



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS®

Fogelman College
of Business & Economics

Doctoral Program Handbook

**Fogelman College of Business & Economics
University of Memphis**

Prepared and Revised by FCBE PhD Sub-Council

May 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is designed to guide doctoral students and faculty in the Fogelman College of Business & Economics through the policies and procedures for students to attain a PhD in Business Administration with the following concentrations: Accounting, Economics, Finance, Management, Management Information Systems and Marketing. This handbook supplements the University of Memphis Graduate Catalog and provides detailed guidance on program requirements and procedures. The latest graduate catalog is available at www.memphis.edu/gradcatalog.

1.2 Program Administration and Contacts

Each concentration is housed in each of the six academic departments in the Fogelman College – Accountancy, Economics, Finance, Insurance and Real Estate, Management, Management Information Systems, and Marketing and Supply Chain Management-- and overseen by a PhD program Coordinator assigned by each department. Students should refer to the list of PhD Coordinators for specific concentration-related inquiries.

Each PhD concentration is under the oversight of the corresponding academic department. Each academic department is under the oversight of the Department Chair. All programs in the college are under the oversight of the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Research.

PhD Program Departmental Coordinators:

- Dr. Nirmalee Raddatz, nraddatz@memphis.edu, Accountancy
- Dr. Huigang Liang, hliang1@memphis.edu, Management Information Systems
- Dr. Joon Lee, jlee17@memphis.edu, Economics
- Dr. Konstantin Sokolov, ksokolov@memphis.edu, Finance, Insurance & Real Estate
- Dr. Susy Jaramillo, mjchvrri@memphis.edu, & Dr. Alex Pratt, abpratt@memphis.edu, Marketing and Supply Chain Management
- Dr. James Vardaman, james.v@memphis.edu, Management

PhD Program Academic Services Coordinator:

Ms. April Jones, fcbephd@memphis.edu

Fogelman Admin. Bldg. 101

3675 Central Avenue

Memphis, TN 38152 USA

2. PhD Program Overview

2.1 Structure and Timeline

The PhD program is designed to be completed in four to five years for full-time students. Part-time students or those entering with only a bachelor's degree may require additional time.

The program must be completed within ten years from the date of initial enrollment unless an extension is approved. The ten-year time limit begins with the starting date of the first semester of coursework in a PhD student's program of study and runs continuously until December 31 ten years later.

2.2 Residency Requirements

The purpose of a residency period is to provide doctoral students with significant time for sustained contact with faculty members. Such continuity is deemed essential to preparation for professional success as well as socialization into the academic community.

To fulfill the residency requirement, students must:

- Complete at least 30 credit hours of doctoral coursework (excluding dissertation hours) at the University of Memphis.
- Enroll as a full-time student every Fall and Spring semester from the start of the program until graduation. Full-time status depends on whether the student is early stage or late stage.
 - **Early-stage students:** at least 9 credit hours each Spring and Fall semester.
 - **Late-stage students:** at least 1 dissertation credit hour each Spring and Fall semester.

3. Academic Requirements

The Ph.D. in Business Administration at the University of Memphis is a 72-credit-hour graduate degree.

3.1 Prerequisites

Each concentration determines its own prerequisite coursework. International students may need to complete additional English language requirements, such as the SPEAK test, before engaging in teaching assignments.

3.2 Program of Study

Each student must have a Program of Study, approved by the departmental PhD Coordinator and Associate Dean for Academic Programs. The Program of Study is submitted at the beginning of the Fall semester, and is revised and resubmitted to the PhD Coordinators and the Graduate Programs Office on a yearly basis or as needed.

3.3 Coursework Requirements

Students must complete between 54 and 66 credit hours comprising the following categories:

- **Research Core:** Minimum of 12 credit hours in research methods and quantitative analysis.
- **Concentration Courses:** Minimum of 30 credit hours, including at least 15 credit hours of 7000/8000-level courses specific to each concentration (e.g., accounting, economics, finance, management, marketing).
- **Elective Coursework:** additional coursework needed to complete 54 -66 credit hours, according to the student's program of study approved by the PhD coordinator.

