Admission to Candidacy and the Dissertation: Requirements
Building your dissertation committee

• Building your dissertation committee begins very early in your academic career.
• Build relationships with professors who work in your fields of interest.
• Taking a course with an outside professor [e.g. Professors Mark Cohen (Owen) and Dana Nelson (English)] is a great way to build a relationship with a potential outside member.
• Your committee chair will ideally work in your primary field of interest.
• You should have a topic in mind and a 1-2 page prospectus prepared before approaching faculty to be on your committee.
About fields of interest

- Building your own field is permissible, but formal advance permission (DGS + Co-Directors) is required. If you create a field outside of the standard fields, it is optimal for that field to be your secondary field. Working on a dissertation outside of the program’s primary fields can present difficulties. There is no requirement that core faculty must agree to be on a dissertation committee. Assembling a committee may be more difficult for non-standard fields.
Building your dissertation committee

• You must obtain agreement from a committee chair and three other faculty members who fit these descriptions:
  1) A core faculty member in the Program (Who are core Program faculty? Hersch, Shinall, Skiba, Viscusi)
  2) A professor in Law School or Economics Department
  3) A professor in Law School or Economics Department
  4) A professor in another department or school, e.g. Political Science or the Owen Graduate School of Management.
Building your dissertation committee

- The committee consists of not fewer than four members of the Graduate Faculty. Dean Hoover may approve non-Graduate Faculty for specific committees, but approval is at his discretion and is not guaranteed. Tenured professors are more likely to be approved.
- Your committee chair must hold a Ph.D.
- One committee member must be core faculty in the Program (Hersch, Shinall, Skiba, Viscusi).
Selecting your committee chair

- Choose a faculty member (with a Ph.D.) who is affiliated with the Program. The faculty member should be a Full or Associate Professor rather than an Assistant Professor. The chair should be a member of the Graduate Faculty. (See the Graduate School Handbook.)
- Ask that professor to be your dissertation committee chair.
- Obtain agreement from your dissertation committee chair.
- Consult with your committee chair about other faculty for your committee.
Graduate Faculty

- Refer to the Graduate School Handbook for a list of Graduate Faculty.
- Chaired professors are Graduate Faculty, e.g. Professor Blumstein, Professor King, Professor Ruhl.
- All professors affiliated with Law & Economics are Graduate Faculty, e.g. Professor Stack, Professor Shinall.
- If a professor’s name does not appear in the Handbook, a request (along with a C.V.) must be submitted to Dean Hoover for approval for committee membership.
Request to Appoint Ph.D. Committee Form

• The student provides the information to the program manager, who will complete and submit the Request to Appoint Ph.D. Committee Form when the student has finalized the committee.

• The DGS must sign the Request to Appoint Ph.D. Committee Form.

• The program manager will submit the form to the Graduate School (Linda Harris) and will keep a record of the form on file.
Request to Appoint Ph.D. Committee Form

- The Ph.D. committee must be appointed by the Graduate School no less than 14 days before the time the student expects to take the qualifying examination.

- The form usually takes 1-2 days to be processed by the Graduate School (Dean Richard Hoover).
REQUEST TO APPOINT PH.D. COMMITTEE

IMPORTANT: Prior to committee appointment, this form should be delivered to the department or program office. The form is to be signed by the Director of Graduate Studies, copied for the department or program file, and forwarded to the Graduate School, 411 Kirkland Hall.

TO: Associate Dean of the Graduate School

This is to request the appointment of the following Ph.D. committee for:

_________________________________________________________
(Student's Name)

_________________________________________________________
(Student's Social Security/I.D. Number)

in _______________________________________________________
(Department/Program)

with _____________________________________________________
(Dissertation Advisor)

is being appointed to the following Ph. D. committee.

Members of the Committee

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Director of Graduate Studies:  

Signature ____________________________  Date ____________
Dissertation Proposal

• The dissertation is an original, independent examination of significant problems that are of fundamental relevance to the field of law and economics.

• Think of the proposal as a contract with the committee that describes what you are going to research in your dissertation.

• Like a grant proposal, the dissertation proposal should set forth your research plan.

