



CHRISTOPHER C. GIBBS

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

PhD in Planning Design & Construction Graduate Student Handbook

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1 OVERVIEW

Welcome to the doctoral program in Gibbs College of Architecture at University of Oklahoma! This handbook provides an overview of the PhD in Planning Design and Construction program and provides overall guidance in planning your course of study in the graduate program. It includes information regarding program goals and objectives, curriculum plan, required and suggested courses, timeline, and additional program resources, policies, and procedures.

This handbook is designed to make your experience in the Gibbs College of Architecture more organized, productive, and enjoyable. Please read all sections of the handbook to become thoroughly familiar with the program and the college. Use this handbook as a guide, but keep in mind that while it is comprehensive, it is not exhaustive. Please consult with your program coordinator, and your committee Chair regarding any questions or concerns you might have.

This handbook supplements the University of Oklahoma Graduate College Bulletin available at <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms/bulletin>.

1.1 Design in Action

The PhD in Planning, Design and Construction degree is available to students wishing to pursue a specialized research or creative agenda. This program consists of coursework tailored to the student's interests, providing them with an opportunity to deepen their expertise in a particular realm of built environment research. Students work closely with their faculty committee to select courses from across the University to create an individualized educational plan, with a concentration in one of the College's five primary disciplines: Architecture, Construction Science, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture or Regional and City Planning. Students have the opportunity to study with leading scholars in the Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture, as well as University-wide fields as diverse as Engineering, Geography, History of Science, and more. Graduates of this program are prepared to continue their work in specialized fields, such as professional researchers, post-secondary educators, and non-profit leaders.

2 COURSES

Appropriate for students interested in a PhD in Architecture, Construction, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture and Regional City Planning concentration. Course requirements include core courses in PDC, core courses in one of the above-mentioned area of concentration, courses in

research methods and analysis and dissertation research. Students will complete 90 credit hours plus a dissertation. The check sheet for this program can be found [here](#). See also the doctoral degree requirements, [here](#).

With approval of the advisory conference committee, the graduate liaison, and the dean of the Graduate College, student can transfer 30-44 hours of master's level equivalent coursework from an awarded master's degree in architecture, construction, interior design, landscape architecture, and planning or related disciplines, regardless of the age of the hours at the time of admission or readmission to the University of Oklahoma graduate degree program. For more information refer to Graduate College Bulletin [8.2.2.3 Transfer Credit from a Master's Degree Applied to the Doctoral Degree](#).

2.1 Core Courses in PDC

The two required core courses in PDC courses PDC 6003 History and Philosophy of Planning, Design and Construction, and PDC 6023 Advanced Research Methods are offered every alternate Spring and Fall semester, respectively. Students are encouraged to take *PDC6003 History and Philosophy of Planning, Design and Construction* either during their second or fourth semester in the program depending on the year it is offered. Similarly, students are encouraged to take *PDC6023 Advanced Research Methods* either during their third or fifth year in the program depending on the year it is offered.

2.2 Core Concentration Courses

All students are required to take a minimum of 9 hours from one or more of the following concentrations listed below. Courses are selected based on the requirements of a specific area of concentration and student's interests and goals, as approved by the doctoral Committee Chair.

- Architecture
- Construction Science
- Interior Design
- Landscape Architecture
- Regional and City Planning

All students are encouraged to enroll in courses within their area of concentration starting in their first semester of the program and complete the requirement before taking their general exam.

2.3 Guided Research Methods and Analysis Courses

Students are required to take a minimum of 9 hours of guided research methods or research analysis courses (beyond *PDC6023 Advanced Research Methods*). Courses are selected based on the requirements of a specific area of concentration and student's interests and goals, as approved by the doctoral Committee Chair. All students are encouraged to enroll in guided research methods courses starting their first semester in the program and complete the requirement before taking their general exam.

2.4 Research Doctoral Dissertation Credits

Students are required to successfully complete a minimum of 6 credits of PDC 6980 Research Doctoral Dissertation. PDC 6980 functions as an Independent Study for completion of the dissertation work. The following enrollment requirement for PDC 6980 should be met:

- The number of credit hours for each enrollment in 6980 will be determined by the student's Committee Chair on the basis of the amount of faculty and university services required by the student during that enrollment.
- After the first enrollment in PDC 6980, continuous enrollment of 2 credits each semester is required.
- Refer to Graduate College Bulletin [8.6.1 Enrollment Requirements for Dissertation Research](#) for more information about PDC 6980 enrollment requirement.

