

Doctor of Philosophy

The Doctor of Philosophy degree is awarded to candidates who give evidence of high scholastic attainment and research ability in their major field. Specific degree requirements are administered by a committee in charge of the degree program. It is the responsibility of the chair of this committee to certify to the college the completion of each requirement for each candidate. Note that advanced standing is determined at the time of admission by the graduate program director.

Continuity of Registration

Students are expected to maintain satisfactory progress toward their intended degree. All students must register as approved by their advisors or the departmental graduate program directors. After establishing degree candidacy, registration must be continuous until graduation requirements are complete unless a leave of absence is allowed by and recommended by the departmental graduate committee and approved by the college. For each of the first two semesters that a doctoral candidate has established candidacy, the student must register for Doctoral Dissertation. For each semester beyond the two Dissertation registrations, the student must register for Doctoral Dissertation Continuation until the dissertation is approved by the college and submitted to ProQuest. During the terms when a student is registered for Doctoral Dissertation or Dissertation Continuation, coursework is not permitted as the course requirements for the degree have already been met. If the academic program requires enrollment in seminars or courses in addition to Dissertation or Dissertation Continuation, the graduate program director will make a recommendation to the college. Approval of the college must happen prior to registration. Students must be registered for Dissertation or Dissertation Continuation during the semester in which they take the final oral examination (including the full summer semester if that is when defense occurs). Any student who does not attend Northeastern University for a period of one year may be required to apply for readmission.

Awards

Funding eligibility is contingent upon making satisfactory progress. See Regulations for All Students (<https://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/social-sciences-humanities/general-regulations/regulations-for-all-students/>) for more information.

Course Requirements

Course requirements in each doctoral program are specified by the committee in charge of the doctoral program and departmental regulations. These are detailed in the academic catalog for the student's term of entry.

GPA Requirements

For all College of Social Sciences and Humanities doctoral degree programs, the minimum cumulative grade-point average is 3.500. To qualify for the degree, the minimum cumulative GPA must be obtained. This average will be calculated each semester according to the grading system noted in the academic catalog and will exclude any transfer credits or repeated courses. Individual programs may have additional GPA requirements. These can be found in the academic catalog or program policies and procedure documents. A student who does not make satisfactory progress toward degree requirements, as specified by the individual department, may be placed on academic probation or dismissed from the program. A student cannot begin working on exam requirements with a GPA that is below the program minimum.

Annual Student Progress Review

All PhD degree students are required to meet with their faculty advisor for an annual student progress review. The reviews will be submitted to the departmental graduate committee, which will determine whether satisfactory progress is being made and students are eligible to proceed to complete their graduate work. The CSSH Graduate Office will receive a copy of each student's review.

Residence Requirement

All PhD students must spend the equivalent of at least one academic year in residence at the university as a full-time graduate student. The departmental graduate committee specifies the method by which the residence requirement is satisfied. Residency is required of all students receiving a stipended graduate assistantship.

Qualifying Examinations

In programs where comprehensive or qualifying exams are required, students must complete these requirements within the time limit set by the program.

Dissertation Proposal

All CSSH doctoral programs require an approved prospectus or successful proposal defense for candidacy.

Doctoral Degree Candidacy

PhD degree candidacy is established when students have completed all departmental requirements for candidacy. These requirements vary by department and include completing the minimum number of graduate semester hours required of doctoral students by the department (this may include an earned master's degree accepted by the department) and passing a qualifying examination and/or a comprehensive examination. All CSSH doctoral programs require an approved prospectus or successful proposal defense for candidacy. Once students reach doctoral degree candidacy they will be certified, in writing, by the college. Registration in coursework is not permitted once a student reaches candidacy.

Doctoral Dissertation

Each doctoral student must complete a dissertation that embodies the results of extended research and makes an original contribution to the field. This work should give evidence of the candidate's ability to carry out independent investigation and interpret in a logical manner the results of the research. The method of approval of the dissertation is established by the departmental graduate committee. No dissertation committee shall have fewer than three faculty members, two of whom shall be from Northeastern. The chair of the dissertation committee will be a full-time tenured or tenure-track member of the faculty of Northeastern and will hold an appropriate doctorate. A research faculty member may chair a dissertation committee if the faculty member holds an appropriate doctorate and has received the approval to do so from the tenured and tenure-track faculty members of the unit(s) in which their appointment resides.

Final Oral Examination

The final oral examination will be on the subject matter of the doctoral dissertation and on important developments in the field of the dissertation. Other fields may be included if recommended by the examining committee. This examination will be taken after completion of all other degree requirements and must be held at least four weeks prior to the commencement at which the degree is to be awarded. All internal and external committee members are expected to participate in the defense. The college must be notified of all scheduled defenses and expects that the defense will be publicly advertised for at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date. Some programs may require up to 30 days' notice.

- Upon successful defense of the dissertation, the student must have a dissertation approval record signed by the members of the dissertation committee and the department chair. Contact the CSSH Graduate Office at gradcssh@northeastern.edu for the approval form template.
- The student must have the dissertation approval record approved by a representative from the CSSH Graduate Office.
- The student must submit an electronic copy of the dissertation to ProQuest, following the directions outlined at the University Library website.