

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ARCHITECTURE
Graduate Students' Handbook

Contents

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORY	4
1.0 PROGRAM OVERVIEW.....	5
2.0 GENERAL ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES	7
2.1. Admission:	7
2.1.1. Prerequisites for Admission	7
2.1.2. Admission Requirements	8
2.1.3. Admission Contact & Application Support	9
2.1.4. Application Review Process.....	10
2.2 Enrollment: General Enrollment Information.....	10
2.2.1. Minimum Enrollment Requirement.....	10
2.2.2. Enrollment Consent and Permission Number Process.....	11
2.2.3. Maximum Time to Degree and Satisfactory Progress in the Program.....	12
2.3. Academic Integrity & Misconduct.....	12
2.3.1. Good Academic Standing	13
2.3.2. Grading	14
2.3.3. Annual Student Progress Review	14
2.3.4. Professional Development.....	16
2.3.5. Grievance Procedures	16
2.3.6. Petitions	17
3.0 DOCTORAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS	18
3.1. Student Learning Outcomes	18
3.2. Program Requirements.....	19
3.2.1. Establishing an Academic Roadmap	19
3.2.2. Coursework and Degree Requirements.....	20
3.2.3. The PhD in Architecture Program Degree Plan.....	23
4.0. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM PROCEDURE	24
4.1. Purpose of the Comprehensive Examination.....	24
4.2. Eligibility	24
4.3. Dissertation Committee for Comprehensive Examination	25
4.4. Guidelines for the Comprehensive Examination.....	25
4.4.1. Comprehensive Written Examination - Dissertation Proposal	25
4.4.2. Comprehensive Written Examination: Written Exam & Closed-door Oral Exam	26
4.4.3. Comprehensive Oral Examination	27
4.4.4. Comprehensive Exam Evaluation.....	28
4.5. Timeline	29
5.0. CONDUCTING RESEARCH, DISSERTATION AND DEFENSE.....	32
5.1. Conducting Research	32
5.2. Dissertation.....	33
5.3. Guidelines for the Dissertation Defense	33
5.3.1. Eligibility.....	34
5.3.2. Dissertation Committee for Final Defense	34
5.3.3. The Final Dissertation Examination (FDE).....	35
5.4. Timeline for Final Dissertation Examination.....	39
6.0. ADVISING, MENTORING, AND COMMUNICATION OF ASSIGNMENTS & ROLES .	42
6.1. PhD Program Committee.....	42

6.2. Dissertation Committee	42
6.2.1. Replacement of Committee Members	43
6.3. Major Dissertation Advisor.....	43
6.3.1. Change of Major Dissertation Advisor	44
6.4. The Graduate Student and Doctoral Candidate	45
6.4.1. Responsibilities of the Graduate Student Doctoral Candidate.....	45
6.5. Information for Graduate Assistants (GTA/GRA/GA)	46

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORY

Mahbub Rashid, PhD

Professor
Dean, School of Architecture & Design
The University of Kansas
e-mail: mrashid@ku.edu

Keith Van de Riet, PhD

Professor
Chair, Department of Architecture
School of Architecture & Design
The University of Kansas
e-mail: kvdr@ku.edu

Dilshan R. Ossen, PhD

Associate Professor
Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Architecture
School of Architecture & Design
The University of Kansas
e-mail: dilshan_ossen@ku.edu

Jordan Wade

Director of Student Academic Services & Success
Graduate Academic Advisor
School of Architecture & Design
The University of Kansas
e-mail: jordanwade@ku.edu

Joan C. Weaver

Admissions Coordinator
School of Architecture & Design
The University of Kansas
e-mail: arcd@ku.edu

Nikki Hammond

Student Program Coordinator
School of Architecture & Design
The University of Kansas
e-mail: nikkihammond@ku.edu

1.0 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The PhD in Architecture is the highest degree offered in architectural research and scholarship. It is awarded for mastering a field of scholarship, for learning the methods of investigation appropriate to that field, and for completing a substantial piece of original research that adds to the body of knowledge. In addition to preparing research specialists, the process of earning the PhD has the goals of: *putting order into human experience; fostering a love of learning for its own sake, instilling a respect for human values, integrating various human powers into a process of creation; and making vital knowledge that enhances the discipline's ability to improve quality of life through responsive and meaningful design interventions.* Although the courses and research leading to the PhD are necessarily specialized, the attainment of this degree should not be an isolated event in the enterprise of learning. The PhD aspirant is expected to be a well-educated person with a broad base of general knowledge, not only as preparation for more advanced work but also as a means of knowing how the chosen specialty is related to other fields of human thought.

Architecture, as an academic discipline, is grounded in the scholarship of the creative process and professional practice, demanding interdisciplinary inquiry across four main domains:

- *History and Theory, which examines intellectual and critical frameworks.*
- *Technology and Performance, which investigates materials, construction, and environmental efficacy.*
- *Social, Cultural, and Behavioral Aspects, which studies the interaction between people and the built environment.*
- *Design Methods and Practice, which explores the processes of design, professional practice, and computational tools.*

These domains inherently overlap, and to generate new knowledge that is both scholarly and relevant to practice, the discipline expects rigorous scholarly work to systematically address foundational theory, detailed case studies, and/or robust empirical analyses.

PhD. in Architecture focuses primarily on expanding knowledge and research capacity and educating researchers capable of establishing the foundations of a research discipline in architecture. It is an advanced degree preparing students for careers in research, scholarship, public service, and teaching. The rigor of study required for the PhD degree extends the discipline of advanced research and design beyond the master's degree and is oriented toward applications in the profession and toward academic advancement. Work done in the PhD program contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the knowledge base needed in architectural scholarship and practice.

The Department of Architecture in the School of Architecture and Design of the University of Kansas offers a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Architecture and an academic graduate degree program. This handbook describes the requirements of the program, the primary people, code of conduct, and the policies and procedures that apply to programs.

The PhD program is designed to provide students with:

- an advanced understanding within a recognized knowledge category of architecture.
- a concentration of specialized and advanced coursework that will create a context for robust inquiry; and
- the skills, attitude, and support necessary to conduct original research that advances and contributes to the body of knowledge within a defined area of specialization.

2.0 GENERAL ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

2.1. Admission:

Admission to the PhD program is selectively granted based on the applicant's demonstrated capability to complete advanced doctoral studies. This capability is assessed by the applicant's proven ability to think critically, to effectively understand and apply analytical concepts, and, most importantly, to execute substantive, innovative, and original inquiry that significantly contributes to the theoretical and/or methodological foundations of the discipline of architecture.

Admissions to the PhD program are overseen by the Coordinator for Graduate Admissions in conjunction with the PhD Program Committee of the Department of Architecture. All students begin the program in the Fall semester. Admission applications, which are online, open on or about October 1 and close on or about February 1 of the following year. (If February 1 falls on a Saturday-Monday, the deadline will be the following Tuesday.)

Non-native English speakers must also provide proof of English proficiency. Please refer to [KU Graduate Studies English Proficiency Requirements](#) for specific score requirements. The University of Kansas requires all applicants to the Ph.D. program in Architecture to follow [graduate admission](#) and [international admission criteria](#).

2.1.1. Prerequisites for Admission

Admission to the PhD program is highly selective and based on a holistic review of academic achievements, professional experience, and research potential. Applicants must meet the following foundational requirements to be considered for candidacy.

Applicants must satisfy one of the following criteria:

1. The applicant must hold **Master's degree in architecture or an allied discipline** such as interior architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, urban planning, urban design, architectural engineering, or construction management – with a **minimum GPA of 3.5** (or an equivalent academic score in international universities). The applicant may hold a Bachelor's degree in architecture, an allied discipline, or any other discipline field.
2. An applicant with a **Master's degree in a non-architectural discipline with a minimum GPA of 3.5** (or equivalent) must hold a Bachelor's degree in architecture or an allied discipline (as listed above under #1) – **AND** must

provide evidence of a **minimum of three years** of documented professional or research experience in architecture or in an allied discipline.

3. An applicant with **ONLY a Bachelor's degree in architecture or an allied discipline** (as listed above under #1) with a minimum **GPA of 3.7** may qualify if the individual provides substantial evidence of a **minimum of five years** of documented professional or research experience in the design and construction sector.

2.1.2. Admission Requirements

In addition to the foundational prerequisites, all applicants to the PhD in Architecture program must submit the following five items to complete their application dossier. These materials are used by the Graduate Admissions Committee to evaluate the applicant's readiness for doctoral-level inquiry and their potential contribution to the department's research culture.

a) A curriculum vitae:

The CV must not exceed 5 pages. The format is established by the applicant and must encompass background information regarding the applicant's education, professional experience, certifications or licenses, professional affiliations, and documentation of notable achievements, including grants awarded, publications, presentations, awards, competitions, and other activities considered significant by the applicant.

b) A Statement of Purpose:

The Statement of Research Interest is one of the most important components of the application package. This statement distinguishes applicants and emphasizes their scholarly interests and research aims, as well as how they relate to one (or more) of the multidisciplinary study areas mentioned in the Ph.D. Program overview. The statement of purpose must not exceed 1,500 words.

