



**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND POLICIES**

**FOR THE**

**PH.D. IN ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**

**OFFERED BY**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**

**DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**

## I. Admission Procedures

The USM *Graduate Bulletin* outlines application procedures and the minimal requirements for admission to the several doctoral degree programs of the University. The first step for interested parties is therefore to consult the *Graduate Bulletin*. It may be viewed online at <http://www.usm.edu/graduatestudies/>. Hard copies may be obtained by contacting the Office of Graduate Studies by telephone (601-266-4369), by FAX (601-266-5138), or by post (USM Box 10066, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0066).

While the basic application procedures and minimal requirements for admission to all doctoral degree programs are established by the USM Office of Graduate Studies, degree-granting academic entities may require additional application materials and procedures, and may mandate admission requirements exceeding those specified in the *Graduate Bulletin*.

Persons holding a master's degree, law degree, or doctorate in any academic discipline are eligible to apply for admission to the program.

### **Submission of Materials:**

The following materials must be *submitted directly to the Office of Graduate Studies*:

1. A completed application form;
2. Copies of official transcripts from all institutions previously attended;
3. Certified scores on all three components of the Graduate Records Examination (GRE);
4. A full resume (curriculum vita) detailing educational and professional experiences related to the degree being sought;
5. Three letters of recommendation from individuals who are directly knowledgeable of the applicant's suitability for advanced graduate study;
6. A typed statement of 750 to 1,000 words summarizing the individual's motivation for applying to the program as well as the professional contributions s/he intends to make assuming successful completion of the degree;
7. A typed statement of 750 – 1,000 words summarizing a possible dissertation topic including a thoughtful discussion of the need for research within the proposed area as well as a rough description of the methodology to be employed; and

8. A copy of the master's thesis or a professional writing sample.

Office of Graduate Studies  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
Box 10066  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0066

**Important Note:**

In addition to the foregoing materials, applicants may also be required to attend an in-person interview with members of the Graduate Admissions Committee for purposes of resolving any questions that may exist on behalf of either party.

**II. Admission Criteria**

Admission to the Ph.D. program in Administration of Justice is of two types - regular and conditional.

**Regular Admission:**

Regular admission requires:

1. A combined score of 1000 on the verbal and quantitative sections of the GRE;
2. A GPA of 3.5 or greater on prior graduate course work;
3. Successful completion of prior course work in research methodology at least equivalent to that required by the USM B.A., M.A., and M.S. degrees in Criminal Justice, namely Methods of Criminal Justice Research and Planning (CJ 420 / 520), Advanced Research Methods for Criminal Justice (CJ 620), and Seminar in Criminal Justice Planning and Research (CJ 625);
4. Successful prior course work in the theory of justice (criminal jurisprudence as well as criminology) at least equivalent to that required by the USM B.A. degree in Criminal Justice, namely Criminal Justice Theory (CJ 325); and

5. Successful prior course work or professional experience confirming expertise in substantive and procedural criminal law and justice administration at least equivalent to that required by the USM B.A. in Criminal Justice, namely Criminal Law (CJ 330), Criminal Procedure (CJ 430 / 530), Evidence, Search and Seizure (CJ 433 / 533), Introduction to Modern Corrections (CJ 352), and Introduction to Juvenile Justice (CJ 360).

Regular admission requires no course work above the semester-hour minimum for the doctorate outlined below.

**Conditional Admission:**

Conditional admission is granted when an applicant's credentials suggest aptitude for successful doctoral study but are deficient in one or more of the five prerequisite areas outlined immediately above. Hence conditional admission requires a variable amount of preliminary course work above the minimal semester-hour requirement for the doctorate outlined below as a condition of regular admission, the amount of such course work being determined by the Graduate Committee.

**Important Note:**

Enrollment in or completion of course work at the Masters level does not imply or automatically guarantee matriculation into the Ph.D. program. In other words, the admissions process is separate and distinct for each program of study.