2.5 DEGREE COMPLETION TIMELINE

Students are encouraged to complete their doctoral degree successfully in 4 – 5 years. For the successful and timely completion of the doctoral degree program, the student is expected to meet the major degree milestone deadlines as listed below:

- Submit a Program Statement by the end of 1st year.
- Submit the [Advisory Conference Report](#) by the end of 2nd year.
- Successfully defend the dissertation proposal and pass the general examination by the end of 3rd year.
- A student becomes a doctoral candidate upon successful completion of the general examination.
- A doctoral candidate is expected to complete all degree requirements, including the defense and final submission of the dissertation, within two calendar years after passing the general examination.

Please refer to the attached PhD program timeline (Appendix I) for more information about the process and suggested timeline for completion.

3 ADVISING

Every doctoral student admitted into the program has an assigned doctoral Committee Chair, selected through mutual agreement between the student and the chair either before or during admission. The Committee Chair will act as the student's advisor and meet with the student as needed during the semester. Together the student and the Committee Chair will select an advisory committee composed of faculty members in the fields of study. After the formation of the advisory committee, an [advisory committee conference](#) is to be held to prepare a general outline of course requirements in the fields, to discuss the student's program, and to file an advisory conference report. The student is expected to meet with the members of the advisory committee as needed to review progress. The purpose of the meetings with the advisory committee members is to give the student direction and guidance in his/her graduate program.

4 ANNUAL EVALUATION

The Committee Chair will formally evaluate the student's performance for each AY by completing the *GCA Doctoral Student Annual Review* form (Appendix II). The first section of the form, *Summary of Accomplishments*, is to be completed by the student by **September 1** of each year, listing the accomplishments achieved in the past Academic Year (AY). Students should then submit the form and attachments to their Committee Chair. The second section of the form, *Evaluation*, is to be completed by the chair by **September 15** of each year. The completed form is then distributed to the student, the graduate liaison, Ph.D. program coordinator, and all listed members of the student's doctoral committee. Committee members may issue additional comments which become part of the record. These should be sent to the student, all other supervisory committee members, and to the PhD program coordinator. Unsatisfactory progress towards degree results is further reported to the Graduate College Dean.

5 HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

All research involving human **subjects**, or the use of data generated via human **subject's** research performed by faculty, staff, or students at the University of Oklahoma Norman or Tulsa campus or at Cameron University, which will result in publication or presentation, must be **reviewed**, and approved by the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) prior to subject recruitment and data collection. The primary role of the OU-NC IRB is to

determine if the rights and welfare of human subjects who volunteer to participate in research studies are adequately protected and to ensure that appropriate informed consent procedures are used. The University of Oklahoma Norman campus policy for the protection of human subjects in research activities and IRB application materials can be accessed at the [OU IRB website](#).

If you have questions about compliance or the IRB approval process, contact the Office of Human Research Participant Protection at (405) 325-8110 or email irb@ou.edu.

6 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Graduate students must uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with the definitions, policies, and procedures concerning academic misconduct. These are explained in [A Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at the University of Oklahoma](#).

The [Academic Integrity Code \(pdf\)](#) defines academic misconduct as any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. For more information refer to Graduate College Bulletin [6.3 Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct](#).

Plagiarism is the most common form of academic misconduct at OU. Examples of plagiarism include but not limited to present some else's ideas or intellectual property as own without citing, copy verbatim and present them as own, or copy direct verbatim with citation but no quotation. More information on plagiarism is available at <https://guides.ou.edu/plagiarism>.

Intellectual property refers to works originating from the mind, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, and unique designs. The law provides protection for these works, allowing the creators to benefit from their products. Copyright is one such set of protections - along with patents and trademarks - and in the US, copyright is controlled by the [US Copyright Office](#). More information on intellectual property and copyright is available at <https://guides.ou.edu/c.php?g=659376&p=4629600>

For additional information on authorship rights refer to <https://libraries.ou.edu/content/author-rights>.

7 ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Full-Time and Maximum Enrollment

New students joining the PDC program must be on campus to enroll and/or sign in with the International Student Services (ISS) prior to being allowed to enroll. Students are encouraged to arrive on campus a few days prior to the beginning of classes to complete the process. Refer to [OU academic calendar](#) for more information. Upon admission into the program a student must register for courses at the University of Oklahoma for the term of admission to retain active status as a graduate student. A student who has been admitted and does not enroll for the term of admission must reapply for admission.

