



THEATRE, DANCE, &
PERFORMANCE STUDIES

Handbook

PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies

Updated: September 2016

Table of Contents

I. General Information	3
Program Description.....	3
Administrative Structure of the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS).....	3
II. Requirements for the PhD	5
Program Design and Duration	5
Example 4-year timeline.....	6
General Information.....	7
Residency	7
First semester and year-end reviews	7
Probation and dismissal	8
Advisors and chairs	8
Course & Credit Requirements.....	8
Mandatory coursework.....	8
Additional coursework.....	9
THET899: Doctoral Dissertation Research	10
Incompletes.....	10
Research Language Requirement.....	11
Production/Performance Requirement	12
PhD Comprehensive Examination.....	12
Step I: Select a Comprehensive Examination Committee.	12
Step II: Submit a working Comps bibliography to the committee.	12
Step III: Take the Comps.....	13
Step IV: Pass an oral examination.	14
Qualifying Examination and Advancement to Candidacy: 4 steps.....	14
Step I: Form a dissertation committee.	14
Step II: Take the Qualifying Examination, which consists of two parts (the Specialization Exam and Dissertation Prospectus).....	15
Writing the Dissertation.....	17
Defending the Dissertation.....	17
III. Assistantships and Research Funding.....	18
IV. Prospectus Guidelines	19
V. Graduate Student Activity Report.....	21

I. General Information

Program Description

The PhD is the signature degree for advanced intellectual inquiry. It provides the mechanism for creating new knowledge and the next generation of knowledge producers.¹ The doctoral program in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland is an interdisciplinary course of study that prepares students for careers both inside and outside of academia, and is committed to a rigorous exploration of both theatre and performance studies.

Each faculty member in the program is a leading scholar in their area of specialization, and each brings a diverse approach to scholarship and teaching. Yet the program's primary strength derives from the impressive cohesion and integration of the faculty's teaching and research interests. We are unique in that the program combines theatre history, dramaturgy, and performance studies; thus, students receive high-level instruction in how to conduct historical research, dramaturgical analysis and application, and in-depth ethnography on contemporary topics. Regardless of a student's particular interest and specialty, they graduate from the program with the skills to integrate and utilize these three key areas and become better scholars and educators. Faculty members also work internationally and/or with international groups in different aspects of theatre and performance studies, and graduate students are increasingly taking their research abroad.

Administrative Structure of the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS)

- a. The **Director of TDPS** is appointed by the Dean of Arts and Humanities and is the chief administrative officer of the School. The person holding this office has the final say on all financial decisions involving TDPS funds—including graduate assistantships, travel funds, and matching funds for awards from other units of the university—and approves the assignments for winter and summer term teaching.
- b. The **Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)** is a faculty member appointed by the Director of TDPS. The DGS acts as the chief advocate and representative of all graduate programs in TDPS and works with the faculty to ensure that each of our four graduate programs is in compliance with all policies and procedures established by the university and the Graduate School. The DGS, in conjunction with the Coordinator of Graduate Services, makes annual reports on all TDPS graduate programs to the Graduate School, the Office of the Dean of Arts and Humanities, and the Director of TDPS. The Heads of the graduate programs in TDPS report to the DGS. The DGS collects data on placements, publications, production work, awards and honors, and other data important to the promotion of the graduate programs; they must also be informed of all issues relating to a student's progress towards the degree. The DGS signs all relevant forms sent to the Graduate School or Registrar's Office. Students

¹ Charles Caramello, "The Centennial Vision—Graduate Education at UMD: Research and Professional Practice for a Global Economy" (publication of the Graduate School, University of Maryland, College Park, October 14, 2014), http://gradschool.umd.edu/sites/gradschool.umd.edu/files/uploads/centennial_vision_for_graduate_education_at_umd_page_1.jpg.

should always allow three to five working days before a deadline to secure the signature of the DGS (working days do not include weekends or holidays).

- c. The **Coordinator of Graduate Services (CGS)** is a full time staff member who keeps records related to the graduate programs and is the primary facilitator for helping students get their paperwork submitted on time. The CGS works closely with the DGS to coordinate all contact between TDPS graduate students and the Graduate School, the College of Arts and Humanities, the Bursar's Office, the Registrar's Office, and the university administration. Any student wishing the assistance of the CGS in submitting paperwork must send the forms at least three days in advance, must have them completely filled out, and must follow up to ensure that the materials were submitted and received at their final destination.

- d. The **Head of the History/Theory Area** is a faculty member appointed by the Director of TDPS. The Head is the chief supervisor of both the undergraduate and graduate programs. The Head is responsible for convening and chairing meetings; administering the program's budget; assigning graduate assistantship duties; monitoring the curriculum and advising processes, and supervising adjunct faculty. The Head may also serve as the Director of the PhD program, though the positions have separate responsibilities.