**II. Program of Study**

The minimal requirement for the Ph.D. in Administration of Justice is sixty (60) semester hours above a master's degree, a law degree, or a doctorate in another academic discipline, inclusive of the University's "research tools" requirement, which is addressed below. Additional semester hours may be required as a condition of admission and/or a result of a student's performance on the qualifying examination, as addressed below.

**Required Courses (54 semester hours):**

Administration of Justice (27 semester hours):

AJ 700: Qualitative Research and Analysis, 3 hrs.

AJ 710: Research and Analysis in Legal Inquiry, 3 hrs.

AJ 720: Quantitative Research and Analysis, 3 hrs.

AJ 721: Advanced Research Analysis in Justice Administration, 3 hrs.

AJ 740: Administration of Justice, 3 hrs.

AJ 798: Dissertation, 12 hrs.

Adult Education (3 semester hours):

ADE 540: Methods and Materials in Adult Education, 3 hrs.

Criminal Justice (3 semester hours):

CJ 600: Seminar in Criminal Justice Theory

**Cognate Courses (21 semester hours):**

Cognate courses are selected with the advice and consent of the departmental Graduate Committee and/or a student's dissertation committee, and must include a 12-semester-hour minor. Frequently selected cognate courses and minors are in the disciplines of Adult Education, Communications, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Economic Development, Forensic Science, History, Planning, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, and Research and Foundations. In all cases cognate courses are selected with an eye to the subject matter and research methodology of the dissertation.

**Research Tools (6 semester hours):**

The USM Graduate School requires that all doctoral students acquire a profound knowledge of "research tools" in the course of their study. In part, this requirement is met by the aforementioned twelve (12) semester hours of AJ research courses (AJ 700, 710, 720, 721). However, because the Ph.D. in Administration of Justice is above all a research degree, and because appropriate "research tools" vary widely according to dissertation topic, an additional six (6) semester hours in research courses is required. The departmental Graduate Committee and/or the dissertation committee of a student, whose members consider the type or types of research methodology to be employed in a particular dissertation, determine the manner in which this requirement is met. The resulting "research tools" curriculum may include course work in foreign language if command of a foreign language is demanded by the subject matter of a dissertation and/or pertinent course work in research methodology. Depending on the subject matter of, and the research methodology employed in, a dissertation, research courses other than those in foreign language might include:

ADE 791: Research in Adult Education, 1-16 hrs.

FSC 691: Research in Forensic Science, 1-16 hrs.

HIS 710: Philosophy and Methods of History, 3 hrs.

PS 691: Research in Political Science

PSY 659: Research Design  
PSY 660: Advanced Data Analysis  
PSY 661: Research Evaluation in the Behavioral Sciences  
PSY 662: Quantitative Methods I  
PSY 663: Quantitative Methods II  
REF 761: Experimental Design  
REF 762: Advanced Regression Analysis  
REF 824: Advanced Experimental Design  
REF 830: Multivariate Analysis in Educational Research

This list, however, in no way restricts students – any methods course that supports an approved dissertation topic might be approved.

**Additional course work required as a condition of admission:**

As specified in above, a status of conditional admission requires the successful completion of specified course work.

**Additional course work required as a result of the qualifying examination:**

All students must sit for a qualifying exam to be administered during their first semester of regular admission. The qualifying exam is a diagnostic tool for the departmental graduate committee, which at its discretion may require additional course work of a doctoral student.

**Transfer Credit:**

The Director of Doctoral Studies has the discretion to allow the transfer of a maximum of six (6) semester hours of graduate course work earned by the student at an accredited institution of higher learning (including USM) where the assigned grade is no lower than an "A."

Credit earned for courses more than six (6) years before the student has been admitted to the program are not eligible for transfer.

**Residency Requirement:**

Residency refers to a period during which the student is on the campus engaged in intensive study, sustained association with faculty members and other colleagues who share scholarly and professional interests, attendance at seminars and colloquia, intensive reading and familiarization with

library resources, consultation with specialists in other disciplines and resource centers and the opportunity for broadened exposure to current intellectual issues as they are revealed in various campus offerings. In short, the requirement is not an inflicted ritual, but an opportunity.

