

Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre & Drama (IPTD)

Handbook for Students and Advisors\*

September 2009

---

\* All administration practices stipulated in this *Handbook* or elsewhere are subject to the policies and procedures of The Graduate School of Northwestern University.

## Table of Contents

## Part I: General Information

1. Mission Statement
2. What is “Interdisciplinary”?
3. Personnel
  - 3.1 The Director
  - 3.2 Associate Faculty and Dissertation Committees
  - 3.3 Executive Committee
  - 3.4 Student Representatives to the Executive Committee

## Part II: For Students and Applicants

4. Program Requirements
  - 4.1 Advising Schedule and Reviews
  - 4.2 End-of-Year Review
  - 4.3 Core Courses
  - 4.4 Other Coursework
  - 4.5 Summers
5. Progressing Through the Program
  - 5.1 Year One Milestones
  - 5.2 Year Two Milestones
  - 5.3 Year Three Milestones
  - 5.4 Year Four Milestones

## Part III: For Students and Advisors

6. The Dissertation Prospectus
7. The Qualifying Exam
  - 7.1 Purpose
  - 7.2 Timetable
  - 7.3 Procedure and Committee
  - 7.4 Conduct of the Exam
  - 7.5 Admission to Candidacy
  - 7.6 Unsatisfactory Performance on the Qualifying Exam
8. Writing the Dissertation
  - 8.1 Changes in the Supervisory Committee
  - 8.2 Expectations for Completing the Dissertation
  - 8.3 Oral Defense of the Thesis
  - 8.4 Timing and the Dissertation
9. Fellowships/Teaching Assistantships
10. Travel to Conferences
11. Additional Funding

## Part IV. Other

12. MA Option
13. Evaluation of Teaching

- 14. Student-Run Groups
  - 14.1 Post-Candidates' Journal Caucus
  - 14.2 Dissertation Reading Group

## Part I: General Information

### 1. Mission Statement

The Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Theatre and Drama is a cross-school program involving faculty from the Humanities, Social Sciences, Fine and Performing Arts. We train outstanding students for lifetime careers in academia, emphasizing simultaneous development of intellectual excellence in scholarship with pedagogical skills. We seek students with exceptional promise as researchers who may also (but not as an absolute requirement) have backgrounds in theatre-making in order to examine performance from multi- and inter-disciplinary perspectives. Students' research agenda of intellectual pursuits is paramount. Each student works with a committee unique to his or her interests and, in consultation with the Director and advisors, designs a program of study incorporating theatre with one or more other fields. "Interdisciplinary research" can involve the use of theoretical tools with previously untried evidence, combinations of methodologies, and intersections of social history with theatrical events spanning a wide range of national, historical, and contemporary contexts.

This philosophy is implemented on a practical level by taking course work in various departments, drawing upon faculty and research resources in theatre studies and other areas, and conducting research that utilizes the materials, methods, and theories associated with more than one discipline. Every student negotiates this uniquely, depending upon his/her background, academic goals, and the needs of his/her research projects. Mentoring is integral at all phases of conception and implementation.

### 2. What is "Interdisciplinary"?

The projects completed recently vary from performances of food rights in the Great Depression to Lusophone cultural circulation in an African theatre festival to recent feminist engagements with Brechtian techniques. Other students have combined topics in politics and gender with the performance modes of North Korean propaganda operas, or and written about the full range of political and social implications of nation, race, and community in the context of Japanese internment in World War II, Black Liberation drama, post-Communist Czechoslovakia, Zimbabwean theatre for development, or spatial and labor practices in Toronto theatre. These are just a few indicative instances of scholarship emanating from students in this program; the possibilities are endless. Investigative paradigms from traditional literary or theatre historical perspectives are welcome, as are the results of interventions from performance theory, a wide range of critical theory, social science fields, and the whole spectrum of arts and the humanities.

Students identify their own combination of fields early in their studies and are advised to find appropriate courses and mentors to help them develop corresponding expertise. Sometimes this involves theatre, drama, or dance and an existing department or program at Northwestern (such as Musicology, area studies, History, Performance Studies, or Sociology); sometimes it involves a more esoteric or emergent combination (such as anthrozoology, globalization/circulation theory, or reception studies) that is non-departmental or programmatic. These examples are indicative, but by no means exhaustive. The Graduate School's clusters provide additional ways to formally structure interdisciplinary work (see

<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/interdisciplinary/> for further information). Every case is unique, which allows the program to be flexible to the needs of students' research and responsive to developments in academic study internationally.

### 3. Personnel

#### 3.1 The Director

The Director is a faculty member appointed by the Deans of Communication and the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. The Director is the students' de facto advisor for their first year, and into the second as they identify dissertation committees; students meet with the Director regularly to discuss goals and progress. The Director's other responsibilities include chairing the Executive Committee (see Section 3.3); liaising with departments and relevant faculty; convening the prospectus group, semi-annual colloquia, and professional development workshops; coordinating the review of applicants and recruitment of new students; administering the program's budget; assigning students' teaching responsibilities; and other routine matters.