The statement should describe:

- The specific research topic the candidate intends to pursue upon admission to the program. The description should be clear and specific, including the applicant's academic/professional experiences and expertise leading to the specific research topic.
- How the research topic and interests align with one (or more) of the interdisciplinary research domains.
- The applicant's career goals and how the Ph.D. degree will subsequently contribute to those goals.

c) Portfolio

Portfolio of work should include the applicant's most significant and relevant scholarly products. It may include one or more of the following:

1. Design projects in architecture/interior architecture/urban design (academic and/or professional)
2. Published (or near-publication manuscripts) of research papers and/or academic papers
3. Evidence of teaching experience (if any) - syllabi, assignments student work
4. Other professional components relevant to the applicant's area of interest

The above materials must not exceed 10 MB (not zipped) in PDF format. Upload under "Other Documents." The portfolio should not be longer than 15 pages.

d) Letters of Recommendation

TWO letters of recommendation from educational and/or professional references that can speak on the applicant's behalf regarding his/her research and academic potential, and ability to succeed in a doctoral program.

e) Proof of External Scholarship Awards (if applicable)

Please provide documentation for any scholarships received from government bodies, home institutions, or third-party organizations (excluding KU) in support of pursuing the doctorate program at KU. Documentation must clearly specify the scholarship's duration and a detailed breakdown of coverage (e.g., tuition, living expenses etc.).

2.1.3. Admission Contact & Application Support

For all inquiries regarding the PhD in Architecture application process, including submission requirements, portal access, and the status of your application dossier, please contact the **Admission Coordinator** for Architecture.

The Admission Coordinator is responsible for receiving and reviewing all incoming materials to ensure they meet the Graduate School's compliance standards before they are prepared for formal review by the PhD in Architecture program committee.

2.1.4. Application Review Process

The application review process occurs following the closing date of the application period on **February 1**. The PhD in Architecture program employs a two-stage application review and selection process, involving all dissertation-status faculty members. Initial screening is conducted by faculty teams organized by major subject area, resulting in a preliminary grouping of admitted and denied applicants. The second stage entails a comprehensive evaluation in which each subject area group assesses and ranks its candidates. The top five candidates from each group are then selected for final consideration by a panel of faculty members, who determine the final student roster. If required, the selected candidates may be interviewed by the PhD Program Committee before making the final decision. At this stage, the committee identifies two potential thesis advisors for each shortlisted candidate based on their research proposal and subject interests. The final list is then submitted to the Dean of the School for the ultimate decision and issuance of offer letters. The final number of offers extended is based on the availability of departmental funds and the number of candidates who secure external foreign scholarships.

Applicants are advised of the decision of the admissions coordinator of the School of Architecture and Design within the first week of April. Applicants who have not submitted all the materials, including all transcripts and references, by the due date may not be considered for admission and may be asked to reapply for a later admission cycle. Upon receipt of the official offer of admission, successful candidates are required to formally communicate their acceptance. This response must be submitted on or before the response deadline explicitly outlined within the document. Failure to provide confirmation by the designated date may result in the immediate rescission of the offer to the doctoral program.

2.2 Enrollment: General Enrollment Information

2.2.1. Minimum Enrollment Requirement

The number of credit hours a student enrolls in during a particular semester is the main factor that determines their graduate enrollment status at the University of Kansas. These thresholds are essential for figuring out who is eligible for graduate assistantships, fellowships, and financial help. The [Graduate Studies policy on enrollment](#) and the [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students policy](#) contain information on fulfilling enrollment requirements. Full-time and part-time enrollment categories are defined by these policies.

To maintain full-time active status in accordance with the Graduate Studies policy, most PhD students are required to enroll in a minimum of 9 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters. However, students holding Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) or Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) appointments are allowed to enroll in a minimum of 6 credit hours.

Once a student passes the comprehensive exam and enters doctoral candidacy, enrollment requirements shift based on progress; the candidate must enroll in a minimum of 6 hours per semester until 18 post-comprehensive hours are completed. If the degree is not finalized after completing these 18 hours, the candidate is then required to enroll in 1 dissertation hour each semester until all degree requirements are met.

During the initial phase of a PhD program, students focus on establishing their academic roadmap. A key requirement within the first year is the submission of a *Study Plan (GP-FM900)* to the PhD in Architecture program committee for approval. This vital document delineates the candidate's Major Dissertation Advisor (MDA), detailing the chosen curriculum for both their Major and Minor areas of study and identifies the members of their Comprehensive Examination Committee.

2.2.2. Enrollment Consent and Permission Number Process

The Architecture department imposes restrictions on both the department and instructors for certain courses. These can be located in the schedule of classes. For courses requiring instructor consent, enrollment must be approved by the instructor. If department consent is necessary, approval from the Department Chair is required to enroll.

The *student services & success team* manages the permission number process. The student is responsible for obtaining permission from either the instructor or the department and must subsequently submit that approval in writing to the *student program coordinator*, who will then arrange the student's authorization. Certain courses require a permission number, which the *student program coordinator* provides to the student for entry into Enroll & Pay portal during enrollment.

Graduate students face additional requirements when looking to take classes outside of the KU Lawrence campus. To enroll in courses offered at the Edwards Campus, KUMC, or through the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (IDEA), graduate students must first secure written approval from both their major dissertation advisor and either the

departmental director of graduate studies or the architecture department chair. After obtaining these approvals, registration can be completed through the Enroll & Pay portal. Furthermore, if any of these external courses require standard department or instructor consent, students must get that approval first and then contact the offering department's scheduling officer to receive a registration permission number.

Any request to waive prerequisites must be submitted by the student to both the instructor and the department chair for evaluation. Upon receiving approval, the student is required to submit written confirmation to the *student services & success team* to initiate the standard enrollment procedures.

2.2.3. Maximum Time to Degree and Satisfactory Progress in the Program

Once admitted, Graduate Studies' policy requires a doctoral student to complete all requirements for the degree within five (5) years. In cases in which compelling reasons recommend an extension of the normal five (5) year limit, the student may petition the PhD Program Committee for a one-year (1-year) extension, and if approved, that Committee will recommend that Graduate Studies grant an extension. Graduate Studies considers approval of extensions on a case-by-case basis. Students must petition the PhD Program Committee for such an extension prior to the exhaustion of the time limit, or they will be automatically dismissed from the program, regardless of their progress or the status of their doctoral work.

Petitions for extensions in the program are considered very carefully and stringently by the Program Director and the PhD Program Committee. Extensions are not granted routinely. Requests for additional extensions are given even closer scrutiny and are granted only in exceptional cases. If approved for a time limit extension, students must notify the *student services & success team* and provide the necessary documentation for the Progress to Degree form to be submitted to KU Graduate Studies.

2.3. Academic Integrity & Misconduct

The Department of Architecture regards academic misconduct as a very serious matter. Students who violate conduct policies will be subject to severe penalties, up through and including dismissal from the School of Architecture and Design. Please refer to the University Senate Rules and Regulations policy (USRR) and the School of Architecture and Design Academic Misconduct Procedure for specific guidelines about actions considered to be academic misconduct and the repercussions of such action.

These actions include, but are not limited to disruption of classes, threatening an instructor or fellow student in an academic setting; giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on examinations or in the preparation of notebooks, themes, reports or other assignments; knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work; unauthorized changing of grades; unauthorized use of University approvals or forging of signatures; falsification of research results; plagiarizing of another's work; violation of regulations or ethical codes for the treatment of human and animal subjects in research; or otherwise acting dishonestly in research.

2.3.1. Good Academic Standing

To maintain "good standing" in the graduate program, the Department of Architecture mandates that graduate students uphold a minimum GPA of 3.00 and demonstrate timely advancement in fulfilling their degree requirements and milestones. For further details regarding good standing, along with probation and dismissal protocols for students failing to meet good standing criteria, refer to policy on Good Academic Standing and Graduate Academic Probation.

A graduate student may be subjected to probation upon the recommendation of the dissertation committee and/or the PhD program committee of the Department of Architecture.

Common reasons for probation include but are not restricted to:

- a) *Failure to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 in courses.*
- b) *Failure to establish an advisory committee by the **end of the first year** of graduate study.*
- c) *Failure to complete the requirements for the foundation and concentration courses within **2 years after entering the program** for Ph.D. track students*
- d) *Receiving multiple, or consecutive, Incomplete grades (I).*
- e) *Failure to submit materials for the annual review.*
- f) *Failure to set up a meeting and meet with their dissertation committee at **least once a semester**.*
- g) *Consensus by the dissertation committee that the student is not making satisfactory progress toward a degree.*

Students recommended for academic probation will receive written notice from the *student services & success team* outlining specific requirements and timelines (typically one semester) that must be met to return to good standing. Failure to meet the terms of the probation constitutes sufficient grounds for dismissal from the graduate program. Placement on probation for a second time (consecutive or not) may also constitute sufficient grounds for dismissal.

