

# Stanford

Published on *Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures* (<https://gap.stanford.edu>)

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## 4.5.1 Doctoral Degrees, Requirements: Policy

Last updated on:

### Summary

Details all university requirements for doctoral degrees: Ph.D., J.S.D., D.M.A. and Ed.D.

### Rationale

Stanford University has authorized the granting of several doctoral degrees: the Ph.D., D.M.A., J.S.D., and Ed.D. degrees. Currently the Ed.D. is not being offered.

#### Authority:

- Committee on Graduate Studies (policy)
- [Office of the Registrar](#) [1] via Stanford Services & Support (implementation)
- Degree program office (implementation)

#### Applicability:

Students pursuing and programs granting doctoral degrees.

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## 1. Requirements for Specific Types of Doctoral Degrees

## Doctor of Philosophy

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is conferred on candidates who have demonstrated to the satisfaction of their degree program substantial scholarship, high attainment in a particular field of knowledge, and ability to do independent investigation and present the results of such research. They must satisfy the general requirements for advanced degrees, the requirements specified by their degree programs, and the doctoral requirements described below. The option for a Ph.D. minor is also described below, though it is not a Ph.D. requirement.

## Doctor of the Science of Law

The degree of the Doctor of the Science of Law (J.S.D.) is conferred upon candidates who hold a J.D. or its equivalent, who complete one academic year in residence, and who, as a result of independent legal research, present a dissertation that is, in the opinion of the faculty of the Stanford School of Law, a contribution to knowledge. Such work and dissertation shall conform to the rules of the Stanford School of Law and of Stanford University for the dissertation and university oral examinations.

## Doctor of Musical Arts

The degree of Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) is conferred on candidates who have satisfied the general requirements for advanced degrees, the program requirements specified in the “Music” section of the Stanford Bulletin, and the candidacy requirement described below.

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# 2. Residency

Each type of graduate degree offered at Stanford has a residency requirement based on the number of academic units required for the degree. The minimum number of units required for the Ph.D. and D.M.A. degrees is 135, and for the J.S.D. is 39 units (26 semester units). See [GAP 3.2 Residency Policy for Graduate Students](#) [2].

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# 3. Candidacy

Admission to a doctoral degree program is preliminary to, and distinct from, admission to candidacy. Admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree is a judgment by the faculty of the degree program of the student’s potential to successfully complete the requirements of the degree program. Students are expected to complete degree program qualifying procedures and apply for candidacy by the end of their second year in the Ph.D. program (see [GAP 4.6 Doctoral Degrees, Candidacy](#) [3]).

Failure to complete the academic requirements, including university and degree program requirements, including admission to candidacy, within the established time limits may lead to dismissal (see [GAP 3.1 Registration, Enrollment, and Academic Progress](#) [4]).

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# 4. University Oral Examination

Passing a university oral examination is a requirement of the Ph.D. and J.S.D. degree. See [GAP 4.7 Doctoral Degrees, University Oral Examinations & Committees](#) [5].

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## 5. Dissertation

An approved doctoral dissertation is required for the Ph.D. and J.S.D. degrees. See [GAP 4.8 Doctoral Degrees, Dissertations & Dissertation Reading Committees](#) [6].

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## 6. Teaching and Research Requirements

A number of degree programs require their students to teach (serving as a Teaching Assistant) or assist a faculty member in research (serving as a Research Assistant) for one or more quarters as part of their doctoral programs. Detailed information is included in the degree program sections of the Stanford Bulletin and in degree program requirements.

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## 7. Foreign Language Requirement

Some degree programs require a reading knowledge of one or more foreign languages as indicated in their respective sections of the university bulletin and in degree program requirements. Fulfillment of language requirements must be endorsed by the chair of the major department.

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## 8. Ph.D. Minor

Students pursuing a Ph.D. may pursue a minor in another degree program to complement their Ph.D. program. This option is not available to students who are not pursuing a Ph.D. Candidates cannot pursue a minor in their own major degree program. In rare cases, a Ph.D. student may complete the requirements for more than one minor.

Only degree programs that offer a Ph.D. may offer a minor, and those programs are not required to do so. Interdisciplinary Ph.D. minors, administered by a designated academic department, may be approved by the Faculty Senate. The minor should represent a program of graduate quality and depth, including core requirements and electives or examinations. The degree program offering the minor establishes the core and examination requirements. Elective courses are planned by the students in conjunction with their minor and Ph.D. programs.

The minimum university requirement for a Ph.D. minor is 20 units of course work at the graduate level (typically courses numbered 200 and above). If a minor program chooses to require those pursuing the minor to pass the Ph.D. qualifying or field examinations, the 20-unit minimum can be reduced. All of the course work for a minor must be done at Stanford.

Units taken for the minor can be counted as part of the overall requirement for the Ph.D. of 135 units of graduate course work done at Stanford. Courses used for a minor may not be used also to meet the requirements for a master's degree. In rare cases, a Ph.D. student may complete the requirements for more than one minor. In that case, 20 unduplicated units must be completed for each minor.

An [Application for Ph.D. Minor](#) [7] outlining a program of study must be approved by the major and minor degree programs and submitted to the Student Services Center. This form is submitted at the time of admission to candidacy or at the appropriate time thereafter. This form specifies whether representation from the minor degree program on the university oral examination committee is required by the minor department.

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### **Related Content:**

#### Related Policies

- [GAP 3.1 Registration, Enrollment, and Academic Progress](#) [4]
- [GAP 3.2 Residency Policy for Graduate Students](#) [2]
- [GAP 4.6 Doctoral Degrees, Candidacy](#) [3]
- [GAP 4.7 Doctoral Degrees, University Oral Examination & Committees](#) [5]
- [GAP 4.8 Doctoral Degrees, Dissertations & Dissertation Reading Committees](#) [6]
- [GAP 6.1 Graduate Tuition Categories](#) [8]

#### Related Bulletin Sections

- [Degree-Specific Requirements \(Doctoral Degrees\)](#) [9]

#### Related Information and Forms

- [Application for Candidacy for Doctoral Degree](#) [10]
- [Application for Ph.D. Minor](#) [7]

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**Source URL:** <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-4/subchapter-5/page-4-5-1>

### **Links**

[1] [https://stanford.service-now.com/services?id=services\\_portal\\_home](https://stanford.service-now.com/services?id=services_portal_home)

[2] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-3/subchapter-2/page-3-2-1>

[3] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-4/subchapter-6/page-4-6-1>

[4] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-3/subchapter-1/page-3-1-1>

[5] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-4/subchapter-7/page-4-7-1>

[6] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-4/subchapter-8/page-4-8-1>

[7] <https://registrar.stanford.edu/phd-minor-application>

[8] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-6/subchapter-1/page-6-1-1>

[9] <https://bulletin.stanford.edu/academic-policies/graduate-degrees#doctoral>

[10] <https://registrar.stanford.edu/application-candidacy-doctoral-degree>