• Substance is more important than length. 20-40 pages is ideal.
Dissertation Proposal Packet Distribution

- The program manager produces a cover memo and a list of all courses you have completed to attach to the proposal.
- The written dissertation proposal must be distributed to all members of the Ph.D. committee at least 21 days prior to the oral qualifying examination date.
- Email your dissertation proposal to the program manager by 4:30 PM for distribution to the Ph.D. Committee on your due date.
Scheduling the Qualifying Examination

• The student and the program manager work together to schedule the exam and to complete the Request to Schedule Qualifying Examination Form.

• The program manager will handle all meetings/room scheduling.

• The program manager will submit the form to the Graduate School (Linda Harris) and will keep a record of the form on file.

• The Request to Schedule Qualifying Examination Form must be submitted to the Graduate School at least 14 days prior to the Qualifying Examination.
REQUEST TO SCHEDULE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

IMPORTANT: Prior to examination, this form should be delivered to the department or program office. The form is to be signed by the Director of Graduate Studies, copied for the department or program file, and forwarded to the Graduate School, 411 Kirkland Hall.

TO: Associate Dean of the Graduate School

This is to inform you that

__________________________
(Student's Name)

__________________________
(Student's Social Security/ID. Number)

in ________________________
(Department/Program)

with _______________________
(Dissertation Advisor)

is scheduled to take his/her qualifying examination

on ________________________
(Date)

at ________________________
(Time)

in/at _______________________
(Location)

Members of the Committee

Please Type Name: Department:

__________________________ _______________________
Chair

__________________________ _______________________
__________________________ _______________________
__________________________ _______________________
__________________________ _______________________

Director of Graduate Studies:
Signature: ______________________
Date: ______________________
The Qualifying Examination

- The oral qualifying examination is conducted by the Ph.D. committee.
- Voice recordings of the qualifying examination are not permitted.
- A student is allowed only two opportunities to pass the qualifying examination.
- The qualifying examination may be administered at any time during the school year and must be completed within a period of 4 weeks (i.e., holding a pass).
Qualifying Examination Results Form

- The qualifying examination results form must be signed by the committee members and the DGS for the Program.
- The qualifying examination results form will be forwarded to the Graduate School by the program manager after the committee and DGS have signed.
- When the student has passed the qualifying examination and the form has been processed, the Graduate School will admit the student to candidacy for the Ph.D.
RESULTS OF QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

IMPORTANT: Immediately after the examination, this form with signatures of committee members should be delivered to the department or program office. The form is to be signed by the Director of Graduate Studies, copied for the department or program file, and forwarded to the Graduate School, 411 Kirkland Hall.

TO: Associate Dean of the Graduate School

This is to inform you that

(\underline{\text{Student's Name}})

(\underline{\text{Student's Social Security/L.D. Number}})

(\underline{\text{Dissertation Advisor}})

\begin{itemize}
  \item \text{\checkmark} Passed
  \item \text{\checkmark} Failed
\end{itemize}

the qualifying examination on \underline{\text{(Date)}}

Student's Major:

Members of the Committee

Please Type Name: \hspace{1cm} \text{Signature}:

\begin{tabular}{ll}
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\text{Name 1} & \text{Signature 1} \\
\text{Name 2} & \text{Signature 2} \\
\text{Name 3} & \text{Signature 3} \\
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\end{tabular}

\text{Chair}

Director of Graduate Studies: \underline{\text{Signature}} \hspace{1cm} \underline{\text{Date}}
OMG! You’re a Ph.D. Candidate!
Intent to Graduate Form

- An Intent to Graduate Form must be submitted to the Graduate School at the beginning of the semester in which the student expects to receive a degree.

- Students should check the University Academic Calendar each semester to determine deadline dates.
NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO GRADUATE ON MAY 8, 2015
The Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

Thesis/Dissertation
Submission deadline: March 23, 2015

All degree candidates, whether the degree is terminal or the student is continuing for another degree, must complete and return this form to the Graduate School, 411 Kirkland Hall, by Monday, February 9, 2015. This includes candidates for master’s degrees "in passing" as well as non-thesis master's degrees.

