



## **Ph.D. STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**Isenberg School of Management**

**University of Massachusetts**

**Amherst, MA 01003**

This handbook should be used in conjunction with the Graduate School Handbook. It contains official and unofficial information that will help you make timely progress in the SOM Ph.D. Program. It will not answer all your questions, but it's a good place to start. If you don't find it here, please ask.

## 1. OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Ph.D. Program in Business Administration is to produce scholars capable of teaching and doing research related to the management of organizations. To accomplish this goal, the program is designed to produce students who have demonstrated competence in:

- a) Research methodology (including probability and statistics), foundation areas such as economics or behavioral sciences.
- b) A major area of concentration within business administration, and an allied area of minor concentration.
- c) Designing, executing, and completing a significant research project.
- d) Two semesters of teaching in their area or areas of interest.

## 2. GENERAL PROGRAM OF STUDY

Accomplishing these objectives normally requires a minimum of three, and more frequently a minimum of four, years. During the first year, the student takes specified courses in statistics/research methodology and the student's major area. For some of the areas a written examination must be passed in the student's major area. During the second year (or in some areas by the middle of the third year), the student completes a program of study in a major and minor field of concentration. The student usually takes his or her comprehensive examination in the fields of concentration by the middle of the third year. Then the student must complete a doctoral dissertation. Though the student should think about the dissertation from the very first of his/her graduate study, the serious work on the dissertation usually begins in the third year and is complete by the end of the fourth year or soon thereafter. In addition, each student must have one year's teaching experience prior to graduation.

A minimum program consists of 45 credit hours of course preparation and 18 credit hours of the doctoral dissertation.

### 3. PREREQUISITES TO THE PROGRAM

All applicants are expected to be graduates of an accredited American college or university of a foreign institution determined to be equivalent and to have achieved acceptable grade point averages in all prior undergraduate and graduate studies. Applicants are required to submit a score on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GRE scores are accepted in some situations with approval of the Ph.D. Director).

Specific course requirements are kept to a minimum so that students, in cooperation with their advisors and the director of the Ph.D. Program, may choose a program which best meets their own needs. Introductory course requirements listed below, therefore, are prerequisites to ensure a minimal level of competence in doctoral-level courses.

The following prerequisites should be met upon application, or shortly after entry, to the Ph.D. Program:

- a) Information Systems and Management Science  
Working knowledge of computer programming, knowledge of management's use of computers, and knowledge of basic management science applications and models.
- b) Mathematics and Statistics  
Working knowledge of differential and integral calculus, matrix algebra, probability, sampling, estimation, hypothesis testing, experimental design, and regression.
- c) Economics  
Intermediate level knowledge of microeconomics and macroeconomics
- d) Business Administration  
Introductory level knowledge of the following areas: accounting, finance, marketing, organization behavior, and strategic & operations management.

Students with a prior business degree are assumed to have this knowledge. Those without prior business degrees are expected to acquire competence in these areas while in the program.

Students entering the program may have acquired the knowledge by formal course work, self-study, or work experience. Some students, with otherwise strong credentials, are admitted without meeting all of these prerequisites. Such students generally must take more courses than students who meet the requirements upon entry. Applicants with a recently awarded MBA degree will usually have met these entrance requirements.

#### Administrative Procedure

The Director of Doctoral Studies, in consultation with the major area coordinators, will determine prerequisite and doctoral program requirements for each student upon admission to the doctoral program.

#### 4. FOUNDATION REQUIREMENTS

Each year the performance of students is evaluated by their advisor and the area coordinators. In particular, at the end of the first year each student's progress is carefully evaluated. The evaluation process is managed by area coordinators with consultation with the director of the doctoral programs and it may include both oral and written exams. Evaluations of the doctoral students (including the examinations) will be completed ad hoc committees in the student's major area. The Director will notify each student, in writing, of the results of his/her evaluation.

The student:

- a) has made sufficient progress and is allowed to continue his/her studies;
- b) has not made sufficient progress in some areas which the committee feels might be clarified through a written examination, an oral examination, a research paper, or additional course work;
- c) has performed too poorly and has failed. A failed evaluation automatically results in an appeal to the Director and major area coordinator, who will then review all relevant information regarding the student's performance. If the appeal is denied, the student is dropped from the program. If granted, appropriate action must be specified.

#### Administrative Procedure

The Director of Doctoral Studies and the major area coordinators will administer the foundation requirements.

#### 5. FIELDS OF CONCENTRATION

The major concentration must be selected from one of the following areas of concentration:

Accounting  
Finance  
Management Science  
Marketing  
Organization Studies  
Strategic Management

#### Administrative Procedure

Upon arrival in the fall, students usually are assigned a temporary advisor from his/her major area. In most cases this person will also be the major area coordinator. The student and the advisor will draft a tentative program of study, semester-by-semester. By the end of the second year a more "permanent" advisor will be selected by the student in consultation with the major area coordinator. This advisor will usually serve as the chair of the student's dissertation committee.

#### 6. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

The student must successfully pass a preliminary comprehensive examination in his or her major area. If the student fails the comprehensive examination, he/she may, at the discretion of the examining committee in consultation with the Ph.D. Director, be permitted a second and final examination. The comprehensive examination is usually taken by the middle of the third year.