- e. The **Director of the PhD Program** is a faculty member appointed by the Director of TDPS (often this is the same person serving as the Head). The Director of the PhD Program is responsible for the operation of both the MA and PhD programs. This person leads recruitment efforts, including the organization of open houses; manages the process of faculty selection of accepted candidates; works with the Head of the History/Theory Area and the DGS to determine financial offers made to incoming students; and coordinates the sending of offer letters with the CGS. The Director of the PhD Program serves as the advisor for all first-year students and organizes their semester-end reviews. This person monitors the degree progress of all PhD students, organizes their annual year-end reviews by the faculty, and ensures that all Graduate Student Activity Reports are submitted to the DGS and the CGS following the reviews.

II. Requirements for the PhD

Each graduate student in the program is responsible for meeting all degree requirements, for submitting all paperwork (with all required signatures) by the required deadlines, and for confirming that all paperwork has been properly received by the Graduate School or Registrar's Office. The student's advisor, the Director of the PhD program, the CGS, and the DGS can assist, but the student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all requirements are met and that all paperwork is submitted on time. Deadlines and forms may always be found on the Graduate School's [website](http://www.ter.ps/deadlines) (www.ter.ps/deadlines).

Program Design and Duration

The PhD Program in Theatre and Performance Studies may be (ideally) completed in four years of full-time study. An example timeline for such a course of study is presented on the following page. Financial support packages normally cover this time period. The complexities of dissertation research and the challenges of effective writing have made five- to six-year completion times more common. Students needing more than four years to finish will be assisted in applying for funding from other sources.

The program requires of minimum of 40 credit hours (beyond the MA or MFA degree) that must be taken on campus. Students are normally advanced to candidacy at the end of their third year (sixth semester), at which point they are classified as ABD ("all but dissertation"). This timeline must be followed for students to be classified as "making satisfactory progress" towards their degrees. However, in recognition of the effects that childbirth, adoption, illness, and caring for incapacitated dependents (such as children, ill or injured partners, or aging parents) may have on the time and energy that graduate students can devote to their programs, the Graduate School allows up to a total of five years to advance to candidacy. Failure to advance within five years will result in the student's removal from the program.

The Graduate School also requires that a PhD be completed within nine years of entry into the program. After nine years, credits earned from coursework are invalidated and the student must start over. In certain circumstances, students may apply for a one-year extension, and may apply for this two times (thus allowing a maximum two-year extension). If two are requested and granted, this could potentially allow up to eleven years to complete the degree.

Example 4-year timeline

Blue text in the table below links to the relevant portion of the Handbook.

1

- Complete 20 credit hours (CHrs) of graduate courses with a grade of “B” or better
- Be approved for continuation at both **end-of-semester reviews**

2

- Complete 20 CHrs of graduate courses with a grade of “B” or better
- Complete the **Research Language Requirement** by the end of the academic year
- Assemble a **Comps committee** (three faculty members)
- Compose a reading list for the **Comprehensive Examinations**
- Identify a primary research advisor (future dissertation committee chair) and potential dissertation topic by the end of the fall semester
- Be approved for continuation at the **year-end review**

3

- Complete 3 CHrs of THET898 in the fall and 3 CHrs in the spring (assistants complete an additional 3 CHrs in the form of a 600-level THET seminar each term, as discussed **below**)
- Pass the **Comprehensive Examination** during the fall semester
- Assemble a dissertation committee and identify a possible Dean’s Representative
- Pass the **Qualifying Examination** during the spring semester and advance to candidacy
- Complete the **Production/Performance Requirement**
- Be approved for continuation at the **year-end review**

4

- Complete 6 CHrs of **THET899** each term (assistants complete an additional 3 CHrs in the form of a 600-level THET seminar each term, as discussed **below**)
- Finish research
- **Write** the dissertation and submit a final copy to the committee
- Successfully **defend** the dissertation
- Submit the dissertation to the Graduate School

General Information

Residency

TDPS recommends students establish residency in the state of Maryland as soon as possible. Requirements, procedures, and the Petition for Change of Classification for Tuition Purposes form may be found [here](http://www.ter.ps/ResPet) (www.ter.ps/ResPet). Establishing residency in Maryland (though not in DC or Virginia) allows students to pay in-state tuition should they exhaust or lose funding. While graduate assistants are eligible for in-state status, their classification will not be changed until they submit the necessary petition paperwork. More information is available [here](http://www.ter.ps/ResClass) (www.ter.ps/ResClass).

Should a student move more than 100 miles from campus before completing the dissertation, they should apply for a Waiver of Mandatory Fees using the [Petition for Waiver of Regulations](#) form (www.ter.ps/fees).