2.3.2. Grading

The University of Kansas (KU) School of Architecture & Design maintains specific grading standards, particularly for its professional and graduate programs. While general graduate studies rules apply as in Graduate Grading Policy, the Architecture department has distinct triggers for probation and advancement as stipulated in the Architecture Minimum Graduation GPA and Academic Probation Policy

To satisfy graduation requirements, PhD in Architecture program degree seeking graduate students must maintain good academic standing, defined by a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher; failure to meet this performance standard will result in the denial of the graduation application.

2.3.3. Annual Student Progress Review

The progress of PhD students in the Architecture program is assessed annually through a two-stage evaluation process focused on degree completion and professional development. In the initial stage, students and their advisors collaborate to complete a Progress to Degree (PTD) form (GP-FM901), which allows the major dissertation advisor to formally review academic milestones, research publications, and professional growth. The second stage requires the student to present their annual progress to their dissertation committee or a panel of the PhD program committee appointed by the director of graduate studies of Department of Architecture.

Key aspects of the student's work are reviewed during this evaluation include:

- *Academic progress*, focusing on courses completed and their academic standing.
- *Research progress* is assessed by evaluating accomplishments in research, issues concerned, comprehensive literature review, justification of the research gaps, clear research questions and research objectives, clear understanding of the research methodologies and method of data collection, method of data analysis, and findings. If applicable, the status of the research proposal writing and preparation for the Comprehensive Examination (CE) and progress of the dissertation writing and preparation for the final dissertation defense are also considered.
- *Research Publication*, journal publications, conference presentations, conference proceedings, book chapters and any other major / minor publication relevant to the dissertation study area.

- *Professional development* is another vital component, considering participation in conferences, workshops, teaching and mentorship roles, grant applications, and the status of funding sources.
- *Timeline of overall progress*, present a comprehensive timeline of research progress, focus on visualizing the trajectory from initial inquiry to final dissemination including, milestones and phases, key accomplishments, anticipated dates for upcoming goals
- Challenges and successes, providing an opportunity to identify obstacles encountered and celebrate achievements throughout the academic year.

By the *first week of February* each academic year, students must submit the completed PTD form (GP-FM901) and their Individual Development Plan (IDP) to their main dissertation advisor, followed by a progress presentation to their dissertation committee within the *first two weeks of March*. Subsequently, the main dissertation advisor and dissertation committee will evaluate the student's performance, provide written feedback, and submit the final PTD form (GP-FM901) to the GP Director of the Department of Architecture by the *first week of April*.

The dissertation committee evaluates progress based on the specified criteria to assign an official rating of Satisfactory, Satisfactory with Warning, or Unsatisfactory, accompanied by written feedback for the student.

Satisfactory

The student demonstrates consistent and substantial progress across all evaluative domains. This includes maintaining strong academic standing in completed coursework and meeting all research milestones, such as a well-justified literature review, clear methodological frameworks, and timely progress toward the Comprehensive Examination or dissertation defense. Furthermore, the student actively engages in professional development through publications, conference participation, or teaching roles, while maintaining a realistic and forward-moving research timeline.

Satisfactory with Warning:

The student is meeting the minimum requirements but shows specific areas of concern that may impede timely completion. This rating is issued when there are minor delays in the research timeline, inconsistencies in publication or professional development activity, or specific weaknesses in the articulation of research gaps and methodologies. While academic standing remains acceptable, the student must address identified obstacles

or "Satisfactory" progress may not be sustainable in the next review cycle.

Unsatisfactory:

The student has failed to meet the fundamental expectations for doctoral progress. This includes significant deficits in academic performance, a lack of demonstrable progress in research (such as ill-defined objectives or inadequate data analysis), or a failure to meet critical milestones like proposal submission or defense preparation. An unsatisfactory rating often indicates that the research timeline is no longer viable or that the student has not adequately addressed previous feedback regarding professional and academic deficiencies.

Students receiving an "Unsatisfactory" rating are placed on university academic probation and lose eligibility for graduate assistantships until they are reinstated to good academic standing.

2.3.4. Professional Development

The professional development framework for architecture graduate students at the University of Kansas (KU) is designed to bridge the gap between advanced academic research and professional practice. Students have access to a dedicated Career and Professional Development Hub that provides specialized support for navigating non-academic roles, perfecting job application materials, and conducting mock interviews. The school hosts a recurring Architecture Lecture Series allowing students to engage directly with industry leaders and contemporary design discourse. Participation in student led organizations provides students with a platform for networking, leadership development, and community engagement.

Apart from the above the University of Kansas (KU) offers comprehensive professional development for doctoral students through Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs, featuring career counseling, workshops (time management, mentoring), and specialized platforms include personalized career coaching.

2.3.5. Grievance Procedures

Grievances arising within the School of Architecture and Design must be heard under the School of Architecture and Design Grievance Procedures. It applies to the academic staff, faculty members, and students. Graduate students who believe they have been treated unfairly or unlawfully in academic matters are entitled to file a grievance with their department or program chair according to

established unit-level and divisional procedures. If a resolution is not reached at those levels, students may file an appeal with the Judicial Board. The Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs also provides specific petition guidelines for cases that fall outside the jurisdiction of other hearing bodies under the Grievance Policy and Procedures for Graduate Students.

2.3.6. Petitions

Exceptions to the graduate program's rules and requirements may be granted by the PhD program committee upon a petition for a waiver, provided there is sufficient justification. Students must submit a Course substitution petition form accompanied by a written assessment from their main dissertation advisor and, if applicable, approval from relevant course instructors or the dissertation committee to ensure the request is vetted by those closest to their work. These petitions are processed through the *Architecture Department's Curriculum Management Committee* and may be forwarded to the *Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs Unit* if University-level policy review is required. For medical-based petitions, students must provide documentation from a healthcare professional confirming they are under medical care, though this statement must not disclose specific diagnostic details. Furthermore, extensions for exams or defenses scheduled outside the standard Spring or Fall semesters will only be considered if a firm date has been finalized and agreed upon by all committee members during the preceding term.

3.0 DOCTORAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

3.1. Student Learning Outcomes

The PhD in Architecture program at KU educates students so that they will become more valuable to society through academic, business, and government organizations that require greater artistic, scientific and investigative skills. It provides candidates with opportunities to develop and deepen their education in three important ways:

- Enhancing research and analytical skills with rigorous methods of inquiry and synthesis.
- Acquiring and advancing knowledge specific to their area(s) of inquiry through comprehensive scholarly investigations, innovations and documentation.
- Developing the ability to communicate knowledge in a clear and eloquent manner.

The program seeks to educate students so that they can contribute to teaching, design and/or community service. The program is designed to prepare graduates to function in academic, research, and/or practice settings; to conduct scholarly endeavors in architecture and related disciplines; to generate and expand the theoretical, empirical and philosophical bases for architectural practice; to provide leadership to the profession and to society and ultimately, to contribute to a better world through design research and innovation. Each candidate will apply the appropriate philosophical, technical and/or synthetic focus to their study; and will develop critical content to their research contributing in innovative and original ways. While some of the academic work will be theoretical in nature, the program will emphasize application within the context of the built and natural environments as well as a major area of specialization.

The PhD in Architecture is designed for students to produce independent, publishable, and impactful research that greatly benefits architectural and other disciplines. We accomplish our program objectives by establishing explicit, measurable *learning outcomes* (LO) that all graduates are expected to demonstrate.

LO1: Acquire advanced knowledge in a specific architectural domain to critically analyze the existing literature, identify significant knowledge gaps, and formulate original research questions that generate new, actionable insights within the field.

[ILG1: Creative inquiry and discovery]

LO2: Develop strong written, visual and oral communication skills to disseminate research results and findings, engage in critical dialogue, and facilitate dissemination to a wide range of audiences via publications, presentations, and other scholarly channels.

[ILG2: Effective communication]

LO3: Apply rigorous research methodologies, quantitative and/or qualitative, to investigate complex issues within specialized areas in architecture, evaluate evidence from multiple perspectives, and synthesize findings into well-supported conclusions.

[ILG3: Analytical reasoning]

LO4: Demonstrate advanced critical and reflective understanding of how diverse social, global, and cultural contexts shape architectural discourse, research, and intervention, fostering equitable and inclusive built environments.

[ILG4: Social awareness and cultural understanding]

LO5: Demonstrate a profound commitment to ethical conduct and professional responsibility, acting with integrity and prioritizing the interests of the larger community, environment, discipline, and profession in their architectural research and practice.

[ILG5: Ethical and professional responsibility.]

LO6: Demonstrate the ability to effectively lead and coordinate diverse professionals within multidisciplinary teams, applying advanced management skills to successfully oversee research activities and cultivate collaborative environments to address complex architectural challenges.

