



## **Ph.D. in International Crime and Justice**

### **Comprehensive Exam/Dissertation Process: Expectations of Major Professors and Students**

#### **PURPOSE**

The program handbook describes in detail the requirements of the comprehensive exam (CE) and the dissertation (see the “Comprehensive Exam” and “Dissertation” sections of the [“ICJ Ph.D. Student Handbook”](#)). This supplementary document provides general guidelines and expectations for the writing process of these two research projects. The intention of this document is to promote productive conversations regarding expectations and obligations for students and major professors (MP) throughout the mentored writing process of these two research projects.

This document should be discussed, signed, and dated at the initial meetings between MP and the student when planning the student’s CE and dissertation. One document for each project will be needed if the MP is different for dissertation. If the MP stays the same, the dissertation parts can be complete at a later time. The document will be kept in the students’ file.

#### **COMMITTEE GENERAL INFORMATION**

Students create two different committees—one for the CE and the second one for the dissertation. For the dissertation committee, generally, students keep the same CE committee and just add the out-of-the-department FIU faculty member (an FIU faculty from another department). Students can change to a new dissertation committee and can also change the dissertation committee during any point of the process. To change dissertation committee members, students must submit the University Graduate School (UGS) [D1r Form – Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee](#).

See [ICJ Ph.D. Student Handbook](#) guidelines in creating a CE and dissertation committee.

See the [UGS guidelines in creating a dissertation committee](#).

#### **THE PROCESS OF COMPLETING THE CE AND DISSERTATION**

1. What is the topic?

Choosing a MP must be based on the topic of the project—MP must possess subject matter expertise to successfully guide and mentor students. To ensure the timely completion of the project, the subject matter should stay within the initial agreed upon topic. Complete the corresponding part of the project being discussed.

CE Topic:

List the circumstances under which the topic may differ from the initial agreed upon topic:

Dissertation Topic:

List the circumstances under which the topic may differ from the initial agreed upon topic:

2. What is the expected timeline to complete the project?

Timelines for completion of both the CE and dissertation are detailed in the [ICJ Ph.D. Student Handbook](#). Adherence to this timeline is important, specially for funded students. Complete the below corresponding timeline of the project being discussed.

Timeline projections for CE. Ideally, the student should hold the defense towards the end of the semester in which they are enrolled in CE credits. The semester before enrolling in CE, students are strongly encouraged to enroll in CCJ 6915 - Supervised Research with the same MP who will be mentoring them during the CE process. The agreed upon timeline can begin during the semester of Supervised Research.

- Timeline to submit IJC Registration of Comprehensive Exam Form (Students need this form in order to register for CE credits):
  
- Timeline for first draft of Chapter 1 – Introduction/Overview of the project:
  
- Timeline for first draft of Chapter 2 – Literature review:
  
- Timeline for first draft of Chapter 3 – Methods:
  
- Timeline for FIU Initial IRB Approval (the approval that applies to the project):
  
- Timeline for first draft of Chapter 4 – Results:
  
- Timeline for first draft of Chapter 5 – Discussion/Conclusion:
  
- Timeline to finalize the CE for committee members:

- Timeline to hold the oral defense of the CE:
- Timeline to submit the UGS [D2 Form – Candidacy Exam Results](#):
- Timeline to submit the UGS [D1 Form – Dissertation Committee](#) (This should be submitted with or shortly after the D2 Form – Candidacy Exam Results):
- List any other timeline agreements not covered on the list above (optional):

Timeline projections for dissertation. This timeline projections also includes the timeline to receive approval for the dissertation proposal. The required dissertation proposal is a short proposal that provides sufficient information for the committee to attest that it is a feasible project. Ideally the proposal should be approved the first semester of dissertation work.