First semester and year-end reviews

Any student who has not yet advanced to candidacy is required to meet with faculty at the end of the academic year to discuss their standing in the program. First-year students are required to meet with the faculty at the end of their first fall semester, as well. Prior to the meeting, each student must submit a [Graduate Student Activity Report](#) to the Director of the PhD Program, who will then submit it to the DGS and the CGS (a sample report is included at the end of the handbook). These reviews are intended to inform students whether they are making satisfactory progress towards the degree, as well as the acceptability of any assistantship work. Any student who is found deficient in two consecutive reviews may lose their funding and may be asked to leave the program. Each second-year student will be notified at the year-end review whether they will be allowed to continue in the program and take the Comprehensive Examination (Comps) in the third year.

At the end of every year until graduation, PhD students are required to turn in a Graduate Student Activity Report that provides information on their progress towards the degree, their professional development, and their accomplishments. These reports are essential for tracking each student's progress and collecting data required by the university. At the end of every year that a student receives funding from TDPS, the faculty will also meet with them to review their classroom performance, their progress towards the degree, and their work as assistants or holders of fellowships. (First-year students will have two such reviews, one at the end of each semester. Students not on funding are reviewed each year until they are advanced to candidacy.)

If there are any concerns regarding a student's performance the faculty will convey those concerns to the student and propose actions to resolve them. In certain cases, the student may be officially put on probation. The year-end reviews are intended to ensure that all students know how they are doing in the program and, if they need to make corrections, that they have the opportunity to do so. Should a student continue to have issues in a subsequent review, the faculty may recommend that the student's funding not be renewed, that the student leave the program, or, in rare cases, they may initiate the process for having the student's participation in the program terminated.

Probation and dismissal

As indicated in the contract letter signed by every graduate assistant, failure to perform assigned duties satisfactorily is grounds for a loss of funding. When possible, a student will be put on probation for one term and will receive a letter stating the grounds for the probation and what actions must be taken by the end of the probationary period. Funding will continue as long as the terms of the probation are met. This is not required, however, if the faculty determines that the student's continuation as an assistant would have negative consequences for other students in the program. In such cases the loss of funding will be immediate.

Students who fail to make adequate progress towards the degree or who have not maintained a "B" average can be put on a semester- or year-long academic probation and will receive a letter stating the grounds for the academic probation and what actions must be taken by the end of the probationary period. Such probation can lead to a non-renewal of funding and a recommendation that the student leave the program. Should the terms of the probation not be met, the student will be withdrawn from the program.

In accordance with university guidelines, the faculty reserves the right to request, at any time, the withdrawal of a student who cannot or does not maintain the required standard of scholarship, or whose continuance in the university would be detrimental to their health or the health of others, or whose conduct is not satisfactory to the authorities of the university. Additional information about the dismissal of students may be found in the [Code of Student Conduct](http://www.ter.ps/code) (www.ter.ps/code).

Advisors and chairs

The Director of the PhD program serves as the academic advisor for all first-year students. By the end of the fall semester of their second year, each PhD student must ask a member of the core PhD faculty in TDPS to serve as their primary research advisor. That faculty member will guide the student through the Comps. Upon completion of those exams the student will select the chair of their dissertation committee. Generally, the primary research advisor will also serve as the chair of the dissertation committee; depending on how the student's topic develops, however, this may not always be the case. The chair of a dissertation committee may be changed even while a student is in the writing process.

Course & Credit Requirements

Mandatory coursework

The minimum 40 CHrs required for the PhD are generally taken in the first two years at a rate of 10 CHrs per semester (three 3-CHr courses and one 1-CHr course). Each student may also take up to 4 CHrs of coursework during the short winter term, thereby reducing the load in later semesters or allowing a broadening of their education. Graduate-level courses in TDPS are not available in the summer.

The required minimum of 40 CHrs must include the credits and courses listed below. (THET is the catalog designation for classes in Theatre and Performance Studies.)

12 CHrs from the following seminars:

- THET700: Introduction to Doctoral Studies in Theatre (3 CHrs)

- THET711: Critical Theory (3 CHrs)
 - or ENGL602: Critical Theory and Literary Criticism (3 CHrs) with approval of advisor or Director of the PhD Program
- THET712: Historical Research Methods and Historiography in Theatre (3 CHrs)
- THET713: Performance Studies (3 CHrs)

12 CHrs of 600-level THET seminars

- Students should try to take at least one class from each of the core faculty members in the program.
- Only one of these classes may be an independent study (and then only if no independent study course is used to fulfill the external course requirement below).

6 CHrs of 600-level seminars from outside of TDPS

- Courses cross-listed with THET and taught by TDPS faculty count as internal, rather than external courses. DANC courses are not considered external courses.
- Only one of these classes may be an independent study (and then only if no independent study course is used for the internal course requirement above).

1 CHr of THET606: Teaching Theatre

- Students who are not TAs or who have significant college-level teaching experience can be exempt from this class but must take another 1-CHr class to replace it.

