Doctor of Philosophy

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy is conferred upon those students who have completed, with high distinction, a prescribed period of intensive study and investigation in a single field of learning. Students must master the methods of study in the chosen field and demonstrate familiarity with what has been done and with the potentialities for further progress in the field. They must also demonstrate capacity for original and independent study or creative work and must present evidence of such investigation in a scholarly dissertation.

A PhD may be earned in communication sciences and disorders; community health education; computational mathematics; consumer; apparel, and retail studies; counseling and counselor education; economics; educational research, measurement and evaluation; educational studies; English; environmental health science; geography; history; human development and family studies; information systems; kinesiology; medicinal biochemistry; music education; nanoscience; nursing; nutrition; psychology; and special education.

Doctor of Musical Arts

The Doctor of Musical Arts degree program is a performance degree offered only in the School of Music. The requirements of The Graduate School stated below apply to the Doctor of Musical Arts; however, due to the highly specialized nature of the degree, the student should consult the Director of Graduate Study in the School of Music for specific requirements and procedures.

Doctor of Nursing Practice

The Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program is an applied degree offered only in the School of Nursing. The requirements of The Graduate School stated below apply to the Doctor of Nursing Practice; however, due to the highly specialized nature of the degree, the student should consult the information in the Doctor of Nursing Practice section regarding the specific requirements and procedures.

Summary of Requirements for Research Doctoral Degrees (PhD, EdD, DMA)

- Satisfaction of all requirements for admission to a doctoral program, including the removal of any deficiencies identified at the time of admission.
- An approved advisory/dissertation committee, to be filed in The Graduate School by the end of 18 semester hours.
- An approved plan of study, to be filed in The Graduate School by the end of 18 semester hours.
- Satisfactory completion of any language requirement or approved option.
- Satisfaction of the residence requirement.
- Satisfactory completion of any diagnostic qualifying examination that may be required by the major department or school.
- Satisfactory completion of all course requirements in the student’s approved program of study.
- Satisfactory completion of the preliminary written and oral examination and any additional work that may be required as a result of this examination.
- An approved dissertation topic, to be filed in The Graduate School.
- Admission to candidacy upon the satisfaction of the requirements above (formal application to be made in The Graduate School).
- Submission of a dissertation acceptable to the advisory/dissertation committee.
- Satisfactory oral defense of the dissertation.
- Acceptance of the dissertation by The Graduate School.
- Filing of an application for graduation with The Graduate School by the end of the first week of classes of the term in which the degree will be granted and payment of the graduation fee.
- Payment of all accounts owed in the University. Diplomas and transcripts of students owing money to the University will be held until the account is cleared.

The requirements above must be met by the deadlines stated in the Academic Calendar. Detailed explanations of these requirements follow. Some programs may have additional requirements not listed above but explained in materials supplied by the major department or school.

Admission Requirements

Admission to the doctoral program is distinct and separate from any previous admission to The Graduate School. For this reason, a student who has been admitted to a master’s degree program must reapply for doctoral study by notifying The Graduate School of the desire to be considered for admission to the advanced program. Admission to study for the doctorate normally follows completion of the master’s degree or its equivalent coursework, but some departments will consider admission directly from an undergraduate program in the case of exceptionally well-qualified applicants. Applicants who hold the master’s degree or its equivalent, however, are not automatically eligible for admission to doctoral study.

In addition to satisfactory entrance examination scores and recommendations (explained in the application materials), final approvals of the major department or school and of the Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School are required.

Advisory/Dissertation Committee

The advisory/dissertation committee, consisting of at least four members of the graduate faculty, shall assist the student with the preparation of the plan of study and shall guide and evaluate the doctoral dissertation. This committee will be appointed by the Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School upon the recommendation of the major department head or dean and must be mutually acceptable to the student and all committee members.

Of the four members, the chair must hold an Endorsement to Chair Doctoral Committees, and no more than one may be an Adjunct Member of the graduate faculty. The committee chair must be from the major department, and it is recommended that when appropriate, one member
be selected from the minor area of study. If at any time the advisory/ dissertation committee decreases in number to fewer than four members, additional members of the graduate faculty must be approved by the Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School to bring the number to at least four. See Policy on Appointment to the Graduate Faculty for further details.

