

Music Education Ph.D. Dissertation: Information for Students

Introduction

The regulations set forth by the University Dean of Graduate Studies state that the dissertation must be an original critical or synthetic treatment of a fitting subject, an original contribution to creative art, or a report on independent research formulated in a manner worthy of publication. To ensure that University requirements are followed in preparation and submission of the dissertation, candidates should consult the official handbook, *The Preparation of Doctoral Theses*, available on the website of the University of Rochester Graduate Studies at <http://www.rochester.edu/Theses>.

2. Registration

The Ph.D. dissertation carries 16 credits, which may be divided into various increments towards this total number. Once the student has completed 16 dissertation credits, he/she must be enrolled continuously in either ESM 999 (Continuation in Residence) or ESM 995 (Continuation in Absentia). If a student is not working actively on the dissertation, he/she may request a leave of absence from the Graduate Studies Office. This registration ESM 985 (Inactive Status = Leave of Absence) carries a small charge for maintenance of student records and e-mail.

3. Forming the Dissertation Advisory Committee

Upon successful completion of coursework and the Ph.D./MUE qualifying examination, a Ph.D. candidate consults with an advisory committee to develop the dissertation proposal. According to University of Rochester Graduate Studies policies, the primary advisor must be a full-time faculty member of the University of Rochester, at the rank of assistant professor or higher. The two other members of the committee must also be current full-time faculty members at the rank of assistant professor or higher, one in the student's department or academic unit (in this case, Music Education) and one from another academic unit or department in the University. An emeritus faculty member or a faculty member from outside the University may serve on the advisory committee, but this individual would normally serve as a fourth member of the committee. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved in writing by the University Dean of Graduate Studies. (See Regulations and University Policies Concerning Graduate Study: <http://www.rochester.edu/GradBulletin/>)

Students should consult with their academic advisor and/or Department Chair as they begin formulating a committee. Once selected, the primary dissertation advisor has responsibility for communicating with other members of the reading committee about the student's progress.

4. Proposal

In Music Education, the Ph.D. 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 proposal abstract must be submitted to the Eastman Graduate Office.

3. Human Subjects

For research studies involving human subjects, a student is required to submit an application to the University of Rochester Research Subjects Review Board (RSRB) for approval. As part of the course requirements in *MUE 403 Introduction to Research in Music Education*, a student must pass the Ethical Principles in Research Program (EPRP); subsequently, s/he is issued an EPRP researcher number and must obtain an RSRB account.

Graduate students at the University of Rochester are allowed to serve as Principal Investigators (PIs) only those studies exempt from full board review. Typically, studies exempt from full board review are conducted in commonly accepted educational settings and involve normal educational practices, or involve use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior. Proposed participants in such studies must not be vulnerable subjects. For all other studies, the dissertation advisor serves as PI. Investigator guidance is available at: <http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/rsrb/handbook.htm>

After the application to the RSRB is complete, the student must wait until s/he has received notice of study approval from RSRB before beginning data collection.

4. From Fair to Final: Roles of the Reading Committee and Advisor

The *fair copy* version of the dissertation is the full draft of the document, including table of contents, abstract, and appendix material. Deadlines for presentation of *fair copy* to the dissertation advisory committee are posted on the Graduate Calendar; students must adhere to the printed schedule to allow time for committee reading and student revision. Specific dates for each academic year are posted on the Eastman Graduate Studies web page: <http://www.esm.rochester.edu/grad>

The committee will read the *fair copy* and provide written and/or verbal feedback to the student. The usual period of time for this to occur is approximately 3-4 weeks of the academic semester. The primary advisor compiles the committee's edits and requests for revision and communicates this information to the student. If the revisions to the *fair copy* are substantial, the committee may be asked to read the document a second time.

When all revisions have been made and approved, all dissertation advisory committee members must sign an authorization form, indicating their agreement that the dissertation is acceptable and ready to be defended. The *final copy* of the dissertation must be bound in some form and submitted to the Eastman Graduate Office. Deadlines for submission of *final copy* are also posted on the Eastman Graduate Studies web page: <http://www.esm.rochester.edu/grad>

5. Dissertation Defense

Date and time for the dissertation defense are arranged by the administrator in the Eastman Graduate Studies Office. Negotiations for date and time begin when the student has submitted the *fair copy* to the reading committee.

When the *final copy* is submitted to the Eastman Graduate Studies Office, the administrator reviews the entire student record (transcript, program of study, documentation of continuous enrollment, etc.) and forwards these materials to the University Graduate Studies Office along with the *final copy* of the dissertation, to be registered for the defense. The University Dean of Graduate Studies appoints the Chair of the dissertation defense and notifies the dissertation advisor of this appointment.

At the defense, members of the reading committee will meet first without the student present to plan a sequence of activity for the defense period of time. The student may prepare a brief introduction to the project that will begin the defense; this may include photo, audio, or video examples as appropriate to the content of the study. The reading committee will question the student about aspects of the research project; the defense Chair will also question the student. Following an allotted time for questioning, the student will be asked to leave the room while the committee and the defense Chair discuss both the defense performance and the dissertation document. Once the committee has reached a decision on the defense, members will bring the student back into the room to hear the final outcome.

Based on the defense, a student may be asked for additional revisions to the document. The reading committee and the defense Chair will determine who is responsible for reviewing the revisions, and will indicate this on the approval statement they sign for the University Graduate Studies Office. The defense Chair will give the student additional materials from the Graduate School, related to microfilm submission and procedures for submitting the *permanent copy*. If revisions have been required, another form indicating that all revisions have been made and signed by the defense designee, must accompany the two *permanent*

copies (plus one digital copy) that are submitted to the University Graduate Studies Office.

6. Conferral of Degrees

All degrees are officially conferred by the University Board of Trustees, which meets three times during the academic year: October, March, and May. Students should file a degree application card in the Registrar's Office as soon as they know their anticipated degree-conferral date. Candidates unable to attend the graduation ceremony may receive their diplomas by mail.

The University awards Ph.D. diplomas only at the May doctoral ceremony, usually held on Saturday morning preceding the Sunday commencement ceremony. New Eastman doctoral graduates also participate as members of the stage party at the Sunday Eastman commencement, where they are introduced individually by Eastman's Graduate Dean.