
UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY · CIVIL & ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

Graduate Program Requirements & Steps

Milestones, forms, and deadlines for the PhD and MS Plan A tracks.

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At a Glance

	PhD Doctoral · dissertation	MS Plan A Master's · thesis
Program of Study finalized	By end of 2nd semester	First semester (Year 0.5)
Committee formed	By end of 2nd semester	First semester (Year 0.5)
Comprehensive exam	By end of 3rd semester	<i>Not required</i>
Written proposal & defense	Before candidacy	By end of 2nd semester
Application for candidacy	≥ 1 year before defense	<i>Not required</i>
Final defense	Dissertation defense	Thesis defense
Submit to committee	4 weeks before defense	4 weeks before defense
Appointment for Examination	10 working days before	10 working days before

“Not required” means the step is not part of that track. Both tracks follow the same proposal requirements document.

PhD Program Requirements

PhD

BY END OF 2ND SEMESTER

BY END OF 3RD SEMESTER

≥ 1 YEAR BEFORE DEFENSE

DEFENSE WINDOW

1

2

3

4

Program of Study & Committee

- **Program of Study** draft with your major professor
 - Research questions and objectives
 - One-page problem statement for the committee
- **Form the committee**; submit the committee form
- First committee meeting: finalize the program of study, set the comp exam format
- Submit the Program of Study form

Comprehensive Exam

- Complete the exam in the format your committee chose at the first meeting

See CEE Comprehensive Exam Requirements.

Proposal & Candidacy

- Complete the written dissertation proposal
- **Defend the proposal** before your committee
- Submit the Application for Candidacy form

See MS Plan A & PhD Research Proposal Requirements.

Dissertation Defense*

- 4 weeks prior — submit the dissertation to your committee
- 10 working days prior — submit the Appointment for Examination form
- Defend the dissertation

The proposal defense and candidacy application must all be complete **at least one year before the dissertation defense.*

MS Plan A Program Requirements

MS Plan A

FIRST SEMESTER • YEAR 0.5

BY END OF 2ND SEMESTER • YEAR 1

DEFENSE WINDOW

1

2

3

Set Up the Program

- Draft the **Program of Study** with your major professor
 - Draft research questions and objectives
 - Write a one-page problem statement for the committee
- **Form the committee** and submit the committee form
- Hold the first committee meeting to finalize the program of study
- Submit the Program of Study form

Propose the Thesis

- Complete the written proposal per the MS Plan A & PhD proposal requirements
- Hold the **proposal defense** meeting with your committee
- Complete the Master's Thesis / Project Approval form

See MS Plan A & PhD Research Proposal Requirements.

Thesis Defense

- 4 weeks prior — submit the thesis to your committee
- 10 working days prior — submit the Appointment for Examination form
- Defend the thesis

References

Graduate Student Handbook

Governing document for the CEE graduate program.

[cee-graduate-handbook.pdf](#)

Comprehensive Exam Requirements

Formats and expectations for the PhD comprehensive exam.

[comprehensive-exam-policy.pdf](#)

MS Plan A & PhD Research Proposal Requirements

One proposal standard shared by both research tracks.

[ms-phd-proposal-requirements.pdf](#)

Research Proposal Template

Starting document for writing the proposal.

[usu.box.com](#)