

715 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE AT SAN DIEGO [En 5/18/65, Am 6/1/2021]

A) Residency

The minimum residence requirement for the Ph.D. degree is six quarters, three of which must be spent in continuous residence at the San Diego campus, except in the case of a joint Ph.D. program, in which the residence requirements are defined by the Graduate Council. Residence is established by the satisfactory completion of six units per quarter, some of which must be at the graduate level.

B) Doctoral Committees

In consultation with their faculty dissertation advisor and following their Ph.D. program guidelines, candidates shall request to appoint a Doctoral Committee consisting of at least four members with faculty appointments at UC San Diego. Eligibility of faculty in different academic series at UC San Diego to serve on and/or chair Doctoral Committees is determined by the Graduate Council.¹ At least one Doctoral Committee member must have their primary appointment in a different department than the one in which the candidate's Doctoral Committee Chair holds their primary appointment. (Doctoral Committee Co-Chairs from different departments or programs satisfy this requirement; note that, even with evenly split appointments, faculty are primary in one department). At least two Doctoral Committee members must be from the department or program in which the student is enrolled and at least one Doctoral Committee member must be tenured or emeritus.

Additional committee members beyond the required four members can be requested to serve, including from another UC campus, non-UC academic institutions and industry. Appointment of such external members who will participate in Doctoral Committee decisions must be justified with a written explanation at the time of requesting committee constitution and must be approved by the Graduate Division. Willingness of external members to serve on the committee must be verified prior to nomination and efforts should be made to maintain continuity of service on the committee for the duration of candidacy.

The Doctoral Committee will be in charge of the student's advancement to candidacy, will oversee and approve the student's dissertation, and will conduct the oral dissertation defense, which will be public and so announced.

Guidelines on Doctoral Committee composition are modified for joint Ph.D. programs offered collaboratively by San Diego State University and UC San Diego with the approval of the Graduate Council. [Am 3/3/26]

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C) Advancement to Candidacy

The Doctoral Committee is tasked with determining if the candidate is qualified to advance to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. All preliminary requirements set by individual programs and by the Graduate Council must be completed by the candidate prior to advancement to candidacy. Following approval by the Doctoral Committee, the candidate must file their application and submit it to the Dean of the Graduate Division, who determines if all formal requirements have been met. A minimum period of resident study equivalent to three quarters must intervene between the date of formal advancement to candidacy and the date of the Ph.D. dissertation defense.

In cases where, even after consultation with graduate program leadership, a unanimous decision on advancement to candidacy is not reached by the Doctoral Committee, the Dean of the Graduate Division shall be called upon to review the case and report their findings to the Graduate Council, which shall determine appropriate action.

D) Dissertations

A dissertation is required of every candidate for the Ph.D. degree. It must bear on the candidate's major area of study, show evidence of their ability to conduct independent research, and be approved by the candidate's Doctoral Committee. A draft of the dissertation must be submitted to each member of the Doctoral Committee at least four weeks prior to the scheduled Ph.D. dissertation defense. The final form of the dissertation must be in accord with the "Instructions for the Preparation and Submission of Doctoral Dissertations and Masters' Theses" which are established by the Graduate Council. An official electronic copy of the approved dissertation must be filed for deposit in the University Library, with the title of the dissertation submitted to the Office of the Registrar.

E) Dissertation Defense

The candidate's oral Ph.D. dissertation defense shall be conducted by their Doctoral Committee. The Doctoral Committee will determine if the defense and the submitted dissertation meet the expectations for awarding the Ph.D. degree. In cases where the Doctoral Committee fails to achieve unanimity in approving the candidate for the Ph.D. degree, the Dean of the Graduate Division shall be called upon to review the case and report their findings to the Graduate Council, which shall determine appropriate action.

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ⁱ Faculty eligibility rules are established by Graduate Council and posted by the Graduate Division:
<https://grad.ucsd.edu/academics/progress-to-degree/committees.html#Doctoral-Committee-Membership-T>