

07.03.07.01 Dissertation Proposal Procedures – PhD

Description

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Composition

Working with your dissertation advisor(s), the student will prepare a dissertation proposal that outlines the plans for both portions of the thesis (composition and paper). The projections for the composition portion generally can be stated within two or three paragraphs, in which specific instrumentation, number of movements and approximate total duration, generative compositional and stylistic procedures and resources that you intend to employ, and other salient characteristics of the work are stated. The essay portion of the proposal probably will require three or more pages, within which the student clearly presents the nature and scope of the topic, makes mention of related studies, delineates the unique aspects the proposed study (how it differs from related studies and represents an “original contribution to knowledge”), and includes a bibliography. Additionally, the dissertation proposal needs to include a cover (or “title”) page. A sample cover page, along with additional guidelines for preparation of the proposal, is available from the Office of Graduate Studies.

When your dissertation proposal is ready, the student should submit it to all members of the reading committee and obtain the approval signatures from the advisor(s), readers, and the department chair on a single copy of the cover page. Then the proposal is submitted electronically to all members of the Composition Department faculty for approval by the full Composition Department. After approval by the Composition faculty, the composition dissertation advisor will forward a copy of your proposal to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Music Education

The PhD proposal is a substantive paper that includes: (1) abstract, (2) introduction, (3) review of relevant literature, and (4) detailed method(s) and procedures for data collection and analysis. The advisory committee must read and approve the proposal before data collection can commence. Signatures of the advisory committee and the department chair on the title page indicate approval of the project. The department chair will also send a letter to the student indicating that the dissertation proposal has been approved. A copy of the letter, signed title page, and dissertation proposal must be submitted to the Eastman Office of Graduate Studies.

Musicology

The student should be on the lookout for dissertation topics from the beginning of graduate study; musicology seminars may well suggest potential subjects. In the third year, the student normally focuses specifically on establishing the dissertation topic. As outlined above (under Directed Study), the student enrolls during the spring semester in an independent study course with the faculty member who may serve as advisor to the dissertation; the goal of the course is to construct a dissertation proposal. The proposal should summarize the state of current research in the field relative to the topic,

the methodology to be pursued, and the questions and issues to be discussed; a bibliography and likely table of contents for the dissertation should also be included. N.B.: The dissertation proposal is only a starting point for dissertation research and writing: its completion should not be delayed by attempts to draw final conclusions nor by excessive concern that the proposal agree in all particulars with the finished dissertation.

When the proposal is completed, the student submits it to the special field exam committee, normally consisting of three or four faculty members (two or three from the musicology department, including the proposed advisor, and one from another department).

In addition to the PhD program faculty within the Musicology department, the following faculty from outside ESM have been approved to serve as inside members of Musicology dissertation committees: Corey Hunter, Kim Kowalke, Jennifer Kyker, and Honey Meconi. They may not be appointed as outside members for Musicology.

The proposal then forms one of the topics of inquiry at the special field exam. Subsequent to the exam, the proposal may be returned to the student for revisions. The special field exam committee then reports its findings to the entire department at a department meeting. After the proposal is approved by the special field exam committee, the department chair designates one faculty member (usually the unofficial advisor) as prospective advisor of the dissertation.

The student then submits the revised proposal—with the endorsing signatures of the advisor, two readers, and musicology chair—to the musicology office, which will forward a copy to the graduate office. For online forms see the Graduate Studies website. The Senior Associate Dean of Graduate Studies writes to the candidate and officially names an advisor for the dissertation, upon the recommendation of the musicology chair.

Music Theory

Discussion of the dissertation proposal defense follows in section [07.03.11](#).

Date

2024/07/06