

## APPENDIX F: Guidelines for Dissertation

### Guidelines for Dissertation

The dissertation is expected to be an original contribution to knowledge, demonstrating in-depth mastery of the latest scholarship in the field of study.

- In the semester that the qualifying exam is passed, the student is expected to form a dissertation committee. The committee members may easily be added or removed during the time from the qualifying exam to the final exam (thesis defense). The dissertation committee shares the responsibility of guiding the student's research to successful completion. Students should view the committee as mentors and advocates for their thesis research. This committee does not have to be identical to the PhD Advisory Committee. Your director will be a specialist in your field of concentration, but the other members of the Committee may be chosen for their expertise in related areas of study (e.g., a theoretical problem, a genre). It can be helpful to have a reader who is not an expert in the field and who might be able to see problems in the communication of ideas.
- With your committee, formulate a plan of action. The Department recommends that the Committee and student use the Mentoring Agreement to establish specific timelines. Normally, the director will read all chapters as they are finished, and the committee will decide which of the other readers will read which portions of the dissertation along the way. Make sure that everyone involved is aware of how things will proceed. Keep the lines of communication open with each of your committee members. If you get “stuck” at any point in the process, the best approach is to consult with your advisor and other members of the committee to discuss how to regain focus and stay on task. It is the student's responsibility to convene meetings of the dissertation committee, when needed.
- Dissertation writing depends on revision. It is not unusual for some chapters to require more than one rewrite. In some cases, the material will have to be shifted from one chapter to another or changed to be made consistent with claims made in other parts of the dissertation. It is necessary to allocate time such revisions.
- Follow dissertation format (in punctuation, bibliography, etc.) beginning in the early drafts, so that valuable time is not wasted during the dissertation process. Please consult the *MLA Handbook* 9<sup>th</sup> ed. and the KU Graduate Studies Policy on Doctoral dissertation at <https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-dissertation>. Rigorously edit your own work before submitting drafts so that your committee can focus on your ideas rather than your writing. Consult the MLA's *Line by Line* on how to edit your own writing.
- Once the dissertation reaches its final stages of writing and revision, the Director and student plan for the defense of the dissertation. The University considers the defense a public event. Consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator about procedures for setting up defense date and arrangements. The Director of Graduate Studies will publicize the defense and make a copy of the dissertation available for members of the University community to read. One digital copy of the defense version of the dissertation must be delivered to the Department office at least three weeks before you defend.

- The student should send the final draft of the dissertation to the full committee via e-mail (or in hard copy if preferred) at least four weeks prior to the scheduled date of the dissertation defense to enable committee members to examine it fully. Make sure to allow enough time for the full committee to read the dissertation and make comments before you set a final defense date.
- The University of Kansas requires that all students whose degree programs require the defense of a dissertation must publish their research to fulfill degree requirements. After the defense, the candidate should meet with the dissertation advisor to make any revisions resulting from the defense. The dissertation should meet all the [formatting requirements](#) specified in KU's ETD Formatting Guidelines. **Before you submit your dissertation, make sure you have complied with all KU requirements, information available at <https://graduate.ku.edu/submitting>.** If you have questions about submission or other online technical details, contact the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator or the College of Liberal Arts Electronic Thesis Dissertation coordinator, Lauren Chaney, [coga@ku.edu](mailto:coga@ku.edu).