#### 3.2 Associate Faculty and Dissertation Committees

Associate Faculty are invited from the graduate faculty of Northwestern University, and are eligible to chair (a.k.a. direct or supervise) dissertations; at least two (of three) dissertation committee members must be on the Associate Faculty. Students are encouraged to think about the widest possible range of suitable faculty for course work, advising, and supervision of research, seeking expertise in their topical area(s), methodology, and theoretical approach. Multi-disciplinary involvement is the norm.

#### 3.3 The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of seven Associate Faculty members, inclusive of the Director who chairs the committee, and two students plus an alternate (see 3.4). The Executive Committee is responsible for review of students' progress; derivation and implementation of policy; admissions; and other routine matters advisory to the Director. Faculty members are drawn equally from the School of Communication and the Weinberg College of Arts and Science, the two oversight bodies for the program, but may also include members from other areas of the university. A range of expertise is ideal. Faculty may serve for multiple years.

#### 3.4 Student Representatives to the Executive Committee

An Executive Committee Policy on Student Representation (passed in December 1997) specifies that each year two student representatives, chosen by vote or consensus from among the current Ph.D. students, will serve on the Executive Committee of the IPTD. In order to represent the broadest range of graduate experience possible, it is recommended that one student be pre-candidacy and one student be post-candidacy. A third (alternate) representative may also be designated. The elected student(s) may also be asked to serve on the Department of Theater's Student Advisory Committee; the same students may serve in one or both capacities.

Student representatives to the Executive Committee will be notified in advance of all Executive Committee meetings. Each representative will be a full participating and

voting member on all matters coming before the committee, except in discussions pertaining to admission, evaluation, and funding recommendations of prospective or current students. Student representatives may contribute items for the Executive Committee's agenda; the student alternate attends when other students cannot.

The responsibilities of these students are as follows: to consult with all students registered in the program and report to them on the business of the Executive Committee; canvas and contribute the views of the graduate students to all relevant discussion; assist the Director with recruiting new students and with promoting student involvement in all aspects of the Program's activities; and to serve in other capacities as the need arises.

## Part II: For Students and Applicants

## 4. Program Requirements

## 4.1 The Advising Schedule and Reviews

First- and second-year students must meet with the Director at least once per quarter (or more often, if deemed desirable) to discuss progress, air any concerns, and plan the course of study. Once students have passed their qualifying exams, advising is shared between the Director, chair of the dissertation committee, and other committee members, as needed; however students are strongly encouraged to meet at least twice per year with the Director to review progress.

## 4.2 End of Year Reviews

First-year students and any others who have not yet passed the qualifying exam must present end-of-year review materials for discussion by the Executive Committee at the end of spring quarter. This consists of a letter or expository explanation of goals and progress and a clean copy of an essay written for a recent class. These are reviewed in conjunction with the student's transcript and written or oral evaluations from faculty. The Executive Committee will review the plans of study, grades, quality of work, rationale for course choices, and progress toward the dissertation. Based on these materials, the Executive Committee can recommend a) continuation in the program, b) conditional continuation in the program, or c) discontinuation from the program. The results of the Executive Committee discussion will be communicated in writing to the student; students will also meet with the Director to discuss these results. Should it become an issue of the student's continuing in the program, the usual appeals procedures will apply.

## 4.3 Core Courses

In the first year of study, all students must take 632-501, Doctoral Studies in Theatre and Drama. Beyond that, all students are required to take at least one approved 400-level or 500-level course in each of the following areas: European theatre and drama prior to 1650; European theatre and drama after 1650; performance theory; and theatre and drama of the Americas, Africa, and/or Asia.

Courses satisfying these requirements emphasize a breadth of historical coverage as well as significant methodological inquiry into historical practice. They must be taken on the recommendation and with the prior approval of the Director. Courses satisfying these requirements are identified each year by the Director, and only those so approved can satisfy the requirement. With the Director's prior approval, courses taught in other departments by Associate Faculty members may be taken to satisfy part of this requirement; in recent years this has included Medieval and Renaissance drama, history of opera, and Greek theatre.

## 4.4 Other Coursework

In addition to core courses, students will take additional coursework to help them prepare for the dissertation. It is to be expected that some courses will be of primary use in honing the skills necessary for advanced graduate study: critical reading, thorough

research, concise and persuasive writing. Further coursework may deepen a student's knowledge of a particular subject, time period, theoretical area, research method, or other component of their research topic. Because of the wide range of topics and multiple disciplinary approaches in which IPTD students engage, it may be uncommon for students to find courses that deal precisely with their area of inquiry: such is the nature of forging new intersections. Students are encouraged to look in many departments and to be creative and proactive about finding courses and/or professors engaging relevant areas of expertise. Asking for references from other students and professors, visiting faculty web pages, and even perusing the undergraduate catalog may yield useful course options. When other alternatives are exhausted, an independent study (499) with an appropriate faculty member may be an option (see Section 7.3)

#### 4.5 Summers

Students are funded through the summer months and are expected to make substantial progress toward the dissertation each summer quarter. This may consist of bibliographic preparation and readings; travel to archives or other research sites; contact with research subjects; participation at conferences; language acquisition; preparation for exams; or writing of the dissertation. Students must account for their plans annually and report on progress.