[ILG6: Effective leadership and collaboration]

3.2. Program Requirements

Our doctoral program is organized into a sequence of discrete phases, facilitating student's academic progression:

3.2.1. Establishing an Academic Roadmap

During the initial phase of a PhD program, students focus on establishing their academic roadmap. A key requirement within the first year is the submission of a *Study Plan (GP-FM900)* to the PhD Program Committee for approval. This vital document delineates the candidate's Major Dissertation Advisor (MDA), identifies the members of their Comprehensive Examination Committee, establishes a timeline to complete the foundation courses, major and minor

courses, comprehensive examination, conducting the doctoral research, dissertation writing, final dissertation defense and completing the degree. As per the doctoral oral exam committee composition policy, the committee membership should be determined in consultation with the student, graduate units have the final determination on questions of committee membership. Details of the dissertation committee composition are explained in section 4.3

Concurrently, this phase also encompasses the completion of an Individual Development Plan (IDP). An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is an invaluable, adaptable tool designed to help PhD students navigate their academic journey, cultivate essential skills, and strategically plan for their future careers, whether in academia or beyond. It functions as a roadmap for growth, encouraging self-assessment and reflection on strengths, weaknesses, interests, and values. Furthermore, an IDP significantly enhances mentoring and communication by fostering open discussions between students and their mentors regarding expectations, progress, and future plans. It also promotes tracking of accountability and progress, enabling students to monitor achievements and identify areas for improvement. Ultimately, by offering clarity and direction, an IDP can lead to increased productivity and well-being.

3.2.2. Coursework and Degree Requirements

The Ph.D. in Architecture program is carefully crafted to allow students to engage in rewarding and potentially revolutionary scholarly investigation steeped in an atmosphere of rigorous academic pursuit. The 49-credit program is divided into three components: foundation (16 hours), concentration (21 hours), and advanced study (12 hours), with major and minor courses classified according to the Academic Program Definitions.

Students are required to fulfill **16 hours of foundational courses** and **21 hours of concentration courses** at the end of the semester in which they attempt the *Comprehensive Examination*. All coursework must be completed with a grade of B or higher, and students are required to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 for all credits taken toward a PhD degree. Grading, Graduate Studies.

(a). Foundation Courses [16 hours]

Foundational courses constitute the essential framework related to PhD in Architecture program, creating the common conceptual language and technical proficiency necessary prior to a student's engagement in specific concentration studies. These courses prioritize critical analysis and the methodologies of advanced research.

Table 1: Foundation Courses

Code	Title	Hours
<u>ARCH 930</u>	Doctoral Seminar I	1
<u>ARCH 931</u>	Theories of Architectural Inquiry	3
<u>ARCH 951</u>	Methods of Inquiry in Architectural Research	3
<u>ARCH 958</u>	Research Practicum Preparation	1
<u>ARCH 930</u>	Doctoral Seminar II	1
XXXX 700	Advanced Methods Course [outside dept]	3
<u>ARCH 959</u>	Research Practicum	4

(b). Concentration Courses [21 hours]

The concentration requirements are divided into Major and Minor courses to ensure both depth of expertise and breadth of perspective.

(b1). Major Courses: [12 hours]

These courses form the core of a student's specialized research area. They are designed to provide mastery over specific methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and technical applications. This segment of the doctoral program requires students to fulfill a minimum of **12 hours** of specialized, graduate-level coursework (700-level or above), totaling **four** 3-hours/credit courses. These courses can be sourced from their department program or other relevant programs offered at KU Lawrence or other KU campuses.

Key Requirements:

- One of the four major courses must address *advanced theory related to the student's primary research subject*, and the course instructor may be the student's Major Dissertation Advisor (MDA).
- Students must collaborate with their MDA to define a major area of emphasis consistent with their research's philosophical foundation and to design a cohesive curriculum within that specialized domain.

(b2). Minor Courses: [9 hours]

Students select minor area courses to develop a secondary area of interest that will complement their main academic or professional goals. Fulfilling the minor requires **9 hours** (three 3-credit courses) taken at the 500-level or higher from either their department program or other KU departments. The student must work with their Major Dissertation Advisor (MDA) or minor course instructors to select courses that form a

cohesive curriculum and reflect the philosophical foundation of their overall research.

(c). Advanced Course: [12 hours]

This segment comprises the ARCH999 Doctoral Dissertation, as defined by the official Doctoral Dissertation policy. Upon entering the advanced studies phase, students must initiate the dissertation process and complete a minimum of 12 credit hours. Please note that continuous enrollment is mandatory until all requirements for the degree are completed (including the filing of the dissertation) or until 18 post-comprehensive hours have been completed (whichever comes first), the candidate must enroll for a minimum of 6 hours a semester.

(d). Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship

According to the research skills and responsible scholarship policy, the University mandates that all doctoral candidates undergo training in responsible scholarship relevant to their research domain and acquire research competencies appropriate for doctoral-level inquiry in their respective fields. These requirements must be fulfilled by the end of the semester during which the student attempts the comprehensive examination. The responsible conduct of research (RCR) requirement ensures students receive training in responsible research practices, which they can fulfill by completing the training available online through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). These CITI courses are embedded within the ARCH951 Methods of inquiry in Architectural Research course.

Students enrolled in the PhD in Architecture program fulfill this requirement by completing:

1. ARCH 951 Methods of inquiry in Architectural Research (3 hours)
2. ARCH 958 Research Practicum Preparation (1 hour)
3. ARCH 959 Research Practicum (4 hours)
4. XXXX *** Advanced Method Course (3 hours) [outside dept.]
5. Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approvals [If applicable]

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approvals.

All research involving human subjects, regardless of its funding or whether it's part of a larger program, requires approval from the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP). "Research" in this context refers to any systematic investigation – including development, testing, and evaluation – aimed at creating or adding to generalizable knowledge. This definition can even include evaluation components within demonstration or service programs. Human subjects are living

individuals where a researcher gathers data through interaction/intervention or uses identifiable private information. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a crucial committee responsible for reviewing these research protocols. Its primary role is to ensure that studies involving human subjects are ethical and that participants' rights and welfare are protected. The IRB reviews research plans, verifies informed consent procedures, and monitors research activities to maintain high ethical standards and safeguard the well-being of individuals in studies.

Therefore, students must obtain IRB approval before starting any research activities that involve human subjects. This step is essential to ensure their research not only contributes to knowledge but also strictly adheres to ethical principles.

3.2.3. The PhD in Architecture Program Degree Plan

Table 2: The PhD in Architecture Program Degree Plan

Fall 1		Credit Hours
ARCH 930	Doctoral Seminar I	1
ARCH 931	Theories of Architectural Inquiry	3
ARCH 951	Methods of Inquiry in Architectural Research	3
-----	Major* or Minor** Course	3
	Total hours - Fall 1	10
Spring 1		
ARCH 930	Doctoral Seminar II	1
ARCH 958	Research Practicum Prep	1
-----	Advanced Methods Course (outside dept.)	3
-----	Major* Course	3
-----	Minor Course	3
	Total hours - Spring 1	11
Fall 2		
ARCH 959	Research Practicum	4
	Major or Minor** Course	3
	Major* Course	3
	Total hours - Fall 2	10
Spring 2		
	Major* Course	3
	Minor** Course	3
	Total hours - Spring 2	6
Fall 3	and beyond	
	Comprehensive Exam (<i>Thesis proposal & Comprehensive Oral Exam</i>)	
Spring 3	and beyond	
ARCH 999	Doctoral Dissertation. Dissertation Defense (<i>Final Oral Examination</i>)	12 (1-12)
	Total hours	49

4.0. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM PROCEDURE

Comprehensive Examination is a significant milestone in a PhD program, frequently regarded as the prerequisite to becoming "doctoral candidate" status and initiating the dissertation research phase. It is intended to evaluate a student's proficiency in their discipline and preparedness for independent scholarly work.

4.1. Purpose of the Comprehensive Examination

- **Demonstrate Breadth and Depth of Knowledge:** The primary objective is to ensure that the student possesses a thorough comprehension of their major discipline, relevant sub-disciplines, and interdisciplinary relationships. It goes beyond individual course knowledge to assess synthesis and integration of concepts.
- **Assess Research Competency:** The exam evaluates the student's ability to critically review existing literature, effectively positioning their proposed research within the current body of knowledge, critical understanding of research methodologies, their ability to critically analyze research, and their capacity to apply research principles to their specific area of interest.
- **Evaluate Critical Thinking and Communication Skills:** Students are expected to articulate their thoughts clearly, defend their positions, and engage in scholarly discourse with their committee members.

A successful comprehensive exam indicates that the student has the essential knowledge and analytical skills needed to conduct the demanding, original research required for a dissertation.

4.2. Eligibility

Students are eligible for the comprehensive examination when they have met the following requirements:

- Completed all the **foundation courses (16 credits)**
- Completed a **minimum program engagement equivalent to two (2) full-time semesters** [part-time semesters: at least 18 hours of enrollment in KU coursework spread out over several part-time semesters]
- Completed the **research skill, residency, and responsible conduct of research (RCR)** requirements.
- Maintain a good academic standing including a 3.0 or higher CGPA.

The student is advised to complete the CE by the first semester of the third academic year. This will enable the student to fulfill the PhD program requirements within a four-year timeframe. The student must uphold satisfactory academic performance, achieving a Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above.

