Other Resources for Doctoral Students


This excellent booklet describes academic and institutional contexts of Ph.D. programs in the United States and Canada, and it identifies standards of quality and policies that are most likely to promote successful programs. For graduate administrators and faculty, the booklet addresses faculty responsibilities, recruitment and retention of doctoral students, recommended administrative services and physical facilities, and guidelines for establishing new Ph.D. programs. The final section is designed to give prospective and current Ph.D. students a clear picture of the purposes of the Ph.D., the tasks that need to be completed, the level of performance to be achieved, and suggestions for completing and publishing the dissertation.


This manual serves as a guide to the administrative requirements of the UMCP Graduate School regarding the completion of students’ Masters’ and Doctoral degrees. The degree completion process is outlined in terms of the order in which students must submit complete requirements and submit documentation to the Graduate School. Links to additional websites and online forms are included for student access.


Compiled specifically for University of Maryland graduate students, this resource guide contains an overview of undergraduate instruction at the University, syllabus construction strategies, guidelines for writing letters of recommendation, assessment of learning techniques, and information for international graduate teaching assistants, as well as additional other important information. The guide also offers tips for selecting a mentor, time management, adhering to the University’s Policies on Professional Behavior, and leading discussion in the classroom.

Griffin-Shirley, N. (2005). *How to survive a full-time 4 year doctoral program & love it!* Lecture given at Texas Tech University, October.

This PowerPoint presentation clarifies the major hurdles that are likely to impede doctoral students’ abilities to successfully complete their dissertation, including lack of information and community, poor advisor/advisee relationship, lack of funding, extensive teaching loads, and lack of collaborative research opportunities. The author provides a variety of suggestions that will help students succeed, such as having healthy social support system, maintaining balance between school and home, using a mentor, and developing study groups, to name a few.


This article is a useful tool for graduate students who are seeking to understand how their faculty view the role and function of the doctoral dissertation. Using results from nearly 600 faculty surveys, the authors clarify what many professors consider to be a “contribution to knowledge in the field” and what
expectations are inherent in their particular field. The two primary purposes of the dissertation, as reported by the faculty, are to demonstrate skills and to acquire training in research skills. The role of the final oral defense is to defend the research and test the student’s knowledge, and the most important characteristic of a dissertation is that it is an independent contribution to the field, followed closely by originality and publishability. Finally, faculty perceived lack of stipends and increasing complexity in their respective fields as being the two most important barriers to completion.

**Jain, R. D. (2005). Ph.D. completion strategies: How to get it done (sm) in a year or less!**
*PowerPoint presentation retrieved from [www.completeyourdissertation.com](http://www.completeyourdissertation.com).*

The author begins by noting that successful dissertators are able to independently conceive of, research, and write about a topic. In order to complete the dissertation in just one year, students must establish a structure that will help them finish (e.g. schedule regular work times, establish deadlines with advisor); accept accountability for committing to this process; and create a network of academic, emotional, and administrative support. Tips are provided about how to research and write effectively. The presentation concludes with a friendly reminder that the dissertation task is a test of one’s perseverance and diligence, not an effort requiring outstanding brilliance.


‘This paper provides a theoretical perspective on the factors that facilitate and impede doctoral students’ transition to independent research.’ The author cites the importance of students’ creativity in helping them make this transition from student to researcher and identifies six resources for creativity: (1) intelligence, (2) knowledge, (3) thinking styles, (4) personality, (5) motivation, and (6) environment. Using a systems theory, Lovitts concludes with a pictoral representation of the various contexts in which a dissertation is creatively written.

**Strengthen Your Graduate Program Through Mentorship.** Division of Research and Graduate Studies, University of Maryland.

This valuable guide was designed for graduate students, faculty, and post-doctoral fellows alike. It explains the various roles of mentors, the benefits of solid mentoring relationships, and the basics of successful dissertation completion. The guide also includes interviews with current UMCP doctoral students and faculty, as well as a comprehensive list of campus resources and contact information.