

GUIDEBOOK OF PROCEDURES

PH.D. DEGREE

TEACHING AND LEARNING DEPARTMENT



Spring 2020

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Welcome to the Department of Teaching and Learning! We hope your study with us is stimulating and rewarding. This document contains information about the programs in the department, the general guidelines, and various policies and procedures. In general, a good rule of thumb is to consult both the handbook AND your advisor if you have any questions along the way. Or, if there is something that neither the handbook nor your advisor can answer, always feel free to contact the Director of Graduate Studies, Ilana Horn (ilana.horn@vanderbilt.edu).

ONLINE RESOURCES

The website for PhD students for the department of Teaching and Learning can be found here: https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/departments/tl/graduate_programs/doctoral_programs/handbooks_and_forms.php
The site is likely to be updated more often than this document is, so it is often a good place to consult first. This site also has information about important forms you need in your progress toward completion of your degree program.

Other sites that you might want to bookmark that pertain to the college/university include:

*** Peabody College Policies:**

<https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/admin-offices/deans-office/college-policies/>

VU Graduate School handbook: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/catalogs/graduate/graduate-school/>

Information for International Students: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/iss/>

Information about health care:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/stuaccts/graduate/health-insurance.php>

* Note that Peabody Policies take precedence over any information in this handbook, as they are kept up by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

PROGRAMS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

There are four PhD programs in the department: Language, Literacy, and Culture (LLC), Justice and Diversity in Education (JDE), Mathematics and Science Education (MSE), and Learning and Design (L & D). Students are admitted into a program based on their interests and background, but it is no problem to change to a different program if interests change. All students are required to take 72 credit hours in order to graduate. Some of these are core courses that all PhD students in the department take, others are specialized to specific programs and based on students' interests.

Students must be enrolled in courses EVERY SINGLE SEMESTER until graduation; after 72 credits have been reached, students can enroll in EDUC 9999 (dissertation credits) for 0 credits to be considered a full time student (see below for more detail).

Core Credits (24-27 hours) *everyone takes these*

- Statistical Inference (PSY-GS 8858) (3 credits)
- Inquiry into Education (EDUC 8010) (3 credits)
- Learning and Instruction (EDUC 8030) (3 credits)

- Diversity and Equity in Education (EDUC 8040) (3 credits)*
- Teaching as Social Practice (EDUC 8020) (3 credits)
- Research Methods: Two courses selected in consultation with your advisor (6 credits total)
- Research Groups (EDUC 9700): (6 credits total)

* *This requirement was instituted for students entering 2019 or later.*

Program-specific courses (27-30 hours) *these differ based on program/student interest*

Electives (9 hours)

Dissertation (1-9 hours)

Everyone must have at least 1 dissertation credit; how many credits you ultimately take (up to 9) simply depends on other classes, whether credits were transferred in, etc.

The specific requirements for each program can be found at the following links:

- **Language, Literacy, and Culture (LLC):**
https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/docs/pdf/tl/phd/llc/LLC_Program_19.pdf
- **Justice and Diversity in Education (JDE):**
https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/docs/pdf/tl/phd/jde/JDE_Program_19.pdf
- **Mathematics and Science Education (MSE):**
https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/docs/pdf/tl/phd/mse/MSE_Program_19.pdf
- **Learning and Design (L & D):**
https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/docs/pdf/tl/phd/ld/LD_Program_19.pdf

PROGRAM BREAKDOWN BY PHASE

Our expectation is that the Ph.D. program will be completed in approximately five years; after that point, funding is not guaranteed. In order to make timely progress through the program, it is important to keep track of deadlines and expectations. The program can be thought of in four phases: before you arrive, completing coursework, qualifying for candidacy, and dissertation. The expectations of these phases are discussed in great detail below.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE (YEAR 0)

Hooray! You're coming to Vanderbilt! Make sure the university knows who you are and how to get in touch with you. It is important to make sure you do the following:

- Communicate your local address to Records Office to the Peabody Registrar:
university.registrar@vanderbilt.edu
- Communicate your local address to Graduate Program Coordinator to Angela Saylor (a name you will want to know): angela.saylor@vanderbilt.edu
- Obtain a VUnetID and e-password
<https://it.vanderbilt.edu/services/identity/user/new/index.php> This will also enable you to

set up your e-mail. You need this to register for classes, view your transcript, get your grades, and participate in classes using Blackboard. Your Vanderbilt email address is the **official address** for communications from Director of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Department Chair. Communications about upcoming events, and other matters pertaining to graduate study will only come to your official Vanderbilt email address. You can forward your mail from this address to any mail address you wish to use.