- Timeline to submit the UGS [D1 Form – Dissertation Committee](#) (Ideally, this should be submitted with or shortly after D2 Form – Candidacy Exam Results):
- Timeline for first draft of dissertation proposal:
- Timeline to complete the CITI Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research Course (RCR). This is not the same as the CITI Human/Behavioral Human Research Course:
- Timeline to finalize proposal for committee approval:
  - Will the dissertation proposal require an oral defense?
- Timeline for FIU Initial IRB Approval (the approval that applies to the project):
- Timeline to submit the [UGS D3 Form – Doctoral Dissertation Proposal](#):

- Timeline for first draft of Chapter 1 – Introduction/Overview of the project:
- Timeline for first draft of Chapter 2 – Literature review:
- Timeline for first draft of Chapter 3 – Methods:
- Timeline for first draft of Chapter 4 – Results:
- Timeline for first draft of Chapter 5 – Discussion/Conclusion:
- Timeline to finalize the full dissertation for committee members:
- Timeline to hold the dissertation defense (check for the [UGS marked deadlines](#)):
- Timeline to submit the [UGS D5 Form - Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense](#) (This form should be submitted to SIPA one week before the UGS deadline):
- Timeline to submit to UGS the [Final Electronic Dissertation \(ETD\) Form](#):
- List any other timeline agreements not covered on the list above (optional):

### 3. Frequency of communication and meetings during the process

Working independently requires high levels of self-discipline and time management. During the process, students may neglect to progress on the project. Thus, communication between the student and the MP is of utmost importance. The MP may take it upon themselves to check with students and request drafts or updates. Some students are more effective at working independently, others may necessitate more interactions with the MP.

- Recurrence of student's communication:
- Recurrence of MP's communication:
- Recurrence of expected meetings:

- List any other information related to communication between MP and student:

4. What is the expected turn-around time for feedback?

A CE/dissertation is a process; most sections take many drafts. Feedback from the MP includes conceptual comments as well as edits and grammar. As the structure and writing of the document improves, additional conceptual comments and edits often arise.

To maximize the students' chances of staying on track, make sure the writing in the document is of high quality (edited, well-organized, grammatically correct, etc.). Why does writing quality matter? Manuscripts with severe writing/editing concerns that preclude comprehension of content will be returned to the student for correction without substantive review. As the MP is reviewing a draft, students should proceed to working on another section of the project, such as drafting the next chapter or fine-tuning your reference section or appendices.

- During busy times of the semester:
- During non-busy times of the semester:

#### **AUTHORSHIP AGREEMENT**

Collaboration between students, MP, and committee members is a process that will naturally developed during the process of completing these two research projects. Agreement of authorship avoid situations in which the students or the MP feel that their contribution to publish work has not been fairly recognized.

- Student sole authorship. MP and student agree on the following: [for example, lead and 100% contribution]
- Student lead authorship. MP and student agree on the following: [for example, xx% leading or contribution of both MP and student]
- Student as second author. MP and student agree on the following:
- MP as second authorship. MP and student agree on the following:

- Student and MP co-authorship. MP and student agree on the following:

### **ANNUAL EVALUATIONS AND MENTORING PLAN (aka EVALUATION)**

Every spring semester, the student must initiate this evaluation. Please refer to the [ICJ Ph.D. Student Handbook](#) for more details.

- Timeline for student to initiate the evaluation (This applies to every year under the MP supervision):
- Timeline for MP to complete the evaluation:
- Timeline for students to review the MP's summary and goals:
- Timeline for committee members to sign-off (this is only applicable during the dissertation process):
- Timeline for MP to approve the evaluation:

### **OTHER EXPECTATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS**

Other agreements between MP and student not covered above can be listed below. Below is also a list of various topics/items that the MP and the student can agree upon. (Optional)

- Turning research into publications – developing and submitting the manuscript, responding to reviewers, etc.
- The process of developing IRB protocol
- Developing and practicing research presentation skills
- Communicating with the committee members
- Attending and/or presentation in an academic conference
- Finding and applying for appropriate fellowships
- Discussing job options and preparing for the job market
- Teaching opportunities and teaching skills

**Agreement for CE process**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Full Name                      Student's Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
MP/Faculty's Full Name                      MP/Faculty's Signature                      Date

By signing this document, major professor (MP) and the student agree and acknowledge to meet expectations and obligations as listed on this guideline.

**Agreement for Dissertation process**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Full Name                      Student's Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
MP/Faculty's Full Name                      MP/Faculty's Signature                      Date

By signing this document, major professor (MP) and the student agree and acknowledge to meet expectations and obligations as listed on this guideline.