

Regulations and Requirements for Professional Doctorate Degree Programs

Admissions Requirements

A student enrolled in a professional doctorate degree program must satisfy the general requirements for admission as a graduate student and the requirements for the specific professional doctorate degree program. To be eligible for admission, applicants must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

Academic Classification and Degree Candidacy

- Doctoral student: Students in this classification have been admitted to a doctoral program.
- Doctoral candidate: Each program in which the term candidacy is used shall have a policy defining candidacy. Students in this classification will have completed all departmental, college, and university requirements except for the dissertation (if applicable). These requirements vary by program but minimally include completion of approximately 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours of acceptable graduate work beyond the bachelor's degree or possession of a previously earned master's degree that is acceptable to the department and certification by the graduate office. The requirements frequently include a comprehensive examination and/or a proposal defense.

Academic Residency Requirement

In the context of a doctoral degree program, the residency requirement refers to either:

- A minimum number of credits or semesters that must be completed at the degree-granting institution
- A minimum duration during which the degree candidate must be enrolled full-time at the degree-granting institution

In those programs in which the term candidacy is used, after reaching candidacy, students must register for Dissertation for a minimum of two semesters in order to fulfill their formal residency requirement. Continuation status enrollment is for students who are postcandidacy, have completed all coursework and their residency requirement, and are actively engaged in completing a dissertation.

Responsible Conduct of Research

All doctoral students for whom Responsible Conduct of Research training is required must complete training according to the university's Policy on Responsible Conduct of Research (<https://policies.northeastern.edu/policy500/>).

Course Requirements

A candidate for the professional doctorate degree must satisfactorily complete an approved program conforming to the requirements of the graduate school and department or program in which the candidate is registered.

The requirements for the professional doctorate degree shall be determined by the program.

Undergraduate-level coursework will not be accepted to meet the requirements for the professional doctorate degree.

Qualifying Examination(s)

In departments that require qualifying examinations, students must be notified in writing of the nature and regulations governing these examinations and of how their performance on the examinations will affect their normal progress toward the degree. The graduate office shall be made aware of the department regulations concerning such examinations.

Dissertation Committee

For programs requiring the dissertation, the dissertation committee shall have at least three members, two of whom shall be from Northeastern University. The chair of the dissertation committee will be a faculty of Northeastern and will hold an appropriate terminal degree for the discipline. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the dean of the relevant college (or their designee) based on the qualifications and experience of the faculty member who would serve as chair.

Comprehensive Examination

For programs requiring a comprehensive examination, the committee in charge of the degree program may require a final written or oral comprehensive examination(s) for partial fulfillment of degree requirements.

Thesis or Dissertation in Practice

If a thesis or dissertation in practice is required in partial fulfillment of degree requirements, it must show independent work based, in part, on original material and must meet the approval of the student's thesis committee. The committee in charge of the degree program is responsible for providing instructions concerning preparation of the thesis.

The student must submit the thesis to ProQuest (or a university-sanctioned successor system) according to the time schedule provided by the relevant graduate office. Information on archiving a thesis is available in the graduate office.

Time Limitation for Achieving Candidacy and Degree Completion

For programs in which the term candidacy is used, degree candidacy must be achieved within three years of entering the doctoral program. For all programs, the degree must be completed within seven years after entering the program. A student may request an extension of these time frames from the graduate office.

Pursuit of an Academic Credential Outside Student's Major

A student enrolled in a doctoral program may seek to pursue academic credentials (e.g., master's degree or certificate) outside of their major only if, prior to completing more than one-third of the required credits for that credential, they obtain the approval of their primary advisor, obtain the approval of the graduate office, and apply to and are accepted into the major offering that credential.