Three additional 1-CHr classes, which may include but are not limited to:

- THET669: Independent Study, a repeatable class generally used to prepare for the Comps
- THET889: Doctoral Tutorial in Theatre, a repeatable class generally used for special research, participation in colloquia, or filling gaps in knowledge
- External, 1-CHr colloquia courses. Recent examples include:
 - Theory Colloquium
 - Graduate Colloquium on Cinema and Theory
 - Medieval & Early Modern Colloquium
 - Digital Studies in the Arts and Humanities Colloquium
 - University Teaching and Learning Program

An additional 6 CHrs (two 3-CHr classes)

- Any appropriate 400- to 800-level courses from inside or outside of TDPS

Additional coursework

Each student in the PhD program will necessarily take additional CHrs beyond the 40-CHr minimum, as described below. Each student with a TDPS assistantship is strongly encouraged to take at least one seminar offered by a core faculty member during each semester, regardless of their candidacy status.

In the fifth and sixth semesters:

- 3 CHrs of THET898: Pre-Candidacy Research each semester
- For assistants: 3 CHrs of a 600-level THET seminar each semester (THET898 is not considered a seminar)
- 1-3 CHrs of THET888: Doctoral Practicum in Theatre (registered under the primary research advisor's number)
- Various other courses taken for personal or scholarly development

THET899: Doctoral Dissertation Research

Once a student is advanced to candidacy—ideally at the end of the sixth semester—they are automatically registered for 6 CHrs of THET899: Doctoral Dissertation Research each fall and spring semester until the dissertation is successfully defended. Students are also billed for student fees during this time unless they qualify for a **waiver**.

- There is a fixed fee for this registration, which is at a lower rate than the regular course rate.
- THET899 registration is not required in the summer, except when students are graduating at the end of a summer term.
- The Graduate School requires each student to have 12 CHrs of THET899 completed before being awarded the PhD. Most students have considerably more than this.
- Because this registration is automatic, it is important that the student confirms that they have been registered in the section assigned to the chair of their dissertation committee. It is especially important to confirm this when the student changes their committee chair after advancing to candidacy.
- Any candidate can take up to 4 additional CHrs each semester (beyond the mandatory 6 CHrs of THET899).

Incompletes

Students are expected to complete all courses they take. Exceptional circumstances may lead a student to request an incomplete (“I”) in a course. Incompletes are governed by the **Graduate School Incomplete Contract** (www.ter.ps/incomplete), which must be signed by both the student and the instructor and filed with the CGS and the Director of the PhD Program. Students are expected to finish all related coursework by the end of the following term: for fall semester incompletes, students have until the end of the spring semester; for spring semester incompletes, students have until the start of the next fall semester. Under exceptional circumstances, students may request one additional semester/term to clear the “I” grade, which will be considered by the faculty on a case-by-case basis.

Failure to clear an “I” grade within the required period will result in a failing grade, which constitutes a failure to make adequate progress towards the degree; along with other factors, this may add to the grounds for a loss of funding or removal from the program. Any student with an incomplete must check in with their advisor and the instructor of the course on a regular basis to detail what actions are being taken to finish the incomplete course requirements. Their advisor will report on the student's progress to the Director of the PhD Program.

Research Language Requirement

Each student must demonstrate knowledge of at least one research language. The student's dissertation topic may require additional research languages, as well. The language requirement can be fulfilled in any of the following ways:

1. Having English as a second language.
2. Providing a letter detailing life experiences that demonstrate competency in a language other than English (e.g., "I lived in Germany for three years, attending a college there where all my courses were conducted in German. My GPA was 3.0.").
3. Submitting transcripts showing a language course taken and passed with a grade of "B" or better beyond the undergraduate work:
 - At the 300 level, in the case of European languages (German, French, Spanish, etc.);
 - At the 400 level, in the case of Greek, Latin, Asian, or African languages.

Linguistic courses or computer programming languages essential to Digital Humanities research may be used for the requirement if they have been passed at the 400 level. Equivalent systems in different numbering systems are acceptable but need to be justified.

4. The successful completion of a summer intensive language program that has a comparable language translation exam as part of its curriculum.
5. A language examination, described below:
 - Language examinations will be held once each year.
 - One faculty member (from TDPS or another department, as necessary) will administer and grade each examination. In the event of a failing or a conditional grade, a second qualified person will review the examination and the grade. The two graders must reach a single judgment.
 - Students may take an examination for any one language a total of three times (the exam itself will change each time), but this will inevitably delay the student's progress, so they should ensure they are sufficiently prepared for the first exam.
 - The examination will last three hours and will consist of two passages (250-300 words each) drawn from works appropriate to each student's general field of study (i.e., a play, a work of theatrical or dramatic history, criticism, or theory).
 - Students will be offered three passages, from which they will select two. Students may bring a dictionary and a verb conjugation book.
 - A passing grade will be awarded when it is demonstrated that the passage has been understood, translated appropriately, and that it may be rendered into natural, idiomatic English.
 - Each student's language will (ideally) be appropriate to their area of research or to general materials in theatre and performance studies.

Students who wish to demonstrate proficiency in an alternative way are free to submit a written proposal to the Director of the PhD Program, who will consult with the History/Theory faculty before approving the alternative.