To qualify for a tuition waiver during a fall or spring semester, you must be enrolled in five (5) or more credit hours and hold a graduate assistantship appointment of at least .50 FTE for the entire semester. Without an assistantship, international and domestic students must maintain 9 credit hours/semester to maintain fulltime status. There are no enrollment requirements for the summer session unless a student plans to defend in the summer. There are limits on how many credit hours a student may enroll in each semester, without permission of Graduate College Dean. More information on fulltime enrollment and credit-hour limits are available at <https://www.ou.edu/registrar/enrollment/credit-hour-limits>

7.2 Continuous Enrollment

A student who has a lapse of enrollment for one year must reapply for admission. A graduate student readmitted after a lapse of enrollment is subject to the most updated program requirement, not those in place at the time of the initial enrollment. Readmitted students are subject to all course age limits as outlined in Graduate College Bulletin [8.2.2 Transfer Credit Applied to the Doctoral Degree](#).

After the first enrollment in PDC 6980, the student must maintain continuous enrollment in at least two hours of PDC 6980 during each fall and spring semester until all degree requirements are completed. The continuous enrollment requirement will be waived only for a student who is not working on the dissertation and who is enrolled in at least nine graduate credit hours during a regular semester.

7.3 Residency Requirement

The primary purpose of the residence requirement is to encourage the educational and professional development of individuals seeking advanced degrees. The opportunity for the student to interact with the faculty and other students in the university community, while freely using all the facilities thereof and being in a position to take advantage of a wide variety of cultural opportunities, justifies a relatively extended campus stay. In addition, the university should be in a position to oversee the development of the candidate, especially during the formal stages of the student's final preparation for the general examination.

The student must be in residence at OU for at least two consecutive 16-week semesters during the pursuit of the doctoral degree while enrolled and engaged in coursework or research activities as prescribed by the major academic unit. Refer to Graduate College Bulletin [8.2.1.1 Residence Requirement](#).

8 Leave of Absence

A graduate student who finds it necessary to temporarily discontinue the program of study may request an academic leave of absence. For more information, please refer to Graduate College Bulletin [3.6.3 Academic Leave of Absence Policy](#).

9 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Funding opportunities for PDC students include graduate assistantships and tuition waivers up to the number of hours required for the degree, including any deficiency courses identified at the time of admission. Any courses taken above and beyond those required for the degree will not be eligible for a tuition waiver, unless a valid reason can be shown that these courses are necessary. A petition will be required, and permission should be sought in advance of enrollment in the course. Graduate assistantships can be either Teaching Assistantships (GTA) or Research Assistantships (GRA). Gibbs College of Architecture has a limited number of GTA positions, and they are usually assigned to students based on merit.

10 DEGREE MILESTONES AND DEADLINES

All PhD students should familiarize themselves with the Graduate College deadlines, the deadlines within their academic unit, and the [University Academic Calendar](#). Any calendar is subject to

change when it is determined to be in the best interest of the university to do so. More information on doctoral degree milestone deadlines is available at <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/steps-to-degree#doctoral>.

11 DEGREE COMPLETION REQUIREMENT

11.1 Program statement

In consultation with the Chair, the student will develop a program statement which will include preliminary research areas and how the student's planned courses allow for mastery of subject area and preparation for the dissertation.

11.2 Advisory Conference Report

The Advisory Conference Report (ACR) lists all the coursework and credits needed to fulfill the requirements of doctoral degree program. Within the first two years, the student should form an Advisory Committee and schedule an Advisory Conference to establish a plan of study for the degree. Typically, the Advisory Committee is comprised of faculty members who will also form the Doctoral Committee. The members of the Advisory Committee should be selected through consultation with the student's Committee Chair and must include one faculty member from outside of Gibbs College of Architecture. The majority of the committee must be made up of Gibbs College of Architecture faculty. **Advisory Conference Report is due no later than the term before the general examination and within the first two year in the program.** The form can be completed at <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/steps-to-degree#doctoral>. Refer to Graduate College Bulletin [8.3 The Advisory Conference](#) for more information.

