

Comprehensive Assessments

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All graduate programs require students to successfully complete a comprehensive assessment. The assessment may include a comprehensive examination (written and/or oral), a research project, thesis, capstone course, portfolio, and/or equivalent. The specific requirements may be found in descriptions of degree programs. For more information about degree requirements, view Curricula at www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/grcat/curricula.cfm.

Thesis/Dissertation: Research, Examination, Preparation, and Delivery

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In programs where a thesis or dissertation is prepared, the student must comply with the specific regulations of his or her school or department and the general requirements of the Graduate School. These requirements are specified in the Manual of Basic Requirements for Theses and Dissertations which is approved by the Graduate School and available on the Graduate School's Web site, www.ecu.edu/gradschool/. The manual contains details on the form, preparation, and electronic submission of theses and dissertations.

Thesis and dissertation topics must be approved by the thesis/dissertation advisory committee and the chairperson of the department. The Thesis/Dissertation Research Approval form, available on the Graduate School Web site, must be completed, appropriate signatures obtained, and submitted to the Graduate School, prior to beginning research. Students whose research involves human subjects, animals, biohazards, or radiation must have their research proposals approved by the appropriate compliance committee BEFORE beginning their research. A copy of the appropriate committee approval must be included in the appendixes of the final thesis or dissertation. Research involving human subjects must be approved by the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB). Students whose research involves animals must have their proposals approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). [Theses and dissertations lacking necessary IRB or IACUC documents will not be approved by the Graduate School.](#) Research involving radiation/biohazards must be reviewed by the Office of Prospective Health to insure compliance.

Copies of the thesis/dissertation must be presented by the student to his or her faculty advisor for the use of the examining committee not later than one week prior to the date on which the examining committee will conduct the oral examination and defense of the thesis. At this oral defense of the thesis, the examining committee may ask the student questions regarding the subject matter in the major field. A student may attempt to defend the thesis or dissertation no more than twice.

After the thesis or dissertation has been successfully defended, the student must submit the approved thesis/dissertation electronically via the electronic submission site, www.etdadmin.com/ecu/ according to directions found on the Graduate School Web site. It must be submitted at least ten days prior to the last day of classes of the student's intended semester of graduation.

Prior to or at the time of electronic submission, the student must complete and sign the ECU ETD Non-Exclusive Distribution Agreement granting ECU a limited, nonexclusive, royalty-free, license to reproduce the thesis or dissertation in electronic form and make available according to the embargo choice/publishing restrictions selected by the student. This form should be delivered to the Graduate School along with the original copy of the signature page bearing signatures of committee chair, department chair and/or dean of the school. Once these are delivered, the student begins electronic submission of the approved thesis/dissertation on the submission site: www.etdadmin.com/ecu/ for format check and review by the Graduate School. [If the changes are editorial in nature, the thesis/dissertation will be returned to the student for revision and later re-submission to the Graduate School.](#) Once revisions requested by the Graduate School are completed by the student and the final document is approved by the dean of the Graduate School, the Graduate School will notify the registrar and the department of completion. Upon verification of student's graduation, the Graduate School will submit the final approved document to ProQuest and Joyner Library Institutional Repository. Students may order bound copies of the thesis/dissertations from ProQuest

at the time of submission or later through other commercial binderies. Both ProQuest and Joyner Library are the repositories for the final electronic versions of theses/dissertations.

If there are questions or issues pertaining to the quality of the thesis/dissertation, the Dean of the Graduate School will notify the unit chair, graduate program director, and thesis committee chair, and arrange to meet informally with the members of the thesis/dissertation committee with the intent of devising an acceptable solution. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the committee, then one or more of the representatives of the student's thesis/dissertation (i.e., committee chair, unit chair, and graduate program director), may submit a written appeal to the Chair of the Graduate Council. The Dean of the Graduate School will forward all pertinent documents to the Chair of the Graduate Council for evaluation. The representatives of the student's thesis/dissertation may also provide any additional information deemed appropriate. If evaluation of the thesis by an expert external to the representatives of the student's thesis/dissertation committee is desired, the identity of the expert must be mutually agreed upon by the representatives of the student's thesis/dissertation committee and the Dean of the Graduate School. The Graduate Council Chair in consultation with the Graduate Council Executive Committee (GCEC) will review the documents to determine if a formal hearing is justified. In order to avoid a conflict of interest, the Dean of the Graduate School will not participate in the GCEC's deliberations on any matters related to the appeal. If the GCEC declines to hear the case, the Graduate Council Chair will issue a written statement to that effect and report its decision to the Dean of the Graduate School, representatives of the student's thesis/dissertation, and the Graduate Council, concluding the appeals process. If the GCEC believes a formal appeal is justified, the Graduate Council Chair will notify the representatives of the student's thesis/dissertation and designate a meeting date for the hearing. The parties representing the student's thesis/dissertation may submit any additional evidence to the GCEC deemed pertinent for the hearing. Following the hearing the GCEC will meet to make its final decision. The Graduate Council Chair will subsequently issue a written explanation and justification of the GCEC's decision to the Dean of the Graduate School and the representatives of the student's thesis/dissertation, and report its actions to the Graduate Council.

For any other requirements and procedures for PhD dissertations, see Curricula at www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/grcat/curricula.cfm.