

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE DOCTORAL DEGREE POLICIES

Purpose (p. 1)

The Professional Practice Doctorate is a rigorous and adaptable graduate degree that meets the evolving professional needs of strategically identified target audiences. The Professional Practice Doctoral degree is granted only upon sufficient evidence of high attainment in professional practice. It is not awarded for the completion of course and seminar requirements no matter how successfully completed. These degrees differ from the research and scholarship Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree. The following degree programs are recognized as Professional Practice Doctoral Degrees at the University of Maryland: Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/school-system-leadership-educ/>), Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/music-musc/>), and Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/clinical-audiology-caud/>)

Course and Credit Requirements (p. 1)

The Graduate School requires that every student seeking a professional practice doctoral degree satisfactorily complete a minimum of 24 semester hours of course credits (beyond the master's degree) and 6 semester hours of Doctoral Capstone credits (829). The required number of practice and other credit hours may be greater for particular programs.

Mid-Program Evaluation (p. 1)

Professional practice doctoral programs are typically defined by two major components: didactic coursework credits and professional practice credits. The distribution and intermingling of these experiences and credits may differ by program. Programs shall perform an evaluation of each student at a point that reflects the transition to the final practice and Doctoral Capstone components of the program, referred to as either the Post-Coursework or Mid-Program Evaluation. Programs will define program outcomes and evaluation procedures, such as examinations or other substantial activities and products (e.g., Doctoral Capstone proposal) as appropriate to the professional practice doctoral program for students to successfully complete prior to pursuing the doctoral capstone.

A student must successfully complete a Mid-Program Evaluation for the doctorate within five years after admission to the doctoral program and at least six months before the date on which the degree will be conferred. It is the responsibility of the student to submit an Approved Mid-Program Evaluation Form when all the requirements have been fulfilled and the faculty have approved the student to proceed to the final phase of the program. Forms may be obtained at the Graduate School, Room 2123, Lee Building, or on the web. Paperwork must be received by the Graduate School prior to the 25th of the month in order for the advancement to become effective the first day of the following month. Professional practice doctoral students who have successfully completed the Mid-Program Evaluation are then automatically registered for a minimum of 1 Doctoral Capstone credit (e.g., 829) within their program; students are continually registered for Doctoral Capstone credits until they graduate except in special circumstances.

Research Assurances (p. 1)

Where professional practice doctoral students engage in activities that require data collection or research activities involving human or animal subjects, please refer to the information below.

Human Subject Research

Everyone at the University of Maryland who is conducting research that involves human subjects must obtain approval in advance from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB is charged with approving the initiation of research involving human subjects and conducts periodic reviews of that research to ensure that all projects comply with Federal regulations. These regulations are strict, and the Graduate School urges all graduate students to consult with the IRB before beginning any research involving living subjects. For application forms and guidelines on such issues as research involving minors or prisoners, surveys, and the use of audio taping, videotaping, digital recordings, and photographs, please see the Institutional Review Board's website (<http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/>).

Other Research

If the doctoral capstone involves the use of vertebrate animals, animal use protocols must be approved in advance by the Animal Care and Use Committee. If the activity involves hazardous materials, either biological or chemical, or recombinant RNA/DNA, the research must be approved by the appropriate University committee. These assurances must be approved prior to the initiation of any capstone-related research, and the approvals must be provided to the Graduate School at the time the student submits the Nomination of Examining Committee form.

The Doctoral Capstone and Examination (p. 1)

A Doctoral Capstone is required of all students for a professional practice doctoral degree, with the specific requirements and outcomes determined by the degree program, unless otherwise approved by the Graduate School. The Graduate School has established the following procedures for the conduct of the doctoral capstone examination.