- Register for classes: At Vanderbilt, registration occurs through a program called YES (<https://webapp.mis.vanderbilt.edu/student-search/Search.action>). Directions for registering can be found here: <https://registrar.vanderbilt.edu/documents/YES-User-Guide-Introduction-to-YES.pdf>
- Get your student id card—information can be found here: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/commodorecard/>
- Do your CITI training and send the certificate to Angela Saylor, Education Coordinator <https://about.citiprogram.org/en/homepage/>

COMPLETING COURSEWORK (YEARS 1-3)

Students who are unconditionally admitted into the Graduate School of Vanderbilt University must enroll as full-time students, and register and complete 72 credits, one of which **MUST** be a dissertation credit (you can take up to 9 dissertation credits). You may not enroll in more than 72 credits. Students are considered “full-time” when enrolled for nine credit hours of coursework during each semester of the academic year, or when you are enrolled for either EDUC 8999 or EDUC 9999 (even for 0 credits).

You must be registered every single semester until you graduate; if you have completed course work but not yet advanced to candidacy, enroll in EDUC 8999 for 0 credits to maintain full time status. If you have advanced to candidacy, enroll in EDUC 9999 (for 0 credits or however you need to reach 72 total hours).

It is graduate student policy that students must maintain an overall “B” average; falling below that average results in academic probation and potential dismissal from the program.

Forms for adding, dropping, auditing, incompletes, and independent studies are available here:

<https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/admin-offices/oas/downloads.php>

Program of Studies

The program of studies is a formal statement of what courses you have taken and plan to take. The purpose of the POS is to ensure that you are taking or plan to take the courses needed to graduate, and that you neither take too many nor too few credits. The program of studies is created in consultation with your advisor and must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

It is a good idea to submit your POS by the fall of your second year, which ensures that there is plenty of time to make necessary changes before you run out of credits.

The POS for students who entered prior to 2019 can be found here:

http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/docs/pdf/tl/phd/forms/Phd_Pos_2012.pdf

The POS for students who entered 2019 or later can be found here:

http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/docs/pdf/tl/phd/forms/Phd_Pos_2019.pdf

Transferring previous coursework

Students should consult the Graduate School Catalog for regulations governing transfer of prior coursework, and should consult with their faculty advisor to determine specific transfer credit. A transfer of credit request form is usually submitted together with the program of studies. This should be done as soon as possible so as to avoid duplicating classes.

The form is available here:

http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/docs/pdf/tl/med/forms/transfer_credit.pdf

Courses with grades lower than “B” are not eligible for transfer. Any grade reported as “P,” “Cr,” “S” and so on, must be accompanied by a statement from the registrar of the respective school where the class was taken, stating that this designation is equal to at least a “B” grade on a 4-point scale. A maximum of 36 hours transfer credit may be applied towards the Ph.D. degree.

First year project

The first year project is a small research project that you conduct some time during your first year (for most students, this is completed in the summer of your first year). The goal of the first year project is to have an opportunity to engage in the research process as a whole, from conceptualizing and justifying a question, to analyzing relevant data, to offering conclusions based on your analysis. This project is very small and can (and should) be done in conjunction with your advisor. You and your advisor should agree on a research question that is of interest to you, which you can address using data that has already been collected (or that can be collected easily). The goal here is not to do a mini-dissertation, but rather to be able to work through the entirety of a research cycle. Students in the past have built their first year projects off of coursework from Learning and Instruction, from a method class, or from their research appointment. The project that you complete will be presented at the first year poster session, discussed below.

Second year project

The second year project is another small research project that continues to push and develop your abilities as an independent researcher. To be clear, by independent we mean not something that is done alone, but rather something that you are able to conceptualize and defend and take ownership over. The second year project can be an extension of your first year project or something totally different; it could build from course work or from research you’ve conducted through research group. Regardless, the topic of the project should be developed in consultation with your advisor. The project that you complete will be presented at the second-year paper session, discussed below.

PhD Research Presentations

Students present their first and second year projects in early fall of their second and third years. First year presentations are presented as posters, while second year presentations are presented as formal papers, with a 15 minute talk followed by 5 minutes of questioning. The purpose of this session is for students to share the work they have been conducting and to get feedback for that work. In addition, this serves as an opportunity for students to have an experience that approximates academic conferences in a setting that is supportive and geared towards improving ideas. Two to three faculty members are assigned to review students posters or papers; these reviews reflect on the following categories:

- Importance of topic
- Clarity of question
- Appropriateness of method
- Soundness of conclusions
- Organization and clarity of presentation
- Level and amount of information
- Response to audience
- Delivery

The evaluations of student presentations are intended to be formative; feedback is shared with students and with the student's advisor.