NAME (as it should appear on your diploma) (First) (Middle) (Last)

STUDENT ID# __________________________

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*If checked, failure to turn in a thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School by the deadline will result in no degree being awarded.
Dissertation Requirements

• The dissertation must be completed within four years after a student has been admitted to candidacy. Please note that funding will not be extended beyond the years listed in your Graduate School acceptance letter.

• Co-authored chapters cannot be included in the dissertation.

• The chair of the dissertation committee is the student’s primary research advisor.

• Periodic reports to all committee members of progress on the dissertation research are strongly recommended.
Dissertation Format

• The final dissertation must follow the format outlined in the Vanderbilt Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines, which can be found at www.vanderbilt.edu/gradschool.

• Before the final dissertation is submitted to the Graduate School, the format must be approved by Liz Leis of the Graduate School. After your final defense, contact Liz Leis to email her your materials if the materials closely conform or to schedule a meeting if your materials need more work. Once your dissertation is approved by committee members, and the format has been reviewed by the Graduate School, this becomes the “final copy.”
Final Defense

• The final defense is an oral examination administered by the student’s Ph.D. committee.

• The public is invited to attend the final defense.

• The candidate must pass his or her dissertation defense at least 14 days before the end of the term in which the degree is to be conferred, or by April 1 for May graduation. Note: let’s talk about extensions.

• When the committee chair agrees that the student is ready to defend the dissertation, the chair notifies the DGS and Program Co-Directors at least 21 days prior to the final defense.
Final Defense

• The program manager will notify the Graduate School of the time and place of the final defense as well as the title of the dissertation at least 14 days prior to the defense (using the Request to Schedule Dissertation Final Defense Form).

• The candidate submits a copy of the completed dissertation to the program manager at least 14 days prior to the defense. The program manager will distribute copies to the committee, DGS, and Program Co-Directors at least 14 days prior to the defense.
Final Defense Results

- The Dissertation Defense Results Form must be signed by the DGS and committee members and will be given immediately to the Graduate School by the program manager.
IMPORTANT: Immediately after the defense, this form with signatures of committee members should be delivered to the department or program office. The form is to be signed by the Director of Graduate Studies, copied for the department or program file, and forwarded to the Graduate School, 411 Kirkland Hall.

TO: Associate Dean of the Graduate School

This is to inform you that

(Student's Name)

(Student’s Social Security/L.D. Number)

(Dissertation Advisor)

☐ Passed ☐ Failed

the dissertation defense on ______________________. (Date)

Student's Major: ______________________

Members of the Committee

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<th>Chair</th>
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Director of Graduate Studies: ______________________

Signature Date
Submitting your Approved Dissertation

• Final copies of the approved dissertation may be submitted to the Graduate School in electronic or printed form. Electronic submission is encouraged.

• One copy of the title page with the original signatures of the majority of committee members, one photocopy of the title page, one copy of the abstract (350 words max) with original signature of dissertation chair must be turned into the Graduate School by the date specified in the Graduate Catalog.

• See http://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/academics/theses/index.php
Submitting your Approved Dissertation

- Students who submit electronically must revise the title page, convert to PDF, and upload the document on the Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) website, http://etd.library.vanderbilt.edu.

- After it has been uploaded to the ETD website and approved, changes cannot be made to this document.
Making your Dissertation Publicly Available

- Dissertations are required to be publicly available. You must do the following:
  - Post an electronic version on the library website.
  - File with ProQuest for inclusion in an accessible database.
- You will also want to work with your committee chair to submit your dissertation to a journal.
- If your paper is to be published in a journal, you may request a delay in the release or posting of the dissertation not to exceed two years.
Final Stages Checklist

• You have submitted all required forms and signed title and abstract pages to the Graduate School. (See the Graduate School website).

• You have made the dissertation publicly available at Vanderbilt.

• You have paid all binding and copyright fees.

• You have passed the final defense of your dissertation.
You will earn your Ph.D.!
Job Placement Binders for Law School Hiring

When you are ready to enter the legal academic job market, register with Association of American Law Schools (AALS). Sample contents of a job placement binder for a faculty candidate:

- Faculty Appointments Register form
- CV
- Research Agenda
- Law School and Graduate School Transcripts
- Teaching evaluations if any
- Reviews and References
- Job talk paper