

APPENDIX H

HELPFUL HINTS AND STEPS TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING A DISSERTATION

1. Select a topic near the beginning of your Ph.D. program. By doing this, you will be able to tailor your coursework to be something that will help with the dissertation.
2. Select a chair for your supervisory committee early in the process. Make sure you have similar research interests, philosophies, and outlooks with this person. Make sure you also respect the person as an academic and individual. This is especially paramount, because you will be working closely with this academic professional.
3. Select a committee. If you are unsure about committee members, speak with your chair. It is imperative that your committee members work well together.
4. Tailor your courses to work in conjunction with your topic.
5. Once you are finished with coursework, you typically will start your comprehensive exams.
6. In the third semester of being in the program, you should file your Program of Study (POS). The POS is filled electronically using the ASU Interactive website, and is a contract that shows the courses you've taken along with the courses necessary to complete the degree. This document serves as a contract between the student, committee, program, and university regarding graduation requirements. If there are errors on the POS (i.e., courses listed but not taken), the student will not be able to graduate.
7. Pass your comprehensive exams. There is a form that you need to complete when you do the oral defense of your comprehensive exams. This form you can find on the Graduate College website and is called "Report of Doctoral Comprehensive Exams" and can be found at: <http://graduate.asu.edu/forms/index.html>
You will want to hold on to this form until you pass your dissertation proposal.
8. While you are still completing coursework, you should work on your dissertation proposal (the first three chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology). Ideally, many of the papers that you have written for your coursework will lend themselves nicely into fitting into the dissertation. Once you are ready to defend your dissertation proposal, you'll need to "Report of Doctoral Comprehensive Exams" form once again for your committee to sign off on before you take it to the Graduate College and provide your academic department with a copy for your student file.
9. Advancing to Candidacy occurs when the following criteria have been met: POS has been approved, comprehensive exams have been passed, and dissertation proposal has been approved.
10. Once you are ready to work on the dissertation, create a time line and stick to it. This website generates a timeline for you based on your start date and your target completion date: <http://www.lib.umn.edu/help/disscalc/>
11. If you are collecting your own data, you will most likely need to have approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at ASU. Information regarding IRB can be found at <http://researchadmin.asu.edu/compliance/irb/>
The chair of your committee would serve as the principal investigator and you would need the Director of the PhD Program to sign as well. You will also need to complete and submit a copy of your National Institute for Health certificate with your IRB application. You cannot collect data until you have IRB approval.
12. As you write the dissertation, it is helpful to have it formatted to the Graduate College requirements as you work. This may be a painful process in the beginning, but will help to save some

time and headaches later. The Graduate College has a format manual available in the Interdisciplinary (formerly Admin B) wing room 170 or you can download it from their website at

<http://graduate.asu.edu/format/index.html>

This website also has some helpful information and resources.

13. It is often helpful to hire an editor to review your work as you progress towards the final draft. Editors can be expensive, but well worth it as you become so close with the work, you may not necessarily see spelling, grammatical, or other errors. Editors can also help with reference checks and formatting. Often, the Graduate College will have a list of editors. Sometimes other graduate students across the campus can be a good resource. Your Graduate Coordinator may also have some suggestions.
14. When your chair says that you are ready to defend, or you think you're ready, you will need some forms from the Graduate College. You will need the Doctoral Defense Schedule form, Format Approval Sheet, and Survey of Earned doctorates. These forms should accompany you when you meet with your chair. You should also try to schedule it informally with your committee members as their calendars often become quite full. Your chair will tell you when to submit your final draft to the rest of your committee. Then, prepare your presentation for the defense. Remember to schedule a room as well.
15. Make sure you pay attention to Graduation deadlines and the 10 working day rule to submit your dissertation to formatting. You can find this information on the Graduate College website at <http://graduate.asu.edu/graddeadlines.html>
16. You will also need to file for graduation. The first step is to pay for graduation at the Cashiering Services window in the Student Services Building on the second floor. Then, you take your receipt to the Graduation Office located in the Registrar's office. You will have to fill out a form that Cashiering Services will provide you with before you can proceed to the Graduation Office. If there is no line, this process can take usually 30-45 minutes. You'll receive information regarding the Graduation Fair at the bookstore. You'll need to buy your cap and gown there. At the days of the Graduation Fair there is a discount on the caps, gowns, announcements, and diploma cases. There is also a photographer taking cap-and-gown pictures.
17. Check the College of Design website for convocation information and submit your RSVP for graduation. Convocation information can be found at <http://design.asu.edu/students/convocation.shtml> If you also plan on participating in the university's Commencement, you'll need to submit the Doctoral Candidate Participation Form found at <http://graduate.asu.edu/forms/index.html> Commencement information can be found at <http://www.asu.edu/ssc/commence/index.html> If you plan on participating in Commencement, and family or friends are not able to attend, they can also view the ceremony live on line at <http://www.asu.edu/ssc/commence/geninfo/isvideo.html>
18. A week before the defense, email your committee to confirm that they have your date on the calendar and that they will be able to make it. Also, you'll need to provide a copy of your 100-word abstract on the format that you would receive from the Graduate Coordinator to post as defenses are public events. Make sure you reserve any media equipment that you might need (i.e., laptop, projector). Decide on your wardrobe for the defense. Business professional attire (i.e. suit) is appropriate.
19. Meet with your chair to review your presentation and materials (i.e., handouts) a few days to a week before the date. Make sure you ask if there is anything specific the chair would like to you cover in the presentation and what is the protocol for the defense.
20. Defenses typically follow this protocol: you present for 20-25 minutes on the dissertation, questions from the