4.3. Dissertation Committee for Comprehensive Examination

The Dissertation Committee is the same as the Research Advisory Committee. This committee is chosen by the Student and Mentor and must be approved by the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee. The Dissertation Committee must comprise a minimum of four members, including:

- 1st member, Major Dissertation Advisor, who will serve as the Committee Chair, from the Department of Architecture
- 2nd member, Graduate faculty member from the Department of Architecture.
- 3rd member, Graduate faculty members from outside the department or external to the University of Kansas (KU) may serve, subject to formal approval by KU Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS).
- 4th member, KU Graduate Studies Representative (GSR) from outside the department to ensure that the rules and policies of the Office of Graduate Studies are followed.
- 5th member (optional), Graduate faculty member from either the Department of Architecture or from an outside department.

4.4. Guidelines for the Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination comprises **three components**. (1) the written dissertation proposal, (2) the written exam & closed-door oral exam and (3) the comprehensive oral exam (COE) of the dissertation proposal. Each part of the exam is described below:

4.4.1. Comprehensive Written Examination - Dissertation Proposal

The student will develop a dissertation proposal with the guidance of the major dissertation advisor and the dissertation committee. The research proposal includes the *research topic, an abstract* that provides a concise overview of the entire project, establishes the *research problem and its significance*, outlining clear *research questions and hypotheses*, and specific *aims and objectives*. A thorough *literature review* demonstrates an understanding of existing scholarships and identifies the *gap your research* will address. The *research design and methodology* section details the approach, specific *data collection and analysis methods, ethical considerations*, and *potential limitations*. The proposal also articulates *expected*

outcomes and contribution to knowledge, a realistic timetable, and, if necessary, a resources/budget plan. Finally, a comprehensive bibliography lists all cited sources.

Students are required to submit their dissertation proposal to their major dissertation advisor **SIX months** before their *comprehensive oral examination* (COE). During the proposal development, it is strongly advised that students consistently engage in discussions regarding their progress with all members of their dissertation committee.

The major dissertation advisor is responsible for a thorough review of the dissertation proposal, providing comprehensive feedback for improvements within a **TWO months'** time frame. **Approval from the major dissertation advisor is mandatory** before the proposal is sent to the dissertation committee.

After a student's major dissertation advisor approves their dissertation proposal, the student must send the completed document to each member of the dissertation committee. This should be done at least **FOUR months** before the *comprehensive oral examination* to give the committee at least **SIX weeks to review** it. During this time, each committee member independently evaluates the proposal's originality, the feasibility of the research, and the rigor of the theoretical foundation and methodology. Following their review, they each prepare at least **two written questions** based on their evaluation of the proposal.

After the **six weeks** of review period, the major dissertation advisor, who chairs the committee, will arrange a meeting to discuss the written proposal and provide feedback. During this meeting, the committee will select **five questions** from all the questions submitted by its members. These questions will form the basis of the student's written exam and will be drawn from the dissertation proposal itself, as well as relevant theoretical and methodological courses. The committee will also set a tentative deadline for the student to submit their written responses to the Dissertation Committee Chair (DC Chair/Major Advisor).

4.4.2. Comprehensive Written Examination: Written Exam & Closed-door Oral Exam

The DC chair will provide the student with **FIVE written questions**. The student must prepare and submit their written responses within **FOURTEEN (14) days**, including weekends, for the dissertation committee members to evaluate. Within **THREE weeks** of the student's submission, the DC chair will convene the dissertation committee and the student for a **closed-door oral exam**. This oral examination seeks to assess the student's thorough comprehension of their field, including *essential theories, subject matter*

proficiency, methodologies, and the dissertation proposal, requiring the student to demonstrate extensive knowledge of their specific research area.

The overall evaluation of the written component is conducted after the committee reviewed **both the proposal, the student's written responses to their questions and the closed-door oral exam**. The committee collectively assesses the student's understanding of the research topic, their ability to defend their research plan, and the quality of their written communication.

Potential results from the exam's written section include:

- **PASS without Modification**
- **PASS with Modification** (minimum 4 weeks – maximum 8 weeks)
- **FAIL**
[Use form **FM902-CWE(I) & FM902-CWE(C)**]

A majority vote is required to “PASS without modification” for the oral examination/proposal defense to proceed as planned. If the Written Exam is “PASS with modifications”, the Dissertation Committee will provide explicit instructions regarding the necessary revisions to the written proposal, and the oral exam may require rescheduling. The dissertation committee may recommend a period between **minimum of 4 weeks to maximum of 8 weeks** to make the necessary corrections. If the required time for correction is **beyond 8 weeks**, the written exam should be considered as a failed attempt. The amended Written component of the Exam must be APPROVED by a majority vote prior to the commencement of the Oral component. Additionally, students are required to submit the "**Request for a Comprehensive Oral Exam**" form (*FM902-COE*) **at least two weeks prior** to the COE date.

In the event of a failed Written Exam, the PhD program committee, in consultation with the student's Dissertation Committee, will evaluate the result to decide if the student may retake the exam. The student will need to re-submit the dissertation proposal and retake the written exam **no less than 90 days** after the initial unsuccessful attempt. Students are allowed **one retake**. If this second attempt requires clarification, the previously stated rules for clarification apply.

If the student is barred from re-taking the Written Exam, they will be terminated from the program.

4.4.3. Comprehensive Oral Examination

The comprehensive oral examination, which serves to assess the breadth and depth of a student's understanding of their dissertation proposal, is conducted

as a public presentation. This event is moderated by the committee chair in the presence of committee members and an invited audience. Ultimately, this examination signifies a student's readiness to function as a **doctoral candidate** and to successfully execute their research project. Although all faculty members from the Department of Architecture are welcome to attend and pose questions, the evaluation of the student's performance is the exclusive responsibility of the dissertation committee members.

The Oral Exam generally lasts 2-3 hours and consists of:

- *An Oral presentation.* Students must prepare a presentation based on their written proposal. This presentation must be completed without interruption in 20 to 30 minutes.
- *Question by the Dissertation Committee and Departmental Faculty.* Questions for the student may be asked after the oral presentation.

4.4.4. Comprehensive Exam Evaluation

The overall evaluation of the Comprehensive Exam will include (1) the development of the written dissertation proposal (2) the written exam and (3) successful defense of the comprehensive oral exam. Following the examination, the student is asked to leave the room to allow the committee to evaluate the student's performance. Each committee member will individually evaluate the CE using **GP-FM902(I)**. The committee will then collectively determine the overall grade, "*High Achievement, Moderate Achievement or Low Achievement*" on the **GP-FM902(C)** form. The two forms will be collected by the major dissertation advisor, who will also serve as committee chair, and submitted to the department's graduate unit. To help facilitate Comprehensive Oral Exam evaluation, the Dissertation Committee may choose to use the "*Assessment Rubric for the Comprehensive Examination*".

Using the combined results from the rubrics for the dissertation proposal, written and oral components, the Dissertation Committee assigns

High achievement:

The student's work is exceptional in every way. The written proposal is highly original and perfectly structured, with a deep and insightful literature review and a flawlessly designed methodology. In the oral exam, the student shows mastery of the topic, defends their work with confidence, and handles complex questions with ease.

Moderate achievement:

The work is solid and meets all the basic requirements, but it's not groundbreaking. The proposal is clear and functional, but it may

lack originality or some key details. During the oral exam, the student demonstrates a sufficient grasp of the material but may struggle with more difficult questions or lack confidence in their defense.

Low achievement:

The student's work is flawed and fails to meet the fundamental requirements. The proposal is disorganized and superficial, with significant gaps in the literature review or methodology. In the oral exam, the student shows a lack of preparation, struggles to answer basic questions, and is unable to effectively defend their research.

4.5. Timeline

The comprehensive examination should ideally be completed by the **spring semester of the second year** of graduate study. This timeline provides students with sufficient time to finish their research and write their dissertation. In the spring or summer semesters preceding their intended exam date, students should coordinate the date, time, and location of the oral exam with their major dissertation advisor and the Dissertation Committee. Once this date is finalized, the student is responsible for notifying the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee by submitting the "**Request for a Comprehensive Oral Exam**" form (GP-FM902) at least **two weeks** before the scheduled exam.

Table 3: Timeline for Comprehensive Examination Preparation

Time frame	Activities
7 months before COE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the dissertation proposal with the Dissertation Committee members.
1. Activities related to the Written Dissertation Proposal	
6 months before COE (24 weeks before COE))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit the complete draft of the dissertation proposal to major dissertation advisor for review. The major dissertation advisor must provide thorough feedback for enhancements within TWO months. Approval from the major dissertation advisor is mandatory before the proposal is sent to the Dissertation Committee.
4 months before COE (16 weeks before COE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The completed written dissertation proposal is distributed to all members of the Dissertation Committee for evaluation. The Dissertation Committee requires a minimum of SIX weeks to assess the proposal and provide feedback.
2. Activities related to the evaluation of the Written Dissertation Proposal, Written Exam & Oral Exam.	