11.3 Identifying a Topic and Developing a Research Proposal

The student is responsible for identifying a topic and developing a research proposal for the doctoral dissertation. The Committee Chair may provide guidance in the development of the research proposal but is not obligated to do so. The satisfactory dissertation research proposal defense can indicate a student's oral and written communication skill and the ability to conduct research, thus the student's potential for completing a dissertation. Moreover, an approved dissertation research proposal documents the extent of work required from the student.

11.4 The General Exam

The purpose of the General Examination is to assess the breadth and depth of the student's knowledge and critical analysis of major areas in a PDC-related field. It will constitute three sections Research Methods, History and Theory of PDC, and a Topical area exam representing the primary research area(s) of the student including an oral defense of all written material to be completed in a two-week period. The University of Oklahoma's Graduate College partially governs the General Examination process. The general exam questions will be created by the Committee Chair in consultation with the committee members. More information about the General Examination process and guidelines is available in Appendix II.

11.5 The Dissertation Preparation and Defense

Student must assume responsibility for identifying what needs to be done to conduct the dissertation research and then complete the work. A student must be able to work independently. The committee members and the committee Chair will be available to provide guidance to the student throughout but is not obligated to do so.

A dissertation must be written in correct English. Proofing, editing, and correcting the rough drafts are the sole responsibility of the student. If a student submits drafts which require extensive technical or grammatical editing, the committee may return the document to the student to revise and resubmit. Although on-campus assistance is available (e.g., the Writing Center), the dissertation must constitute original work by the student.

The Committee Chair will proof, edit, and suggest corrections to the first draft of a dissertation. Only after the student incorporates editorial and technical suggestions from the Committee Chair will the student distribute the near-final reading copy to the Doctoral committee and schedule a dissertation defense date.

11.5.1 Reading Copies of Dissertation

The recommended deadline to submit dissertation reading copy to the committee is three weeks prior to the scheduled date of dissertation defense, however, doctoral committee will determine how far in advance the student should provide the draft to all committee members. This time limit should allow the committee sufficient time to review the dissertation before the deadline for submitting the *Report of Reading Copy and Request for Authority to Defend* online form to

the Graduate College. This form is due TEN (10) business days before the scheduled defense date. The final day to submit this form is FOUR (4) weeks prior to the last day of finals.

The *Report of Reading Copy and Request for Authority to Defend* circulates to the committee member for them to affirm that they have received a copy of the dissertation. Committee members will be required to sign the *Reading Copy and Request for Authority to Defend* online form at least FIVE (5) days before defense and at least THREE (3) weeks prior to the last day of finals. All doctoral forms can be accessed <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/steps-to-degree#doctoral>.

11.5.2 Scheduling Dissertation Meetings and Reviews

The student pursuing a Doctoral degree is solely responsible for the logistics associated with the degree program, such as scheduling meetings, reserving meeting rooms and audio-visual equipment, etc. Faculty members often have a full calendar of research and teaching-related appointments scheduled days or weeks in advance; therefore, students should not expect faculty members to attend meetings or defenses unless the student provides adequate advance notice.

11.5.3 Dissertation Defense Result and Completion

The deadline for the dissertation defense is TWO (2) weeks (10 working days) prior to the last day of finals. The student is allowed only one attempt for the final dissertation defense. The final oral presentation should be given in a professional manner and should include use of multimedia technology. An effective oral presentation is well rehearsed; hence, students should practice their oral presentation prior to the oral defense. The results of the final dissertation defense must be submitted to the Graduate College on the *Authority Report form* within 72 hours of completion of the defense.

Assuming there are no significant changes required in the draft dissertation document at the time of the defense, the student should allow ample time after the final defense to prepare the final dissertation for submittal to the Graduate College.

In the event that the committee does not reach a unanimous decision, please refer to Graduate College Bulletin [8.7.6 Result of the Dissertation Defense](#).

In the event of an unsatisfactory result, the decision is final, and the defense cannot be repeated. The student will be dismissed from the graduate program.

11.5.4 Deposit of Dissertation in the Library

After a satisfactory dissertation defense, the student must complete any revisions required by the committee before submitting the *Approval for Thesis/Dissertation Submission to SHAREOK* form. Submission instructions are provided by the Graduate College in the email authorizing the dissertation defense. The form will be routed to the student's committee for electronic signatures indicating approval of the final dissertation. Students are notified via email when each committee member completes their section of the form. Once the student and committee complete their sections of the form, it is routed to the Graduate College.