The student must request the appointment of this committee no later than upon completion of the first 18 semester hours of graduate courses. Any subsequent changes in the advisory/dissertation committee must be submitted to The Graduate School for approval.

**Minor**

Certain doctoral programs may permit, encourage, or require a minor, which is a formalized curricular sequence of advanced work in one or more areas outside the major field but cognate to it. The student should ask the chair of his/her advisory/dissertation committee if a minor is appropriate or required. The minor must consist of at least 12 hours of study. The student's advisory/dissertation committee approves the minor, and it must appear on the doctoral plan of study.

For information concerning the doctoral minor in educational research and methodology, human development and family studies, information systems, and statistics, see the relevant academic program.

**Research Competence**

Competence in research is required of all doctoral students. Whereas the specific requirements will vary from field to field and according to the student's professional objective, the plan of study must provide for mastery of techniques of research that not only are appropriate to the particular field of study but also will help prepare prospective holders of the doctorate to continue their intellectual and professional growth.

**Plan of Study**

A plan of study for the doctoral degree must be outlined by the student and the advisory/dissertation committee at the earliest possible time following admission of the student to The Graduate School, preferably at the end of the first semester of residence or not later than the completion of 18 semester hours. The plan must indicate the following:

- Major and minor fields of study.
- Specific courses the student is expected to complete as a minimum requirement.
- All specific core, seminar, language, and research requirements of the major department.
- No more than one quarter of the coursework credited to the degree, exclusive of the dissertation, at the 500 level.
- No more than 15 semester hours of independent study, exclusive of the dissertation. (See additional requirements above in order to pursue Independent Study.)
- No credit evaluated as B- (2.7) or less. All courses applied toward the degree must be B (3.0) or better, and additional hours must be taken for any hours earned with a grade of B- (2.7) or less.
- Credit earned for STA 667 Statistical Counseling is not applicable to a graduate plan of study.

A record of all graduate work the student has taken must accompany the proposed program. It is at this time that the advisory/dissertation committee evaluates the student's qualifications to be recommended for further study in The Graduate School, further preparation for such study, or withdrawal. The committee may propose prerequisite coursework to be taken if it believes the student shows weaknesses that might be corrected by additional formal study.

The plan of study must be submitted to the Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School for approval. The Vice Provost reserves the right to refer any or all plans of study to the Graduate Studies Committee for review and recommendation.

Copies of the approved plan of study must be filed in the student's permanent folder in The Graduate School, in the department's files, with the chair and each member of the advisory/dissertation committee, and with the student. Any subsequent changes in the plan of study or in the subject of the dissertation must be submitted to The Graduate School for approval.

**Language Requirement**

Each candidate for the doctorate must show either a satisfactory reading knowledge of at least one modern foreign language relevant to the student's major area of study, or, where approved, a satisfactory mastery of research skills at an appropriate level of competence.

The language or languages used to satisfy a language requirement must be approved by the student's major advisor. French, German, and Spanish are most frequently used.

The language requirements must be passed prior to the preliminary examinations, and prior to admission to candidacy.

A student whose native tongue is a language other than English may use English, but not the native language, to satisfy a language requirement. When English is offered, the examination will be administered by the Department of English or by the student's major department in consultation with the Department of English. A statement certifying the candidate's proficiency in English must be filed in The Graduate School before the preliminary examinations may be taken.

**Residence Requirement**

Doctoral students are expected to satisfy a residence requirement, which provides them the opportunity for an extended period of intensive study and intellectual and professional development among a community of scholars.

The basic requirement is two consecutive semesters (minimum of 6 hours per semester) of graduate coursework (excluding independent study and dissertation hours) on this campus after admission to a doctoral program. Spring and fall may be considered consecutive semesters if summer courses are not regularly available in the program. The two sessions of summer school count as one semester. Undergraduate courses taken in support of a graduate program cannot count towards residence.