- **The Doctoral Capstone and Capstone Outcomes.** The completion of a doctoral capstone is required of all professional practice doctoral students, allowing demonstration of excellence in professional practice in the field as determined by the graduate program in which the student is earning the degree. The topic, activities, and outcomes related to the doctoral capstone are approved by the doctoral advisor and doctoral capstone committee, with the Doctoral Capstone outcomes presented and defended by the student.
- **Eligibility.** A student is eligible to defend a doctoral capstone if the student (a) has successfully completed the Mid-Program Evaluation, (b) has met all program requirements for a doctoral capstone examination, (c) is in good standing as a graduate student at the University, (d) is registered for at least one credit, (e) has a valid Graduate School-approved Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee, and (f) if this is the second examination, the examination has been approved by the Graduate School.
- **Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee Membership.** The Committee must include a minimum of five members of the Graduate Faculty, at least three of whom must be Full Members or Associate Members whose primary academic affiliation is with the University. The Chair of the Committee normally will be the student's advisor, who will be a Full or Associate Member of the Graduate Faculty,

or who has been granted an exception to the policy by the Dean of the Graduate School. Each Committee will have appointed to it a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean's Representative may be one of the five voting members. Alternatively, the Dean's Representative may not be a voting member of the Committee. Whether the Dean's Representative votes or not is a decision made by the student, primary advisor and the Dean's Representative before the Dean's Representative is nominated for approval by the Dean of The Graduate School. In addition, the Dean will ensure that there are five voting members on the Committee. Therefore, Committees that have a non-voting Dean's Representative must have at least six members (five voting members and the non-voting Dean's Representative.)

• **Nomination of the Doctoral Capstone Examining**

Committee. Membership on a Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee requires nomination by the student's advisor and the Graduate Director of the student's professional practice doctoral program, and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. The nomination of a Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee should be provided to the Graduate School at least six weeks before the date of the expected capstone presentation and defense. The capstone examination cannot be held until the Graduate School approves the composition of the Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee. Furthermore, if the Graduate Faculty status of any member of an approved Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee changes, the approval of the Committee may be void, and a new Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee nomination form may be required to be approved by the Graduate School.

- **Chair.** Each Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee will have a chair, who must be a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty, an Associate Member who has been approved by faculty, or, by special permission, has been otherwise appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. Doctoral Capstone Examining Committees may be co-chaired; at least one of the co-chairs must be a Full or Associate Member of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty or an individual so appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School.

- **Representative of the Dean of the Graduate School.** Each Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee will have appointed to it a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean's Representative should have some background or interest related to the student's activities, and may be a voting or non-voting member of the committee. The Dean's Representative must be a tenured member of the Graduate Faculty at the University of Maryland, College Park. The Dean's Representative must be from a tenure home different than that of the student's program, the primary advisor or co-advisors, and the dissertation examining committee chair or co-chairs (if the chairs or co-chairs are not the primary advisor or co-advisors). In the case of multi-disciplinary programs, the Dean's Representative can be a member of the program, as long as they have a different tenure home from that of the primary advisor or co-advisors and the dissertation examining committee chair or co-chairs.

The person nominated to become the Dean's Representative may serve as a regular member of the student's Doctoral Graduate Committee from the time it is first convened. Alternatively, the person nominated to be the Dean's representative may be added to the Doctoral Graduate Committee at a later date and either take part in some Committee meetings including the Mid-Program Evaluation, or only join as a Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee member for the final capstone defense. In all cases, the Dean's Representative

must be present for the full capstone presentation and defense and serve to adjudicate the defense.

- **Special Members.** Individuals from outside the University of Maryland who have been approved for Special Membership in the Graduate Faculty may serve on Doctoral Capstone Examining Committees. These Special Members must be in addition to the required three Full or Associate Members of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty. Special Members may also co-direct Doctoral Capstone Examining Committees with a Full or Associate Member. For procedures to nominate an individual for Special Membership, please refer to the section below on Graduate Faculty.
- **Service of former University of Maryland faculty members.** Graduate Faculty who terminate employment at University of Maryland (and who do not have emeritus status) retain their status as members of the Graduate Faculty for a twelve-month period following their termination. Thus, they may serve as members and chairs (but not as Dean's Representatives) of Doctoral Capstone Examining Committees during this twelve-month period if they are otherwise eligible. After that time, they may no longer serve as chairs of Doctoral Capstone Examining Committees, although, if granted the status of Special Members of the Graduate Faculty, they may serve as co-chairs.
- Professors Emeriti and Associate Professors Emeriti may serve on Doctoral Capstone Examining Committees provided they are members of the Graduate Faculty.

