### 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](https://gap.stanford.edu) via HelpSU (implementation)
- Departmental 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 department or school 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 program requirements specified by their departments, 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.

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].

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 program, department or school of the student’s potential to successfully complete the requirements of the degree program. Students are expected to complete department 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, department, and 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]).

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 and Committees [5].

5. Dissertation

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

6. Teaching and Research Requirements

A number of departments/schools 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 department sections of the Stanford Bulletin and in departmental requirements.

7. Foreign Language Requirement

Some departments require a reading knowledge of one or more foreign languages as indicated in department sections of the University Bulletin and in departmental requirements. Fulfillment of language requirements must be endorsed by the chair of the major department.

8. Ph.D. Minor

Students pursuing a Ph.D. may pursue a minor in another department or 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 department or program. In rare cases, a Ph.D. student may complete the requirements for more than one minor.

Only departments that offer a Ph.D. may offer a minor, and those departments 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 department offering the minor establishes the core and examination requirements. Elective courses are planned by the students in conjunction with their minor and Ph.D. departments.
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 department 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 outlining a program of study must be approved by the major and minor departments 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 department on the University oral examination committee is required by the minor department.