

University Policy 3.01.10

Advanced Doctoral Students

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POLICY STATEMENT

Capella University requires that all doctoral students successfully complete all didactic coursework, residencies, and comprehensive examination courses prior to conducting dissertation or doctoral capstone research. Capella University requires that all doctoral students successfully complete the dissertation or doctoral capstone requirements of their program for degree conferral. The advanced doctoral phase is considered complete when students successfully meet all of the designated requirements within the time frames established by the university. Students are required to maintain good academic standing as defined in university policy 3.01.04 *Academic Standing*. All doctoral students are expected to remain continuously registered once they begin the advanced doctoral phase of their program, registering every quarter for the appropriate course in accordance with the advanced doctoral course sequence. Doctoral students must complete the requirements for their program listed in Capella's *University Catalog* and the *Capella University Doctoral Manual*.

RATIONALE

Capella University recognizes that the completion of a doctoral degree requires the demonstration of unique competencies not present in other degree levels. This policy outlines and defines the procedures and requirements of these program components necessary for doctoral degree conferral.

DEFINITIONS

Advanced Doctoral Phase

The advanced doctoral phase begins after a student has completed all didactic coursework and residencies. An advanced doctoral student's requirements include any remaining courses in the comprehensive examination, dissertation, doctoral project, or doctoral capstone course sequence, and any additional program requirements as published in the *University Catalog*.

Didactic Coursework

Didactic coursework refers to academic courses that focus predominantly on instruction of theories, facts, and competencies.

Inactivity

A student is considered "inactive" during any academic quarter in which they are not registered in any Capella course (including non-credit courses, residencies, etc.).

PROCEDURES

I. Comprehensive Examination Requirements

- A. It is expected that students will require no more than one quarter to complete their comprehensive examination course requirements.
- B. A comprehensive examination course is considered complete when students successfully complete all of its requirements and they have been reported complete by the assigned faculty member.
- C. Failure to successfully complete the comprehensive examination within the stated time frame will result in a Not Satisfactory (“NS”) grade.
- D. An “NS” grade indicates failure of the comprehensive examination and failure to maintain good academic standing, and may result in a comprehensive examination retake or administrative withdrawal from the university. Students should refer to the *Capella University Doctoral Manual* and university policy 3.01.04 *Academic Standing* for additional information.

II. Dissertation and Doctoral Capstone Requirements

- A. The advanced doctoral phase is considered complete when students successfully complete all of the designated dissertation or doctoral capstone requirements.
- B. A Not Satisfactory (“NS”) grade or a “Non-Performance” competency evaluation indicates a student’s failure of the dissertation or doctoral capstone and failure to maintain good academic standing, and may result in administrative withdrawal from the university. Students should refer to the *Capella University Doctoral Manual*, *Dissertation Manual*, and university policy 3.01.04 *Academic Standing* for additional information.
- C. Demonstration of Progress
 - 1. Upon entering the advanced doctoral phase of their program, any student who does not achieve a Satisfactory (“S”) grade, fails to complete a degree requirement after 52 consecutive weeks, or receives three deferrals of work submitted for a review is considered to be in poor academic standing.
 - 2. Students are expected to maintain good standing throughout their dissertation, capstone, or doctoral project. Each program maintains program specific requirements that must be met to maintain good academic standing.
 - 3. Students who register for an advanced doctoral course and subsequently drop it with a Withdrawal (“W”) grade in two consecutive attempts will also be considered in poor academic standing.

III. Advanced Doctoral Students Change of Program Options

- A. Prior to initiating a degree program change, advanced doctoral students are encouraged to consult with academic advising to discuss options and considerations for the change.
- B. Eligibility to Request a Change of Degree

PhD students who have not begun or completed their comprehensive assessment requirements, PhD students who have not begun or completed their dissertation requirements, and professional doctorate students who have not begun or completed their capstone or final doctoral project requirements may request a change of degree

under university policies *2.02.07 Changing Academic Program* and *3.01.04 Academic Standing*.

1. PhD students who fail to complete their comprehensive assessment requirements but are otherwise in good standing with Capella University may request a change of degree to a predetermined, aligned master's degree program, through the change of degree process described in university policies *2.02.07 Changing Academic Program* and *3.01.04 Academic Standing*. PhD students who elect to change to the predetermined master's degree option will be required to complete the master's-level capstone(s) to be eligible for conferral of the master's degree.
 2. PhD students who fail to complete their dissertation requirements but have passed their comprehensive examination and are otherwise in good standing with Capella University may request a change of degree to a predetermined, aligned master's degree program, through the change of degree process, under university policies *2.02.07 Changing Academic Program* and *3.01.04 Academic Standing*. Students who elect to change to the predetermined option may be eligible for conferral of the master's degree.
 3. Students enrolled in a professional doctorate program who fail to complete their capstone or final doctoral project requirements and are in good standing with Capella University may request a change of degree, if/when a predetermined, aligned master's degree program is available. Students are encouraged to first consult with their academic advisor to determine whether such an alternative is available for consideration.
- C. Advanced doctoral students who request and are approved for a change of degree to the predetermined, aligned master's degree program are not eligible for readmission to any doctoral program at Capella University.
- D. Doctoral students with a conferred master's degree from Capella University may not request a change of degree to a conferred master's degree program. Students who have previously earned a Capella University master's degree from Capella University will be ineligible for conferral of a duplicate second degree.

IV. Inactivity and Advanced Doctoral Students

- A. Doctoral students do not have access to their dissertation or doctoral capstone courseroom during quarters in which they are not registered in a dissertation or doctoral capstone course.
- B. Doctoral students may access support services such as Academic Advising, Financing Support, Disability Services, Doctoral Affairs, and Military Support during quarters in which they are not registered in a dissertation or doctoral capstone course.
- C. Doctoral students who have not registered for a dissertation or doctoral capstone course for two quarters may have their mentor reassigned by the school and may need to request a new mentor.
- D. Doctoral students must be registered in dissertation, doctoral capstone, or program-specific advanced doctoral courses throughout the quarter in which they complete their degree requirements.

- V. All procedures in this policy apply to students in programs in GuidedPath and FlexPath formats.

POLICY OWNER

Academic Owner: Office of Research and Scholarship

Operations Owner: Doctoral Affairs

RELATED DOCUMENTS

University policy 2.02.07 Changing Academic Program

University policy 3.01.04 Academic Standing

University policy 3.03.01 Human Research Protections

Capella University Doctoral Manual

Dissertation Manual

University Catalog

HRP Standard Operating Procedures

REVISION HISTORY

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