**Residence Requirement - Online Doctoral Programs**

The minimal residency requirement for online professional/practice doctoral programs will be met when students make a minimum of three required visits to campus as part of their graduate program:

- To participate in an orientation program prior to coursework to foster a sense of community with their peers and faculty, and to gain knowledge of UNCG resources available to them;
Upon completion of coursework, to participate in written and oral comprehensive examinations, in discussion regarding the dissertation proposal with faculty, and in observation of a dissertation defense; and

To participate in their dissertation defense at the culmination of the program.

Time Limits for Doctoral Degrees

Advanced degrees awarded from UNCG indicate that our students have current, usable knowledge in their field; therefore, all requirements for the doctorate, including the dissertation, must be completed within seven academic years. Post-master's (or equivalent) credit that is to be applied to the student’s doctoral program must be no more than seven years old when the degree requirements are completed. This means that all coursework to be credited to the student’s doctoral program must fall within a seven-year period of time beginning with the date the first courses carrying graduate degree credit applicable to the student’s program are begun. If credit to be transferred was earned before enrollment at this University, the seven-year period of time commences with the beginning date of the term in which the transfer credit was earned.

The seven-year time limit does not apply to students who are admitted directly to a doctoral program upon completion of the baccalaureate. In this case, the time limit is ten years.

Transfer Credit for Doctoral Degrees

(See Graduate Transfer Credit for more information)

In some instances, work done in other institutions may be counted toward the degree, particularly work culminating in a master's degree from a regionally accredited institution and representing an appropriate area of study. If the student proposes the transfer of credit from another graduate school, the work for which credit was received must be covered by the preliminary examination, and the transfer must be recommended by the student’s advisory/dissertation committee before The Graduate School will credit the work to the student’s doctoral program.

A maximum of one-third of non-dissertation course credit hours beyond the master’s degree may be transferred to a doctoral program.

The following conditions apply to transfer credit for doctoral program:

• All credit offered in transfer must have been taken at an accredited graduate school.
• Such work must have been taken within the time limit described above.
• The student must have earned a grade of B (3.0) or better on all transfer credit. In a four-letter grading system, only credit earned with either of the top two grades is transferable.
• The credit must be recorded on an official transcript placed on file with The Graduate School.
• The credit must be approved by both the student's doctoral advisory/dissertation committee and the Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School.
• The credit must be necessary to meet specific degree requirements.

Hours only, not grades, may be transferred from other institutions. Quarter-hours do not transfer as semester hours. A fraction of an hour of credit will not be transferred. See sample below.

- 2 quarter hours transfer as 1 semester hour.
- 3-4 quarter hours transfer as 2 semester hours.
- 5 quarter hours transfer as 3 semester hours.
- 6-7 quarter hours transfer as 4 semester hours.
- 8 quarter hours transfer as 5 semester hours.
- 9-10 quarter hours transfer as 6 semester hours.

Students must secure approval from their doctoral advisory/dissertation committee and the Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School in advance of registration at other universities. In general, however, not less than two-thirds of the total non-dissertation credit hours of doctoral degrees must be completed in residence courses at UNCG.

In order to ensure that the courses fall within the time limit permitted, the transfer credit will be accepted finally and posted to the transcript only at the time of completion of the degree requirements.

Preliminary Examination

When a student has removed any provisions or special conditions that may have been attached to admission, completed a minimum of 75% of the coursework contained in the program of study, passed any foreign language requirements, and completed the research skill requirements, that student is then eligible to take the preliminary examination. Individual departments may have additional requirements. Each doctoral student is required to pass the doctoral preliminary examination, which consists of both a written and oral examination. The written part is scheduled and prepared by the dissertation advisor with the assistance of the advisory/dissertation committee. The questions may cover any aspect of the coursework taken by the student during the period of this graduate study or any subject logically related and basic to an understanding of the subject matter of the major and minor areas of study. Any transferred coursework is subject to examination at the time of the preliminary examination. The oral examination should be scheduled within one month following the written examination.