Procedures for the Oral Doctoral Capstone Examination (p. 2)

- **Oral Examination Requirement.** Unless otherwise approved by the Graduate School, each professional practice doctoral student is required to defend orally their doctoral capstone as a requirement in partial fulfillment of the degree. The oral examination consists of two parts.
 - **Part 1: Student Presentation.** The student presents a summary of the capstone, emphasizing the key activities, important outcomes, and relevance to the practice field of the discipline, with the details of these presentations determined by the program. During Part 1, questions from the public audience to the student will be permitted. For questions from persons who are not members of the Examining Committee, the Chair of the Committee will have discretion to decide whether such questions are germane to the topic of the capstone and how much time will be allotted for them and the answers.
 - **Part 2: Formal Examination of the Student by Members of the Examining Committee.** This part will be open only to the Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee, other members of the Graduate Faculty, and graduate students from the student's graduate program. During Part 2, only members of the Examining Committee will be permitted to ask questions. Programs may vote to establish a policy to have Part 2 be open only to members of the Examining Committee and members of the Graduate Faculty. The chair of the Examining Committee invites questions in turn from each member of the Examining Committee. The questioning may continue as long as the Examining Committee feels that it is necessary and reasonable for the proper examination of the student.

- **Conclusion of the Examination.** After questioning has been completed, the student and any others who are not members of the Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee are asked to leave the room while the Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee discusses whether or not the capstone and its defense are satisfactory. The Committee has the following options:
 - i. To accept the capstone and the oral defense without any recommended changes and sign the Report of the Examining Committee.
 - ii. To accept the oral defense, but recommend substantive revisions to the capstone and, except for the chair, sign the Report of the Examining Committee. The chair will provide the committee and student with a list of the required revisions. The chair will check that the changes to the capstone have been made, and, upon their approval, sign the Report of the Examining Committee.
 - iii. To accept the oral defense, but recommend substantive revisions to the capstone and not sign the Report of the Examining Committee until the student has made the changes and submitted the revised capstone for the Examining Committee's approval. The chair will provide the committee and student with a list of the required revisions. The Examining Committee members sign the Report of the Examining Committee if they approve the revised capstone.
 - iv. To recommend major revisions to the capstone and/or to deem the oral defense deficient. In this case, the committee would reconvene a closed meeting of only the Examining Committee and the student to complete the student's examination. The chair will provide the committee and student with a list of the required significant revisions to the capstone and/or deficiencies in the oral defense. The chair also will inform the program's Director of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the Graduate School of the required revisions/deficiencies and the timeline for reconvening the Examining Committee. During the reconvened meeting, committee members' questions will focus on the revisions to the capstone and/or the deficiencies in the prior oral defense. Ordinarily, the reconvened meeting of the Examining Committee will occur within two months after the initial meeting oral defense.
 - v. To rule the capstone (including its examination and oral defense) unsatisfactory. In that circumstance, the student fails. Following the examination, the chair, in the presence of the Dean's Representative, must inform the student of the outcome of the examination. The committee chair and the Dean's Representative both sign the Report of the Examining Committee, including a statement explaining why the capstone was deemed unsatisfactory. A copy of this statement must be included in the student's file at the graduate program office, and a copy is given to the student. This statement must be submitted to the program's Graduate Director, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the student.
 1. A second examination may be permitted if the student will be in good standing at the time of the proposed second examination. A second examination requires the approval of the program's Graduate Director and the Dean of the Graduate School.
 2. If the student fails this second examination, or if a second examination is not permitted, the student's admission to the graduate program is terminated unless the student desires to and is eligible to change their degree objective (e.g., to a master's degree in the same program). For more information on changing a degree objective, consult the Policy on Change of Status or Program (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/admissions-policies/#change-of-status-or-program>).
- **Passage or Failure.** The student passes if one member refuses to sign the Report of the Examining Committee, but the other committee members agree to sign, before or after the approval of recommended changes. Two or more negative votes constitute a failure of the student to meet the capstone requirement.
- **Committee Preparation.** The members of the Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee must receive any written components and related artifacts of the capstone at least ten working days before the scheduled examination. Should the Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee deem it reasonable and appropriate, it may require submission of the capstone materials more than ten working days in advance of the examination.
- **Attendance at the Examination.** Oral examinations must be attended by all members of the student's officially established Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee as approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. All examinations must be open to all members of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty. Programs may wish routinely to open capstone examinations to a broader audience. In such cases, program policies must be established, recorded, and made available to all doctoral students.
- **Emergency Substitution Procedure.** Last-minute emergencies can prevent a committee member from attending a scheduled capstone examination. The Graduate School will work with the chair of the examining committee and/or the Director of Graduate Studies to make last-minute substitutions in committee membership to allow the examination to take place as scheduled.
 - The request must be sent in writing via email to the Dean of the Graduate School. A telephone call to the Graduate School explaining that an emergency request is coming will facilitate the process.
 - The proposed substitute must be a member of the Graduate Faculty consistent with the rules for committee membership. Thus, if the Dean's Representative (who must be a tenured faculty member) could not attend, the substitution of an untenured member of the Graduate Faculty would not be acceptable.
 - Once the written request has been received, the substitution will be made, usually within the hour, provided that the revised committee meets the requirements for committee membership.
 - When the substitution has been made, a written confirmation via email will be sent, along with a telephone confirmation. The substitution is not official, however, until the written confirmation has been received in the graduate program. A copy of the written request and the written confirmation must be placed in the student's file for future reference.
 - An examination that is held with one or more substitute members on the committee, but without prior written confirmation from the