If your dissertation involves human subjects research, contact the [IRB](#) office to obtain documentation confirming that your involvement as a graduate student in the research project is officially terminated. You will need to submit this additional documentation to the Graduate College before you submit the dissertation to SHAREOK.

The final dissertation is due within 60 calendar days of a satisfactory dissertation defense. A student planning to graduate in a given semester may need to submit the final document sooner in order to meet the graduation deadline for that semester. The deadline to submit to ShareOK is ONE (1) week (5 working days) prior to the last day of finals. Please see the instructions at the Graduate College for more details at <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/steps-to-degree#doctoral>.

A student who does not submit the final dissertation during the semester of the defense must enroll in at least two hours of 6980 during the semester in which the dissertation is submitted. The semester in which the dissertation is submitted will be the semester of graduation if all other outstanding requirements for the degree have been completed.

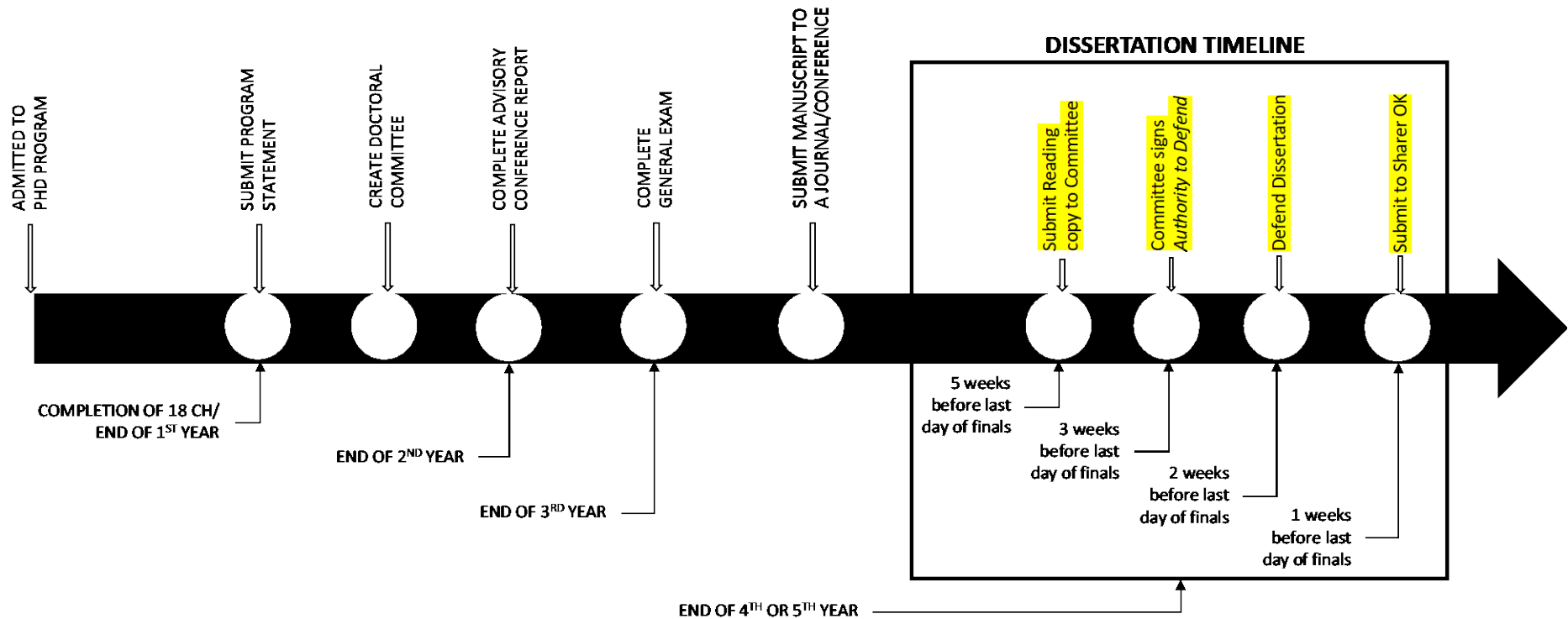
11.6 Degree Completion and Graduation

The doctoral degree is awarded for excellence in research scholarship, not merely because a program of courses has been completed or a given amount of time spent in its pursuit. It signifies the attainment of independently acquired and comprehensive learning attesting to general professional competence.