The minimum residency requirements for the doctoral degree can be fulfilled by the completion of 24 hours of continuous graduate study on campus within two consecutive semesters, one of which can be the full summer session. During this period the student is obligated to devote full time to graduate work and to earn at least 12 semester hours of credit in each of the two semesters. A student should not attempt to fulfill the residency requirements if he or she is gainfully employed full time. Residency may begin only after the student is admitted to a doctoral program as a regular student. Alternative plans for meeting residency have been developed by some departments with specialized needs. These plans are in keeping with the purpose of residency as stated above.

The following are options for satisfying the residency requirement: (a) two consecutive terms of 12 hours each, (b) two consecutive summer terms of 12 hours each with continuous enrollment during intervening terms, or (c) three consecutive full-time terms. Students must consult with individual departments regarding which of these options are approved and whether on-line or off-campus courses are approved.

#### **Duration of Doctoral Study:**

Excepting only dissertation hours, all course work applied toward satisfying the requirements of the degree must be completed within six (6) years from the date of the first course taken for Ph.D. credit. All degree requirements must be completed within eight (8) years from the date of the first course taken for Ph.D. credit.

### **III. Academic Standards, Grading & Retention Policies**

The Director of Doctoral Studies will audit the academic records of all Ph.D. students at the end of each semester for evidence of satisfactory academic progress.

#### **Academic Probation:**

Where a student's academic performance is unsatisfactory, s/he will be placed on academic probation.

Students will be placed on academic probation – a condition that prohibits registration until cleared by the Director - if one or more of the following conditions are found to exist:

The student's cumulative grade point average falls below 3.25

The student receives a grade of "C" or below in any course

The student receives an incomplete in any course

A pattern of incomplete grades is reflected on the student's transcript or academic history

A pattern of withdrawal from courses is reflected on the student's transcript or academic history

A pattern of enrollment followed by non-enrollment is reflected on the student's transcript or academic history

**Summary Dismissal:**

A student may be summarily dismissed from the program if one or more of the following conditions are found to exist:

The student fails to resolve a grade of incomplete by the end of the following semester and said grade has automatically reverted to that of an "F"

The student receives a grade of "C" or below in more than one course

The student receives a grade of "F" in any course

The student is found guilty of academic dishonesty by a preponderance of the evidence, as such behavior is defined by the University or this policy manual

Graduate school regulations allow students to retake only one class with prior permission from the Director of Doctoral Studies.

In the event that a student earns a grade of "C" or below in any course, s/he must retake the class the next semester that it is offered.

**Student Responsibility Statement:**

It is the student's responsibility to know and comply with all prerequisites and requirements for the degree being sought.

**Credit Toward the Degree:**

No grade of "C" or below counts toward the degree.

**Permission to Repeat:**

Consistent with University policy, students are allowed to repeat a course only once during their graduate career. However, permission to do so must first be obtained from the Director of Doctoral Studies as well as the appointed representative of the Graduate School.

**Incomplete Work:**

A grade of incomplete (I) will only be assigned where extenuating circumstances preclude the completion of course requirements by the final exam date for a given course.

In the event that a student receives an incomplete (I) in any course, s/he must promptly meet with the Director and course instructor for the purpose of developing a plan to resolve the grade. Consistent with University policy, an incomplete (I) that is not resolved by the end of the following semester automatically results in a grade of "F" being recorded on the student's transcript.

**Grade Review:**

The instructor of record has the authority over all matters affecting the conduct of the class including the assignment of grades to all work including, but not limited to, examinations and final grades.

Student performance should be evaluated according to academic criteria made available to all students within the first two weeks of the semester.

Grades should not be determined in an arbitrary or capricious manner.

In the event that a student disagrees with the final grade assigned for a course s/he should first try to resolve the issue with the instructor. Where this fails, the student should express her/his concern to the Department chair.