3.4 Comprehensive Examinations

The comprehensive examination is completed within two years of completing coursework, and consists of two components:

- A written exam.
- An oral exam.

Only students who are in good standing who are completing an approved program of study may take the comprehensive examination. Successful completion of both a written and an oral examination is required.

The comprehensive examination is not a course. Therefore, the results of the examination cannot be appealed, nor can they be changed after the form has been filed with the Graduate School. Students may take the examination a second time. A second comprehensive examination failure results in termination, which can be appealed. More information about retention appeals is provided in Section 6.3.2.

3.4.1. Written Examination

The written examination is set by the departmental PhD Coordinator in collaboration with appropriate Departmental faculty. At least two graduate faculty members will grade each exam question.

The procedures used for grading each question and determining an overall pass or fail are determined by each concentration. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize themselves with departmental comprehensive exam requirements.

If a student's performance on the written examination is unsatisfactory, the student may be awarded a grade of "fail" on the comprehensive examination. If a student's performance on the written examination warrants, the concentration schedules an oral examination.

3.4.2 Oral Examination

The oral examination is scheduled as soon as possible following the grading of the written examination. The departmental PhD Coordinator and other faculty from the concentration organize and administer the oral examination.

3.5 Student Status

A student who has not yet completed the Comprehensive Exam requirement is considered an Early-Stage student.

A student who has successfully completed the Comprehensive Exam requirement and whose Comprehensive Exam Results Form has been fully processed is considered a Late-Stage student.

As mentioned in Section 2.2, student status affects the conditions to fulfill the full-time enrollment requirement.

3.6. Dissertation

Students must write and defend a dissertation. A dissertation constitutes major research that is both original and creative. It must demonstrate the ability to conduct independent research and interpret the facts and information revealed by the research in a logical and thought-provoking manner.

The dissertation and the final defense must demonstrate a satisfactory level of scholarly competence in the use of research methods and writing. The content of the dissertation must comply with the research standards of the University and contribute to the

development of new knowledge and/or information. The dissertation is the research capstone of the PhD program.

A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 18 dissertation credit hours can be counted toward the degree. Details about the dissertation process are provided in Section 4.

3.7 Additional Requirements

Some concentrations may have additional requirements for PhD students, such as submitting research proposals or reports, paper presentations, participating in research lab activities, attending colloquia, among others.

4. Dissertation Process

4.1 Dissertation Credit and Continuous Enrollment

After passing the comprehensive exams, students must register for at least one dissertation credit hour each Fall and Spring semester until the dissertation process is completed. Enrollment in dissertation hours during Summer is required only if the dissertation defense will take place during the Summer term.

Only students who have passed the comprehensive exams are permitted to register for dissertation credits. Eligible students need a permit to register for dissertation hours. Permits will be issued in accordance with a student's approved Program of Study.

4.2 Dissertation Committee

Each student selects a dissertation chair and committee consisting of at least three graduate faculty members. The committee's role is to provide guidance as the student develops and completes the dissertation. They provide the first review and initial acceptance or rejection of the manuscript. The committee chair must hold Full Graduate Faculty status.

Faculty who are not employed full-time by the University of Memphis may be eligible to serve on the PhD dissertation committee upon receiving External Graduate Faculty status. Only one External Graduate Faculty member may serve as a voting member of a dissertation committee and does not count toward the three-member minimum. The external faculty member cannot chair or co-chair the dissertation committee.

- The external graduate faculty status eligibility is described here:
https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/resources/gradfac_guidelines.php

- The procedure for adding an external faculty member is described here:
https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/resources/gradfac_app.php

A dissertation will not be submitted to the Graduate School until it meets the committee's approval. See the "Final Semester Check List" for guidelines on the review process.

4.3 Human Subjects Research

Research involving human subjects requires approval from the [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB). Applications should be submitted well in advance of data collection. Depending on the level of potential risk to subjects, as determined by the committee, the application may be subject to full committee review, expedited review, or exempted from the review process. Please allow up to four weeks for a response from the committee.

