

Antiochian House of Studies (AHOS)
Doctoral Dissertation in Orthodox Studies
 Handbook for Faculty and Students

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE FOR A DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
 (Please see the body of the “Handbook” for detailed guidance)

PROGRAM YEAR:	STUDENT ACTIONS / DATES:	SUPERVISOR ACTIONS / DATES:
<p>FIRST YEAR</p> <p><u>DOCTORAL DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND GENERAL SUBJECT AREA OF DISSERTATION</u></p>	<p><i>Students begin identifying a subject area and soliciting the support of a suitably qualified potential director, first reader, and second reader.</i></p> <p>Prior to August 15, students are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain agreement from potential director, first reader, and second reader; <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the general subject area for dissertation; <input type="checkbox"/> Along with director, Submit the “Doctoral Dissertation Topic and Committee: Request for Approval” to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations. 	<p><i>Potential members of the Dissertation Committee who are extern and not pre-approved apply for approval to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations.</i></p> <p>Prior to August 15, where necessary, potential committee members are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If extern, submit necessary documentation, including curriculum vitae, to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations, with all such approvals of externs confirmed by the Academic Dean; <input type="checkbox"/> Submit the “Doctoral Dissertation Topic and Committee: Request for Approval” to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations.
<p>SECOND – THIRD YEAR</p> <p><u>PRELIMINARY ORAL EXAMINATION</u></p>	<p><i>In close consultation with their approved director, student identifies topics in the general subject area and timetable for the doctoral preliminary oral examination.</i></p> <p><i>With the doctoral dissertation committee members, the student schedules the date and time of the examination.</i></p>	<p><i>Director advises the student topics in the general subject area and timetable for the doctoral preliminary examination.</i></p> <p><i>Doctoral dissertation committee members coordinate the date and time of the examination.</i></p>

Two weeks prior to the examination, the student is expected to:

- Submit an abstract of the topics that the student will present and be tested during the examination;
- Survey the current state of research in the general subject area where the dissertation will take place.

During the examination, the student is expected to:

- Make a forty-minute oral presentation;
- Respond to questions based upon their coursework and relevant to the topics under discussion.

After receiving the abstract of topics, committee members are expected to:

- Review the abstract of the topics that the student will present and formulate questions based on the abstract and the student's doctoral coursework.

During the examination, committee members are expected to:

- Question the student based on their coursework and the topics under discussion;
- Evaluate the student's ability to understand and orally convey research topics of current interest in the subject area.

THIRD YEAR

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION TOPIC PROPOSAL

After successful completion of the oral preliminary examination, the doctoral candidate formulates a dissertation proposal in close consultation with the approved director.

Doctoral candidates are expected to:

- Complete a doctoral dissertation proposal in five main sections that address title, statement of problem and background, methodology, contribution and originality, and bibliography;
- Submit the doctoral dissertation topic proposal to the Faculty Council;
- Resubmit the doctoral dissertation topic proposal to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations for approval.

The approved director assists the doctoral candidate in formulating a dissertation proposal.

Directors are expected to:

- Advise the student on the feasibility of a topic within the subject area and the suitability of the project.
- Be present at the Faculty Council to answer questions on the proposal and in turn convey any requests for emendation and changes of the proposal to the doctoral candidate.
- Review and approve any doctoral dissertation topic proposal that requires emendations and changes before resubmission to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations for approval.

FIVE YEARS**RESEARCH,
WRITING, AND
ORAL DEFENSE
OF DOCTORAL
DISSERTATION**

In close consultation the director of the committee, the doctoral candidate conducts research and writing according to an agreed schedule.

Director advises the doctoral candidate on timetable, research, and writing. The director and two readers review the production of the doctoral candidate and provide direction.

After completion of the final draft, the student is expected to:

- Arrange with doctoral dissertation committee for an oral defense of the dissertation at least three weeks prior to the end of the term;
- Provide a copy of the final draft to the committee at least two weeks prior to the oral defense.

During the oral defense, the doctoral candidate is expected to:

- Present and defend the study;
- Respond to the questions of the committee.

If successful, the doctoral candidate is expected to:

- Obtain the signatures of the director, first reader, and second reader on the signature approval page;
- Follow the procedures for deposit of the doctoral dissertation.

