

# DOCTORAL DEGREE

The doctoral degree is the highest academic degree offered by CSU. Those who earn it must demonstrate significant intellectual achievement, scholarly ability, and breadth of knowledge. The nature of the degree program will vary greatly depending on the type of doctoral degree and discipline involved. There are two types of doctoral degrees that may be earned, the doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) and the professional doctorate (P.D.). There are several important distinctions between the Ph.D. and the P.D. The defining characteristics of each are as follows:

1. The Ph.D. and the P.D. degrees are distinguishable from each other based on the courses comprising the programs' curricula, student learning outcomes, and measures of student success. The New Degree Program Proposal must address these components as part of the Provost's and the University Curriculum Committee's review process for such proposals.
2. For the Ph.D., the scholarly, scientific, and creative outcomes are expected to contribute to the knowledge base of the field. Extensive original research or creative activity relevant to the discipline is required. The preparation of a dissertation that presents the results of sustained research or investigation of an important intellectual problem is mandatory.
3. For the P.D., the experiential, scientific, and creative outcomes are expected to contribute to the highest level of professional skills and the application of such skills and knowledge in the profession and its practice. Applied research, clinical research, or extensive advanced experience relevant to the profession is required. The preparation of a dissertation that presents the results of an applied project relevant to the profession is mandatory for non-accredited programs; programs accredited through a national organization may require other capstone experiences or a dissertation.

## Credit Requirements (Ph.D., P.D.)

A minimum of 72 semester credits beyond the baccalaureate degree is required for both the Ph.D. and the P.D.

*For students who submit a master's degree in partial fulfillment of these requirements:* A master's degree from an accredited college or university may be accepted for a maximum of 30 credits. In addition, up to ten credits in courses earned after the date on which the master's degree was awarded may be accepted in transfer if approved by the student's advisory committee, the department, and the Graduate School (<https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/>). A minimum of 32 credits must be earned at CSU after admission to a doctoral program. At least 21 credits beyond the master's degree must be earned in courses numbered 500 or above.

*For students enrolled in a continuous master's/doctoral program at CSU:* All courses taken during the master's program may be applied to the doctoral degree, even if the total master's degree credits exceed 30. These courses must be specified on the doctoral program of study and approved by the student's advisory committee, the doctoral department, and the Graduate School. Continuous programs are those in which the student is admitted to the doctoral program and formally registers for the Fall or Spring semester immediately following receipt of the master's degree. All other prescribed credit requirements of the master's and doctoral degrees remain in effect in such cases.

*For students who do not submit a master's degree in partial fulfillment of these requirements:* Up to ten credits earned at an accredited college or university may be accepted for transfer if approved by the student's advisory committee, the department, and the Graduate School. A minimum of 62 credits must be earned at CSU after admission to a doctoral program. At least 37 credits beyond the bachelor's degree must be earned in courses numbered 500 or above.

A professional, post baccalaureate degree in Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Law, or Divinity may be accepted for a maximum of 30 credits. The institution granting such a degree must be certified by one of the major regional accrediting agencies. Students contemplating this option may be required to pass an equivalency examination to assure they possess levels of knowledge and skill generally expected of master's degree holders.

## P.D. Requirements

Requirements for a P.D. may vary based on the presence or absence of an accreditation process. P.D. programs that are accredited through a national organization will identify curricular content, process, and outcome requirements for the degree to meet the accreditation standards. These curricular requirements may take precedence over Graduate School requirements; however, the minimum number of credits and their level are Graduate School requirements regardless of accreditation standards. P.D. programs that are not accredited must conform to Graduate School requirements.

Departments or Special Academic Units with a P.D. program must form an active advisory board composed of CSU faculty and individuals from outside of CSU who are leaders in the discipline from applied settings. Advisory board members serve to provide advice on the program curriculum, assist with student projects and placements, and interact individually with students.

The Graduate School requires the following P.D. program components:

1. Programs that do not require relevant work experience for admission must include a significant experiential component within the curriculum.
2. Curricula must include a minimum of 18 credits of course work at the 500 level or above that reflect professionalism and applied or translational knowledge and fulfill the learning objectives of the programs. The 18 credits of coursework must meet the following criteria:
  - a. A minimum of 6 credits is included within each of the two categories (professionalism, applied or translational knowledge),
  - b. at least 9 credits must be regular coursework, and
  - c. up to 9 credits may be non-regular coursework (Scholastic Standards) (<http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/graduate-bulletin/graduate-study/procedures-requirements-all-degrees/#scholastic-standards>).
3. The preparation of a dissertation is required for non-accredited programs. The dissertation is a formal, written document which presents the results of an applied or clinical research project on an issue relevant to the profession and practice. The dissertation must represent an independent intellectual achievement and must make a meaningful contribution to the creation, use, and improvement of knowledge in the context of a profession and practice. Students typically earn a number

of research credits while completing the work which underlies the dissertation.