4.4 Dissertation Proposal

Students must submit and defend a written dissertation proposal before conducting their research. Faculty and PhD students are encouraged to attend proposal defenses. Notification of the scheduling of the proposal defense will be made to all faculty by email from the Graduate Programs Office. The dissertation committee decides the outcome of the proposal defense.

4.5 Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense provides an opportunity to ascertain: that the student is the primary author of the research document, possesses knowledge of the broad range of research related to the study, can justify the research methodology and design and defend the conclusions, possesses the ability to collect and interpret data for empirical manuscripts, and is capable of presenting the study in a coherent, understandable, and scholarly manner.

Upon committee approval, students defend their dissertation in a public presentation. Successful defense and committee approval are required before final submission of dissertation to the Graduate School.

4.6 Dissertation Submission

A copy of the defended and corrected dissertation must be converted into a PDF and submitted to ProQuest. The committee approval form must be submitted to the Graduate School. After the Graduate School has reviewed the final draft in ProQuest, the student must make all additional corrections.

For details and instructions, refer to the Graduate School Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Guide: https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/td-guide.php.

5. Graduation Process

During the final semester of completing your dissertation, you must begin planning for graduation.

5.1 Admission to Candidacy

To be officially admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, you must have satisfied the following requirements:

1. The "Doctoral Degree Candidacy Form" and "Apply to Graduate Application" must be filed by the deadline on the Graduate School website.
https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/graduation.php
2. The student must have at least a "B" average on all course work listed on the candidacy forms as well as on any other graduate work taken at The U of M within the ten-year time limit. Grades of "D" or "F" are not accepted for any graduate degree credit, but these grades will be computed in the GPA. No more than six (6) credit hours of grade "C" will be counted toward degree requirements.
3. All coursework offered for the doctoral degree must have been completed within a ten-year time frame ending at the date the degree is conferred. For information about Course Validation, please refer to the Academic Regulations section of the Graduate Catalog. Please refer to the Transfer Credit section of the Graduate Catalog for the rules to count hours earned outside of the University of Memphis. Transfer credits must be approved by the PhD coordinator in your concentration.
4. The student's entire program, including the dissertation, must be acceptable to the dissertation committee, and approved at all the appropriate levels as per the Dissertation Proposal Defense Form.

5.2 Final Semester Checklist

Use the following checklist for meeting graduation deadlines, published each semester on the Graduate School website:

https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/graduation.php.

- Apply for graduation through my Memphis portal.
- Submit the Doctoral Degree Candidacy Form.

- Defend the dissertation and complete all required revisions.
- Submit Dissertation Final Defense Results form to the Graduate School.
- Submit the dissertation to the Graduate School.
- Order cap and gown (if participating in commencement). Regalia orders must be received no later than three weeks before commencement exercises. Late orders will not be accepted. To order cap and gown, go to <https://www.memphis.edu/commencement/apply/cap-and-gown-order.php>

6. Academic Standing, Termination and Appeals

6.1 Progress toward Completion of the Degree

6.1.1 Early-Stage Students

Early-stage Ph.D. students must remain in good academic standing. Students are in good academic standing if they have not received a grade of "D" or "F" in any course in the prior semester and have received a grade of "C" or lower in two or fewer courses during their program.

Students who fail to maintain good academic standing will be placed on academic notice. Students will regain good academic standing by completing all courses with a grade of "B" or higher in the following semester.

A student is subject to dismissal from the Ph.D. program if they remain on academic notice for two semesters or if they receive a grade of "C" or lower in more than two courses over the duration of the program.

Evidence of progress toward completion of the degree during coursework is provided by successful completion of the courses in the student's program of study.

Evidence of progress toward completion of the degree once the student has completed their coursework, but has not been admitted into candidacy, is provided by successful completion of the comprehensive examination.

6.1.2 Late-Stage Students

Once the student has passed the comprehensive examination and is admitted into candidacy, evidence of progress toward the completion of the degree consists of completion of assignments given in the dissertation credit course (BA 9000).

If the student's performance in BA 9000 is deemed unsatisfactory by the professor on record, the professor shall communicate that circumstance in writing, to the student, PhD

Coordinator, Department Chair, and the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Research.