### 5. Progress through the Program

#### 5.1 Year One Milestones

- First-year students serve as Research Assistants for one quarter (by assignment of the Director); this provides experience in some aspect of academic work (e.g. editing, bibliographic research, pedagogical preparation, literature review, data analysis, or writing-up of results) in a close mentorship model with a member of the Associate Faculty.
- First-year students are also expected to take steps to prepare themselves to teach by attending sessions sponsored by the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence and/or the IPTD, observing classes, and reading about pedagogy (the Searle Center maintains an extensive library for this purpose).
- In year one, students take nine course credits (three per quarter) that explore topical, disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological experience relevant to the anticipated dissertation field(s). This includes 632-501 and other Core classes.
- Satisfactory work in classes must be accompanied by growing clarity about the dissertation topic and approach.
- The first summer is usually devoted to developing bibliographies and reading, however sometimes field or archival visits are appropriate.
- Although not required, students are encouraged to serve as dramaturgs to a Theatre Interpretation Centre production.

#### 5.2 Year Two Milestones

- In year two, students take nine course credits (three per quarter), including any Core classes not taken in the first year.
- TA assignments (3 quarters) are geared to give students a wide range of experience – i.e. in different departments, kinds of classes, and pedagogical

situations – that prepare them to run small-group discussions and take responsibility for undergraduates' education.

- Major activities in year two include planning the dissertation, writing the prospectus (see Section 6), identifying a dissertation committee, and preparing for the qualifying examination (see Section 7.3).

#### *Choosing a Chair and Committee*

The dissertation chair and committee are chosen in consultation with the Director; if difficulties arise, students may consult with the Director or any member of the Executive Committee for advice. Students should be on the lookout throughout their course work for potential dissertation chairs suited to their research needs and personal temperament. A good working relationship of scholarly rigor, interpersonal trust, and mutual respect is critical. It is inappropriate for faculty to “lobby” students to choose them as chairs or committee members. However, friendly, constructive, and supportive feedback on work may be taken as a sign of confidence from faculty members.

- As the dissertation's needs are clarified, students determine what funding will be needed to enable the work; identify internal and external fellowships and grants for which they will be eligible; and develop a plan for seeking additional support. This plan may be modified regularly, however it frames some of the activities anticipated in the subsequent years and until completion of the dissertation and graduation.
- Year two culminates with the qualifying exam (see section 7) and admission to candidacy (see Section 7.5).

### 5.3 Year Three Milestones

- By this time, most students have passed their qualifying exam and advanced to candidacy.
- Students on Graduate Assistantships normally teach two quarters; the purpose of this assignment is to design and implement a syllabus for a freshman Theatre course.
- Students are expected to make substantial progress on the dissertation, i.e. conducting research, traveling to archives or field sites, and beginning to write up results.
- Normally, students present at conferences by their third year. The timing is dependent upon readiness to present research results.

### 5.4 Year Four and Five Milestones

- Students normally teach on Graduate Assistantships in two quarters; typically this involves greater responsibility than the third year's assignments and may include teaching upper-division Theatre classes. Assignments are determined by the Director in consultation with departments.
- Further progress, and if possible completion, of the dissertation is expected in the fourth or fifth year (see Section 8).

## Part III: For Students and Advisors

## 6. Dissertation Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus should be no more than 12 double-spaced pages, plus a bibliography. The prospectus should include the following elements, usually in this order:

**TITLE** — Emphasize key topics to be addressed.

**PREMISE** — State in a paragraph the premise or hypothesis of the study.

**SCOPE** – Explain the parameters of the study and the rationale for these choices or limitations (e.g. temporal, geographical, and topical).

**JUSTIFICATION** — Argue the significance of the study in light of previous scholarship, including other dissertations.

**THEORETICAL APPROACH/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK/METHOD** — Explain and justify the proposed methods of research and analysis.

**RESOURCES** — Describe required resources, their location and accessibility; describe any already examined, including other logistical considerations, e.g., “Peter Brook has given me unlimited access to rehearsals (letter attached),” or “the Gulbenkian Foundation has promised funding to support field research in Knossos (letter attached).”

**CHAPTER OUTLINE** — Indicate the units or steps in the argument or study, with some estimate of the scope and length for each.

**DISSERTATION BIBLIOGRAPHY** — Provide a working bibliography of relevant sources already consulted and those that will need to be consulted. Do not prepare an unselective bibliography of the sort that is generated by computerized subject searches.

