

**DISSERTATION TIMELINE  
COLLEGE OF NURSING - MUSC**

Selection of Dissertation Chair	May occur any time after completion of approximately half of the course work in the program of study.
Selection of Dissertation Committee	No later than 6 months after selection of the Dissertation Chair. Director of the Doctoral Program must send <i>Recommendation for Appointment of Dissertation Committee</i> to Dean's office, College of Graduate Studies (COGS).
Comprehensive Examination	Within 6 months of completion of course work, students should arrange with their committee for their comprehensive examination. On successful completion the committee along with the PhD program director will sign the <i>Admission to Candidacy form</i> and forward to the Dean, COGS. Student must meet with committee at least yearly until dissertation is successfully defended.
Research Proposal	Submitted no later than 6 months after passing Comprehensive Examination and before beginning research. Within 2-4 weeks of submitting proposal, Dissertation Committee determines student's readiness for Proposal Defense.
Research Proposal Defense	Oral presentation of the proposal for 20 to 30 minutes. Committee may question and discuss with student up to 1.5 hours for a total of 2 hours. If approved, <i>Plan of Research</i> signed by committee and sent to Director of Doctoral Program for signature and will be forwarded to Dean's Office, COGS.
IRB Approval	Online submission and one hard copy of all forms required to assure protection of human or animal subjects completed and approved before research initiated. Contact person for all IRB communication is administrative support person for Doctoral Program.
Dissertation Distributed <b>(Step 1)</b>	At least 4 weeks before planned date of the defense; all committee members receive final draft of your dissertation for review and comment.
Dissertation Announcement <b>(Step 2)</b>	At least 3 weeks before planned date of defense, candidate notifies Doctoral Program office of intent to defend dissertation and COGS office is notified so notification can be given to University. Once Defense Notices are distributed, <i>Degree Order form</i> sent from Office of Enrollment Services.

<p>Approval to Defend <b>(Step 3)</b></p>	<p>At least 2 weeks prior to scheduled date for defense, Committee Chair submits <i>Dissertation Defense Notification</i> with all committee member's signatures, indicating candidate is ready to defend, to Director of Doctoral Program, who will sign and forwarded to Dean's Office, COGS.</p>
<p>Dissertation Defense <b>(Step 4)</b></p>	<p>Formal presentation with PPT slides of 30 minutes. Open to faculty and students with closed questioning and vote to follow. After successful completion of defense, <i>Certification of Successful Defense</i> sent to Director of Doctoral Program and will be forwarded to Dean's Office, COGS with signature of Director of Doctoral Program.</p>
<p>Revisions to Dissertation <b>(Step 5)</b></p>	<p>All revisions recommended to Dissertation are completed and reviewed by the committee as needed. Formatting per COGS catalogue instructions.</p>
<p>Final copies submitted (candidate may participate in ceremony only when 3 final signed copies of dissertation are on file at the COGS) <b>(Step 6)</b></p>	<p>At least 2 weeks prior to Commencement, or the last day of exams for Summer and Fall semesters, all revisions to the dissertation must be completed. Three copies of the final signed dissertation turned into Dean's Office, COGS, with <i>Graduate Information Form, the UMI Doctoral Dissertation Agreement Form, and the Survey of Earned Doctorates</i>. See COGS catalog for instructions regarding formatting of copies.</p>
<p>You're official! When - Commencement day (or last day of examinations for Summer or Fall semester graduations) <b>(Step 7)</b></p>	<p>Sample timeline for a May 20 graduation:  March 25 - Step 1  April 1 – Step 2  April 8 – Step 3  April 21 – Step 4  April 22 – May 5 – Step 5 – <i>these dates are <u>up to you</u> and your committee and are not exact; this depends on how quickly you can get your revisions done and approved by your committee, as well as how quickly you can get documents into final formatting.</i>  May 6 – Step 6  May 20 – Step 7 – Congratulations!</p>

Developed with Dissertation Process Guidelines document, July 29, 2005