Graduate School Doctoral Degree Requirements

The information in this section is a summary of the Graduate School doctoral degree requirements. The Graduate School Doctoral Degree Requirements WEB page has more detailed information.

It is the responsibility of the student to meet the following Graduate School minimum requirements to qualify for the doctoral degree.

A student must satisfy the requirements that are in force at the time the degree is to be awarded.

- A minimum of 90 credits must be completed (a Master’s degree from the UW or another institution may be used as a substitute for 30 credits of enrollment).
- A minimum of 60 credits must be completed at the University of Washington.
- At least 18 credits of UW course work at and above the 500 level must be completed prior to the General Examination.
- At least 18 numerically graded UW credits of 500 level courses, and approved 400 level courses, must be completed prior to the General Examination.
- At least 60 credits must be completed prior to scheduling the General Examination. A Master's degree from the UW or another institution may be used as a substitute for 30 of these 60 credits.
- A minimum of 27 dissertation credits (so-called Physics 800 credits) spread out over a period of at least three quarters must be completed. At least one of those three quarters must come after the student passes the General Exam. Except for summer quarters, students are limited to a maximum of 10 dissertation credits per quarter.
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 must be maintained.
- The General Examination must be successfully completed.
- A dissertation accepted by the Graduate School and the reading committee must be submitted.
- The Final Examination must be successfully completed.
- Registration as a full- or part-time graduate student at the University must be maintained, including for the quarter in which the examinations are completed AND the quarter the degree is conferred.
- All work for the doctoral degree must be completed within ten years.

The following doctoral degree requirements may impact progress:

- If a student enters the UW with a Master’s degree or equivalent from elsewhere, he or she must satisfy the requirement of taking 18 graded credits in 500 level courses, or approved 400 level courses at the University of Washington before the General Examination is scheduled.
- A candidate must register for a minimum of 27 credits of Physics 800 over a period of at least 3 quarters in which at least one quarter comes after the student passes the General Examination. Scheduling the General Examination too close to the Final Examination may lead to a deficiency in Physics 800 credits.
- The Final Examination may be scheduled if: (a) a student passed a General Examination in a previous quarter; and (b) a reading committee is officially established with the Graduate School; and (c) the reading committee has read an entire draft of the dissertation; and (d) the entire supervisory committee has agreed that the student is prepared and has approved the student to schedule a Final Examination. At least four members of a supervisory committee must be present at the examination, i.e., the Chair and the Graduate School Representative must both be present, as well as at least two additional Graduate Faculty members.

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