Annual Review of Progress

Every year the faculty in each program review students' work in order to ensure students are making satisfactory progress. This review takes place during January of each year, with review letters delivered by March. Faculty review students' portfolios as updated in Braveheart and also draw on experiences of course work, research participation, and performance in the student research presentations. Students receive a rating of *satisfactory* or *unsatisfactory*; if the latter designation is made, students are instructed about how to improve their progress and given a specific timeframe in which to do so. Students receiving unsatisfactory reviews may be denied access to travel or professional development funds.

Note that the fourth year review is the most consequential. Many student offer letters provide a 5th year of funding contingent on satisfactory review in the 4th year. Students would be wise to organize their time to ensure completion and successful defense of their MAP in a timely fashion.

- The link to Braveheart can be found here:
<https://pbdapps.vanderbilt.edu/BRAVEHEART/output/login.asp>

Although specific criteria may vary depending on students' particular circumstances, the following table roughly outlines the expectations for satisfactory review by year in the program:

Year in Program	Satisfactory Progress Criteria:
1	(no formal review)
2	Successful completion of First Year Project; applied to and/or presented at 1-2 conferences; continued satisfactory progress in coursework; no incompletes.
3	Successful completion of Second Year Project; initial progress towards MAP; applied to and/or presented at 1-2 additional conferences since last review; continued satisfactory progress in coursework; no incompletes.
4	Program of studies completed; MAP draft in advisor's hands, and defense date scheduled for before the end of Spring semester; coursework finishing up; no incompletes.
5+	Dissertation proposal defended ("ABD" status); progress made towards completion of dissertation.

WRITING AND DEFENDING THE MAP (MAJOR AREA PAPER) AND ADVANCING TO CANDIDACY (YEARS 3 & 4)

In the department of teaching and learning, the university qualifying exam requirement is fulfilled by writing a major area paper (MAP). The purpose of this paper is for students to review extant literature in order to demonstrate their ability to research a topic, identify salient issues within that topic, and convey those ideas in writing. Ideally, the MAP should be written and defended before the end of your third year at Vanderbilt—this will give you time to conceptualize, carry out, write, and defend your dissertation without running out of funding. However, some students wait until their fourth year to complete their MAPs. (See previous section on *annual review of progress*.)

Logistics

Some students write their MAP while still taking classes. However, if you have finished taking classes and haven't yet defended the MAP, then you are eligible to register for one hour of dissertation credit during the semester in which you will be defending your MAP. Once your MAP has been approved, you are eligible to advance to candidacy. If you do not complete all requirements and do not receive official candidacy status during this semester, you must petition the Department Chair and Dean through their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies for a second semester in which to take one hour of dissertation credit to complete the qualifying examination, but there is no guarantee that the extension will be permitted.

After students have completed one semester of dissertation credit (or two semesters with the Chair and Dean's approval) without completing the qualifying examination and attaining candidacy status, they must either take a leave of absence or take at least one 3-hour course or 3-hour independent study per semester until candidacy is attained. Students may not take the qualifying examination during a leave of absence.

The department of Teaching and Learning offers a course whose explicit purpose is to help you work on conceptualizing and writing your MAP. This class is called Scientific Writing (EDUC 8800) and students usually take it in Fall of their third year.

Your MAP will be presented and discussed in an oral defense with your committee. The meeting is set to last for two hours, at which point a designation is made whether you passed or need to revise. Generally students are allowed one substantive revision in order to pass.

Committee. Committee members should be selected in consultation with your advisor; it is then your responsibility to ask faculty to serve on the committee. All PhD committees must be comprised of at least four people, three from the student's department and one from outside the department. The Graduate School may approve one non-Graduate Faculty member (a professor of practice) to serve on a committee. This requires a letter of justification detailing why this person should be on this committee, and a copy of the proposed committee member's curriculum vitae. Students usually have the same committee for their MAP and their dissertation, but this is not always the case. Making a change simply requires filing a change of committee form.

In the case that one of a student's committee members should leave Vanderbilt University while serving on their committee, it is up to the faculty member whether or not they prefer to continue serving on the committee. If they are going to continue on the committee, there is no need to file the curriculum vitae or a Change of Committee form. If they do not wish to continue a Change of Committee form does need to be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Conceptualizing and writing your MAP

The goal of your MAP is to:

1. Develop an important issue within a larger topic area,
2. Discuss and synthesize various viewpoints, and their relative merits, with regard to the issue under discussion, and
3. Suggest directions for resolving the issue.

Your MAP must present a clearly focused topic and include references relevant to the topic chosen. Of course, much wider reading will have to be done to determine the issue(s) to be discussed and the relevant, critical work that will be referenced in the paper. This does not mean that the qualifying appear must include an exhaustive literature review; rather, the review section should synthesize and integrate literature relevant to the discussion. A key element is that relevant literature be chosen and developed in the context of the chosen topic. A paper that reads like a list of studies or ideas presented in the literature is not acceptable.