**EXAMINATION READING LISTS** — Use headings to identify the fields covered by the reading list. In some cases it will be useful to separate primary from secondary literature to be covered in the examination; in others this distinction may be unnecessary or irrelevant. The student and committee will come to an agreement on the appropriate range of the examination, number of texts to appear on the reading lists, specific titles, and scope of the exam’s various parts. Three (or sometimes four) exam fields must be delineated.

Recent examples:

Dissertation topic: The Institutionalization of German Theatres, 1815-1935  
Exam Fields: German and Economic Theatre History; German Social and Cultural History; Economic History and Economics of the Arts; Institutional and Organizational Theory

Dissertation topic: Soundscapes of the European Theatrical Avant-Garde, 1890-1935

Exam Fields: (1) Modern and postmodern theatre and drama (critical studies); theatre historiography; selective plays, (2) sound studies; philosophies of modern music; sound and theatre, and (3) theories and historical analyses of mise-en-scène; theories of audience reception; textual analysis

Dissertation topic: Hybrid Events: An Interdisciplinary Model for Analyzing Rock Concerts

Exam Fields: Performance Analysis; Media Technology and Culture; American Theatre and Film from Vietnam to Iraq

Dissertation topic: Staged Presence: A Phenomenology of Space in Performance

Exam fields: Contemporary Performance; Performance Theory; Phenomenology

Dissertation topic: Theatre at the Convent in Counter-Reformation Venice

Exam fields: Medieval & early modern theatre and drama; Italian Renaissance cultural history, Counter-reformation studies, and theories of ritual; Medieval and early modern religious women and gender studies

Dissertation topic: From *Mimesis* to *Poiesis*: West Indian Racial and Cultural Representations in Panamanian Performance

Exam fields: Black Cosmopolitanism and African Diaspora Theory in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries; Performance, Performativity, and Gender Theory; and Gender, Labor, and U.S. Intervention in Latin America

Dissertation topic: The Return of Repetition: Charting the Philosophical Dramaturgy of Lessing, Kierkegaard, and Strindberg

Exam fields: Modernity and Modernism; Historiography of German and Scandinavian Theatre ca. 1750-1900; Enlightenment and Post-enlightenment Northern European Aesthetics

Dissertation topic: Performing the Passion: a Study on the Nature of Medieval Acting

Exam fields: Women and religion; Medieval theatre and drama; Models for historicizing acting and spectatorship

Dissertation topic: Theatre in Circulation: Performing National Identity on the Global Stage in Cape Verde, West Africa

Exam fields: Theatre and the nation in Africa; Theorizing performance, ethnography, and festival; Global flows, diaspora, and cosmopolitanism

Dissertation topic: Libertine Theatricality: Contextualizing Erotic Drama in Ancien Régime France

Exam fields: Libertine literature; theatre, gender, and the public sphere in Ancien Régime France; Historicizing private theatres and taste publics

## 7. The Qualifying Exam.

The qualifying exam is normally taken at the end of the second year. The format of the qualifying examination involves three 3-hour written sessions, followed by a conference (a.k.a. oral exam) with the examining committee (usually the same as the dissertation committee) after they have read the written parts.

Since students in the IPTD often work closely with faculty who may be unfamiliar with the procedures of this program, we have devised this brief outline of the qualifying examination. Students and faculty should feel free to call the Director of the program with any questions.

### 7.1 Purpose

The function of the qualifying examination is to test a student's competence in the special areas that frame the dissertation. In the IPTD, the examination explores areas that provide relevant contexts for the dissertation, as conceived by the student in consultation with his/her committee. For this reason, the student is required to develop both the dissertation and the areas for the qualifying examination in tandem. Although some departments use the qualifying examination to develop a student's familiarity with broad general fields, the IPTD generally asks that the examination fields be made specifically relevant to the scope of dissertation research and the student's intended teaching fields.

### 7.2 Timetable

Students who enter the IPTD with a master's degree are encouraged to take the qualifying examination during the spring quarter of their second year of study at Northwestern or before fall quarter of the third year; since they are typically given a year's residency credit for their master's work, they are able to register for 599 Post-Candidacy Research in the third year. Students who enter the program with a bachelor's degree only are encouraged to take the examination as soon as possible, preferably between the spring quarter of the second year and the winter quarter of the third year. 599 Post-Candidacy Research may not be taken, however, until the nine quarters of residency requirement has been met; summer coursework does count toward this requirement. Students who pass the qualifying examination before completing the residency requirement may either take formal coursework, 499, or 590 to complete residency.

### 7.3 Procedure and Committee

Students work with the program Director in fall and winter quarters to develop their initial prospectus draft. Additionally, an on-going prospectus group consisting of students preparing their prospectuses (and sometimes students who have recently completed the qualifying exam) meets with the program Director to discuss prospectuses-in-progress. These colloquia are valuable in providing a testing ground for ideas, as well as an intellectual community for IPTD students beginning their research careers.