Students must apply for graduation online at the beginning of the semester in which they plan to graduate, according to the deadlines indicated on the [Academic Calendar](#). A student may not graduate until all degree requirements are completed, including the application for graduation.

Refer to Graduate College Bulletin [8.9 Checklist for Doctoral Students](#) to review all requirements. Doctoral candidates are individually recognized and hooded on stage at the university-wide Commencement ceremony. Students who wish to participate in Commencement or in a College Convocation ceremony should see the OU Commencement [website](#).

12 APPENDIX I - Planning, Design + Construction PhD Timeline



Program Statement – In consultation with the Chair, the student will develop a program statement which will include preliminary research areas and how the student's planned courses allow for mastery of subject area and preparation for the dissertation.

Doctoral Committee – Doctoral committee membership (same as the Advisory Conference Committee Membership) should follow the guidelines and regulations indicated in Graduate College Bulletin¹ Section 8.3.1.

Advisory Conference Report is due no later than the term before the general examination. The form can be completed at <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/forms>. More information available at Graduate College Bulletin¹ Section 8.3.1.4.

General Exam – Will constitute three sections Research Methods, History and Theory of PDC, and a Topical area exam representing the primary research area(s) of the student including an oral defense of all written material to be completed in a two-week period. The general exam questions will be created by the Committee Chair in consultation with the committee members.

Reading Copy - It is a draft copy of the completed dissertation document, reviewed and approved by the chair.

* At the end of every year Committee Chair is required to complete the attached *Doctoral Student Annual Review* form.

1 – Graduate College Bulletin available at <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/graduate-college-bulletin>

13 APPENDIX II – FORMS and GUIDELINES

This section includes the following forms and guidelines

1. [GCA Doctoral Student Annual Review](#)
2. [Advisory Conference Report Form](#) (*downloadable word document*)
3. [General Exam Guideline](#)
4. [Dissertation Proposal Guide](#)
5. [Dissertation Format](#)

For more information on dissertation format please refer to the following

- Thesis and dissertation formatting information provided at <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/steps-to-degree#doctoral>.
 - Recently completed PhD PDC dissertations available at <https://architecture.ou.edu/planning-design-and-construction/>
6. [Graduate College Form links](#) - <https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/steps-to-degree#doctoral>

University of Oklahoma
Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture
PhD Program in Planning, Design and Construction (PDC)

Doctoral Student Annual Review

20__ - 20__

Doctoral committees are required by university regulations to review the progress of doctoral students each year. This form is to be used for that purpose. The first section of the form, *Summary of Accomplishments*, is to be completed by the student by **September 1** of each year, listing the accomplishments achieved in the past Academic Year (AY). Students should then submit the form and attachments to their committee chair. The second section of the form, *Evaluation*, is to be completed by the chair by **September 15** of each year. The completed form is then distributed to the student, the graduate liaison, Ph.D. program coordinator, and all listed members of the student's doctoral committee.

Committee members may issue additional comments which become part of the record. These should be sent to the student, the graduate liaison, all other supervisory committee members, and to the Ph.D. program coordinator.

PART ONE: SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING AY _____ — _____ .

Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Chair: _____

Committee Chair and Members (if known): _____

1. Coursework: Please list all courses attempted and grades received during the Academic Year (AY) in review, as well as the summer term if applicable.

Course number and Title	Grade Received	Term

2. Program Milestones: Indicate milestones completed during the period.

Date(s)

Program Statement Approved: _____
 Advisory Conference Report Approved: _____
 Journal Article (or equivalent): _____
 General Examinations Passed: _____
 Dissertation Proposal Approved: _____
 Dissertation Completed and Approved: _____

3. Scholarly Activity: Describe any accomplishments during the AY in review. Entries should clearly indicate whether work is independent or collaborative.

Publications Title: _____ Accepted/Submitted: _____
 Conference presentations/papers: _____ Presented/Proposed: _____
 Research proposals: _____ Funded/Submitted: _____
 Research projects underway: _____

4. Courses taught (optional): _____

PART TWO: EVALUATION

Assess the quantity and quality of work accomplished in terms of progress toward the award of the degree and the development of a firm foundation for the student's scholarly career.