<p>10 weeks before COE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each member must send the major advisor at least TWO written questions for the written exam based on their assessment of the dissertation proposal. • After reviewing the dissertation proposal, the dissertation committee will meet to finalize a timeline and choose maximum of FIVE questions from the submitted list of questions for the student's written examination. Major advisor will then hand over the questions to the student. • The student will respond to the five questions within FOURTEEN days, including weekends, and submit the answers to the Dissertation Committee. • Within TWO weeks, the Dissertation Committee will review the written exam answers.
<p>6 weeks before COE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within THREE weeks of the student's submission of the written exam, the DC chair will convene the dissertation committee and the student for a closed-door oral exam. • The Dissertation Committee will then vote to evaluate the outcome of both the “written dissertation proposal” and the “written exam”. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PASS without modification - PASS with modification (minimum 4 weeks - maximum 8 weeks) - FAIL • If the proposal is “PASS without modification” by a majority vote, the oral exam will proceed as planned. If it is “PASS with modification”, the oral exam may be rescheduled. • The dissertation committee chair (major dissertation advisor) is responsible for submitting both completed forms [GP-FM902(I) & GP-FM902(C)] to the Department of Architecture's Graduate Studies Unit within ONE week of the closed-door oral exam.
<p>3. Activities related to the Comprehensive Oral Examination and the overall assessment of the Comprehensive Exam.</p>	
<p>2 weeks before COE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student submits the "Request for a Comprehensive Oral Exam" form (GP-FM902) to the Graduate Studies Unit of the Department of Architecture.
<p>1 week before COE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administrator of the graduate studies unit of the Department of Architecture will send out an announcement and invitation of the scheduled Comprehensive Oral Exam to the Department faculty and students.
<p>Within 1 week after the Oral Defense Exam of the COE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each committee member will individually evaluate the CE using GP-FM902(I). Using the combined results from the rubrics for the Written and Oral Components, the Dissertation Committee will then collectively determine the overall outcome for the

	<p>Comprehensive Exam, as "high achievement," "moderate achievement" or "low achievement", on the GP-FM902(C) form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dissertation committee chair (major dissertation advisor) is responsible for submitting both completed forms to the Department of Architecture's Graduate Studies Unit within ONE week of the COE.
--	---

The student is responsible for determining the time and location of their Comprehensive Oral Examination (COE). The administrator of the department's graduate studies unit can help the student to reserve a room for the examination. To ensure the availability of both the room and committee members, scheduling must be completed well in advance of the exam date.

5.0. CONDUCTING RESEARCH, DISSERTATION AND DEFENSE

5.1. Conducting Research

The last years of a doctoral student's career will be dedicated primarily to conducting research under the supervision of their Major Dissertation Advisor and Dissertation Committee. This portion of training is expected to take 1-3 years, for a total program duration of 4-5 years. If the total time since admission to the program **exceeds 4 years, the student may lose financial aid.** At the University of Kansas (KU), the maximum time allowed to complete a PhD is **8 years from the date of initial enrollment**, regardless of whether the student has a previous master's degree.

After successfully passing their **Comprehensive Examination**, doctoral candidates must maintain **continuous enrollment**, until all degree requirements are met. Each enrollment should accurately reflect their demands on faculty time and university facilities. During this period, and until either all degree requirements are complete (including dissertation filing) or 18 post-comprehensive hours have been earned (whichever comes first), candidates are required to enroll for a minimum of **6 hours per semester** (More details can be found under "Doctoral Candidacy" in KU policy administration). Once a doctoral candidate has accumulated 18 post-comprehensive hours, they must then continue to enroll in at least **1 dissertation or approved dissertation-equivalent hour** each fall or spring semester until graduation. The specific number of hours for each enrollment is determined by the doctoral candidate's major dissertation advisor, and it should always reflect the candidate's use of faculty time and university facilities as accurately as possible.

- The doctoral candidate should update their Individual Development Plan (IDP), PhD milestones, and dissertation committee (if required) in preparation for the final dissertation defense.
- The doctoral candidate is strongly encouraged to get actively involved in academic, professional development and research activities in their field of study and attend conferences and pursuing journal publications.
- The doctoral candidate must communicate their progress to the **Major Dissertation Advisor at least once a month** (according to student's IDP) and the **Dissertation Committee at least once per semester** until the date of their dissertation defense.
- The doctoral candidate must **submit the Annual Progress Report** to the Graduate Studies Unit of the Department of Architecture, which includes an **evaluation from their major dissertation advisor and the dissertation committee** (refer section 2.3.3)
- The doctoral candidate should **structure the dissertation** by organizing their research into a coherent and well-structured document.

5.2. Dissertation

The dissertation should be a rigorous inquiry that aligns with the defended research proposal presented at the Comprehensive Examination (CE). Any deviations from this proposal require the committee's approval.

The dissertation serves to foster and confirm the development of a doctoral candidate's broad intellectual capabilities, alongside demonstrating an intensive focus on a specific problem or research area. It must be a cohesive scholarly work, not merely a collection of disparate pieces. Ultimately, the dissertation should effectively showcase the doctoral candidate's growth and their ability to identify and investigate significant research questions, organize and analyze scholarly results, communicate these findings clearly, and apply a range of research skills and scholarly or creative processes to a relevant area of interest. While it needs to present an original accomplishment, it should also highlight the candidate's potential for future contributions to knowledge and understanding.

In this spirit, the dissertation must:

- Establish the *relationship to the existing body of knowledge* within the declared disciplines,
- Develop a *clear theoretical framework* within which the investigation is grounded,
- Follow an *explicit research methodology*,
- Document the *research process*,
- Document the *discovery and interpretation of facts & data* and the implications of those facts in revising/ extending/ refuting accepted theories (hence, developing new knowledge),
- Address both the *transferability* of findings as well as their *applicability*.

The dissertation must be publicly defended, allowing members of the dissertation committee, faculty, and students the opportunity to question the doctoral candidate's research. **A minimum of one month must pass after successfully completing the CE requirement and fulfilling other eligibility requirements as doctoral candidate before a dissertation defense can be scheduled.** If the committee determines the dissertation has been successfully defended, the student may then apply for the PhD in Architecture degree.

5.3. Guidelines for the Dissertation Defense

A dissertation defense centers on the dissertation itself, offering doctoral candidates a chance to showcase their expertise after years of preparatory coursework, research, and writing. Doctoral candidates must also demonstrate their ability to explain the ideas and methods within their dissertation and to

defend the implications and conclusions of their research. The dissertation defense has **two parts**: first, the **completed dissertation draft** is submitted to each member of the Dissertation Committee. All committee members are required to read the entire dissertation and inform the Dissertation Committee Chair of its readiness for defense. The second part is the **Final Oral Exam**, where the candidate demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, the originality and significance of their research, and their ability to defend their findings and methodology.

5.3.1. Eligibility

Doctoral candidates become eligible for the dissertation defense examination once they have met the following criteria:

- Enroll in ARCH 999 for the semester in which they intend to defend.
- Completed all the required and recommended coursework.
- Adhere to **post-comprehensive enrollment** requirement.
- Received approval from their Major Dissertation Advisor.
- Received approval of their full Dissertation Committee.
- Completed the Comprehensive Examination (CE) at least **one month** prior to their defense. Additionally, students must ensure that their scheduled dissertation defense occurs within **five years** of passing the comprehensive examination to remain within the required residency timeline.

5.3.2. Dissertation Committee for Final Defense

The Dissertation Committee's composition mirrors that of the Comprehensive Examination committee. While the committee members can be identical to those from the Comprehensive Examination, students and their Major Dissertation Advisor may deem it appropriate to include new members. Regardless, the Dissertation Committee must contain at least **four members**, including specific roles relevant to the dissertation process.

- 1st member, Major Dissertation Advisor, who will serve as the Committee Chair.
- 2nd member, Graduate faculty member from the Department of Architecture.
- 3rd member, Graduate faculty member from outside the department. This committee member can be selected from outside of the University of Kansas but must obtain the approval of KU Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs (GPA).

- 4th member, Graduate Studies Representative (GSR) from outside the department to ensure that the rules and policies of the Office of Graduate Studies are followed.
- 5th member (optional), Graduate faculty member from either the Department of Architecture or from an outside department.

5.3.3. The Final Dissertation Examination (FDE)

Doctoral candidates must adhere to all University of Kansas (KU) guidelines for dissertation formatting, as specified by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Comprehensive details on dissertation format are available on the **Graduate Studies Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) web page**.

https://guides.lib.ku.edu/etd/ETD_Home

Doctoral candidates should also consult the **Office of Graduate Studies Graduation Information site** to ensure all Graduate School requirements are fulfilled. This site offers a valuable **Graduation Checklist**, which is a helpful resource for a student's final semester.

To effectively schedule final dissertation submissions and the final defense, doctoral candidates should consult both the **Graduate Studies Calendar** and the **KU Academic Calendar** for important deadlines related to the Application for Degree, thesis upload, and other pertinent dates.