Production/Performance Requirement

Doctoral students often enter the program with training and experience in the artistic and production areas of theatre and performance. Students without such training and experience must obtain it before earning the degree by enrolling in appropriate classes or engaging in production activities appropriate to their skills and areas of interest (e.g., directing, dramaturgy, stage management, film, acting, video production, etc.). Those who undertake production work may earn up to 3 CHrs of THET888, though these do not count towards the minimum of 40 CHrs required for the degree.

PhD Comprehensive Examination

PhD Comps are intended to assess a student's overall level of knowledge in the fields of theatre and performance studies. They go beyond the exams taken during coursework and are designed to test a student's ability to integrate knowledge gathered across a range of classes. They survey the breadth of a student's knowledge of theatre and performance studies in general, knowledge students are expected to acquire above and beyond what is covered during coursework.

Note: As of August 2015 the Area of Specialization section is no longer part of the Comps; it is now part of the Qualifying Examination described [below](#).

Comprehensive Exam Process: 4 Steps

Step I: Select a Comprehensive Examination Committee.

This must be accomplished by the first week of a student's fourth semester in the program. As soon as the committee is in place, a student must inform the DGS and CGS.

The Comps committee will be chaired by the student's primary research advisor, who will assist the student in selecting at least two additional faculty members to serve on the committee. These must be faculty from whom the student has taken courses. One must agree to write questions related to the *history* of theatre and performance studies; the other must agree to write questions related to the *theory* of theatre and performance studies. The primary research advisor and committee members will develop the student's Comps questions.

Step II: Submit a working Comps bibliography to the committee.

This must be accomplished by the tenth week of a student's fourth semester in the program. Each student must submit to their committee, as well as to the DGS, a bibliography that demonstrates a knowledge of the books, articles, and plays necessary to ensure the student possesses a comprehensive knowledge of both theatre and performance studies. This bibliography will include some works the student has read for classes, some works read independently, and works the student must read before the exam. This bibliography **will not** necessarily include works that are properly part of the student's Area of Specialization (described [below](#)), although there may be some overlap.

Students should be selective when creating their lists. They should not include every book written about Greek theatre, for example, but should list a few that are known for providing comprehensive, reliable, and significant information on the subject. Similarly, students should not attempt to cover every theory of performance studies, but should focus on those that are most often cited in the literature they have read and are most applicable to their own future place as a theatre/performance studies scholar. Additionally, students should select plays that they have most often seen referenced elsewhere in the bibliography. Using the bibliography as a guide, the committee will help the student focus the concept and scope of “comprehensive knowledge” and identify additional works they want the student to read.

Students should not include readers or entire volumes in their lists, but should rather list original references for articles or books. For example, students should not list a passage from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* that is reprinted in *The Goffman Reader*, but should rather include the original work. Similarly, rather than listing a critical theory reader that includes selections from Pierre Bourdieu’s work, a student would list Bourdieu’s *The Field of Cultural Production*.

Bibliographies may be emailed to the student’s committee members and the DGS in MS Word or PDF format. The bibliography should include around 50 sources per subject area.

Step III: Take the Comps.

The exams should be completed by week seven of a student’s fifth semester in the program.

Part 1: History

The first portion of the Comps tests a student’s comprehensive knowledge of the history of theatre and performance studies, and is given at the start of a student’s fifth semester. (Typically, this is at the end of September at the start of a student’s third year.)

At 9:00 a.m. on Monday of the exam week, 3-5 questions will be emailed to the student by their primary research advisor/chair or by the CGS. The student will select and answer two of the questions. The student will answer each question in 16-18 pages (double spaced, 12 point type, 1” margins). The question itself must be included at the top of the first page (single spaced, in italics). All pages must be clearly numbered and properly formatted footnotes should demonstrate the extent of the student’s reading on the subjects covered.

By 9:00 a.m. the following Monday, the student must email both the essays to their full committee and to the CGS (who will log the receipt of the exam). Each student will always have a full week to answer the questions (e.g., if the exam arrives at noon on Monday, it will not be due until noon the following Monday).

Part 2: Theory

The second portion of the Comps tests a student’s comprehensive knowledge of the major theories associated with theatre and performance studies. The exam is typically given as soon as the student submits the essays from Part I, though students have the option of waiting one week before beginning Part II. With either option, the 3-5 questions will be sent to the student

by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, and the student must return their answers by 9 a.m. the following Monday.

Step IV: Pass an oral examination.

This must be accomplished between eleven and thirty working days of the completion of the second portion of the Comps. (Working days do not include weekends or holidays.) Committee members must have a minimum of ten full working days to read the answers before the oral exam can occur. The oral exam further tests a student's comprehensive knowledge of both the history and theory of theatre and performance studies. It will also test a student's ability to discuss, explain, elaborate, and defend the answers they provided.