All topics for major area papers must be presented to the student's faculty advisor for approval. The paper must be original work and must be related to the student's major program area. For many students, the MAP becomes the first chapter of their dissertation proposal; for this reason, it makes sense to choose your topic carefully. Although a MAP should reflect your learning of material from your entire program, it needs to be more than a minor modification or an edited version of work prepared to meet requirements for another course. It may, of course, be in the same area or topic as one prepared for a class. For example, it could be a continuation of an idea that you have already worked on, but if so, it must clearly be an extension of work you have completed in the past.

Your paper should be independently conceived and written, but your advisor should also read and offer feedback on your draft. It is also a good idea to look at other students' MAPs that have previously been defended in order to get a sense of what a MAP might look like. Note that there is tremendous diversity amongst students' MAPs, based on their research interests and their advisors. As with most everything in the department, your advisor is the most important source of information and support for your writing.

The paper must conform to the APA style manual.

Oral Defense of your MAP

When you and your advisor agree that your MAP is ready to be shared, your first step is to schedule a time when your committee can meet. *It is very important for the Graduate School to receive requests to appoint the PhD committee and schedule the qualifying examination at least two weeks before the date of the examination.* This is necessary in order to approve and appoint the committee and to verify the status of the student.

- The form for requesting approval of the committee is available here:
https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/request_appoint_phd_committee_rev7-18.pdf
- The form for scheduling your qualifying exam is available here:
https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/request_schedule_qualifying_exam_rev7_18.pdf

The oral examination should be scheduled for two hours. The purpose of the oral examination is to allow students to show their understanding of their chosen topic in a forum that allows questions, exploration, and dialogue. Generally, students present a brief overview of the highlights of their paper, which is then followed by questions and discussion with the committee. Oral exams should be challenging in that they should push you to think about aspects of your topic that you haven't considered or that you haven't written completely about. This challenge is an expected part of the discussion. If the committee agrees that you have passed your MAP defense, all members will sign a qualifying examination results form.

- The examination results form can be found here:
https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/qualifying_examination_results_form_rev10_17.pdf

It is also possible that your committee might conclude that your MAP doesn't yet meet the expectations of depth or rigor. In that case, you would be asked to submit one additional draft to address comments made by faculty readers. Resubmitting the qualifying paper, if required, should occur no later than the end of the semester following the paper's initial submission for evaluation.

Advancement to candidacy

After your Major Area Paper and the oral qualifying examination have been successfully completed, the Director of Graduate Studies presents the student's name to the Chairperson of the Department of Teaching and Learning and to the Graduate School Dean, who formally admits the student as a doctoral candidate. After advancement to candidacy, students must register on an ongoing basis for dissertation credits until completing the doctoral program. Ph.D. students have four years after being admitted to candidacy to complete dissertation and dissertation defense. Note that these four years do not include guaranteed funding.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL AND DEFENSE

There are three distinct phases to your dissertation; the conceptualization and defense of the proposal, carrying out and writing up results of your research, and an oral defense of the work. Dissertations can range tremendously in length depending on the questions posed, and methods used. In addition, the Department of Teaching and Learning allows for two different kinds of dissertations to be written; a standard single document and a three-paper model. The difference between these is significant, and the procedures for these two dissertation types are different as well. You and your advisor together should decide which model of dissertation you want to write—this decision is based on your planned work, the data you are drawing on, and how you and your advisor see these different models fitting for the argument you will make.

Dissertation proposal

This step involves completing a formal, written proposal for the dissertation. The proposal hearing is intended as a contract between the student and committee. Essentially, once the committee has formally signed off on the dissertation proposal, this constitutes an agreement that if the dissertation is carried out as outlined in the proposal, the dissertation will be accepted and the student will receive a degree of a PhD—regardless of the specific findings of the study. More pragmatically, it is important to be sure that the project being proposed is sufficient for a dissertation, and is using the right methods and collecting the appropriate data required to answer the proposed question.

Technically, no data should be collected before the committee has approved the proposal. Part of what the committee does is determine whether you have a plan to collect the data you need in order to answer your research question. If you have already collected data (or are using data from a larger project, or an existing data set), the committee will determine whether the data you have is sufficient to answer the questions you have posed. If they determine that more or different data is needed, then you will have to collect more or different data. Therefore, it is

important to know that the committee **MUST** approve your data collection plans (or the data you have been collected), and thus it is a risk to collect in advance of your proposal hearing.

Traditional Dissertation. A traditional dissertation proposal usually includes a literature review, rationale, question statement, and design and procedures sections. For many students, the dissertation draws significantly on the MAP but adds to it an actual plan for research and justification of that plan. It is important for the committee to know exactly what you plan to do and why, so that they can advise you about whether you have conceptualized a research plan that will enable you to answer the questions you have posed.