Overall assessment/progress: ___ *Satisfactory/Exceeds Expectations*
 ___ *Marginal/Meets Expectations*
 ___ *Unsatisfactory/Does not meet expectations.*

Signature

Date

University of Oklahoma
Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture
PhD Program in Planning, Design and Construction (PDC)

General Examination Guidelines

One requirement in the PDC Doctoral program is the completion of a *General Examination*. The purpose of the General Examination is to assess the breadth and depth of the student's knowledge and critical analysis of major areas in a PDC-related field. The Examination is also used to evaluate the student's potential to complete a doctoral dissertation and a focus of the exam is how a student plans to use knowledge learned in coursework to contribute to the body of knowledge within a student's topical area. The University of Oklahoma's Graduate College partially governs the General Examination process.

Process

Before the second week of the academic term, the student should work with their Dissertation Committee members to schedule the exam and apply through the Graduate College using the online form available at the link below.

<https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms>

Students are eligible to take the exam when they have completed their coursework as listed on their Advisory Conference Report (ACR) or are enrolled in their final academic term of coursework.

Content and Format

The general exam is to be completed by the student in conformance with the University of Oklahoma's *Academic Integrity Code* and the *Student Rights and Responsibility Code*.

https://www.ou.edu/content/dam/integrity/docs/Academic_Misconduct_Code.pdf

<https://www.ou.edu/content/dam/studentconduct/docs/20%2021%20Interim%20Student%20Rights%20and%20Responsibilities%20Code%20.pdf>

The written portion of the General Examination consists of three components, which students will complete over a two-week period.

The individual components of the exam include a *History and Theory of Planning, Design and Construction (PDC)*, *Research Methods in PDC*, and a *Topical Area Exam* specific to the student's interests and research area(s). One week is dedicated for the History and Theory and Research Methods portion of the exam and one week for the student's topical area.

Each of the three components involves a take-home examination that consists of 2-3 questions prepared by the Supervisory Committee. The questions assess the student's mastery of each subject area and provides the student with the opportunity to discuss, critique and synthesize a large body of material. For the Topical Area portion of the exam the specific area of interest and its relation to the existing body of knowledge in Planning, Design and Construction is addressed, hence the topical area questions are constructed to demonstrate the student's ability to successfully design and execute their own original research. Students should demonstrate in their response to the topical area question(s) that they demonstrate knowledge, analysis and writing skills that are typical of an advanced and scholarly paper. The topical area exam directly assesses the student's area of scholarly interest, which are articulated in the student's *Program Statement* and ideally will form the basis for the student's dissertation.

At a minimum, the student will demonstrate an advanced understanding of the theoretical foundations of the field and illustrate an ability (1) to critically discuss theoretical, methodological, and technological aspects of the student's chosen academic discipline, as well as demonstrate the ability (2) to integrate and synthesize knowledge within their specific area of interest.

Exam components are distributed to the student and collected by the committee utilizing the university's course management systems (CANVAS) or via email.

The *oral* component takes place after the student has submitted the written component of the Examination. The student briefly presents the main arguments in all responses and the presentation is followed by a question and discussion with the student and the members of the Dissertation Committee. During the discussion, Dissertation Committee members may ask the student questions about all responses submitted, their relationship to the student's statement of interest, and their relationship to a potential dissertation proposal and dissertation. The University of Oklahoma's Graduate College provides information governing the exam process and results.

<https://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/forms-and-policies/graduate-college-bulletin#8.5>

The Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee, working with the Division's Graduate Liaison and /or PhD program coordinator is responsible for notifying the student and Graduate College of the results.

University of Oklahoma
Christopher C. Gibbs College of Architecture
PhD Program in Planning, Design and Construction (PDC)

Guide for Dissertation Proposal

The **Dissertation Proposal** should summarize the proposed dissertation research, including:

- A concise review of the relevant literature, describing the historical and theoretical context
- Descriptions of the theoretical questions and hypotheses
- Descriptions of the methods to be used
- Descriptions of the likely analytic techniques to be used
- Descriptions of the possible outcomes and their theoretical implications
- Discussions of potential problems that may be encountered, and how they will be dealt with
- A tentative timeline for the conduct of the research

Note that each student should consult their primary research advisor for discussion on any specific content or format for the proposal that might be well-matched to the project itself. The proposal for the dissertation research might not include any data collection or data analysis. The collection and analysis of data will be dictated by the underlying research questions. The only formal requirement for the proposed research is that it be approved by the Dissertation Committee.