The examination lasts ninety minutes. The student is responsible for arranging the date, time, and location at their committee's convenience. The student is also responsible for reserving a space with the appropriate TDPS staff, and for notifying both the DGS and the CGS once the details have been set. All members of the committee must participate in the oral exam. For the purposes of the exam, "participation" includes video teleconferencing (with systems like Cisco's Jabber or Adobe Connect) or participation by phone. In rare cases a member of the committee may provide written questions to be asked by another member of the committee during the exam. Such cases must be cleared with the student's primary research advisor/chair and the Director of the PhD Program.

Qualifying Examination and Advancement to Candidacy: 4 steps

Step I: Form a dissertation committee.

Before the end of a student's fifth semester in the program, they should have selected a dissertation advisor and started the process of developing a research topic. Note: The student's primary research advisor (who chairs the Comps committee) and their dissertation advisor need not be the same person, though they generally are.

Also during the fifth semester, the student needs to nominate a dissertation committee consisting of five readers and a Dean's Representative. Once the committee is selected, the student must complete a [Nomination of Dissertation Committee Form](http://www.ter.ps/nomination) (www.ter.ps/nomination).

The dissertation committee includes the following members:

1. A committee chair, selected from the core faculty of the PhD program.
2. Two faculty members from the core faculty of the PhD program.
3. One UMD graduate faculty member from outside of TDPS.

Note: By special permission this person can be from outside the University of Maryland. Outside faculty must have special expertise in the dissertation's subject area that is not available among the UMD faculty. They must be nominated and approved for Special Membership in the Graduate Faculty of the University of Maryland and must either be physically present at the defense or virtually present by way of a Graduate School-approved teleconferencing technology (Skype, Google Hangouts, etc. do NOT qualify). There are generally

expenses related to having outside faculty members present at a dissertation defense and this funding must be approved before any invitation to join the dissertation committee is extended.

4. The Dean's Representative, who must be an associate or full professor from outside of TDPS.
Note: This person's task is to ensure that the dissertation defense is conducted according to Graduate School regulations, which ensure that the process is fair to the student and upholds the high academic standards of the Graduate School. The Dean's Representative is generally also a content reader, and therefore the final voting member of the committee. The Dean's Representative can, however, opt not to be a reader (and therefore not to be a voting member). In this case, another voting member is required.
5. If the Dean's Representative opts not to be a voting member, an additional reader and voting member, selected from the graduate faculty within TDPS or from outside it, is required.

Step II: Take the Qualifying Examination, which consists of two parts (Specialization Exam and Dissertation Prospectus).

The Qualifying Examination commences at some point after the first week in January of the student's third year in the program, and must be completed in full by the first week of April that same semester. Generally, students begin the Specialization Exam in the first or second week of February, though it can be done in winter term with the agreement of the dissertation committee.

Step II, Part 1: Take the Specialization Exam.

This examination is intended to test the depth and breadth of a student's knowledge of the dissertation topic's context. (The student's knowledge of the actual dissertation topic is examined with the dissertation prospectus, described [below](#).) If a student is writing about an American theatre company of the 1930s, for example, the exam might test their knowledge of American, and possibly even European, theatre in the first half of the twentieth century. If a dissertation involves the work of one or more performance studies theorists, the examination might test the student's knowledge of the social context in which the theory or theories developed, or the student's knowledge of what the theory or theories replaced. The purpose is to ensure that the student is not dealing with the topic of their dissertation in isolation, and that their work will be informed by a contextual understanding of the topic (whether or not that understanding is explicitly addressed in the dissertation itself). The chair of the dissertation committee will solicit questions from the voting members of the committee, will incorporate them into the exam form, and will ask the student to write on two of them.

The Specialization Exam follows the same procedures and guidelines as the [Comps](#).

Step II, Part 2: Submit the dissertation prospectus.

A dissertation prospectus takes many months to develop and should ideally be worked on continuously from a student's first term in the program, but especially after the end of the student's second year. **Within ten working days of completing the Specialization Exam the student should submit a final draft of the dissertation prospectus to their committee chair.** The chair must approve it for distribution to the voting members of the committee.

The prospectus should be on the order of 20-25 pages (not including the working bibliography). The topic will dictate its length but the committee will expect it to be clear, concise, to the

point, and persuasive. Exceeding the recommended length is discouraged. Guidelines for the prospectus may be found [below](#).

The prospectus has three primary goals:

1. To persuade the committee that the student's project is new and of significance to the field.
2. To persuade the committee that there are sufficient research sources for the project to be done fully.
3. To persuade the committee that the student is capable of completing the project in a timely manner.

Step II, Part 3: Defend the Qualifying Examination (Specialization Exam and prospectus).

Not less than ten working days after the prospectus is submitted to the dissertation committee and no later than the first week of April, the student must defend their Qualifying Examination.