Doctoral candidates should submit their application for the PhD degree graduation at **least one semester before their final defense**. This allows the Office of Graduate Studies to notify them of all remaining graduate requirements to be completed before their final semester of enrollment. If a candidate does not complete all degree requirements during the semester for which they applied, a new degree application may be necessary. (<http://www.registrar.ku.edu/graduation>)

Doctoral candidates are required to convene a dissertation committee meeting **six months prior** to their final dissertation examination. The purpose of this meeting is to update the committee on research progress and to discuss the current draft of the dissertation. At this juncture, the candidate's research should be largely, if not entirely, complete. It is expected that substantial portions of the dissertation will be of publishable quality and submitted to reputable, peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Doctoral candidates must submit their completed dissertation draft to their committee chair (major dissertation advisor) at least **four months** before the scheduled oral defense date. The chair assesses the draft's readiness, ensuring all chapter requirements are met and the overall work meets acceptable

baseline standards. Any substantial revisions required by the chair must be completed before a defense date can be confirmed. Once approved, the candidate distributes the draft to the remaining committee members at least **two months** before the oral defense date. Using the official assessment rubric, committee members evaluate the dissertation while reserving final judgment on the dissertation's overall quality until after the oral examination.

Once the dissertation is deemed ready for defense, the Chair advises the doctoral candidate to submit the **"Request for a Final Dissertation Oral Examination" form (GP-FM903) at least three weeks (21 days) prior to the oral defense date**. The Department's Graduate Studies unit will then schedule the student's final examination (defense) upon receiving both the completed scheduling form and a properly formatted, typed copy of the dissertation. All Final Dissertation Oral Examinations are publicly announced in the appropriate campus-wide publication.

The Final Dissertation Oral Examination generally lasts 2 hours and consists of:

An Oral presentation:

Doctoral candidates must prepare a presentation based on their Dissertation. This presentation must be completed without interruption in 30 to 45 minutes.

Final Dissertation Oral Examination:

On the day of the oral exam, the defense begins with the Major Dissertation Advisor introducing the doctoral candidate prior to the defense presentation. The candidate then delivers a presentation of approximately 30 to 45 minutes detailing their research. Following this presentation, the Dissertation Committee poses their specific questions to the candidate and provides detailed feedback regarding the dissertation's format and content, while the chair or co-chair opens the floor to direct additional questions from the audience to the candidate.

Once the question-and-answer sessions are completed, the candidate and the audience will be asked to leave the room. This allows the committee to begin their deliberations regarding the outcome of the defense examination.

To facilitate a structured evaluation, committee members may opt to use the PhD Program's Dissertation Rubric. This optional framework provides standardized criteria that help the committee objectively assess the quality and academic rigor of the candidate's research before rendering a final judgment.

During the deliberation, each committee member will individually evaluate the overall outcome of the defense examination using form GP-FM903(I) and submit their decision to the chair. A discussion regarding the potential awarding of honors will also be conducted at this time. The chair will then aggregate these individual assessments to determine the majority decision and report the final overall award as "Honors," "Satisfactory," or "Unsatisfactory."

The final collective decision and overall award will be officially recorded on the GP-FM903(C) form. The Major Dissertation Advisor, in their role as committee chair, is responsible for gathering both the individual evaluation forms and the aggregate committee decision form and must submit the complete packet to the Department's graduate unit within seven days (one week) of the defense.

The Chair reserves the right to reschedule the *Final Dissertation Oral Examination* if further revisions of the dissertation are needed, based on the outcomes of the dissertation rubrics.

The candidate is responsible for completing all revisions suggested by the dissertation committee and adhering strictly to the formatting guidelines established by the KU Office of Doctoral and Postdoctoral Affairs in the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Formatting Requirements. As mandated by these guidelines, the manuscript must include an Acceptance Page featuring the title of the document, the author's name, the date the ETD was accepted, and the name of the committee chair – or both the primary chair and co-chair in cases of joint supervision – which signifies final review and approval of the work. Until all required copies are successfully submitted, the doctoral candidate will not have fulfilled the graduation requirements for the Ph.D. Additionally, a digital copy of the final dissertation must be submitted directly to the Student Academic Services of the Department of Architecture as well as to UMI/ProQuest via the KU Graduate School submission link. (<https://graduate.ku.edu/submitting>).

“Honor”

To earn honors status, a student must demonstrate exceptional achievement across several key areas: a strong record of **publications** and submitted manuscripts, with emphasis on their quality and impact; **consistent high academic performance** reflected in a minimum Cumulative GPA of 3.75 and the quality of seminar presentations; **significant recognition and awards**,

such as local honors, external recognition, invited talks, poster presentations, grants and fellowships; and a **distinguished dissertation**, judged on the quality of both the written work and oral presentation, as well as Q&A performance. The outstanding performance in the dissertation means comprehensive, theoretically well-founded, and methodologically sound research that contributes new knowledge towards their area of research, and the candidate pass the oral examination with convincing arguments and in-depth knowledge. Finally, their overall academic growth and progression, alongside their likelihood of future success, will be assessed to determine eligibility. All committee members will collectively agree upon whether the student has met more than one requirement across the above stated key areas for **honors recognition**. Any minor corrections left in the dissertation should be made within 2 weeks (14 days) of FDOE.

“Satisfactory”

Doctoral students receive a **"Satisfactory"** award for above-average academic performance if their dissertation is comprehensive, theoretically well-founded, methodologically sound, contributes acceptably towards their degree, and they pass the oral examination with convincing arguments and in-depth knowledge. If fewer than a majority of the committee members find the response satisfactory, they'll collectively decide if further clarification or an unsuccessful mark is warranted. If clarification is needed, the committee will provide specific written guidance, which the major dissertation advisor will review with the doctoral candidate.

The Dissertation Committee (DC) will recommend a revision period ranging from a minimum of 2 weeks to a maximum of 15 weeks. The student must complete the modifications and submit the amended dissertation to the DC by this time. The editing process is repeated until the committee formally endorses the dissertation within the designated deadline. Failure to meet requirements or submit the revised work by the deadline may result in a one-semester academic probation. If the terms of this probation are not met, or if the clarification is considered "unsuccessful," a second final dissertation oral examination will be mandated, scheduled no less than 90 days after the previous unsuccessful attempt (clarifications are evaluated solely as successful or unsuccessful). If a student fails the dissertation examination on their second attempt, they have a 30-day window

to petition the department for a third and final try. Failure to submit this petition within the designated timeframe, or the rejection of the petition by the department, will result in the student's formal dismissal from the program. Additionally, it is important to note that the summer season is excluded from the revision and petition timeline, meaning those months do not count toward the 30-day schedule.

“Unsatisfactory”

If an exam response is **“unsatisfactory”**, the dissertation committee will work together to outline the **strengths and weaknesses** of the response. The *major dissertation advisor* will then review this feedback with the doctoral candidate.

The dissertation committee will determine one of the following outcomes based on the status of the doctoral candidate's dissertation corrections:

- a) The doctoral candidate will not be awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree but may resubmit a revised thesis for further examination after additional study and research, which will necessitate a retake of the Final Dissertation Oral Examination (FDOE) **no less than 90 days** (3 months) and **no more than 180 days** (6 months) after the previous unsuccessful attempt.
- b) If this second attempt requires clarification, the previously stated rules for clarification apply. However, if the second attempt is also **unsuccessful**, the doctoral candidate will be **terminated from the program**. If the oral defense is failed twice, students have 30 days to petition the department for a third attempt. Failure to petition, or a rejected petition, will result in students' dismissal from the program.

5.4. Timeline for Final Dissertation Examination

The doctoral candidate must wait a **minimum of one semester** between successfully completing their Comprehensive Examination (CE) and their Final Dissertation Examination (FDE). The FDE must also occur **no more than five years after the CE**. Throughout this period, students need to register for the ARCH999 course and maintain good academic standing, which includes a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Table 4: Timeline for Final Dissertation Examination Preparation

Time frame	Activities
1 semester before FDOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit the PhD graduation application to the Office of Graduate School. • The Office of Graduate Studies ensures completion of all graduate requirements before the final semester of enrollment.
6 months before FDOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the research progress with the Dissertation Committee members.
4 months before FDOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit the completed draft of the Dissertation to Major Dissertation Advisor. Approval from the major dissertation advisor is mandatory before the Dissertation is sent to the Dissertation Committee.
2 months before FDOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The completed written dissertation draft is distributed to the Dissertation Committee members for evaluation. • The Dissertation Committee will take at least four weeks for their review and feedback. • If substantial revisions are required, these must be completed before finalizing the defense date.
3 weeks before FDOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student submits the "Request for a Final Dissertation Oral Exam" form (GP-FM903) to the Graduate Studies Unit of the Department of Architecture. • The FDOE must be scheduled to occur at least four weeks prior to the Graduate Studies deadline for electronically filing the dissertation.
1 week before FDOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administrator of the graduate studies unit of the Department of Architecture will send out an announcement and invitation of the scheduled Final Dissertation Oral Exam to the Department faculty.
Day of FDOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The doctoral candidate will deliver a 30 - 45-minute public presentation for the School of Architecture and Design community and invited guests. • The doctoral candidate will verbally respond to the Dissertation Committee's inquiries for additional clarification regarding the dissertation and defend their work, with the entire session not exceeding two hours. • After the oral defense, the doctoral candidate will exit the room while the Dissertation Committee votes and assesses the work for honors designation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee chair meets the candidate and delivers the result of the examination and the committee's feedback on the necessary revisions to be made.
Within 1 week after the FDOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each committee member will individually evaluate the FDOE using GP-FM903(I). The Dissertation Committee chair aggregates the individual assessments to determine the majority decision and reporting the final overall award of "Honors," "Satisfactory," or "Unsatisfactory" on the GP-FM903(C) form. The dissertation committee chair (major dissertation advisor) is responsible for submitting both completed forms to the Department of Architecture's Graduate Studies Unit within one week of the FDOE.
Following the FDOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The doctoral candidate is responsible for incorporating all changes requested by the Dissertation Committee and the Graduate School, as well as meeting all deadlines for uploading the Electronic Dissertation and submitting a digital copy of the final dissertation to both the Student Academic Services of the Department of Architecture and UMI/ProQuest via the KU Graduate School submission link.