Specifically, a typical prospectus will include the following:

I. Statement of Thesis What is the problem you wish to study and what is its interest or significance in current thinking? State clearly and concisely how you presently conceive this problem and how you suppose it can be resolved.

II. Study Context What work has, and has not, been done in this field and on this problem? Discuss relevant scholarship critically. It is not necessary to criticize specific failings; but show what is understood to be the merits and limitations of relevant works. How do you propose to develop, challenge, or depart from existing positions or themes in historical literature?

III. Literature Review Outline an approach to the subject. If the conception has theoretical aspects, discuss them critically. Have scholars in other fields developed concepts of potential interest to the topic? How does your topic fit within the larger scholarly conversation around the issue; e.g., what is the history of this topic, on what existing scholarship will your work be building, etc.? Think about method and theory, even if there is a decision not to engage much with external perspectives and theory. The faculty neither encourages nor discourages such engagement but cautions that original historical work should not simply illustrate other people's ideas.

IV. Methods What methods and methodology will you use for the study design, data collection, data analysis, and the interpretation of findings? Provide a clear rationale for anticipated decisions to be made at each stage of the research process. What do you expect to find? What is your specific role if the research is taking place in a team environment or in partnership with your advisor?

Please see the guiding questions below for discussing the study design and data analytic strategies when considering the analysis of qualitative or quantitative data. Guiding Questions for Design of Qualitative or Quantitative Data Analysis.

The prospectus should include a brief discussion of any statistical/analytical techniques you plan to use. The following list of guiding questions can be used to guide you in developing a qualitative or quantitative study design. You are strongly encouraged to discuss these questions with your Committee Chair and include a summary as part of your prospectus. Note that this of questions are intended as a guide for students to consider when designing their research plans. The lists are not meant to be used as a prescriptive or complete list of considerations, but as a framework for the types of questions a researcher should consider.

Quantitative Considerations

Population and Sampling: What method will you use to select your sample? Why is this appropriate for this question? What are the potential limitations with regard to your sample? Have you investigated whether your sample size will impact the applicability of your results?

Methodology and Analysis: What data do you plan to collect from your sample? What are your independent and dependent variables? What kinds of collection tools or measurements will you be using? What statistical methods will you use to analyze your data? Are the necessary assumptions and conditions for your chosen statistical method likely to be met by your data, given your data collection plan (e.g., quantitative versus qualitative data)? How will you verify assumptions (e.g., normality) that must be assessed after data collection? How will you determine whether any data points should be excluded from your analysis?

Discussion and Presentation: What is your plan if your research does not produce statistically significant results? Have you discussed this possibility with your advisor? How will you present your results? If you are using tabular or graphical formats, what are the disciplinary standards for formatting the table/graph and discussion of the table/graph within the narrative? To what extent can you realistically generalize your data, given your sampling and analysis?

Qualitative Considerations

Participants and Sampling/Selecting a site and/or cohesive subject area to analyze What is your sampling strategy? Why is this an appropriate strategy? How will these participants help you to explore your research question(s)? In other words, why them and not others? What are the potential limitations or constraints with regard to your participants? If selecting a site or other cohesive subject area to analyze (injury reports from a job/company, communication between designers/contractors/clients, review of a neighborhood in terms of architectural styles/use patterns, simulating the environmental effects of a hazard event using previous data and software, etc.), providing some detail about how your research about the site/cohesive subject area is related to an established scholarly subject area and helps to provide additional knowledge about the problems, issue, site.

Methodology & Analysis What is your methodology or overall research design? (e.g., ethnography, case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, content analysis, hermeneutics) What are your data sources? What data collection method(s) will you use? What is the protocol for your methods? What are ethical issues that need to be considered regarding your method(s)? What are potential limitations of your method(s)? How will you organize, analyze, and interpret the data?

Discussion and Presentation What are the major themes, issues, concepts, etc., that you found in the data? How will you represent these findings? What are the limitations of the findings? How did you achieve trustworthiness in your data? What are the connections between your findings and the scholarly literature/disciplinary field including contributions and gaps? How do your findings contribute to your conceptual or theoretical framework? What are the larger implications of your findings? What are suggestions for future research, based on your findings?

V. References

VI. Proposed Timeline Draft a tentative chapter outline and schedule of tasks and stages for the writing of the dissertation. Allow time for research, travel to collections (if applicable), writing, and revision.