The student is responsible for arranging the date, time, and location at their committee's convenience. The student is also responsible for reserving a space with the appropriate TDPS staff, and for notifying both the DGS and the CGS once the details have been set. The defense should be scheduled for two hours, which allows thirty to forty minutes to discuss the Specialization Exam, sixty to seventy minutes to discuss the prospectus, and additional time for the committee to deliberate. While all members of the committee should read the Qualifying Examination and be present at the exam, a minimum of three are required to attend in person. Those who cannot be present should participate via teleconference or phone call; at the very least, they should submit questions to be asked by the chair. (Note: None of this is possible for the actual Dissertation Defense, when all members MUST be present.)

At the end of the Qualifying Examination defense the committee will issue one of the following determinations based on the results:

- Pass
- Pass after completion of required rewrites
- No decision pending the results of a required retaking of part or all of the exam
- Fail (resulting in the student's dismissal from the program)

By passing the student the committee agrees that the approach proposed in the dissertation prospectus is appropriate; the final dissertation will be judged on how well the student accomplishes what they have proposed. The committee cannot change the terms of that agreement but the student can. Indeed, it is expected that as the student learns more about the topic, adjustments to the original proposal will be made. As long as the alterations do not significantly change the nature of the study, the student and the committee chair can make such alterations by mutual agreement. Should the alterations constitute a substantial change to the original prospectus, however, a new prospectus should be sent to the committee for approval. The committee can opt to give its approval by email, or to call for a meeting to discuss it first if necessary.

Step II, Part 4: Advance to candidacy.

Upon passing the Qualifying Examination, the student advances to candidacy. It is the student's responsibility to submit an Application for Admission to Candidacy using this [form](#) (www.ter.ps/candidacy). **Remember, a student must be advanced to candidacy for the doctorate within five years of admission to the doctoral program and at least six months before the date on which the degree will be conferred.**

Starting in the next fall term, and for every fall and winter term until graduation, the student will be automatically registered for six credits of THET899: Doctoral Dissertation Research, for which they pay the flat, candidacy tuition rate. Those on assistantships will also sign up for an additional 600-level seminar class, for which their tuition will be covered.

Writing the Dissertation

Under the supervision of their advisor, the doctoral candidate conducts research and writes the dissertation. The candidate should follow the prospectus approved by the dissertation committee. While aspects of its scope and content may grow and evolve, any significant changes in the dissertation plan may require a new draft of the prospectus to be approved by the dissertation committee.

Defending the Dissertation

Once the dissertation has been completed, the candidate must defend the dissertation orally. Incomplete dissertations cannot be submitted for defense. Graduate School rules prohibit an oral defense from occurring sooner than ten working days after the committee has received the completed dissertation. Dissertation committees can and do require longer times. It is the student's responsibility to distribute copies of the dissertation to their committee members. Students should inquire as to whether or not their committee members want electronic or "hard" copies of the dissertation and provide them accordingly. The examination typically lasts two to three hours and must follow the guidelines established by the Graduate School at the University of Maryland, which can be found [here](#). (www.ter.ps/PhDPolicies).

The student is responsible for arranging the date, time, and location at their committee's convenience. The student is also responsible for reserving a space with the appropriate TDPS staff, and for notifying both the DGS and the CGS once the details have been set. A public announcement of the event must be made at least five working days before it occurs. The public announcement must include the student's name, the dissertation's title, and exact details of the defense date, time, and place; it must also invite all faculty and graduate students in TDPS to attend. A copy of this announcement must be sent to the Dean's Representative and to the DGS so they can certify to the Graduate School that this requirement has been met.

Once successfully defended, the student is responsible for completing the [Thesis and Dissertation Electronic Submission Form](#) (www.ter.ps/PubForm) and uploading the dissertation to ProQuest [here](#) (www.ter.ps/ProQuest). See the [University of Maryland Electronic Thesis and Dissertation website](#) (www.ter.ps/UMDETD) or the [University of Maryland Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide](#) (www.ter.ps/filing) for additional information on these procedures. The student is responsible for

checking the Graduate School [website](http://www.ter.ps/deadlines) (www.ter.ps/deadlines) for all deadlines related to the submission of their dissertation.

III. Assistantships and Research Funding

TDPS offers teaching and research assistantships; the university also provides a limited number of fellowships to augment these assistantships. Financial support is typically provided for four academic years to a student who remains in good standing and successfully completes their assigned duties. Tuition remission is included in most assistantships and fellowships:

- Assistants receive tuition remission for 10 CHrs every fall and spring semester, and 4 CHrs in the short winter term. There is no tuition remission for summer terms. Any hours above those covered by the assistantship assignment must be paid for by the student.
- Those who are on fellowship or are funded from external sources can take up to 12 CHrs a semester.
- As noted above, each student with a TDPS assistantship is strongly encouraged to take at least one seminar offered by a core faculty member during each semester, regardless of their candidacy status.

Limited funding is also available to support student research, travel, and conference attendance. Those who need funding should email the Head of the History/Theory Area with a description that includes the purpose, outcome, and an anticipated budget for the research/travel. Priority is given to students in their third and fourth years in the program. Conference attendance of students in the first two years in the program is discouraged.