6.0. ADVISING, MENTORING, AND COMMUNICATION OF ASSIGNMENTS & ROLES

6.1. PhD Program Committee

The PhD Program in Architecture is overseen by the PhD Program Committee. This committee is composed of all faculty members who have earned a doctoral degree and is chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies. The committee works alongside the director to manage the responsibilities of the program.

- a) To develop, maintain, and monitor all graduate studies policies and procedures related to PhD program.
- b) To help resolve issues involving graduate studies.
- c) To conduct annual reviews and assessments of PhD students.
- d) To conduct the annual program review and assessment of the PhD Program.
- e) To review applications and select new graduate students for the upcoming academic year.

6.2. Dissertation Committee

A dissertation committee guides and supports graduate students through the dissertation process, ensuring a high-quality final product. This committee is composed of a chair, who provides primary guidance, and other members who offer expertise and feedback. Typically, the graduate student, in consultation with their advisor, selects the four to five members. The PhD Program committee must approve the final committee composition.

Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee.

- a) Ensure the dissertation complies with stringent academic requirements by offering guidance on research methodologies and assisting the student in navigating the research process.
- b) Participate in both the comprehensive examination and final dissertation examination offering critical feedback on the dissertation's content and arguments.
- c) Assign grades for the comprehensive examination (CE) and the final dissertation examination (FDE).

6.2.1. Replacement of Committee Members

Graduate students may request a change in their **Major Dissertation Advisor or other committee members**. The PhD Program Committee sets the criteria for approving these changes.

A committee member, including the Major Dissertation Advisor, can also request to be released from the committee, as long as the graduate student agrees. The same process used to approve new committee members is used to approve these requests. In rare cases, a faculty member can ask to be released from a committee without the student's consent. Examples of these situations include

- 1) conflict of interest,
- 2) the faculty member leaving the University, and
- 3) the student changing the dissertation topic.

For additional information, student may consult Graduate Studies Policies at <http://policy.ku.edu/office/Graduate-Studies>

6.3. Major Dissertation Advisor

A major dissertation advisor is a faculty member who guides and mentors graduate students through the dissertation process. They play a critical role in a graduate student's academic journey, particularly during the research and writing phases and guide them to overcome obstacles. New students will be assigned a major dissertation advisor and a co-dissertation advisor at the time of admission. Every graduate student is required to have a graduate advisor from the time of admission until completion of degree requirements.

Responsibilities of the Major Dissertation Advisor

- a) Advise graduate students on defining their research interests, choosing appropriate coursework, and ensuring their research meets the required standards of their discipline in terms of depth, breadth, and quality.
- b) Guide graduate students in selecting and forming their dissertation committee and serve as the committee chair, ensuring all committee responsibilities are properly conducted.
- c) Working with the graduate student to set a realistic schedule for completion of various phases of the program.
- d) Assist graduate students in developing an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and help them identify career goals, assess their skills, and create a plan to achieve their professional aspirations.

- e) Mentor graduate students through the research and writing phases, offering specific suggestions on designing and executing their research, as well as providing advice on methodology and techniques.
- f) Provide timely feedback on research progress, writing, and presentations. Conduct annual evaluations of graduate student progress.
- g) Approve the dissertation proposal and the final draft of the dissertation before submission.
- h) Ensure compliance with all university and departmental rules. Assign grades for the dissertation and submit all necessary forms to the graduate studies unit.
- i) Advise graduate students on career options and the job market, write letters of recommendation, and introduce them to the broader academic community through conferences, seminars, and collaborations.
- j) Facilitate the publication of graduate student research.
- k) Help graduate students find funding for their graduate studies.

6.3.1. Change of Major Dissertation Advisor

Students may change advisors at any time provided they can identify another regular member of the department's graduate faculty willing to accept the position. It is the student's responsibility to identify the new advisor, to notify the director of graduate studies of the department at once and in writing of such changes, and to notify the previous advisor of the change. When a change of advisor is necessary for reasons beyond the student's control (e.g., a faculty member leaving KU, retiring, or when the advising relationship is no longer productive), the co-dissertation advisor is expected to step into the role on a temporary basis, unless alternative arrangements are made with the director of graduate studies and/or department chair to serve as the temporary advisor. The PhD program committee of the Department of Architecture will give the student a defined period of time to identify the new advisor of up to six months. The director of graduate studies will assist with and monitor this process, but it will be entirely the responsibility of the student to initiate contacts and identify a faculty member willing to be their primary advisor.

Any faculty member has the right to refuse to continue as a student's advisor or to serve on any student's committee. If a student is unable to identify a faculty member from the Department of Architecture and Interior Architecture who is willing to serve as their advisor within six months, or sufficient faculty members to make up a committee, this may be grounds for dismissal.

6.4. The Graduate Student and Doctoral Candidate

A **Graduate student** is someone pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. This degree involves advanced coursework, research, and writing a dissertation.

While the terms "**graduate student**" and "**doctoral candidate**" are often used interchangeably, they can have different meanings. A **graduate student** is typically in the early stages of their program, focusing on coursework and preparing for research. A **doctoral candidate**, on the other hand, has usually finished their coursework and comprehensive exams and is focused on writing their dissertation. The PhD program sometimes refers to this stage as ABD (All But Dissertation).

6.4.1. Responsibilities of the Graduate Student | Doctoral Candidate

- a) Becoming familiar with, and adhering to, the rules, policies, and procedures in place in the department, graduate school and the University as outlined in available resources such as department website, graduate student handbook (Department of Architecture, graduate school website, and important University policies related to graduate studies.
- b) Adhering to all deadlines and policies regarding registration, leaves of absence, limitations on time and recertification, dissertation submission and graduation as listed in the department website, graduate student handbook (Department of Architecture, graduate school website, and important University policies related to graduate studies.
- c) Develop their Individual Development Plan (IDP) with the assistance of their major dissertation advisor. This process involves setting specific, measurable goals and outlining the actionable steps required to achieve them.
- d) Complete all required foundation courses, Major and Minor courses as scheduled in the PhD Study plan
- e) Complete the research skill, residency, and responsible conduct of research (RCR) requirements as scheduled in the PhD Study plan.
- f) Establishing a dissertation committee, with the assistance of the major dissertation advisor, early in the dissertation stage.
- g) Maintaining a good academic record and steady progress of each stage of research.
- h) Meeting with the major dissertation advisor when requested and reporting regularly on progress and results, including informing the major dissertation advisor of any significant changes that may affect the progress of the research.

- i) Meeting with the dissertation committee when requested and reporting regularly on progress of the research and results.
- j) Formulate and defend a formal research proposal that outlines the methodology, scope, and original contribution of the intended study.
- k) Demonstrate subject matter expertise by successfully completing the comprehensive examination, satisfying all departmental and institutional requirements for doctoral candidacy.
- l) Execute independent, original research in accordance with ethical standards and established scientific or scholarly methodologies.
- m) Compose a comprehensive dissertation that documents research findings, analysis, and conclusions to a standard suitable for peer-reviewed publication.
- n) Coordinate the administrative logistics for the final dissertation defense, including committee synchronization and public notification.
- o) Justifying the academic rigor and novelty of the completed research during a final oral examination, articulating the significance and impact of the work to a panel of expert examiners.
- p) Attending and presenting at academic conferences and preparing research manuscripts journal submission.

6.5. Information for Graduate Assistants (GTA/GRA/GA)

Graduate assistantship appointment types and related policies (GRA, GTA, and GA) are available in the [Office of Graduate Studies Academic Catalog](#)

Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA)

Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) are salaried graduate student employees who perform research in their field or a closely related field of study. This research experience forms an integral part of their graduate education. For further information, applicants should communicate directly with the chair or graduate advisor of the major department.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA)

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) are salaried graduate student employees whose job duties consist primarily of direct involvement in classroom or laboratory instruction. Graduate students should communicate directly with the chair or graduate advisor regarding GTA appointments. Graduate teaching assistantships in Lawrence are governed by a [Memorandum of Agreement \(MoA\)](#) between KU, the Kansas Board of Regents, and the American Federation of Teachers, which represents KU GTAs in Lawrence. The Memorandum of Agreement, with additional information on tuition and fee payment,

appointments, wages, benefits, and other topics of interest to GTAs, is available on the [Graduate Studies website](#).

Graduate Assistantships (GA)

Graduate Assistants (GA) are graduate student employees (either salaried or hourly) whose job duties are professional in nature and further their professional and academic development. For further information, applicants should communicate directly with the chair of the department of architecture.