
 - c. The manuscripts must be tied together with a general Introduction chapter that introduces the general theme and overview of the dissertation, and a Summary/Discussion chapter that integrates the major findings of the manuscripts.
 - d. At most **ONE** of the manuscripts can be a critical review of the literature (a systematic or integrated review) that is broader than the literature review provided for each article (i.e. a state of the field type of article).
 - e. If a manuscript has already been published, the manuscript must include a preface that:
 - i. Contains the complete citation for publication with a list of all authors
 - ii. Explains contribution of each author to article, including if this paper has been included as a part of another dissertation
 - iii. Contains a copy of the written permission from the publisher (who generally holds the copy right) to reprint the article

4. Abstracts. Two abstracts are required regardless of traditional or multiple manuscript presentation of the dissertation. In addition to the scientific/ technical abstract, an abstract targeting a lay audience is required and must be approved by the dissertation committee prior to submission of the dissertation to the graduate school.
5. The dissertation committee shall consist of at least four regular faculty members, at least three of whom, including the dissertation director, possess an earned doctoral degree. Two members of the committee must be regular faculty members with appointments in the Department of Kinesiology.
 - a. Additional voting or non-voting members may be selected in addition to the four regular faculty members required by University policy. Additional members could include, for example, a faculty member from another university or research center or an off-campus professional involved in the planning and/or execution of the project.
 - b. The membership of the dissertation committee may be different from the membership of the student's guidance committee, and the dissertation director may be a different person than the student's advisor.
6. The student shall prepare, present, and defend a dissertation proposal that includes the title page and introduction, literature review, and methods chapters of the proposed dissertation research (in case of the multiple manuscript format, an outline of the manuscripts will be included as part of the proposal). The completed written proposal must be provided to all committee members at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled proposal defense date. Approval of the proposal by the committee is required before the final dissertation defense can be scheduled.
7. Generally, the dissertation proposal presentation should consist of a 15-30 minute talk in which the student briefly outlines the rationale and proposed methods for the study. After the presentation, the audience may address a brief period of questions to the student. After the question/answer period, the dissertation committee will meet privately with the student to engage in scholarly inquiry and discussion about the dissertation and to address any specific concerns. The student will then be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates on the outcome of the defense of the proposal. The committee shall decide on one of four outcomes: approved with no changes, approved with changes (student's dissertation director to be the final arbiter of the revised proposal), approved with changes (revision to be resubmitted to all committee members for re-evaluation), or rejected. Following these deliberations, the student will be apprised of the committee's decision.
8. If the project will involve research using human subjects, laboratory animals, or hazardous substances, an application must be submitted to the appropriate university review board. Approval by the appropriate university review board is required before any data collection begins.

9. Upon conclusion of the research, the student shall prepare, present, and defend the written dissertation. The final defense meeting serves as the student's final certifying examination. This final presentation and defense shall follow the same procedures outlined above for the proposal defense, with the addition of a brief oral summary of the results, discussion, and recommendations.
10. The proposal defense presentation and the defense of the completed dissertation shall be open to the public. The dissertation director shall notify the Graduate Studies Secretary at least 14 days in advance of defense, and the Graduate Studies Secretary shall notify KIN faculty and graduate students within 7 days in advance of the defense. Notification shall be via email and written notices posted on the Graduate Studies bulletin board by the Graduate Studies Secretary.
11. Remote Participation in a Dissertation Proposal and/or Defense - A majority of the members of a Dissertation Examining Committee must be present either remotely or physically in the examination room during the entire dissertation proposal and/or defense and during the committee's private deliberations following the examination. Participation by telephone/video conference/Skype is permitted for 2 of the 4 committee members. Remote participation by either telephone/video conferencing/Skype is permitted under the following circumstances, although all parties should be present if possible:
 - Permission to conduct a telephone/video conference/Skype proposal and/or defense must be obtained from the dissertation chair in advance.
 - All parties involved should make sure that the technology needs are in place and working prior to the start of the proposal and/or defense.
 - The candidate must request permission from the dissertation chair to participate remotely in the examination.
 - The dissertation chair may be at a remote site, however another on-site committee member must assume role of facilitator during the candidates oral presentation and questions from the guests.
 - If costs are involved, the Department will assume responsibility.
 - It is the responsibility of the candidate to inform the Graduate Secretary as to the date and time and to initiate the procedure to obtain electronic signatures from all participants.
12. Electronic copies of the completed dissertation must be filed with the Graduate School and the Department of Kinesiology. Electronic (bound, if requested) copies of the completed dissertation should be provided to the dissertation director and all members of the dissertation committee.
13. The student and dissertation committee must comply with MSU guidelines on Research Data: Management, Control, and Access (http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/regs/regs_index.htm). According to those guidelines, research data for projects conducted at MSU or under the auspices of MSU are the property of MSU. Therefore, students must insure that dissertation data remain at MSU. The student may take a copy of the data when s/he leaves the university. The Research Data: Management, Control, and Access guidelines provide additional information on this topic, including procedures for requesting transfer of data to a different institution.

The following information was provided by the MSU Graduate School in May 2007.

- Full time status for doctoral students is defined as a minimum of 1 credit for those students who: (a) have successfully completed all comprehensive examinations and are actively engaged in dissertation research or (b) are doing department-approved off-campus fieldwork related to preparation of their dissertation.
- The new publishing agreement for thesis/dissertations with ProQuest now provides an “Open Access Publishing Option” as an alternative to the traditional publishing option available to our students. The Open Access option gives ProQuest the authorization to make the electronic version of the document accessible to all via the internet, including the selling of the document by commercial retailers and the accessibility to the work via search engines. A student selecting the Open Access option will not be eligible to receive royalties. The pros and cons of selecting this new option differ significantly across disciplines and the graduate handbook could be a way to inform students of benefits and problems associated with each option. For more information visit:
http://proquest.com/products_umi/dissertations/epoa.shtml

The following information was provided by the MSU Graduate School in May, 2011.

□ ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS OF THESES & DISSERTATIONS:

Graduate handbooks must indicate that MSU only accepts electronic theses and dissertations submitted via ProQuest. The instructions for electronic submissions are available from <http://grad.msu.edu/etd/>.

The target date for the FINAL APPROVAL of an electronic Thesis or Dissertation to the Graduate School for graduating the semester of that submission is FIVE working days prior to the first day of classes for the next semester (see future target dates below). Be aware that a submission via ProQuest does not mean that the document has been ACCEPTED. The review process is interactive and final approval can take anywhere from a few hours to weeks, depending upon the extent of the necessary revisions and how diligent the author is when making the necessary revisions.

Graduation on the semester of the electronic submission is only guaranteed if the document is APPROVED on or before the target date for that semester

□ NEW EXIT SURVEYS:

A new short online exit survey for all students graduating with a Plan A or Plan B masters or with a Doctoral degree was introduced May 9th of 2011. Only students who have applied for graduation will have access to the survey. The survey asks questions about educational experiences in MSU graduate programs, as well as about immediate professional plans. The Graduate School uses data from this survey when reviewing graduate programs and to guide decisions about services and initiatives for graduate students. The identity of all respondents will be kept confidential and only aggregate (group) information

will be made available to faculty and administrators. The students will receive an e-mail message from the dean of the graduate school with a link to the survey.

However, students do not need to wait for that e-mail message to complete the survey after applying for graduation. It takes about 5-10 minutes to complete the online survey. Instructions for completing the survey are available from <http://grad.msu.edu/etd/>