

Stanford

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4.6.1 Doctoral Degrees, Candidacy: Policy

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Summary

Admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree is a judgment by the faculty of the student's degree program on the 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 doctoral program. Candidacy is valid for five years, subject to satisfactory academic progress.

Rationale

Admission to candidacy marks the end of a doctoral student's initial study period. Each degree program has an assessment procedure by which it pronounces the students qualified to pursue the doctoral degree and admits them as a candidate for the it. By admitting the student to candidacy, the degree program states its judgment that the student has the knowledge and ability to complete a research project and present it as a dissertation within the applicable time limits.

Authority:

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

Applicability:

Doctoral students and programs

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1. Admission to 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 in 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 doctoral program. Honors Cooperative students are required to apply by the end of their fourth year. Candidacy is valid for five calendar years (through the end of the quarter in which candidacy expires), unless terminated by the degree program (for example, for unsatisfactory academic progress). A Pregnancy or Parental Leave of Absence automatically extends the pre-candidacy or candidacy period (see [GAP 5.9 Pregnancy, Childbirth, Adoption, and Lactation](#) ^[2]for details).

Admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree is granted by the degree program following a student's successful completion of qualifying procedures as determined by the degree program. Programmatic policy determines procedures for subsequent attempts to advance to candidacy in the event that the student does not successfully complete the procedures. Failure to advance to candidacy results in the dismissal of the student from the doctoral program (see [GAP 5.6 Dismissal for Academic and Professional Reasons](#) ^[3]).

Candidacy is confirmed on the [Application for Candidacy for Doctoral Degree](#) ^[4] (or the degree program's version of this form). This form also specifies a departmentally approved program of study to fulfill degree requirements, including required course work, language requirements, teaching requirements, dissertation (final project and public lecture-demonstration for D.M.A.), and university oral examination (for other doctoral degrees). The degree program should confirm at this point that the student's program will meet all university and degree program requirements.

Prior to candidacy, at least 3 units of course work must be taken with each of four Stanford faculty members. To reiterate, however, a student will only be admitted to candidacy if, in addition to the student fulfilling programmatic prerequisites, the faculty makes the judgment that the student has the potential to successfully complete the requirements of the degree program.

If the doctoral student is pursuing a minor, approval by the degree program awarding the minor is also required on the Application for Candidacy.

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2. Extension of the Pre-Candidacy Period

The degree program may determine that extension of the pre-candidacy period is necessary to provide a student with additional time to complete qualifying procedures or to provide faculty with necessary evidence on which to base a candidacy decision. Decisions to extend the pre-candidacy period and thus delay the candidacy decision should be made on an individual student basis and should not be applied to entire cohorts or students absent exceptional circumstances. Degree programs are not obligated to extend the pre-candidacy period.

When providing an extension of the pre-candidacy period, the degree program should communicate in writing the reason for the extension, expectations for the academic work to be completed by the student, the duration of the extension, and the timeline for the candidacy review. Extensions of the pre-candidacy period should generally not extend beyond two academic quarters.

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3. Time Limit for Completion of Degree with Candidacy

Students are required to maintain active candidacy through conferral of the doctoral degree. All requirements for the degree must be completed before candidacy expires. Candidacy is valid for five calendar years (through the end of the quarter in which candidacy expires), unless terminated by the degree program (for example, for academic unsatisfactory progress). The candidacy time limit is not automatically extended by a student's leave of absence.

Failure to make minimum academic progress or complete university and degree program requirements in a timely or satisfactory manner may lead to dismissal of the student (see [GAP 5.6 Dismissal for Academic and Professional Reasons](#) [3]).

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4. Extension of Candidacy

All requests for extension, whether prompted by a leave or some other circumstance, must be filed by the student before the conclusion of the program's time limit, using the [Application for Extension of Candidacy or Master's Program](#) [5] form. Degree programs are not obligated to grant an extension. Students may receive a maximum of one additional year of candidacy per extension. Extensions require review by the degree program of a dissertation progress report, a timetable for completion of the dissertation, any other factors regarded as relevant by the degree program, and approval by the degree program such approval is at the degree program's discretion.

A Pregnancy or Parental Leave of Absence will also result in an extension of candidacy (or of the pre-candidacy period). See [GAP 5.9 Pregnancy, Childbirth, Adoption, and Lactation](#) [5], for details.

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Related Bulletin Sections

- [Doctor of Philosophy: Candidacy](#) [9]

Related Information and Forms

- [Application for Candidacy for Doctoral Degree](#) [4]
- [Application for Ph.D. Minor](#) [10]
- [Application for Extension of Candidacy or Master's Program](#) [5]
- [Memo, Phd Candidacy Issues](#) [11] (Richard Roberts, 2012) [pdf]

Source URL: <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-4/subchapter-6/page-4-6-1>

Links

[1] https://stanford.service-now.com/services?id=services_portal_home

[2] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-5/subchapter-9/page-5-9-1>

[3] <https://gap.stanford.edu/handbooks/gap-handbook/chapter-5/subchapter-6/page-5-6-1>

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

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