When two such memos are received regarding a student's progress in BA 9000, the PhD Coordinator will initiate the process to recommend the student for termination from the PhD program.

6.2 Termination

A student who has not made sufficient progress towards completion of the degree, as outlined in the previous subsection, will be recommended for termination. The PhD Coordinator initiates the termination process outlined in the Academic Regulations section of the catalog, Academic Performance Termination Procedures sub-section, bringing the matter to the Department Retention Committee.

The Retention Committee, which is a committee of the Department, will review the situation and decide whether the student should be allowed to continue in the program or be dropped from the PhD program for lack of sufficient progress towards completion of the degree. Each Department's Retention Committee will be formed at the direction of the Department Chair. Decisions regarding the size and membership of the committee will be at the Department Chair's discretion.

If the Retention Committee approves a termination recommendation, the recommendation moves on to the next step in the process outlined in the Graduate Catalog. If the final decision is to terminate, the student will receive a termination letter from the Dean of the College. The student can appeal the decision following the procedures noted in Section 6.3.2 of this document.

6.3 Appeals

6.3.1 Grade Appeals

The student has the right to appeal the final posted course grade (though not individual assignment grades) in accordance with college and university policies.

Grounds for grade appeals are the following:

- (a) Grades were assigned contrary to the instructor's stated grading criteria (e.g., the syllabus states that a score of 400 receives a B, but the instructor assigns a C to a student who obtains a score of 400).
- (b) The instructor acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner (e.g., two students submit comparable work, but receive different grades).

As per the [College policy](#): *"Grades are never given or adjusted because of student needs for any reason, including, but not limited to, graduation requirements, financial aid considerations, or academic probation issues."*

The procedures for grade appeals outlined in the Academic Regulations, Grade Appeals section of the Graduate Catalog must be followed, and a Graduate Grade Appeal form must be used.

As outlined in the Graduate Catalog, grade appeals follow a structured review process. The process starts with the course instructor. If the appeal is not resolved, the appeal is escalated to the chair of the department in which the course was taken, then to the College Dean. If the appeal is not resolved at the College level, the student must file a written request for a hearing before the Graduate Appeals Committee with the Dean of the Graduate School or designee. There are time limitations for this process, indicated in the Graduate School policy.

6.3.2 Retention Appeals

If a student is dismissed from the doctoral program, the student may file a retention appeal.

The reasons for appealing are the following:

- (a) New information, not available at the time of termination recommendation, has become available which would substantially alter the outcome of the termination decision,
- (b) The academic department or college/school failed to conduct the termination process fairly or violated its procedures in such a way as to disadvantage the terminated student,
- (c) The decision of the academic department or college/school is arbitrary in relation to academic and professional performance requirements of the student's academic program.

Retention appeals must follow the guidelines provided in the Graduate Catalog, Academic Regulation, Academic Performance Termination and Appeals section, and use the Graduate Student Retention Appeal form.

As outlined in the Graduate Catalog, termination appeals follow a structured review process. A Graduate Student Retention Appeals form is submitted to the Fogelman College Dean's office, which will review the case and issue a decision. If denied, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. Please refer to the Retention Appeals Section of the Graduate Catalog for specific timelines. The University Graduate Appeals Committee will then review the case and determine if a hearing is warranted. If a

hearing is granted, the student, department chair (or designee), and Associate Dean/Director of Graduate Studies (or designee) will present their cases.

The Committee's final decision, communicated by the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, may include reinstatement with conditions. The Graduate Appeals Committee's decision is final, except in cases of procedural oversight, where the Dean of the Graduate School may review the process. Students should refer to the Graduate Catalog for full details.

7. Assistantships and Teaching Requirements

7.1 Graduate Assistantships

PhD students may hold research or teaching assistantships, requiring either 10 or 20 hours of work per week supporting faculty. Assistantships provide valuable experience and financial support.

7.1.1 Research Assistantships

Students assist faculty with research-related tasks, including data collection, statistical analysis, and manuscript preparation, among others. Significant contributions may lead to co-authorship opportunities.

