

# PhD Degree: Dissertation Procedures

A doctoral dissertation is based upon original investigation and shows mature scholarship and critical judgment as well as familiarity with tools and methods of research.

## Format of the Dissertation

Generally, a dissertation is comprised of main chapters that could together comprise a viable book manuscript or result in three independent papers in leading peer-reviewed journals in the student's field. Short introductory and concluding chapters that frame the work and speak to its intellectual unity and contributions also are expected of most PhD dissertations.

A dissertation must represent the equivalent of at least 30 semester (credit) hours of work. The dissertation must comply with the [specifications for dissertations](#) outlined by the Graduate School.

## Defense Meeting

The defense consists of a public presentation that is open to anyone, and a closed door meeting with the committee. The public presentation should consist of a 20-30 minute formal presentation summarizing the research and outcomes. The presentation should be of a format acceptable at a national professional meeting. After delivering this presentation, committee members will ask the audience to leave and will then ask questions and provide feedback directly to the student.

Following the defense, the committee votes on whether the student's work was *satisfactory* or *unsatisfactory*. More than one unsatisfactory vote disqualifies the candidate. A student who fails the examination may attempt it once more after a period of time determined by the examining committee.

Several rules must be followed when scheduling a dissertation defense:

1. The dissertation defense should be scheduled no later than the [posted deadline](#) for the semester in which the degree is to be conferred.
2. The student must be registered as a full-time, regular degree-seeking student at CU-Boulder, for a minimum of 5 dissertation hours during the semester in which they pass the final examination.
3. The committee chair and a majority of the committee must be present on the Boulder campus for the examination.
4. Students must notify the Graduate Program Coordinator School of their plans to defend their dissertation *at least three weeks before their defense date*.

## After the Defense

After passing the dissertation defense, the student should complete the following steps:

- Submit the completed Doctoral Examination Report and grade card to the Graduate Program Coordinator
- Submit a signature page with original signatures from the chair of the student's committee and at least one other committee member to the Graduate School by the Graduate School's deadline.
- File the final version of the dissertation by the Graduate School's deadline according to these [instructions](#).
- Submit the Survey of Earned Doctorates Form online at <http://survey.norc.uchicago.edu/doctorate>.