Once the student has identified the field of dissertation inquiry, s/he begins to identify members of the faculty with whom to work: normally three of these faculty members will become the supervising committee; the chairperson of the committee must be a member of the IPTD Associate Faculty and a tenured or tenured-track member of the graduate faculty. In general, the two additional members of the committee are invited after consultation between the student, the dissertation chair, and the Director. The two additional members must be tenured or tenure-track faculty and a least one of them must be an Associate Faculty member of the program. Additional members of the committee from within or without the University may be added; the responsibility for making such arrangements is shared by the chair of the dissertation committee and the Director of the program.

Once a committee chair has been determined, the student works with the chairperson and committee members in further developing the dissertation prospectus, the dissertation bibliography, and the examination reading lists. In some cases, the chair and student will prefer to bring the prospectus and exam lists to a certain level of completion before bringing them to other members of the committee; in other cases, the committee members will all be involved from the beginning. Depending on the circumstances, students may register for 499 or 590 to help support writing the prospectus and examination lists. 590 may be taken for one, two, or three course units per quarter; in IPTD, students generally register for no more than two units of 590 in a given quarter, and for no more than five 590 and 499 units combined before taking their qualifying examination. This is a flexible guideline, however, and students are encouraged to discuss the merits of 590 and 499 registration with the dissertation chair and with the Director of the program.

Students may be counseled to register for 590 when they are fully capable of reading and understanding an area critical to their dissertation research, whereas 499s is a more appropriate designation when a specialized interlocutor will be needed for the student to gain a working knowledge of the material. 590 is a non-directed reading, whereas 499 is an independent study supervised by a faculty member. 499s must have approved syllabi specifying the course's objectives, reading assignments, and expectations for evaluation (such as essays, weekly study questions, etc.). 499s receive a grade and usually involve weekly meetings between student and instructor.

While the prospectus and bibliography provide a working account of the planned dissertation, the examination reading lists identify relevant contexts for the qualifying examination. Examination fields should be made pertinent to the scope of dissertation research. The examination is given in three sessions, but the student is not limited to three reading lists: the student and committee may decide to devote two exam sessions to one large area and a third session to a third narrower area, or there may be a four areas. The examination lists will to some extent duplicate the dissertation bibliography; while shorter in length, the examination lists are wider in scope than the dissertation bibliography. Students should consult approved examination lists on file with the graduate secretary.

The dissertation committee will read and approve the dissertation prospectus, dissertation bibliography, and examination reading lists. The student will then submit a copy of these documents to the Executive Committee for final approval; in many cases, the Executive Committee recommends some alterations and revisions. Once the prospectus, bibliography, and examination reading lists have been approved by the Executive Committee, the examination may be scheduled. Note that the “Recommendation for Ph.D. Qualifying Examination” form, signed by the Director of the program, is to be submitted electronically by the student ([www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/forms](http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/forms)) to The Graduate School at least three weeks before the date of the examination. The dissertation committee members submit questions to the dissertation chair, who then compiles the examination and submits a copy to the graduate secretary. The student may then pick up examination questions from the graduate secretary on each day of the exam.

#### 7.4 Conduct of the Examination

The student and committee agree on when the examination will be taken, and schedule a date for the oral component of the exam as well, usually in the week following the written section. The student notifies the Theatre and Drama graduate secretary of these dates; the secretary and the student determine where the examination and the oral will be given. The student is required to request the appropriate paperwork in advance electronically ([www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/forms](http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/forms)). The dissertation chair solicits and determines examination questions, and forwards the questions to the graduate secretary in advance of the examination.

The examination is given in three 3-hour units (scheduled over three successive mornings or afternoons). Students who so request may take two parts of the exam on one day, however this is not generally recommended. If a computer cannot be provided, students may bring their own laptop. Students may not consult notes, books, or computer files during the exam, nor may they connect to the web. The University’s and Graduate School’s Policy on Academic Integrity is strictly applied and contravention will constitute automatic failure of the exam. Students using a computer must provide the graduate secretary with a digital file of their examination answers at the end of each session.

After all three sessions have been completed, the graduate secretary will copy and circulate the examination to the examination committee: each member of the committee reads the entire examination. At the oral defense, students may be asked to comment further on answers given during the written session as well as to answer other questions arising from the examination lists and the dissertation prospectus.

The qualifying examination committee is responsible for evaluating the student’s performance on all areas—written and oral—of the qualifying examination, and for deciding whether the student has passed or failed the examination. In most cases, the committee comes to a consensus on whether the student has passed the examination; in rare cases when consensus cannot be reached, the chair will call for a vote, and the majority will carry. Although it is difficult to specify in the abstract what constitutes a passing or a failing examination, passing examinations generally engage the questions

asked, develop a sufficiently sophisticated critical argument in answering the questions, reveal an awareness of important critical or historical or theoretical contexts of the questions, and bring relevant detail to bear in the answers. Part of the committee's conversation about the examination may include discussion of the prospectus, and how well prepared the student seems to be to undertake the work of the dissertation itself.