7.1.2 Teaching Assistantships

Students gain teaching experience by either assisting faculty in courses or serving as primary instructors. Most PhD students are required to teach at least one course independently before graduation.

Performing teaching activities requires completing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) tutorial, available here:

<https://www.memphis.edu/registrar/faculty/ferpa/tutorial.php>

Non-native English speakers may be required to pass the SPEAK test before being assigned teaching responsibilities. Additional language courses may be required.

7.2 Assistantship Performance Evaluation and Continuation of Funding

Doctoral assistantships at the Fogelman College of Business and Economics are contingent upon the student maintaining good academic standing, making adequate progress toward their degree, and performing satisfactory work in assigned assistantship duties, as outlined in the assistantship offer letter. Assistantship continuation is also

subject to the availability of funding and adherence to the University's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

7.2.1 Evaluation of Assistantship Performance

- **First-Year Evaluations:** Students will undergo evaluations of their assistantship performance at the end of each semester during their first year in the program.
- **Subsequent Evaluations:** After the first year, students who have consistently received satisfactory evaluations will be evaluated annually. Those who have received unsatisfactory evaluations will continue to be evaluated each semester.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Evaluations will assess the student's performance in assigned research and teaching activities. The Departmental PhD Coordinator and/or the Department Chair, in consultation with relevant faculty, will conduct these evaluations. Each Department will construct their own evaluation format.
- **Evaluation Outcomes:** Evaluations will result in a designation of either "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory." Students receiving an "Unsatisfactory" evaluation will receive written feedback and guidance for improvement.
- **Communication of Results:** The Department Chair and/or the Departmental PhD Coordinator will provide the evaluation outcome and any recommendations in writing to the student and will also convey this information to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs.

7.2.2 Consequences of Unsatisfactory Evaluations

A student who receives two consecutive "Unsatisfactory" evaluations may have their assistantship revoked.

7.2.3 Appeal Process

- **Students can appeal** an assistantship evaluation if they believe the evaluation contains procedural or factual errors.
- **Appeal Procedure:**
 1. **Initial Appeal:** The student must submit a written appeal to the Departmental PhD Coordinator and Department Chair within 14 calendar days of receiving the

evaluation. The appeal must clearly state the nature of the alleged procedural or factual error and include any supporting documentation.

2. **Review Process:** If the situation is not resolved, the student may submit a written request to the Dean of the College for further review, forwarding all correspondence related to the appeal. The Dean's decision is final and not subject to further appeal.

- **Retention Appeal:** In cases where the assistantship revocation is part of a broader retention issue—such as when a student is recommended for termination from the PhD program—the student may initiate a retention appeal following the procedures described in section 6.3.2.

8. Forms and Administrative Procedures

Students must complete and submit required forms at designated stages of the program.

- Graduate School forms are available here:
https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/resources/forms_index.php
- Graduate School deadlines are available here:
https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/graduation.php.

8.1 Program of Study

This form enables students to outline a program of study for the PhD degree and should be completed with the help of the Program Coordinator. Students should inquire about their program of study during their first semester in the program and must have an approved program of study on file in the Graduate Programs Office by the end of their first year of study.

This program of study should be updated and submitted to the Program Coordinator and Graduate Programs Office annually or as needed, based on changes in the students' interests and/or availability of courses.

The Program of Study form is included in the Appendix of this document.

8.2 Comprehensive Exam Results Form

This form is completed immediately after the written and oral examinations requirements are satisfied and requires the signatures of the members of the examining committee.

When processed at the Graduate School level, this form officially changes student status from early stage to ABD (all but dissertation) or late stage.

8.3 Dissertation Faculty Committee Appointment Form

A faculty committee (minimum three members) made up of graduate faculty will advise the student through the different stages of completing the dissertation. The committee chair must hold full graduate faculty status. For details on the composition of the Dissertation Committee, refer to Section 4.2.

A dissertation committee form must be filed with the graduate school and updated when changes are made to the committee.

8.4 Dissertation Proposal Defense Form

This form is signed by committee members when the dissertation proposal has been approved. If applicable, a copy of the human subjects research approval/exemption letter must be attached.