In no event will a request for change of grade be entertained if more than 30 school days (exclusive of weekends and official University holidays) have elapsed since beginning of the semester subsequent to the one in which the grade was awarded.

#### **IV. The Comprehensive Examination**

##### **Date(s) and time(s) of administration:**

The exam will be administered twice annually – once in the fall and spring.

The exam will take place over the course of three days - Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Testing will be conducted from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. each day.

In no case will a student be allowed to take the test if s/he is more than 30 minutes late to any session.

##### **Prerequisites:**

A student becomes eligible to take the comprehensive exam during the semester in which they are scheduled to complete all coursework required for the degree.

##### **Registration:**

Students who intend to sit for the exam must obtain a registration form, which must be submitted to the Director by the following dates:

Fall exam – Students must register no later than the last day of finals for the preceding spring semester.

Spring exam – Students must register no later than the last day of finals for the preceding summer semester.

##### **Cancellations:**

Students are strongly discouraged from making last-minute cancellations as valuable time and effort are expended in the construction and collection of exam questions. No cancellations will be permitted within 30 days of the scheduled exam date.

When a student arrives on the first day of exam administration, it is assumed that s/he will complete the process in its entirety. Once testing for the first substantive area has begun, all remaining substantive sections must also be completed. That is, a student may not begin a substantive area of the

exam and then, in the absence of extenuating circumstance, simply decide to complete the remaining portions during a subsequent semester. In other words, once the exam has begun the student is obligated to complete all substantive areas during the same testing session.

**Format:**

The exam will cover six (6) substantive areas. These include: 1) Administration; 2) Criminal Justice Theory; 3) Law; 4) Research Methods; 5) Statistics; and 6) Cognate(s).

In order to successfully complete the comprehensive exam process, a student must pass all six sections.

The student will be required to complete two (2) questions within each substantive area.

Each will be administered independently so that all questions in a given substantive area must be completed and submitted before undertaking another.

The student will have five (5) hours to complete the two questions required for each substantive area.

**Evaluative Process:**

Two graders will independently evaluate the response to each question.

The identity of the student will remain anonymous to evaluators and no identifying information may be noted upon or included within the response.

**Evaluative Scale:**

Answers to the exam questions will be graded on a scale of zero (0) to four (4) where:

- 0 = Unacceptable
- 1 = Below Average
- 2 = Average
- 3 = Above Average
- 4 = Excellent

Given that two evaluators will independently grade each response, the maximum number of points that may be earned in any substantive area is sixteen (16). A minimum of twelve (12) points is required in order to pass any substantive area. Consider the following examples:

A student completes the two questions required for the Law portion of the exam. For the response to question number one, she is assigned a score of 3 by the first evaluator and a score of 4 by the second evaluator. For the response to question number two, she is assigned a score of 2 by the first evaluator and a score of 3 by the second evaluator. Because the student earned a total of 12 points, she has successfully passed this substantive area.

A student completes the two questions required for the Criminal Justice Theory portion of the exam. For the response to question number one he is assigned a score of 3 by the first evaluator and a score of 2 by the second evaluator. For the response to question number two he is assigned a score of 2 by the first evaluator and a score of 3 by the second evaluator. Because the student earned a total of 10 points, which is less than the minimum of 12 points required to pass, the student has failed this substantive area.

In the event that there is more than a one (1) point difference in the scores that are assigned to a given response, the discrepancy will be resolved by closed conference among the evaluators and the Director. This rule shall apply whether or not the student has acquired the minimum number of points required to pass a given substantive area, and the discrepancy may be resolved in either direction. Consider the following examples:

A student completes the two questions required for the Administration portion of the exam. For the response to question number one, she is assigned a score of 3 by the first evaluator and a score of 2 by the second evaluator. For the response to question number two, she is assigned a score of 2 by the first evaluator and a score of 4 by the second evaluator. Because there is more than a one point difference in the scores assigned for the response to question number two, the discrepancy must be resolved by closed conference.