#### 7.5 Admission to Candidacy

After the prospectus has been officially approved by the dissertation committee and by the Executive Committee, and after successful completion of the qualifying examination at the end of the second or in the third year of study, students are eligible for formal admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. Procedures are described at <http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/doctoral/admissiontocandidacy/>. Students must achieve candidacy by the end of their third year or will cease to be eligible for financial support (see the *Graduate Policy Guide*) [http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/docs/Grad\\_Study\\_at\\_NU\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/docs/Grad_Study_at_NU_2_.pdf)

#### 7.6 Unsatisfactory Performance on the Qualifying Examination

In the event of failing examination, the examining committee should follow the following procedure.

1. The examination committee makes a written report to the Executive Committee and to the student, outlining its evaluation of the student's examination: strengths and weaknesses, reasons for failing the examination, and rationale for permitting or not permitting a retake examination. Examinations are retaken in their entirety; the Executive Committee will also indicate whether the student should be asked to respond to the same questions as on the first examination or whether new questions will be raised. The Executive Committee will consider the examination committee's negative recommendation in light of the student's overall performance in the IPTD. It will consult both with the committee and with the student in such a way that all parties can explain and amplify their judgment of the situation. The student will be given ample opportunity to respond to the examining committee's recommendation, and to provide the Executive Committee with any additional information bearing on his/her performance in the examination. In some cases the student may be interviewed by the Director of the program; in others by members of the Executive Committee or by the entire Committee. The examining committee, or members of the examining committee, may also be interviewed by the Director and/or the Executive Committee. In cases where the Director and/or member of the Executive Committee are also on the examining committee, The Director will appoint a subcommittee – drawn from the Executive Committee and/or from the Associate Faculty – to consult with the student and with the examining committee, and to report to the Executive Committee. After consulting with the student and with the examining committee, the Executive Committee will vote on whether to extend permission to write a retake examination to the student. Members of the student's examining committee who are also on the Executive Committee are ineligible to vote in this matter.

2. If the Executive Committee does not approve a retake examination, the student is recorded as having failed the examination; in accordance with Graduate School regulations, dismissal from the program will ensue. Appeals may be directed to The Graduate School.

## 8. Writing the Dissertation

Once the student is admitted to candidacy, progress toward the degree will depend very much on his or her own pace and initiative. We encourage completion of the dissertation by the end of the fourth year; some students will take part or all of an additional year to finish. Experience suggests that students will not improve their dissertation by spending more than two years on it. In writing the dissertation, students will be guided by their committee, who will be both advisers in the process of research and composition and judges of the final product.

It is useful to think of the prospectus as a memorandum of understanding between the student and the committee about the dissertation. The prospectus is not a contract specifying provisions to be fulfilled. The student will undoubtedly change his or her mind on many aspects as work proceeds, and the committee members will accept this as natural. At the same time, students must seek their committee's advice and approval if they envision substantial departures from the topic, scope, or method of the original proposal. The committee, at their discretion, may require an amended prospectus. Such formal revision of the prospectus is especially important if the student intends to reduce the scope of the dissertation, delete authors and topics, or make significant changes in data gathering or the coverage and treatment of secondary literature. It is the student's responsibility to keep the committee informed of what they are doing and to make sure that the dissertation is a realization of plans that the committee has had a chance to ponder and approve.

Formally, the student's communication with the committee will be through the dissertation chair, who chairs the committee and has the major responsibility for supervising progress. It is the chair's responsibility to make sure that the parts of the dissertation are presented to the committee in a sufficiently coherent and substantial form to permit evaluation and advice. No member of the committee is required to read any part of the dissertation until it has been reviewed by the chair.

While the dissertation chair has the leading role as adviser, all members of the committee are equal judges of the final product, and each member must certify by his or her signature that he or she is willing to accept work as meeting the standards for a doctoral dissertation in the program.

Within this framework, it will be up to the student to develop a relationship with the committee that will work best for the dissertation. Some candidates will work mainly with the chair, and other members of the committee will serve primarily in a review function. There may be other cases in which interests and expertise on the committee are balanced in such a way that all members are actively involved at all stages of the dissertation. Whatever particular relationship develops, it will be important for students to solicit the committee's criticism and advice on the bulk of the dissertation sufficiently early to take full advantage of it.

### 8.1 Changes in the Supervising Committee

A student who is dissatisfied with their advisor or a reader has the right to request a change from the Executive Committee. Similarly, an advisor or reader may request to be released from this obligation.

If a member of the committee leaves the University or resigns from a committee, the Director will appoint a replacement after consultation, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. If a student would like a faculty member who has left the University to continue on their committee and the faculty member is willing, the Executive Committee will normally comply with the request if the dissertation is well underway. In exceptional circumstances, a student may also be permitted to continue working with a dissertation chair who has left the University. Such a decision requires the explicit consent of the Dean of The Graduate School.