8.5 Doctoral Degree Candidacy Form

This form must be submitted to the Graduate School by the deadline dates specified for the semester the student intends to graduate.

8.6 Application to Graduate

This application is available via MyMemphis portal and must be filed at the beginning of the intended graduation semester by the Graduate School deadline.

8.7 Announcement of Dissertation Defense

An abstract of dissertation defense must be submitted by email to the Graduate Programs Office three weeks prior to the dissertation defense date. The announcement is distributed to all graduate faculty within the Fogelman College including faculty members on the student's advisory committee as well as PhD students and members of the Graduate School.

Note: Please contact your department's administrative associate to check for room availability and make an online request.

8.8 Dissertation Final Defense Results Form

This form is for committee members' signatures when the committee has approved the dissertation. It must be submitted immediately after the defense is approved.

9. Additional Resources

Student Services

The University of Memphis provides resources for academic success, career development, and mental health support. Students should take advantage of these resources.

- [Disability Resources for Students \(DRS\)](#): the DRS office arranges, coordinates, and provides academic accommodation and support services for qualified students with disabilities.
- [Canvas resources](#): Canvas is the learning management system (LMS) for course delivery at the University of Memphis. If you are unfamiliar with Canvas, this website provides resources to learn the basics.
- [University of Memphis Libraries](#)
- [Psychological Services Center](#)
- [R. Brad Martin Student Wellness Center](#)
- [FCBE Center for Professional Career Development](#)

UofM E-mail

All students are required to maintain and access their University of Memphis (@memphis.edu) email account. Any inability to receive incoming mail in a timely fashion (e.g., not regularly checking email, having a “full mailbox” condition, etc.) is the student’s responsibility.

Graduate Catalog

The graduate catalog contains academic regulations that apply to all graduate students, as well as minimum requirements to obtain your degree. It is available here: www.memphis.edu/gradcatalog.

Registrar’s Calendars

The dates and deadlines for each semester are provided in the Registrar’s calendars, available here: <https://www.memphis.edu/registrar/calendars/index.php>

USBS Calendars

Deadlines pertaining to tuition and fee payments are provided in the University and Students Business Services office: <https://www.memphis.edu/usbs/calendars/>

Academic Integrity

The University of Memphis has clear codes regarding cheating and academic misconduct. If interested, you may refer to the Student Handbook section on academic misconduct for a discussion of these codes. Should your professor have evidence that academic misconduct and/or cheating has occurred, steps as described on the campus' [Office of Student Accountability website \(opens in new window\)](#) may be taken.

If you have any questions about academic integrity or plagiarism, you are strongly encouraged to review the [Fogelman College's Website on Academic Integrity \(opens in new window\)](#).

Inclement Weather

The University of Memphis has established an Inclement Weather Hotline at 901.678.0888 as well as the [LiveSafe App \(opens in new window\)](#), an emergency alert app for students, faculty and staff. This optional service is used in the event of an on-campus emergency, an unscheduled university closing, or a delay or cancellation of classes (e.g. due to inclement weather).

Additionally, if inclement weather requires the cancellation of classes at The University of Memphis, local radio and television media will be immediately notified.

Appendix

PhD Business Administration - Program of Study

Full Name:
U Number:
Email:
Concentration:
Expected Graduation (term/year):

Research Core (12 credit hours minimum)

Course Number	Course Title	Semester Planned

Concentration Courses (30 credit hours minimum)

Course Number	Course Title	Semester Planned

Dissertation (6 credit hours minimum / 18 credit hours maximum)

Course Number	Course Title	Semester Planned

Additional Courses

Course Number	Course Title	Semester Planned

Credit Applied from completed Master's Degree (maximum 30 credit hours)

Course Number	Course Title	Semester Taken

Transfer Credit or Shared Credit (maximum 15 credit hours)

Course Number	Course Title	Semester Taken

Total credit hours for degree: 72

I have met with my PhD Concentration faculty coordinator and accept this plan. I acknowledge this plan is subject to change based on course availability.

Student Signature: _____

PhD Coordinator Signature: _____