After completion of the final draft, committee members are expected to:

- Arrange with the student for an oral defense of the dissertation at least three weeks prior to the end of the term;
- Review the copy of the final draft.

During the oral defense, committee expected to:

- Discuss the study and question the candidate;
- Discuss and vote on the pass/fail status of (1) the oral defense and (2) the written document.

If successful, the committee members are expected to:

- Sign the signature approval page.

No Doctoral Dissertation may be accepted as complete outside of this "Handbook."

Identifying a Subject Area and the Doctoral Dissertation Committee

A doctoral dissertation committee shall consist of a director (major professor), first reader, and second reader.

The student is advised to begin identifying a general subject area and soliciting the support of suitably qualified members of the faculty to be potential members of the three-person doctoral dissertation committee no later than the end of the second academic year of the Doctoral Program.

All members of the AHOS faculty who hold an earned doctorate from an accredited institution are pre-approved to be members of a doctoral dissertation committee.

The names and signatures of the approved director, first reader, second reader, and student, as well as the identification of the general subject area for the dissertation shall be recorded on the “Doctoral Dissertation Topic Area and Committee: Request for Approval” form (Attachment 1) and submitted by the student to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations. On the form, the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations shall certify that the director and readers are approved.

The Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations may approve a proposed committee member that is extern (namely, from outside of the faculty). However, in order to be approved, any such member must be an Orthodox Christian in good canonical standing, hold an earned doctorate from an accredited institution, and hold an Orthodox theological degree or demonstrate Orthodox theological formation through their curriculum vitae, which will also include their positions and organizations. The Academic Dean must confirm the approval of any extern.

A committee member that is extern shall be approved to serve as a director only in extraordinary circumstances.

The submission for any approval of a proposed committee member that is extern shall take place through email correspondence and will require the proposed committee member to submit a curriculum vitae and other documentation deemed necessary by the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations.

Advancement to Candidacy

At the end of the second academic year in the Doctoral program, the student and director identify the subject area and timetable for the doctoral preliminary examination.

Successful completion of the doctoral preliminary examination qualifies the student to continue studies at a higher level as a doctoral candidate and consists of an oral presentation surveying the current state of research in the general subject area where the dissertation will take place.

The three-person doctoral committee presides over the examination and evaluates the student’s ability to understand and orally convey research topics of current interest in the subject area.

The student will determine with the committee members the date and time of the examination. At least two weeks prior to the examination, the student prepares and submits an abstract to the committee. The abstract provides a brief description (approximately one typed 8-1/2 x 11 page in length) of the topics that the student will present and be tested during the examination.

The first forty minutes of the examination are devoted to a prepared presentation by the student. Students should expect questions based upon their coursework and relevant to the topics under discussion. A two-thirds favorable vote of the committee is necessary to pass. If the student is not successful, the examination may be retaken up to three times after six-month intervals. Within five business days of the vote, the director shall report the results of the examination or any subsequent reexaminations to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations.

Formulating a Dissertation Topic and Obtaining Approval

During the third year of the Doctoral program, after successful completion of the preliminary examination, the doctoral candidate formulates a dissertation proposal in close consultation with the approved director. The director shall advise the student on the feasibility of a topic within the subject area and the suitability of the project. A written proposal would then be submitted to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations to be presented to a meeting of the Faculty Council for approval. The Faculty Council consists of those faculty with a terminal degree in their area of study.

At the Faculty Council, the student's director is asked to be present to answer any questions the Council may have. The proposal may be approved by the Council either "as is" or on the understanding that small-scale emendations will be made. In the latter case, it is the responsibility of the director to communicate the requested emendations to the student and to ensure that these are made by the student. The Faculty Council may also decide that the proposal requires major reworking and needs to be resubmitted after revision. In this case as well, the director is responsible for conveying the Council's remarks to the student and ensuring that the student makes the recommended revisions. Once any emendations and/or reworkings have been done to the director's satisfaction, the student must forward the revised proposal to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations for review and approval.

Approval is granted after an evaluation of the dissertation proposal and other pertinent factors that support an assessment that the candidate will successfully complete the work. After approval is granted, the doctoral dissertation proposal shall be placed as an informational item on the next faculty agenda to keep all informed.