### 8.2 Expectations for Completing the Dissertation

Committee members have an obligation to read chapters or blocks of the dissertation within three weeks of receipt. Students can make it easier for them to do so if they give them advance warning. If a student plans to hand in an entire dissertation at once, they must give a month's notice if they expect the three-week rule to be followed.

Committee members also have an obligation to read a dissertation while they are on leave (with appropriate allowances in extending the three-week rule for those who are out of the country). Faculty members are under no obligation to do any reading or other supervisory work during the summer months.

The Graduate School regulations concerning electronic submission of dissertations are stated in <http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/doctoral> and must be adhered to.

It is hoped that students will never have a need to worry about The Graduate School regulations concerning time limits for the Ph.D., let alone the provision for an extension. Students should be aware, however, that these rules are firmly administered. The maximum time limit for completion of the degree is nine years from matriculation into the program.

### 8.3 Oral Defense of the Thesis

A student's last act as a degree candidate will be the defense of the dissertation at an oral examination. This is a 2-3 hour exam where the committee raises concerns which students must satisfactorily answer. Following a successful defense, the dissertation is submitted to The Graduate School in conformity with the guidelines stipulated in "Preparation and Submission of the Dissertation" handbook.

### 8.4 Timing and the Dissertation

Students finishing the Ph.D. sometimes do not understand what is involved in completion and how much time the last stages take. This is an attempt to explain the last steps. This section should be reviewed in conjunction with The Graduate School's written guidelines.

*While writing the dissertation*

Normally, one's dissertation committee advisor reads each chapter as it is completed and gives feedback directly to the student. When additional expertise is needed, other members of the committee may be consulted, however the chair is the primary contact throughout the writing phase.

*When the entire dissertation is drafted*

When the main body of the dissertation is written the student often feels that the process is almost over. Some of the faculty on the committee may have already read some or all the chapters and given feedback. However, there is a major evaluation that can only take place when the dissertation advisor has received the entire dissertation, from title page to complete bibliography with all the notes in approved form. At this point the advisor can see whether the work fits together as a whole, refers to the entire range of pertinent literature, has a relatively consistent style, and develops a consistent argument. Each faculty member works differently, but as a rule of thumb three weeks are needed from the time an advisor receives a dissertation until feedback can be expected. Sometimes it is less, but sometimes, especially at the end of a quarter, or during vacation, or if conferences, professional, or family matters intervene, it may take longer. It is always best to alert faculty before giving them a major amount to read, so at least it can get put on the stack of things to schedule and do.

*Getting ready for the defense*

Once the advisor has read the whole dissertation, and agrees it is substantially defensible, it can be sent to the other faculty on the committee. (Of course, it may be found lacking, and more work will have to be done by the student before it can be sent to the committee. And other members of the committee may have read parts of it already. Such factors will alter the schedule.) The advisor will contact the other members of the committee to let them know that the dissertation will be delivered to them, -give a context (the candidate's plans, observations and criticisms that the advisor has at this stage, etc.), and try to get a sense of the committee members' schedules and availability.

Then, it again takes about three weeks for the members of the committee to read and comment. It is important at this stage that the committee members communicate to the advisor regarding their comments. Of course the student may run into members of the committee, and they may discuss the dissertation, but it is very important that the advisor be the one person who pulls together the various and diverse comments and interprets them for the candidate. Otherwise, the student can end up misunderstanding the relative importance of various comments, or face contradictory demands.

At this point the committee as a whole, or individual members of it, may have significant comments and reservations about the work. This may be due to different understandings of the project, or the methodology, or the style. In some cases, the dissertation committee agrees to meet with the candidate (not as an official defense) in order to review the work, the expectations, and substantial new work that needs to be done. (This kind of a meeting may also be useful during the research and writing stage, especially if the dissertation seems to be taking a different direction than first planned.) When the chair and members of the committee agree that the dissertation is ready for a defense, the student files a form electronically with The Graduate

School scheduling the event (liaise with the graduate secretary about this). This form is filed three weeks before the defense.

### *The oral examination*

The oral defense is attended only by the committee and the candidate. The student should be ready to verbally defend the dissertation, especially the central argument made and the appropriateness of the methodology and expression. Faculty may challenge any part of it, and the student is expected to be able to satisfactorily respond. (This is in fact an activity that takes place at various scholarly gatherings, when giving papers or lectures and dealing with peer audience responses, so it helps to think of the oral exam as a step toward professionalization rather than a hazing ritual of graduate study.) In general, the defense functions as a face-to-face meeting about the dissertation, a chance for the candidate to discuss the process of doing the research and writing and what was learned, to evaluate the work, and to discuss future professional work. Assuming that faculty have carefully read the complete dissertation before agreeing to schedule the defense, there should be no surprises at the defense. Sometimes the defense reveals certain questions or problems that require additional research, writing or rewriting. In some cases some major rewriting is needed and committee members may not sign off on the dissertation until they review the rewritten version.

