

Doctoral Student’s Comprehensive Guide to Finishing the Degree (humanities, social science, interdisciplinary focuses)

	Early Course Work		Exams, Research & Dissertation Work		Diss & Job Search
	Years 1-2 *begin course work *begin to develop relationship with advisor *balance course work with assistantship (depending on funding) * identify areas of specialization in department & in profession	Years 2-3 * continue course work * begin prep for prelims * balance course work and prelim prep with graduate assistantship and/or other job/funding	Years 3-4 * complete exams * select dissertation committee * file prospectus * begin research and fieldwork * attend conferences * balance exams and dissertation work with assistantship	Years 4-5 * research/draft dissertation * shape professional presence in field as part of career planning * submit manuscripts * balance dissertation work, professional development, and assistantship and/or other job/funding	Year 6+ * develop & defend final dissertation draft * interview for jobs * balance dissertation, professional development and assistantship and/or other job/funding
Writing Development	<p>Identify types and styles of academic writing that are central to your discipline(s)</p> <p>Learn new writing and research skills necessary to excel in graduate school</p> <p>Seek out resources to consult as you meet new obligations and expectations</p>	<p>Seek out peer feedback and establish a writing group</p> <p>Practice using feedback to improve writing</p> <p>Determine writing support needed for on-going development of scholarly writing</p>	<p>Discuss with advisor samples of writing in your field: grants, teaching materials/documents, field/lab/research notes, and conference papers, presentations, and posters</p> <p>Distinguish among the criteria for acceptance of papers, proposals, posters, articles, and book chapters in your field</p> <p>From this, develop a plan to further advance your reading and writing skills</p>	<p>Gather manuscript/submission guidelines for key publishers of periodicals and publishers that regularly accept/solicit book chapters in your field and related areas of study</p> <p>Understand the different approaches to drafting and revising scholarly research when preparing a manuscript for a specific audience, purpose, or type of degree requirement or publication or presentation</p>	<p>Prepare a new Comprehensive Guide to assist in your transition from dissertation writer to junior faculty or post-doctoral associate, or into a non-academic position</p>
Dissertation Development	<p>Understand “the dissertation” as a particular type of text document</p> <p>Frame possible topics and articulate these to others</p>	<p>Learn what components your department expects to be in a dissertation and explore field appropriate methodologies</p> <p>Begin narrowing your main focus/research questions to a manageable scope</p> <p>Begin compiling citations/ analytical notes for your literature review</p>	<p>Shape a peer support group suitable to your work at this stage</p> <p>Conduct research in preparation for exams and with attention to intended focus/topic of the dissertation you will propose</p> <p>Develop a prospectus as a corollary to exam prep.</p>	<p>Consult with your dissertation committee to put the research phase into the background and focus on writing</p> <p>Write a full first draft using the university’s dissertation template</p> <p>Make a plan for gathering committee response to draft</p>	<p>Discuss defense expectations and protocols</p> <p>Revise dissertation draft after gathering and analyzing committee feedback</p> <p>Finalize defense draft with advisor and conduct a mock defense</p>

<p>Communicating with Advisors and Other Faculty (addressing topics and issues beyond program and course requirements)</p>	<p>Develop an understanding of personalities and communication styles</p> <p>Establish a meeting schedule</p> <p>Discuss research interests</p> <p>Develop timeline to completion of graduate degree</p>	<p>Seek guidance to narrow your research topic and review methodology options</p> <p>Discuss committee selection</p> <p>Inquire about departmental/college co-authorship protocols</p>	<p>Clarify research direction/intended topic</p> <p>Identify faculty with expertise in methodology appropriate to your work</p> <p>Keep faculty apprised of professional goals and accomplishments so they can write effective reference letters</p>	<p>Plan for feedback: decide how to ask for feedback and from whom</p> <p>Write a cover letter to request specific feedback from readers</p> <p>Submit draft to dissertation advisor and circulate to committee members as appropriate</p>	<p>Set a defense date</p> <p>Evaluate final feedback from readers in preparation for defense</p> <p>Consult with advisor about defense format and the roles of participants</p>
<p>Communicating with Peers</p>	<p>Join student organizations at the departmental, college, and discipline levels</p> <p>Seek out local opportunities to hear presentations and discuss research</p> <p>Learn the range of social, cultural and interest groups on campus and create a local support network</p>	<p>Understand the Principles of Productivity for early career faculty and develop an individual plan for fostering strength in these areas</p> <p>Join/form/reconfigure a peer writing support group to develop research questions and practice advanced scholarly writing and thinking</p>	<p>Practice asking for feedback on your writing: conference papers, travel grant applications, preliminary dissertation writing, and course materials</p> <p>Meet peers outside of your own department, concentrating on building interdisciplinary, cross-cultural connections</p>	<p>Assess the fit of current writing support and build in teaching support to keep work efficient & effective</p> <p>Determine how and from whom you will seek advice and feedback for emerging drafts and next steps</p> <p>Attend dissertation defense sessions</p>	<p>Develop a strategy for evaluating feedback from multiple readers and incorporating key feedback into the revision process</p> <p>Arrange a mock defense with peers who know your dissertation well</p>
<p>Networking & Professional Development</p>	<p>Draft an Individual Development Plan with your advisor</p> <p>Attend local talks, events, and workshops and join professional associations</p> <p>Learn how conferences operate, from program planning to proposal review</p>	<p>Present at conferences</p> <p>Prepare and submit publications</p> <p>Learn strategies for efficiently integrating all elements of your academic life</p>	<p>Identify a chosen career path but remain open to other possibilities</p> <p>Identify mentors in your chosen career and begin to foster a mentor/mentee relationship</p>	<p>Talk with various mentors about day-to-day life in academic and non-academic careers</p> <p>Determine what practical skills you need to develop to pursue different employment options</p>	<p>Finalize a job search portfolio including CV/resume, research statement and teaching portfolio</p> <p>Conduct mock job talks and interviews with mentors and peers</p>
<p>Seeking Financial Support</p>	<p>Identify & actively explore assistantship and fellowship options in your department and in related fields on and off campus</p>	<p>Identify processes & timelines for fellowships and travel grants in your field(s); seek out & review successful applications</p> <p>Complete training for human/animal research</p>	<p>Apply for fellowships to fund research</p> <p>Apply for travel grants to fund research and attendance at conferences</p>	<p>Research postdoctoral fellowships and the academic and non-academic job markets</p>	<p>Apply for jobs</p>