Once you and your advisor believe that your proposal is ready to be shared, you will set up a meeting with your dissertation committee, scheduled for two hours. If the dissertation proposal is approved, you can then proceed with your dissertation.

Three-paper model. A three-paper dissertation is one that takes the form of three thematically linked papers plus a “coat.” The coat is a narrative that explains how the papers collectively make progress on the same broad research question, but focus on that question in different ways. Each of the three papers needs to be “stand alone” in that they could be submitted independently for publication. Indeed, the expectation for a successful 3-paper dissertation model is that the papers either have been published in a high-quality journal, or are of sufficient quality that there is every reason to believe that they will be accepted for publication in a high-quality journal. It is important to note that not all research questions lend themselves to a three-paper model. Thus the decision about whether to write a three-paper dissertation versus a more traditional model should be made with your faculty advisor.

The three papers that are included in the defense must make clear *the structure of the argument* for each paper. It could be that the data for the papers have already been analyzed, or the papers have been written to some extent, or it could be a proposal that outlines the three central arguments.

For a three-paper dissertation, there are two formal proposal meetings to be scheduled with the committee. The first involves an informal meeting with the entire committee that describes the overall vision of the three papers, including a discussion of papers that have already been written that may be included in the final three paper count. This meeting is best thought of as a planning meeting, and does not take place around a formal written document. The second meeting is the more traditional proposal meeting with the entire committee, which is the time when the committee signs the papers that indicate the student is ready to proceed to data collection, analysis, and writing of the dissertation.

Dissertation Defense

Students work closely with their advisor when writing their dissertation, receiving feedback and performing revisions as needed. Multiple drafts of sections and chapters are common and should be expected. When the advisor and student feel it appropriate, the dissertation or portions thereof are circulated to the dissertation committee members, who will usually provide feedback at that

point. After revisions based on this feedback are made, and if the student's advisor feels that the dissertation is of an acceptable standard, the dissertation defense is scheduled.

The dissertation defense is scheduled by the student, who presents the suggested date to the Graduate Program Coordinator. This date is confirmed in writing by the Dean of the Graduate School. The date needs to be officially requested using this form:

https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/request_schedule_dissertation_defense_rev7-18.pdf

Note that the dissertation defense must occur at least 21 days before the end of the semester in which the degree is to be conferred. Notification of intent to defend the dissertation must be filed with the Graduate Program Coordinator at least two and one-half weeks before the defense occurs.

The student presents and defends the dissertation before the dissertation committee at a two-hour meeting. Only the dissertation committee has a vote with regard to final approval of the dissertation and defense.

The meeting is publicized and parts of the meeting are open to all interested persons. For example, the student's presentation of the research is open to the public, who can also ask questions for a brief period (determined by the committee chairperson) following the presentation. The committee questioning portion of the meeting is open to the public at the discretion of the committee chairperson. Committee votes and discussions are not open to the public.

If the defense is successful, all members of the committee will need to sign the *Results of Dissertation Defense* form, found here:

https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/dissertation_defense_results_form_rev10_17.pdf

Sometimes revisions are requested. In that case, the committee will determine whether the entire committee needs to review changes, or if the student's advisor can review and approve changes. Once changes have been approved, the Results form will be signed by all committee members.

GRADUATION

In an effort to provide more flexibility and a more efficient posting of the degree, the Office of the University Registrar (URO), in conjunction with the associate deans of all ten schools, proposed an intra-term degree posting process. This policy was approved by the Provost and the Deans and will be effective the Summer 2017 term.

Students must be approved by their school to graduate intra-term following the school-based degree certification process. Schools must submit the Intra-term Graduation Form to the URO by the deadlines outlined below. All grades must be assigned to the student record, the requisite degree minimums and maximums must be met, and all degree audits (if any) must run clean.

NOTE: No extensions will be given.

Schedule: The URO will post degrees for students who have been certified by their school(s) in the middle of a term on the following schedule:

Intra-Term Graduation Dates:

January 31
February 28(9)
May 31
June 30
August 31
September 30
October 31

End of Term Graduation Dates:

December 15, 2019
May 8, 2020
August 7, 2020

The school must notify the URO that all degree requirements have been completed by the close of business on the posting day (or, if that day falls on a day the university is closed, the close of the next business day).

The student will have their degree posted in the middle of the semester; however, they will be counted as a member of the cohort graduating at the end of the term (e.g. students who have degrees posted on September 30 will be a part of the Fall graduating class). Diplomas will be dated on the intra-term date (see schedule above). Transcripts will reflect the degrees as soon as they are posted.