A student completes the two questions required for the Statistics portion of the exam. For the response to question number one, she is assigned a score of 4 by the first evaluator and a score of 2 by the second evaluator. For the response to question number two, she is assigned a score of 3 by the first evaluator and a score of 4 by the second evaluator. Because there is more than a one point difference in the scores assigned for the response to question number one, the discrepancy must be resolved by closed conference even though the student has acquired the minimum number of points required to pass this substantive area.

Points acquired in excess of those required to pass a given substantive area may not be applied / transferred to another substantive area in which the student's score is numerically deficient. Consider the following example:

A student acquires 14 points for the Law portion of the exam, but only 10 points for the Administration portion. The two additional points from the former substantive area may not be applied / transferred in order to make up for the deficiency in the latter substantive area.

**Re-testing:**

In order to successfully complete the comprehensive exam process, a student must pass all six sections. Where a student does not acquire the minimum number of points required to pass all six substantive areas, s/he will be allowed a second opportunity to sit for the relevant portion(s) of the exam during the next full semester for which exams are regularly scheduled.

In no case will a student be allowed to take the exam, either in whole or part, more than twice.

Students who must be re-tested in one or more substantive areas are required to register with the Director under the guidelines outlined above.

Students who are being re-tested need only attend the relevant sessions in coordination with the Director.

**Materials:**

Students need only to bring writing utensils on the day of the exam.

The exam must be completed on paper provided by the Department.

No outside materials (purses, book bags, notebooks, etc.) are allowed in the room where testing is being conducted.

**Appropriate Test-Taking Behavior:**

Prior to beginning the exam, either in whole or part, students must read, sign and date a statement of academic honesty as well as a form indicating agreement with the terms of test administration.

Conversation among students regarding material relevant to the test is prohibited.

Restroom breaks may be taken on the student's time. In no event shall two or more students take a restroom break at the same time.

Students who are aware of cheating or other inappropriate test-taking behaviors and do not report such activity to the Director or exam proctor are themselves subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.

**Notification of Results:**

Students will be notified of test results by mail. In no case will the results of an exam, either in whole or part, be given in-person, over the telephone, by email, or any other means.

**Caveat Emptor:**

Successful completion of required and elective course work does not imply or otherwise guarantee that a student will successfully pass comprehensive examinations. In other words, just because a student has earned a passing grade in a given course does not mean that s/he will know everything that may reasonably appear on a comprehensive exam or that the quality of one's course work will pass muster for purposes of later competency tests.

**V. Admission to Candidacy**

A student is admitted to candidacy for the degree once the following criteria are satisfied:

S/he has completed all coursework with a G.P.A. of at least 3.25;

S/he has successfully passed all six (6) substantive areas of the written comprehensive examination; and

S/he has successfully defended a dissertation prospectus.

Once admitted to candidacy, the student must complete the entire dissertation process within three years, or s/he will be required to retake the comprehensive exams.

## **VI. The Dissertation**

### **Minimum Time to Completion:**

The Department requires a minimum period of six months between admission to candidacy and granting of the degree. In nearly every case, it would be unrealistic for a student to think that s/he could complete a quality dissertation within this short time frame. Generally speaking, a quality dissertation will take a minimum of one year to complete.

### **Quality of the Dissertation:**

The dissertation is a scholarly work investigating a problem of significance and should constitute a meaningful contribution to the body of existing knowledge regarding matters of criminal justice policy or practice. It is the culmination of a program of advanced study leading to a doctoral degree and, as such, is expected to demonstrate a high degree of scholarly competence. It must show that the candidate is capable of conceptualizing and conducting sophisticated original research, analysis and reporting on an approved topic related to crime and justice by use of accepted scientific methods.

### **Suggestions / Considerations for Topic Selection:**

Often times, a student enters the program with a general area of interest – for example, police or corrections administration. While it is indeed desirable for students early in the course of study to begin thinking about a possible dissertation topic, it is important to understand that there are numerous criteria that must first be satisfied before one begins to invest large amounts of time and effort into this culminating endeavor.