In most cases some additional refinement is needed, so it is best if the candidate schedules the defense at least 2-3 weeks before the final version must be turned in to The Graduate School to meet their deadline (typically early May and December). But, understand that it is conceivable that major changes may still be needed at this stage and chapters or the whole thing re-examined by committee members. Also, it is important to remember that preparing the dissertation in accordance with Graduate School specifications can be time-consuming.

### *After the defense*

Normally, dissertation revisions specified at the defense must be reviewed by the advisor. This procedure may take several days. Only then it is ready to send to The Graduate School. So, typically it takes about one quarter or ten weeks to go from final draft of the dissertation to actually having everything turned in and approved.

*In other words, to meet a May deadline for June graduation, students must have completed the “final draft” ready for their advisor in late February or early March (for a June graduation) or late August or early September (for a December graduation).*

## 9. Fellowships/Teaching Assistantships

All students admitted to the IPTD receive four or five full years of funding including summers (subject to satisfactory progress, assessed periodically by the Executive Committee). Support comes from a combination of assistantships and fellowships quarters. Two or three non-teaching quarters are allotted post-candidacy; their distribution is determined in consultation with the Director. In addition, summer fellowships are geared to intensive preparation for qualifying exams, travel to archives or research sites, and writing.

The progression is intended to optimize students' ability to complete course work, identify a dissertation topic and prepare a prospectus in the second year, and advance to candidacy by the

end of the second year or beginning of the third year while also undertaking supervised experiences that prepare them to excel both as researchers and pedagogues. In years two through four or five, teaching assignments are in circumstances of graduated responsibility and autonomy (see Section 13), usually involving the Department of Theatre and at least one other department appropriate to the student's interdisciplinary focus and intended teaching fields post-graduation.

Students entering without an MA normally receive five-year funding offers. Students with an MA normally receive four-year funding offers; in such cases, eligibility for a fifth year of funding rests on availability of funds, demonstrated progress toward the degree, and a record of applying for competitive outside (non-programmatic) resources, especially non-Northwestern grants and fellowships. Consistent participation in workshops for grant writing skills will help equip students for this challenge.

#### 10. Travel to Conferences

To the fullest extent possible, the program's budget will be directed to support students' travel to conferences. Students giving papers may apply for assistance with costs; additional funds are available directly from The Graduate School and other Northwestern sources. Students giving papers based on their research will receive priority; under some circumstances respondents or participants in round tables may also apply.

Students will be asked to submit requests early in the fall quarter for all conferences falling with the fiscal year (September to August). Those not yet in receipt of acceptances may receive provisional approval for funds and submit their proof of acceptance to the conference program before funds are requisitioned. Normally, each student may receive support for only one conference per year. Requests will be funded on a pro rata basis in a manner equitable to the demand for funds and respective of the needs of the entire group. Normally, only domestic travel will be funded. Foreign conferences may, however, be funded up to a proportion comparable to domestic conferences.

#### 11. Additional funding

In view of the likelihood that students may require additional funding to complete their dissertations, they should actively seek funding from outside agencies as well as Northwestern-based sources. The following policy was passed by the Executive Committee (effective September 1999, revised June 2008):

As soon as possible after completing the qualifying exams (and annually thereafter) students must consult with the Director of the program to strategize about fellowship funding and to report on their activity in seeking support. This includes funding for travel or other costs of research, major fellowship applications, teaching posts, and post-doctoral fellowships.

In preparing the application for fifth-year funding, students should also demonstrate a good faith effort to locate and apply for fellowship and research support outside Northwestern (this recognizes variations in accordance with students' circumstances).

### Part IV. Other

#### 12. MA Option

Technically, IPTD is a PhD-only program. However, students who matriculated at Northwestern without an MA may take a Master's degree along the way to the PhD by temporarily changing their registration post-candidacy.

The MA in Theatre and Drama consists of 18 course units, including T/D 501 Methodology, and three graduate-level courses in European theatre history or drama prior to 1650; European theatre history or drama after 1650; and some aspect of theatre or drama in Asia, Africa, or the Americas. Additional courses to be selected in consultation with the program's Director. The MA is fulfilled upon satisfactory completion of a qualifying exam.

Students must be admitted to the IPTD in order to participate in the MA.

### 13. Evaluation of Teaching

Each teaching assignment must be observed a faculty member at least once per quarter. A written evaluation must be provided to the Director; evaluators are also encouraged to give oral feedback to the student. These evaluations help the Director assess a student's growing competence as a pedagogue and determine subsequent teaching assignments.

### 14. Student-Run Groups

#### 14.1 Post-Candidates' Journal Caucus

This group meets regularly during the academic year. Each quarter, a student coordinator is assigned; candidates take turns choosing an article recently published in a prominent journal in theatre and performance studies. Group discussions help students keep current on research and publishing outside their immediate dissertation interests.

#### 14.2 Dissertation Reading Group

This group meets ad hoc throughout the year. Usually, the group is constituted jointly with candidates from the Department of Performance Studies as well as students in the Critical Studies in Theatre and Performance Cluster. Students share dissertation chapters in progress.