ADDITIONAL USEFUL FACTS AND PROCEDURES

SELECTING A FACULTY ADVISOR

An advisor is assigned to doctoral students on admission, based on the match between student and faculty interest, faculty availability, and funding. Because you work so closely you're your advisor throughout the program, it is important that your research interests fit well with his or her work. Sometimes interests change, and sometimes personalities conflict. In such a case, it is possible to change advisors (but note that you must have an advisor, so you should not terminate a relationship with your advisor without first securing a new one).

The first step in this process is to speak with the potential new advisor to see if he or she is able to accept a new student. If the answer is yes, then a meeting should be scheduled with the original advisor, detailing the reason for the change. If this conversation is potentially challenging, the director of graduate studies is a good resource to both attend the meeting or to talk with all parties. Note that all PhD advisors must be members of the Graduate Faculty.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD PERMISSION

All students who are working on research projects that involve human participants must all complete the online CITI program in the responsible conduct of research (RCR). All required modules must be completed with a 75% or better for each module. Once all modules have been completed, please print the RCR Course Completion Page and provide a copy to Angie Saylor angela.saylor@Vanderbilt.Edu. This certification requires renewal every year; please be sure to pay attention to emails that let you know that your IRB approval is expiring.

In addition, if you are collecting data on your own project (for example, for your dissertation), you will need to have your proposed research reviewed by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. Required forms are available here: <https://www4.vanderbilt.edu/irb/forms/applications-and-consents/>

RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT

Ph.D. students must meet Graduate School requirements that 24 hours of formal coursework must be taken while registered as a PhD student in the Graduate School. The Department faculty feels strongly that at least three years of full-time attendance results in a superior experience for students. A student's commitment to ongoing, full-time study is considered favorably when admission decisions are made.

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

Full-time doctoral students are given priority consideration for financial aid. This assistance can come from one or more of: work study funds, student loans, scholarships, grant-in-aids, research assistantship, teaching assistantships, and grant-work possibilities. Financial aid information is available through the Department Chairperson, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Office of Admissions and Financial Assistance. Doctoral students typically are supported at a level commensurate with available funds for a maximum of five years, provided there is evidence of progress with regard to the respective student's degree program.

TEACHING AND LEARNING TRAVEL POLICIES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

There are three sources of funds for travel for Ph.D. students: the Graduate School, Peabody College, and the Department of Teaching and Learning. In all cases, the priority on student travel is associated with the presentation of research results to colleagues and other professionals.

Graduate School

A student must be the sole presenter (either individual or first author) of research conducted at Vanderbilt. The meeting must be a major regional, national, or international conference.

Awards are restricted to \$500. Students are restricted to up to 3 trips during their graduate school tenure. Forms for funding from the graduate school can be found at:

https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/academic_forms/GS_Travel_Grant_Application_3-2019.pdf

Peabody College

(Travel reimbursement continues to be refined, so always check with the DTL financial administrators for the most recent policies)

Peabody College provides funding for each on-campus PhD student to present papers at up to two major professional meetings per year during the years for which support was promised when they were admitted. A “professional meeting” is understood to be a conference of a professional organization at which multiple papers are presented that is a significant national conference in your field, as agreed upon by your advisor and approved by the Dean. Peabody does not provide funds to support travel for invited presentations or workshops at other universities, school, etc. If you are unsure whether a particular event would constitute a professional meeting under this policy, please consult with Jeannette Mancilla-Martinez, Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Peabody will provide up to \$750 per trip. Expenses that may be reimbursed include:

- Advance-purchase economy air fare (MUST be booked through Concur)
- Automobile fuel if personal car is used for trip (up to cost of air fare)
- Lodging (not to exceed convention rate for a single room)
- Ground transportation
- Tips (20% maximum)
- Fees for checking luggage
- Meals (up to \$50 per day; \$25 max per meal, must have itemized receipt)
- Conference advance registration fee (but not membership dues)
- Parking (maximum \$10/day)

Before booking your trip, please:

- Make sure that your profile is current in Braveheart. Requests for travel will not be approved if this information is not up to date. To update your profile, go to: <https://pbdapps.vanderbilt.edu/BRAVEHEART/output/login.asp>
- Submit your request to your advisor using the travel request form. Your advisor’s signature certifies that the professional conference is of importance to your professional development.
- Submit your request to your department’s Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). Your DGS’s signature certifies that your Departmental Assessment/Review is current and you are in good standing in your department.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Graduate School requires continuous registration except for summer sessions. Students who desire to interrupt their graduate study must petition the department, who on their behalf apply to

the Graduate School for an authorized leave of absence. Leave of absence is granted for a maximum of one year. Those without authorized leave who do not register are dismissed from the Graduate School and are not considered students. To get permission, please seek the approval of your advisor and the DGS. Then send those approvals to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (currently Bunmi Olatunji).