In order to develop a cogent and meaningful topic, students are encouraged to first expend considerable effort researching the area of interest. This involves developing a comprehensive familiarity with the related literature, narrowing the focus of inquiry and thinking through the methodological issues.

A dissertation is not the type of endeavor that a student can fully embrace or appreciate during the first few semesters of graduate study. Although a student may think that s/he has selected the best possible topic, it is often later discovered that the idea is not as methodologically feasible or academically acceptable as once thought. For this reason, students are encouraged to let the natural progression of degree-related coursework serve as a guide in sharpening their understanding of how to best select an appropriate topic, synthesize the related literature and theoretical issues, frame a workable methodology, analyze the data, and relate the relevant findings. Using this approach, students are far less likely to invest valuable time and effort that may only be wasted in the long term once it is discovered that the topic is benign, impractical, untimely, or poorly conceptualized.

**Suggestions / Considerations for Committee Selection:**

Students are encouraged early on to identify a major professor who shares similar interests and is perhaps willing to serve as Chair of the dissertation committee once all comprehensive exams have been successfully completed. In making this selection, students must remain mindful that it is their responsibility to present the idea in an understandable and well-articulated fashion rather than expecting the faculty member to carry this burden. Generally speaking a faculty member will be more receptive to a student who has done their homework as compared to one that has not.

**Format:**

In all instances, the final draft of the dissertation must conform to the University's specifications for printing and publication.

**Dissertation Pre-proposal:**

In order to balance the need for meaningful guidance and feedback regarding a proposed dissertation topic against the principle that one must first be admitted to candidacy before a dissertation committee can be formally constituted, it is suggested that the student develop what is commonly referred to as a "pre-proposal."

A pre-proposal, while not formally required, allows the student an opportunity to communicate in written form to members of the faculty who may serve as potential committee members the general idea / conception underlying a proposed dissertation topic.

At this point in the academic process (generally during the second or third year of study), it is expected that the student has developed a general area of inquiry suitable for dissertation purposes through careful consultation with a major professor.

While the pre-proposal need not meet the same formal requirements as a prospectus (described below) or final dissertation (described below), it should nonetheless be well-researched and include such elements as an abstract, a comprehensive review of the literature, an annotated bibliography, and a tentative research methodology.

**Pre-proposal Presentation Protocol:**

The pre-proposal presentation should be scheduled in coordination with the student's major professor and the Director of Doctoral Studies.

This request must be submitted in writing to both parties.

Each faculty member who is asked to participate in the pre-proposal presentation must be provided with a copy of all relevant materials at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date.

The major professor directs all proceedings, retaining the authority to acknowledge participating faculty members in a fair and orderly fashion.

The student will be allowed a reasonable and adequate amount of time to present and justify the proposed topic.

A reasonable and adequate amount of time will also be allotted to discussion and questions regarding the proposed topic.

Once the presentation has concluded, the major professor will dismiss the student so that participating faculty members may discuss and vote upon the practicality and acceptability of the proposed topic.

There are two possible outcomes to this pre-proposal process:

Approve– must receive unanimous endorsement.

Reject – the proposed topic is unacceptable for one or more reasons.

### **Constitution of the Dissertation Committee:**

A dissertation committee may be formally constituted only upon successful completion of all comprehensive examinations.

The dissertation committee shall consist of a single chair occupying director status on the University's graduate faculty. S/he must have expertise in the proposed topic and be knowledgeable of the accepted data collection and analytical methodologies. The student's major professor may serve in this capacity.

The dissertation committee will be composed of four additional members who are jointly selected by the student *and* Chair. Two members must be selected from within the Department while the remaining positions are to be selected from another department, program or office within the University. All members of the committee must have regular status as graduate faculty. In certain instances it may be acceptable to invite an individual from outside the University to occupy the fourth seat on the committee. This selection must first be approved by the student's Chair and is contingent upon the individual's qualifications relative to the subject matter at hand.