4. At least one graduate committee member must have or have had a substantial and relevant employment record in an applied setting and meet the Graduate School requirements for membership (Graduate Advisor and Committee Makeup (<http://graduateschool.colostate.edu/policies-and-procedures/advisor-committee/>)). The committee chair must submit a request for approval of the individual that includes proof of the Advisory Committee's endorsement of the individual and a description of the individual's substantial and relevant employment record in an applied setting to the dean of the Graduate School.

## Ph.D. Requirements

The preparation of a dissertation is required. The dissertation is a formal, written document which presents the results of sustained research or investigation on an important intellectual problem. The dissertation must represent independent, intellectual achievement and must make a meaningful contribution to the knowledge, accumulated wisdom, or culture of the field in which it is written. Students typically earn a number of research credits while completing the work which underlies the dissertation.

When programs within the same department have both a Ph.D. and a non-accredited P.D., Ph.D. students in the department offering the P.D. may enroll in one or more of the 18 P.D. credits that meet the professionalism and applied/translational knowledge requirement. However, these credits may NOT count toward the 72 credits beyond the baccalaureate required for the Ph.D.; they will be in addition to that number. Credits earned in P.D. specific courses cannot be part of the program of study for any Ph.D. student.

## Doctoral Residency Requirement (Ph.D., P.D.)

There is no CSU residency requirement for doctoral degree programs; however, such requirements may exist at the department level. Students should check with their departments about such policies. Whether or not a residency requirement exists, registration policies as outlined above must be followed.

## Doctoral Preliminary Examination (Ph.D., P.D.)

A preliminary examination shall be administered at least two terms before the final examination to determine whether the student is qualified to continue toward the doctorate. The usual procedure is to have written examinations in the field of specialization and supporting areas followed by an oral examination. In order to assure full information to all concerned (student, major professor, all committee members, department head, Graduate School), the intention to hold a doctoral Preliminary Examination is to be publicized two weeks in advance by the advisor. The student is responsible for obtaining the Report of Preliminary Examination (GS Form 16 (<https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Example-GS16-Form.pdf>)) from their RAMweb (<https://ramweb.colostate.edu/registrar/Public/Login.aspx>) account and returning it to the Graduate School, appropriately completed, after the conclusion of the examination.

Providing the committee approves, a candidate who fails the preliminary examination may be reexamined once and, for the reexamination, may be required to complete further work. The reexamination must be held no later than 12 months after the first examination. The examination must not be held earlier than two months after the first examination, unless the student agrees to a shorter time period. Failure to pass the second exam results in dismissal from the Graduate School.

Participation in oral examinations by the student and/or one or more members of the examining committee may be via electronic link so long as all are participating simultaneously and all committee members and the student have agreed to this in advance.

## Doctoral Candidacy (Ph.D., P.D.)

Doctoral students at CSU are considered to achieve "candidacy" for the degree upon passage of preliminary examinations. Candidates generally retain that status through the completion of the degree. However, candidacy is lost if

1. the student is placed on probation due to insufficient grade point average;
2. the student's graduate advisory committee finds insufficient progress is being made toward the degree; or
3. the student is dismissed for academic or disciplinary reasons.

The students who lose candidacy may regain it, when appropriate, through the established procedures for improving grade point average, demonstrating satisfactory progress, or achieving readmission.

## Doctoral Final Examination (Ph.D., P.D.)

At least one month before the final examination, the advisor will inform the student and the committee members of the nature and scope of the examination. Normally, the final examination will cover primarily the dissertation, but additional subject matter, specified by the committee at the time of the preliminary examination, may also be covered. Dissertation defenses are open to all members of the CSU community and the public at large. In order to assure timely notification across the entire campus, advisors should announce this information to the CSU community and public at large at least two weeks in advance. Advisors may publicize the defense through CSU's electronic announcement and message delivery system. The chairperson of the committee shall have the prerogative to decide whether those in attendance (outside of the committee) should be allowed to ask questions of the candidate during an oral examination.