If you want to resume graduate study at Vanderbilt, you must petition for reinstatement. For information on student insurance, please look here:

<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/stuaccts/graduate/health-insurance.php>

PARENTAL LEAVE

All students enrolled full-time in the Graduate School and supported by funding from either internal or external sources are covered by this policy. This includes students with funding through stipends, such as training grants or service-free fellowships, and students compensated for services, such as teaching assistants or research assistants. Students supported by external funding sources may be subject to additional rules of the granting agency regarding parental leave. Students are not employees and thus are not subject to the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Period of Leave: Prior to and/or following childbirth or adoption of an infant, the primary caregiver (whether mother or father) will be allowed to take six weeks of paid parental leave. During this period, the student's current stipend, and, if applicable, funding for health insurance and tuition, will be continued without interruption. The student's enrollment status will be continued during this period, as well.

Limitations: If both parents are Vanderbilt graduate students, only one may take parental leave. The parental leave provided by this policy may be taken during the semester in which the child is born or adopted, or during any subsequent semester that begins no later than six months after the birth or adoption.

Advance notice and approval: The student must request a parental leave from her or his departmental chair, through the director of graduate studies, at least three months prior to the beginning of the anticipated leave or, in the case of adoption, as soon as the adoption is confirmed. The request must be made in writing and, once approved by the department chair and Director of Graduate Studies, forwarded to the Peabody Dean's Office for approval and notification of the Graduate School. Students should also make appropriate arrangements as needed with their course instructors to make up any missed coursework during the leave period.

Extended Leave: Students who wish or need to take a longer period of leave, without continuation of funding, may request a leave of absence for up to one year through the established policy of the Graduate School. Graduate students who are not receiving funding through Vanderbilt should request a leave of absence for childbirth or adoption if they anticipate an interruption in progress toward their degree.

USE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

PhD students are awarded Professional Development funds, which may be used to help defray the direct expenses of the recipient's research or other experiences, that, if capitalized upon, could help build a strong CV. These funds may be accessed beginning in the third year (upon the completion of 36 credit hours) in the doctoral program when most students' research programs are getting underway. Students have up to three years to spend these funds; funds are no longer eligible for use after graduation.

Eligible expenses are for those items that will help improve the Fellow's CV and include the following:

- Research apparatus and materials (e.g., data collection equipment, standardized tests, reproduction of investigator-developed questionnaires)
- The direct costs of data collection (e.g., travel to collect data, payments to research participants)
- Expenses for data analysis (e.g., specialized software, cost of attending a workshop dealing with new analytic methods)
- Travel to present research results at a professional meeting
- Attending a special training session or field school
- Symposium attendance

Because this fund is not intended for general support of the recipient's academic work, it may not be used for living expenses, journals, books, professional memberships or computers. Students contemplating expenditures from their research fund are asked to develop a brief (1-2 page) proposal in consultation with their faculty advisor, obtain their advisor's endorsement, and send the proposal to their department's Director of Graduate Study for approval. Please make sure your BRAVE profile is updated before you submit the request. These funds will be used to reimburse expenses that fall into the above categories and that were approved in the proposal. Graduate students will work with departmental administrative officers for submitting reimbursement requests.

SUMMER FUNDING

Effective 2018-19, the funding in your offer letter can be combined with other funding for a maximum of 2.5 months summer pay. The student should request use of College summer funds directly to their faculty mentor by indicating what they hope to accomplish during the supported time, as well as by detailing any additional funds they will be receiving for the summer, and the responsibilities associated with those funds. The student's faculty mentor should then provide a brief statement indicating that they are supportive of the student receiving the College funds, and verifying that there are no alternative (e.g., grant) funds available to support the student. Please note that, in cases in which the student is forgoing available grant funds (e.g., to focus on completing a major area proposal, for their own dissertation data collection which is distinct from any available grant work, etc.), the faculty mentor should provide a rationale explaining

why the use of College funds is preferred in this case for the student. The student and faculty mentor statements should be submitted for approval to the appropriate Director of Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies should then submit these documents for final approval from the Associate Dean of Graduate Education, copying the relevant Administrative Officer.

Details of this policy can be found here:

<https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/secure/docs/PhD-Student-Summer-Funding.pdf>

FUNDING

Please seek clearance from the Associate Dean for Graduate Education for PhD students to take an extra course (whether in summer, which is the most typical scenario, or during the regular fall or spring semester) or to work more than the 20 hours/week in a standard RA-ship. These requests are considered exceptions and should only be submitted for consideration when absolutely essential. If permission is granted for the student to take an extra course at the College's discretion, the proviso is that the overall credit-hours the College will support is the required 72 hours. Finally, when submitting these requests, provide the following:

- 1) compelling rationale for the request, including a short statement explicitly noting whether the student is making the expected progress in the program
- 2) approval, or statement on reservations, from the student's advisor and DGS

THINGS THAT CAN DELAY GRADUATION

As this document hopefully makes clear, there are several administrative processes involved in moving through the program. Sometimes things take longer than you might expect, or might have built-in time delays, that can take you by surprise and interfere with your graduating plans. Some of those things are noted below.