Structure of Doctoral Dissertation Topic Proposals

The Antiochian House of Studies requires that all doctoral dissertation topic proposals conform to the norms of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, current edition) and its interpretation in Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, current edition) (hereafter, Turabian). In addition, *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Atlanta: SBL Press, current edition) may be used as a supplement for biblical studies and related disciplines. All dissertation topic proposals use notes-bibliography style.

The doctoral dissertation proposal shall consist of five separate and clearly labeled sections: title, statement of problem and background, purpose, methodology, contribution and originality, and working bibliography of basic primary and most important secondary sources. First person plural language ("we" and "our") must be avoided.

The proposal must not exceed two pages, not including the bibliography, with at least one-half inch margins, and the typeface must be no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman or equivalent. The first page should be headed by the full title of the proposed research and the candidate's name. The title should be capitalized as it

will appear in the final copy of the dissertation. The proposal must be concise, organized in a coherent manner, and include the following information:

Title

The title may be changed during the course of research only if authorized by the director and the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations

Statement of Problem and Background

This section must identify the current state of research and provide important background information.

Purpose

Depending on the topic, the purpose section may contain a clear statement of a problem, research questions to be explored, a point of view that will be supported and argued, hypotheses that will be tested, and/or what will be accomplished. However, in all cases, the purpose section must address the rationale or intellectual justification for the research. Optionally, this section can also discuss how the theological work in the dissertation can be applied to the life of the Church.

Methodology

The method section must indicate the nature of the data, information, or themes to be discussed; the kinds of interpretive procedures to be employed; and the types of supporting evidence and arguments for the question investigated. A plan of scholarship that outlines the organization of the research must be included. This may be descriptive or even take the form of a brief outline of the proposed chapters. The methodology section must also reflect the academic tools that will be applied to complete the dissertation successfully (for example, language skills, research tools, and so forth) and the scope of the research.

Contribution and Originality

The proposed research must be original, and the proposal must indicate that identical research must not previously been conducted. The proposal must also clearly state the contribution that the researcher expects to make to the relevant field of knowledge.

Bibliography

The bibliography of primary and secondary sources must include works upon which the proposal was based. The bibliography is initial and working, and subject to change during the course of research with the approval of the director. It is not necessary to report such changes to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations. The bibliographic format must be consistent with Turabian.

In addition, the dissertation committee and Ph.D. candidate will complete and attach the "Doctoral Dissertation Topic: Request for Approval" form (Attachment 2) to the written dissertation proposal in the submission to the Faculty Council.

Doctoral Dissertation Supervision

It is the responsibility of the director and student to meet for dissertation supervision, once approval of the dissertation topic proposal has been granted. There are no fixed rules regarding the frequency of such meetings and timetables. Such plans and/or schedules shall be subject to the approval of the director. The director shall determine when the dissertation is complete and what must be done to satisfactorily fulfill the academic standards of The Antiochian House of Studies.

First and Second Readers

The dissertation must be reviewed by the first and second readers, who as members of the committee will assist the major professor to ensure that satisfactory academic standards are maintained and make useful suggestions. This review includes an in-depth consideration of the content and addresses questions of format and style.

Schedule, Requirements, and Criteria for Assessment

If research extends over several years, students and faculty are obligated to review the most current version of the Handbook available prior to preparing the final manuscript for deposit. The final draft should be completed and submitted no later than five years from the approval date of the doctoral dissertation topic proposal. An additional year's extension may be granted. The major professor and student must request approval of an extension from the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations. Once a final draft is completed to the doctoral committee's satisfaction, the doctoral candidate will schedule an oral defense with the committee.

Generally speaking, the dissertation must be at least 250 double-spaced pages in length, including footnotes and bibliography. The Antiochian House of Studies requires that all doctoral dissertations conform to the norms of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, current edition) and its interpretation in Turabian. In addition, *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Atlanta: SBL Press, current edition) may be used as a supplement for biblical studies and related disciplines. All dissertations must use notes-bibliography style. The dissertation director shall assist their doctoral candidates in the appropriate interpretation of discipline-specific guidelines within the context of The Antiochian House of Studies requirements. When in doubt, candidates and faculty may contact the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations for assistance.

Elements of the Dissertation

The title page must be based on the attached model, "Doctoral Dissertation Title Page Sample" (Attachment 3). The title must be exactly the same one as submitted on the dissertation topic proposal unless a change is authorized by the director and the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations. Doctoral candidates must use their "name of record" on the title page, which will appear on their diploma as stated and include an abbreviation of the degree received upon graduation immediately after the name (namely, Ph.D.).