Graduate School that the substitution(s) have been approved, will be voided and the examination will have to be repeated.

- **Location and Announcements of the Examination.** Oral examinations must be held in University facilities that are readily accessible to all members of the Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee and others attending the examination. The chair of the examining committee selects the time and place for the examination.

- Announcements of the date, time, and location of the examination, as well as the student's name and the capstone title, will be disseminated five working days in advance to all members of the Graduate Faculty and graduate students within the graduate program in which the student's degree is to be awarded. Mass distribution methods, such as e-mail, a faculty/student newsletter, or individual announcements are acceptable. Merely posting a paper notice on a corridor bulletin board will not constitute a sufficient announcement.

- **The Dean's Representative.** The Dean's Representative must be identified at the beginning of the examination. The responsibilities of the Dean's Representative include the following: ensuring that the procedures of the oral examination comply with those of the Graduate School (as described herein) and reporting to the Dean of the Graduate School any unusual problems experienced in the conduct of the examination.
- **Invalidation of the Examination.** The Dean of the Graduate School may void any examination not carried out in accordance with the procedures and policies of the Graduate School as pertaining to Professional Practice Doctoral degrees. In addition, upon recommendation of the Dean's Representative, the Dean may rule an oral examination to be null and void.
- **Remote Participation in a Capstone Defense.** Under normal circumstances, a majority of members of a Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee must be physically present in the examination room during the entire capstone presentation and defense and during the committee's private deliberations following the examination, with all other committee members present remotely for the entire duration by video teleconferencing. Participation by telephone is not permitted under any circumstances. Remote participation by video teleconferencing is permitted under the following circumstances:
 - Permission to conduct a remote-participation defense must be obtained by the capstone chair from the Graduate School in advance. In making this request, the chair must indicate in writing that they have read the rules for a remote defense listed below.
 - The student, the committee chair (or at least one of the co-chairs), and the Dean's Representative must all be present in the examination room. None of them may be at the remote site.
 - Video conferencing software must be used that allows all participants to see and hear each other during the entire defense.
 - The remote participants must connect to the defense in a manner that will ensure that all participants are visible and audible and that the connection is stable and available throughout the scheduled time of the defense.
 - No more than two remote sites may be used during the capstone defense.

- Units can opt to offer online synchronous viewing options even when all committee members are in-person, with the defending student's consent.

- **Exceptions.** Departments and graduate programs may petition the Dean of the Graduate School for exceptions to these procedures.

Submission and Publication of the Capstone (p. 4)

Capstones often have written or other components relevant for submission to the Graduate School in electronic format after final approval by the Doctoral Capstone Examining Committee, as evidence of successful completion of the Doctoral Capstone. See the University of Maryland Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) website (<https://www.etdadmin.com/main/home/?siteId=76>) or the University of Maryland Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/students/academic-progress/thesis-and-dissertation-filing/>) for the details of this submission process. General guidelines appropriate to all culminating written projects at the university are included here. Not all capstones will have artifacts relevant to these procedures.

Additional Requirements (p. 4)

In addition to those requirements specified above, each graduate program may impose additional requirements. For these requirements, consult the descriptions that appear under the graduate program listings or the special publications that can be obtained from the graduate programs or colleges.