First, several problems can result if the major area paper is not completed right after coursework is completed. As noted above, students cannot register for more than one dissertation credit until they are candidates (that is, until they pass the qualifying examination.) If the major area paper is not completed, students cannot qualify for candidacy and cannot register for dissertation credits. Thus, students can be in the position of having completed coursework (thus not needing to register for nine more hours), but not being able to register for dissertation credit because the qualifying paper is not finished. This presents a major problem because students who are not attending "full term" can lose their funding/financial aid. Students are strongly advised to plan their programs and to budget their time so that the major area paper is completed at the latest during the last semester of coursework.

Second, sometimes it can be difficult to schedule committee meetings (for the oral examination, proposal hearing, and so on) because faculty are busy, traveling, on sabbatical, etc. For that reason, it is important to stay in close contact with your committee and try to schedule meetings

early in a given semester. Otherwise, if a given deadline is missed, a delay in graduation can occur because other deadlines (for example the deadline for submitting an approved dissertation to the Dean's office) are also missed. Everyone should be aware that some deadlines appear very early. For example, **spring semester dissertation defense dates must occur no later than the end of March** for May graduation, and faculty may request three weeks to read a full dissertation draft. This means that a "penultimate" dissertation needs to be given to the dissertation committee at the beginning of March.

FAQs

What should I expect of my advisor?

Advisors differ in style and in the range of activities they do with their students. There are some great resources on managing this crucial relationship [here](#). Some important topics to discuss with your advisor include: identifying points of connection in your interests; understanding your role on your advisor's research projects; the extent to which your work needs to center on their project needs vs. pursuing your own interests; how frequently you will meet at different phases of your program; the best ways to contact and communicate with them; co-presenting at conferences; co-authoring papers; helping you network in your field; your post-doctorate career goals and how they can support you.

Whom should I talk to if I have concerns about my advisor and I don't feel comfortable talking to my advisor directly?

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) is responsible for supporting doctoral students and helping them navigate advising relationships. If you do not feel comfortable talking to the DGS or the DGS is your advisor, you should talk to the Department Chair.

If you are considering changing advisors, the DGS can help broker that. It is a good idea to identify an alternative advisor before moving on from your current one.

Is there a way to know in advance which courses are going to be offered?

Unfortunately it is tricky for us to know exactly which courses (beyond required ones) will be offered in advance. There are a number of factors at play: Faculty get grants, awards, or sabbaticals that take them away from their teaching commitments. A course is under-enrolled and pulled from the books. Faculty move away or their teaching commitments are taken up by other programmatic needs. If you are really looking to take a particular course, it is a good idea to contact the faculty who typically teaches and inquire about its next offering.

When should I consider an independent study?

These are often good ways to get credit for substantial work that you want to undertake in developing your scholarship. Independent studies can be used to do significant literature

reviews, develop manuscripts, or to work with a faculty member on data analysis or teaching that would require an investment of time equivalent of a course (~ 9 hours/week). Note that these require faculty oversight, and they do not count in faculty's teaching load. This is why finding mutually beneficial work is a good strategy.

What is the course number for independent study?

EDUC 7960

My funding comes from research assistantships. How can I get teaching experience during my graduate program?

If you are not on a funded research project, then you will typically be assigned a teaching assistantship. Some students go between funded research projects and teaching assistantships. If your primary assignment is a research assistantship but you want to get teaching experience, you can either negotiate a break from your research assistantship; do an assistantship as an independent study; or enroll in a course for credit where you act as an unofficial TA.

My funding comes from teaching assistantships. How can I get research experience during my graduate program?

If your primary assignment is a teaching assistantship but you want to get research experience, you can talk to a faculty member who has a grant that interests you and see if they might have extra funding to support part time or summer work. You can also work on faculty research (funded or unfunded) as an independent study.

What if I want to take more than 9 credits in one semester? Or I want to enroll in a Maymester course?

This is all feasible, but it requires an exception. In the first case, your advisor needs to write a letter explaining why you need to take an overload and that you are in good standing. In the second case, you need a similar letter, with an additional explanation about how the Maymester course is important for your coursework. There is also a form to fill out entitled "PEABODY PHD SUMMER TUITION REQUEST." You can find it [here](https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/secure/docs/PhD-Student-Summer-Tuition-Guidelines-6.23.17.pdf).

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In both cases, you are still limited to the 72 credit hours for your doctoral program.