Doctoral candidates must include an abstract of their dissertation directly behind of the title page, but not numbered. The abstract must be written in English and contain no special characters, or any text written in a non-Roman alphabet. The text of the abstract must be double-spaced and must provide a concise summary of the following information: statement of the problem, a description of the research procedure or method, explanation of the results of the research, and summary of conclusions. The abstract may not exceed a 350-word limit.

The signature (approval) page appears immediately after the abstract and is signed by the director and readers. Although the committee may request minor corrections to the dissertation following the oral defense, this usually does not prevent committee members from signing the dissertation signature page. If this is not possible, arrangements must be made to obtain the signature of all members of the committee for completion. The signature page is numbered at its bottom center with a lower-case Roman "ii."

A dedication, epigraph, list of illustrations, list of tables, list of abbreviations, forward, preface, and acknowledgements may be included.

In the body of the text, footnotes must be used and if exceeding 100, then they should be numbered consecutively by chapter. If translations are presented, the original text normally is presented as well in footnotes. Guidance in Turabian germane to the citation of sources on the internet in terms of evaluation for reliability and form used for citation must be followed.

Illustrative materials include photographs, charts, graphs, tables, prints, maps, reproductions, renderings, hand-drawn items, and so forth. They may be included in the body of the text or in an appendix. If included in the text, the materials must be inserted as close as possible to their first reference in the text. The explanation of the illustrative material must precede the item, and the label must follow the illustrative material. If the materials are included in an appendix, the explanation must also precede the item. These materials may include reproductions of manuscripts, original texts, and translations.

Optional end matter may include an appendix or appendices, a glossary, a list of abbreviations (which may also appear with the preliminary pages) and addenda.

Manuscript Preparation

The text of the manuscript must be printed with a 12-point size Times New Roman, Garamond, Palatino Linotype, or Century Schoolbook font. Underlining or italics must be used to emphasize text, but not both. Bold typeface must not be used for emphasis. Proportional spacing and right-margin justification can be used, as long as hyphenation is used properly.

The text must appear on the paper so that the left-hand margin of the text runs along the 11-inch length of the paper and 8.5 inches represents the width of the top and bottom of the paper. Exceptions may be made for charts, graphs, drawings, and so forth. However, pages must always be paginated with 11 inches representing the length and 8.5 inches representing the width, regardless of the placement of charts, graphs, or drawings.

All margins must be one inch wide. A common error made in creating bottom and top margins is not adjusting the header and footer of the page. To do so, change the header and footer from the default of 0.5 inch to 1 inch to be sure you have the required one-inch margins both at the top and bottom of the page.

Double-space the text uniformly throughout the manuscript, with the exception of footnotes, quotations, and so forth. Refer to Turabian for proper spacing instructions.

Every page of the manuscript following the title page, with the exception of the abstract, must carry a number. Preliminary pages must be numbered in lower case Roman numerals. The text must be numbered in Arabic numerals, which continue consecutively throughout the remainder of the paper, including end matter.

Do not accompany page numbers with any other symbols. For example, the following methods are not acceptable: "Page 1," "Page One," "p. 1," "-1-," etc. Also, pages may not be supplemented, for example, 7a, 7b, 7c.

All preliminary page numbers must be centered at the bottom of the page. Additionally, all end matter, that is every page after the main text, including appendices and bibliography, must be paginated at center bottom throughout.

All text page numbers can either be centered at the top of the page, or appear in the upper right-hand corner, with the exception of those pages carrying a major heading, such as the first page of a chapter, in which case the number must be centered at the bottom of the page. Even if charts, illustrative materials, and so forth, are inserted in the manuscript in landscape format, the page numbers must appear on the page and be consistent with all other pages of text in portrait format.

On rare occasions, it will not be possible to place a page number on an illustration, photograph, or other special insert. Consider that page to have the next consecutive number, continuing the sequence on the following page.