IV. Prospectus Guidelines

I. Basic Information

- A. A cover page that includes the dissertation's proposed title, author's name, institution name, degree sought, and author's contact information.
- B. A list of dissertation committee members, including the Dean's Representative, if known (with phone numbers and email addresses). Note: while the Dean's Representative does not have to be an expert in the student's field (they are principally there to ensure a fair dissertation process), they must be a tenured member of the faculty, and cannot be from the student's home department.
- C. The prospectus should be approximately 20-25 pages in length (not including the working bibliography).
- D. All research projects involving the use of human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). If a student's dissertation research requires IRB approval, they must have either completed or begun the process for IRB approval. Visit [here](http://www.ter.ps/IRB) (www.ter.ps/IRB) for more details.

II. The research question or hypothesis and scope of the study

A. The main research question or hypothesis

In constructing the research question, the student should ask the following: will the research *expand* the current literature, *challenge* it, or *contribute* new data or perspectives? Other things to keep in mind in formulating the research question:

1. The student should present their line of inquiry as succinctly as possible. While it needs to be clear, it should also be dynamic and engaging. Students should remember that the prospectus is both an outline of their future project as well as a "pitch" of their idea that needs to catch the attention of readers.
 2. Most research projects include multiple questions—one main "framing" question, and several more closely focused questions. Students should consider how to include the latter under the umbrella of their framing question. At the same time, they should be cautious about including so many research questions that readers lose track of what the main focus will be. Students should define what they believe are the most significant/critical questions to be explored, and should only list questions that, if answered, will contribute something substantial and vital to the understanding of the primary research question.
 3. The student should be sure to discuss and/or clarify any significant terminology or special terms that may be unique to their study or that have many potential definitions.
- B. The student should define the general scope of the project. For example, they should specify chronology to be covered, geographical region, genre, etc. In so doing, they should be sure to explain *why* this particular time-frame, location, etc. is significant to the goal(s) of their study.

III. Literature Review and Rationale

- A. Students should include the *relevant* material that has been written on the topic so that the audience understands the current state of the subject. The literature review should include only those authors/theories essential to the main topic.
- B. Students should present their “rationale” for the project: they should discuss how the dissertation will contribute to the field and how their research will differ from research that has already been done in the area. At this juncture, students can fully explain how their project *expands* upon the current literature, *challenges* it, and/or *contributes* new data or perspectives to the field.

IV. Methodology/Research Plan

- A. The Methodology/Research Plan documents how the student plans to gather information. It describes the way they will collect and interpret data or resources, test the hypothesis, or apply their theory.
- B. The Methodology/Research Plan also explains *why* the student has chosen a particular set of data or materials and explains their proposed approach.
- C. This section could include:
 - 1. The group, place, or specific event to be studied.
 - 2. The techniques used to collect data or materials.
 - 3. Information about perceived limitations and weaknesses inherent in the proposed study.

V. Chapter Outline

A tentative outline of chapters with a brief description of each one.

VI. Timeline

A tentative timetable for completing the dissertation, including research remaining to be done.

VII. Working Bibliography

V. Graduate Student Activity Report

Return to **First semester and year-end reviews**

Due ____

For all information that is right justified, enter data after colon.

For all information that is left justified, enter data below line.

Email this form back to Dr. Hildy at hildy@umd.edu & Stephanie S Bergwall bergwall@umd.edu

Please save a copy of this form so you can just add updates each year. .

Name:

Program MA, MFA, PhD:

Advisor:

Years in program as of May 31 of this year.

Years of funding remaining after May 31 of this year.

TA Assignment (this year):

Fellowship (this year):

Professional production work: (Title, company, your position --i.e. costume designer, choreographer, dancer, actor, dramaturge, etc.-- dates. Include those professional assignments accepted but not yet undertaken.)

Publications: (use correct bibliographic form. Include those in press.)

Non-professional production work: (same details as above.)

Conference presentations: (Paper title, conference, location, date.)

Conferences attended without giving papers:

Grants (including travel grants), awards, honors:

Service and community activities: (Professional, university wide, TDPS, other.)

Courses taught while at the University of Maryland. (include courses taught at other institutions.)

Requirements of program still to be met and dates by which you expect to meet them.

If you have been hired for a job for next year, please provided name of institution/organization, job title and starting date.

MAs only:

Thesis title or topic:

Date prospectus approved: Date of thesis defense:

Thesis committee members (chair first):

MFAs only:

Pre-thesis production/area/date:

Thesis production/area/date:

Thesis committee members (chair first):

PhDs only:

Dissertation title or topic:

Date admitted to candidacy:

Expected dates for taking comprehensive examinations:

Date prospectus approved by committee:

Date of dissertation defense:

Dissertation committee members (chair first):

Notes and queries: (anything you want to add. Anything you want to ask about.)