committee (typically about an hour), questions from the audience, removal of everyone in the room (including you) to allow the committee to deliberate, your chair comes out and announces that you've passed (your chair will not let you defend if you are not ready), you can't believe that you actually passed and go back into the room to meet with the committee and chair to discuss revisions (almost everyone has them) and they sign your pass/fail form, and then you faint because you still can't believe you passed.

21. After your defense, you have ten working days to submit your pass/fail form to the Graduate College for the dean's signature. Either your chair or the Graduate Coordinator will hold on to your final pass/fail form for the final signature from the chair indicating that you have completed all of the revisions. The latent consequence of this is that all revisions must be done and approved by your chair in 10 working days. If you work a full or part time job, requesting some time off to complete and focus on your revisions, as well as recuperate, is always beneficial and a great idea. You will be mentally tired after the defense.
22. Once you have completed all revisions and obtained your chair's signature, you must take the form to the Graduate College office located in Admin B room 170. You will have to call daily to see if your pass/fail form is ready to be picked up. They will not contact you. Once it is ready to be picked up, you will need to do so and take it with you when you go to the ASU Bookstore for binding.
23. You will need to print copies of your dissertation on the type of paper specified in the Format Manuel provided by the Graduate College. As of June 2007, the paper is 24lb bright white, high contrast, acid free paper. The easiest way to do this is to go to Office Max with your jump drive and have them print out the number of copies you'd like bound. Office Max uses the 24lb paper as their standard (although confirm when you get there), but some other places use 20lb paper as theirs. There is a difference between 24lb and 20lb paper.

24. The dissertation must be bound at the ASU Bookstore. You are required to have a minimum of 3 copies: 2 for the ASU Library and 1 for the Ph.D. program in the College of Design. Please put the Graduate Coordinator down as the departmental contact. If you wish to have additional bound copies, that is your choice. Typically, students will have one bound copy for themselves (it feels different when you have a hard copy of your work in a completed format) and one bound copy to their chair. Committee members should also receive a copy of the final dissertation, but that could be a bound copy from Office Max or such. There are a couple of forms you will have to fill out at the Bookstore for the binding and can also be found at <http://bookstore.asu.edu/ASU/SiteText.aspx?id=3435>
Binding can be expensive and you should be prepared to spend between \$150 to \$300 for binding, depending on the number of copies bound. The Bookstore will take your pass/fail form (make sure you receive a copy of it with the dean's signature before you give it to them) and provide you with a receipt. Hold on to your receipt, because this is proof that you have completed almost all of your steps.
25. This is the final and most important step. Do something you enjoy. You've just become a doctor. You've now entered the realm of having your life back. Congratulations, it's a weird, but wonderful feeling.

Random helpful hints/things to be aware:

- Although the focus of the process has been getting to the dissertation defense, there can be additional stress after you defend.
- Editing can be expensive, but it is well worth it
- Remember to do things that you still enjoy. It will help keep you sane
- You will be emotional, tired, stressed, etc. during this process. It's normal.
- The process of earning a PhD is a complex yet very rewarding

- process, with fewer than 2% of the population receiving a Ph.D.
- Your chair is not out to get you and will come through when you need him/her to do so.
 - Use the resources that you have on campus to your advantage.
 - A good dissertation is a done dissertation. Now is not the time to be a perfectionist.
- Present your dissertation topic and research at professional conferences.
 - This is a good way to receive feedback and anticipate questions regarding your study.