Oral Defense

The defense is chaired by the director who, acting as moderator, rules on questions of procedure and protocol that may arise during the defense. The overall goal is the presentation and defense of the study. As moderator, the chair should indicate the candidate's allotted presentation time, question and answer session for the committee, and whether the candidate can be interrupted during the presentation. Oral defenses are not public. However, the doctoral dissertation committee, with the agreement of the candidate, may invite other faculty members, including those from other institutions, to be present for the oral defense. The director will determine their participation in discussions during defense. However, only the doctoral dissertation committee (defined as the major professor and two readers) vote on the status of the oral defense and the written document.

The defense must be held at least three weeks before the end of the term in which the degree is to be granted. All members of the committee must receive a copy of the candidate's dissertation at least four weeks prior to the scheduled defense.

During the defense, the doctoral dissertation committee (the major professor and two readers) will explore, with the candidate, research methods employed in conducting the study, findings and conclusions revealed by the study, and contributions the study is expected to offer. In this way, the candidate and examiners reach a more extensive insight into the candidate's research area.

During the oral defense, all members of the doctoral dissertation committee must be present and must render a judgment on the candidate's performance.

The candidate will be dismissed after all questions for the candidate have been addressed. The doctoral dissertation committee members will discuss and vote on the pass/fail status of (1) the oral defense and (2) the written document. The decision to pass a candidate in either category may include no more than one negative doctoral dissertation committee member vote. After the decisions have been made, the chair should call the candidate back into the room to privately discuss the decision(s) with the committee.

As stated above, signatures should be obtained on signature approval page. If extensive editing of the written document is required of the candidate, committee members may withhold their signatures pending the required changes, or the members may sign to approve the written document, while the chair withholds his or her signature, pending final approval of the corrected document.

In the event that the committee votes not to pass the candidate on either the written document or oral defense, the committee is under no obligation to permit the candidate to repeat either portion of the defense. A decision to allow another defense must be made by the committee and should be documented in writing to the student and to the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations. Specific requirements should be clearly delineated.

All approved doctoral dissertations are considered “Satisfactory,” but the committee may rate a dissertation as approved “With Distinction.”

The committee must use the following criteria to consider a dissertation “satisfactory”: a clear, grammatically correct, coherent expository writing style; a focused thesis statement; a review of pertinent literature; well-structured, convincing argumentation; an implementation of applicable theory and critical methodology; and noteworthy contributions to the field of study. If the dissertation manifests a particularly high level of accomplishment in most or all these areas, the committee may optionally pass it “With Distinction.”¹ On the other hand, if the dissertation is deficient in the aforementioned areas, the committee must consider the dissertation “Not Satisfactory.”

Within five business days of the vote, the Director shall notify the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations regarding the results of the oral defense. The Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations will ensure that appropriate information is entered in the automated learning system to indicate whether the candidate has passed or failed.

Printing, Binding, and Deposit of Doctoral Dissertation

Doctoral students are required to have their completed doctoral dissertation printed and bound using the specific guidelines listed on The Antiochian House of Studies website - <https://ahos.edu/current-students/thesis-guidelines/printing-binding-your-thesis>.

The bound dissertation must be sent and deposited in the Antiochian Heritage Library, 140 Church Camp Trail, Bolivar, PA 15923. In addition, doctoral candidates shall provide a final copy of their approved dissertation in PDF format for publication on The Antiochian House of Studies website. The candidates shall submit this copy

¹ In academic culture in the United States, Latin honors (cum laude and magna/summa cum laude) are not used in rating the doctoral dissertation. However, in recognition of their use in various European academic cultures, the dissertation committee may optionally draft a statement indicating the specific strengths of a dissertation. That statement can then be included in the candidate’s dossier for appropriate use. The Director shall provide a copy of this statement to the successful candidate.

to the President, the Dean, the Administrator for Doctoral Dissertations, and the Librarian of the Antiochian Heritage Library (library@avcenterpa.org).

Graduation

Doctoral candidates will graduate in the same year if they complete their dissertation and oral defense by June 1 during Spring semester. Otherwise, all others who complete after June 1 will graduate during the following year.

Acknowledgement

Elements of this handbook were derived from the publicly available doctoral dissertation program materials of The Catholic University of America, Brown University, Duke University, and Southern University and A & M College. The administration of The Antiochian House of Studies expresses its gratitude to these institutions for making such materials available online. The criteria for the rating of dissertations were derived and quoted from Barbara E. Lovitts, "How to Grade a Dissertation," *Academe* 91 (November–December 2005): 18–23.