**Dissertation Prospectus:**

The prospectus is a more formal presentation of the proposed dissertation topic than the pre-proposal defense.

**Scheduling of the Prospectus Defense:**

The prospectus defense should be scheduled in coordination with the student's major professor and Director of Doctoral Studies.

This request must be submitted in writing to both parties.

Each faculty member who is asked to participate in the prospectus defense must be provided with a copy of all relevant materials at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date.

**Prospectus Defense Protocol:**

Once scheduled, the prospectus defense will be announced to all committee members through memorandum issued by the Director of Doctoral Studies.

The Chair of the Committee directs all proceedings, retaining the authority to acknowledge members and participants in a fair and orderly fashion.

The student will be allowed a reasonable and adequate amount of time to present and justify the proposed topic.

A reasonable and adequate amount of time will also be allotted to discussion and questions regarding the proposed topic.

Once the prospectus defense has concluded, the Chair will dismiss the student so that committee members may discuss and vote upon the practicality and acceptability of the proposed topic.

There are two possible outcomes to this process:

Approve– must receive unanimous endorsement.

Reject – the proposed topic is unacceptable for one or more reasons.

### **Scheduling of the Final Defense:**

Students must arrange a date and time for the final defense in coordination with the dissertation Chair and Director of Doctoral Studies.

This request must be submitted in writing to both parties.

The dissertation Chair and Director of Doctoral Studies will notify the student in writing that the request for scheduling of a final defense has been accepted, considered and approved.

In all instances, the following rules shall apply without exception:

No final defense may be scheduled or occur until the next full semester following successful completion of the comprehensive exams.

No final defense may be scheduled to occur until the next full semester following successful completion of the prospectus defense.

The last day to defend a dissertation for graduation during the fall semester is September 30. The last day to defend a dissertation for graduation during the spring semester is February 15.

No final defense may be scheduled or occur within 30 days of the deadline established by the Office of Graduate Studies for the semester during which graduation is expected.

Once scheduled, the following rules also apply without exception:

No final defense may occur with less than 30 days notice to all committee members.

No final defense may occur where any committee member receives a final draft of the dissertation with less than 30 days notice.

The last day to provide all members of the committee with a final draft of the dissertation for graduation during the fall semester is August 30. The last day to provide all members of the committee with a final draft of the dissertation for graduation during the spring semester is January 15.

No substitutions or changes to committee membership may occur within 60 days of the proposed date of defense.

No final defense may occur unless all members of the committee are present.

**Final Defense Protocol:**

Once scheduled, the final defense will be announced to all Department members through memorandum issued by the Director of Doctoral Studies.

The final defense is open to all faculty, staff and students of the University.

The Chair of the Committee directs all proceedings, retaining the authority to acknowledge members and participants in a fair and orderly fashion.

The student will be allowed a reasonable and adequate amount of time to present relevant findings.

A reasonable and adequate amount of time will also be allotted to discussion and questions regarding the student's work.

Once the presentation has concluded, the Chair will dismiss the student so that committee members may discuss and vote upon the acceptability of the final product.

There are three possible outcomes to this process:

Accept without revision – must receive unanimous endorsement.

Accept with revision – required changes must be made and approved by the dissertation Chair within 14 calendar days.

Reject – final product is unacceptable and needs considerable work in order to be approved.

In instances where the committee accepts the final product pending revision, only the Chair shall determine if it is appropriate for members to endorse the approval sheet or, instead, this should be done at a later date. In other words, it is inappropriate for a student to make this request.

In no instance will a committee member be required to sign the approval sheet where any voting member of the committee suggests changes.

## **VII. Procedures for Policy Revision & Clarification**

The policies and procedures outlined in this manual are subject to change upon approval of the Graduate Admissions Committee with approval of the Department Chair.

The Director of Doctoral Studies will collectively notify students affected by changes to this manual in a timely fashion by memorandum posted in a conspicuous and accessible location.

Requests for policy or procedural clarifications should be submitted to the Director of Doctoral Studies.