Unanimous approval is required for passing the preliminary examination. Approval may be conditional, however, upon the satisfactory completion of such additional work as may be required by the committee. However, if the student does not pass the preliminary examination, no more than one re-examination will be allowed. The re-examination will not be permitted during the semester in which the preliminary examination was failed. If the student fails to pass the re-examination, The Graduate School will send the student a letter of dismissal from the program.

The complete advisory/dissertation committee of at least four must participate in the holding of the preliminary oral examination.

Admission to Candidacy

When a student has completed all major and minor required courses, has passed the preliminary written and oral examinations, satisfied any language or skill requirements, and submitted a dissertation research outline that has been approved by his dissertation advisor and advisory/dissertation committee, that student may then make formal application in The Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

The Dissertation

The dissertation is the product of a thorough investigation of a basic and significant problem or question within the major area of study. An appropriate plan of research must be developed and executed by the student under the general guidance of the chair and the advisory/
dissertation committee. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required for research involving human subjects prior to acceptance of a dissertation based on such research.

The dissertation requirement is designed to develop the capacities of originality and generalization in the candidate. It should foster and attest to the development in the candidate of ability in scientific inquiry, understanding and mastery of the techniques of scholarship, and the art of exposition within the field of specialization. The advisory/dissertation committee, with such other professors as may be appointed by the Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School, shall examine the dissertation. No dissertation shall be accepted unless it secures unanimous approval of the advisory/dissertation committee.

It is expected that the dissertation will serve to demonstrate the student’s ability to contribute to the development of research or scholarship within the discipline. As such, The Graduate School must be certain that the dissertation is a demonstration of the student’s ability to identify a problem, develop a methodology, carry out the necessary steps to gather data, analyze the findings, and form a defensible conclusion.

In the case of non-traditional dissertations that may contain chapters or sections with multiple authors, it is necessary to clarify the contribution of the dissertating student and others who may contribute to the dissertation. In situations where there may be multiple authors, it is the responsibility of the advisory/dissertation committee chair to identify the percentage of proposed work to be developed by each of the contributors and submit it to The Graduate School for approval. This must be done at the proposal stage and again at final defense if the original plan has been revised.

It is expected that the dissertating student will be identified as the primary author of each of the chapters. The introduction to the dissertation must be solely authored by the dissertating student and must contain the theoretical framework that unifies the chapters that follow. The dissertating student also must be the sole author of the concluding chapter in which the significance of the various articles is explained. It is also expected that within the dissertation, appropriate attribution will be given to the other authors who contribute to the chapters.

Students file the dissertation electronically via the online submission system available on The Graduate School’s website. In final form, the dissertation must comply with the rules prescribed by the Graduate Studies Committee in the Guide for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations. The approved electronic submission must be uploaded by the deadline dates as specified in the Academic Calendar.

Publication of the dissertation by UMI Dissertation Publishing/ProQuest Information and Learning is required by The Graduate School for all programs except the DNP. There is no charge for traditional publishing. However, optional services requested by the candidate during submission may have associated charges.

The process for submitting the dissertation to The Graduate School has two components: submitting the signed approval copy and submitting the final copy. The specific instructions and deadline dates affiliated with each step are available in the Guide and the Academic Calendar.

Dissertation hours vary according to the program but are never less than 12 semester hours, normally taken in units of three semester hours. For a complete explanation of requirements affecting dissertation registration, see the Policy on Continuous Enrollment.

Oral Defense

The doctoral candidate who has successfully completed all other requirements for the degree must defend the dissertation orally. The defense will be scheduled by the chair of the advisory/dissertation committee in consultation with the other committee members. The Graduate School will publish the dissertation title, date, time and location of the oral defense at least two weeks prior to the defense. The defense is open to all members of the University community who may wish to attend, as required by state laws on public meetings. The oral defense is administered by the advisory/dissertation committee according to program guidelines. The defense is largely related to the dissertation field of study including courses taken here and elsewhere. Approval of the defense must be attested to by all members of the advisory/dissertation committee. The results of the defense are to be reported in writing to the Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School.