## Administrative Procedure

Each student will take a written comprehensive examination followed, if necessary, by an oral examination in his/her fields of concentration. The nature and scope of the comprehensive must be approved at least one semester before the exam actually takes place. Note that the comprehensive examination precedes and is distinct from the defense of the dissertation proposal. The exam is given by a committee which consists of a minimum of three members of the Graduate Faculty of the University of Massachusetts. Two of the committee members must be from the Graduate Faculty of the School of Management representing the student's major field of concentration. The third member must represent the student's minor field of concentration and does not need to be from the School of Management. The examining committee must certify the results of the examination to the Director. The student's advisor will arrange the composition of the committee, the examining procedures, and the scheduling of the examination in consultation with the area coordinator and the Director. The Director is responsible for certifying the results of the comprehensive examination to the Graduate School.

### 7. DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

The dissertation prospectus represents the next step after the comprehensive examination.

An approved dissertation prospectus (proposal) must be submitted to the Graduate School at least seven months prior to the Final Oral Examination (dissertation defense). This seven month minimum waiting period may, however, be waived in exceptional circumstances with the permission of the Graduate school.

After the student has passed the preliminary comprehensive examination, he or she should promptly develop a dissertation proposal and form a dissertation committee. The Dissertation Committee is proposed by the student in consultation with his/her advisor, major area coordinator, and the Ph.D. Program Director. The Director then nominates committee membership to the Dean of the Graduate School who officially appoints the committee. *The committee is composed of at least four members of the Graduate faculty. At least two of the Graduate faculty nominated to the committee must be from the School of Management Graduate Faculty. One member must be from outside the School of Management (outside member). The outside member shall, without exception, be a voting member of the Dissertation Committee and is expected to be an active participant beginning with the preparation of the dissertation proposal.*

The chair of the Dissertation Committee should be chosen consistent with the scope and direction of the student's proposed research. The chairperson should be very knowledgeable about the subject matter with which the dissertation will be concerned. The remaining members of the Dissertation Committee should also be selected according to their expertise in the field of inquiry. The Dissertation Committee is distinct from the Comprehensive Examination Committee and may be comprised of different members of the Graduate Faculty. The student's advisor to date may but will not necessarily serve as the Dissertation chairperson.

The Chairperson of the Committee shall be the primary faculty member responsible for the direction of the student's research. The Chairperson has the responsibility to arrange a conference with the members of the Committee and the candidate before approving the dissertation proposal. The Dissertation Committee is responsible for approving the dissertation proposal, supervising its execution, and arranging the final examination of the student.

A copy of the dissertation proposal must be signed by the Director and each member of the Committee in black ink to certify approval of the proposal and to certify that a conference with the student that been held. Two signed copies of the proposal must be presented to the Director, one copy will be forwarded to the Graduate School and one copy will be placed in the student's files.

Before the dissertation proposal is approved, it must be presented to, and defended before, the interested Graduate Faculty and students of the School of Management. The presentation can be a part of the conference with the Candidate and the Committee.

8. DISSERTATION

The student must complete a dissertation that is satisfactory to both the Dissertation Committee and the Director.

Administrative Procedure

At least four weeks prior to the date of the proposed final examination the Dissertation Chairperson shall certify to the Director that the Committee unanimously has approved the Dissertation (subject to successful completion of the final examination) and must present a copy to the Director for approval. Upon approval of the Dissertation by the Director, and prior to three weeks before the proposed final examination, the Director will notify the Graduate School and the Graduate Faculty of the School of Management that a final examination has been scheduled and that the dissertation has been examined and approved by the Committee and the Director. An abstract (approximately 350-words) of the dissertation will accompany the announcement to the Faculty of the School of Management.

9. DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The student must pass a final oral examination conducted by the Dissertation Committee. This examination shall be primarily upon, but not limited to, the candidate's dissertation. This examination cannot be scheduled until all members of the Committee and the Director have approved the dissertation. Moreover, all members of the Committee must be present for the defense.

Administrative Procedure

Attendance at the final oral examination is open to all members of the Faculty and any member of the University's Graduate Faculty. Only members of the Dissertation Committee may cast votes. A unanimous vote of the Committee is required for the student to pass the final oral examination. If two members of the Committee cast negative votes, the candidate will have failed the examination. If one negative vote is cast, the degree will be held up pending action of the Graduate School.

The committee must certify the results of the examination to the Director who will in turn certify the results of the final oral examination to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Members of the Committee and the Director must sign the signature page of the Dissertation in black ink.

10. DISSERTATION FEES

The candidate must submit to the Graduate School the original and one copy of the dissertation. In addition, a final copy of the dissertation is given to the Ph.D. Program office in the School. The candidate pays all fees associated with depositing the dissertation and with graduation. The candidate must also provide an abstract of fewer than 350 words.

Administrative Procedure

The dissertation chairperson is responsible for ensuring that the final draft of the dissertation includes all final revisions that may have resulted from the final oral

examination and that the dissertation to be deposited is as was approved by the Committee.

## 11. STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

The Graduate School provides a four-year statute for those students entering a Doctoral Program with a Masters in the area and six years for those who do not have a Masters degree. Those who wish to remain in the program and continue to pursue their degree past these limits must request and be granted an extension. The Director would, therefore, be approached for such a recommendation.

To be effective, the actual extension must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Normally, however, the Director's recommendation will be given overriding weight. In effect the Dean ratifies the Director's recommendation.

When asked for an extension, the Director will

- a. review the student's file,
- b. talk with relevant faculty, especially the Chair of his or her Dissertation Committee,
- c. talk to the student about his or her status and plans for completion of their program.

The Director generally recommends the first extension if he or she is satisfied that the student is in good standing, has made reasonable progress to date, and has a realistic plan for completion. Clearly, by the fourth year a student should at least have passed their comprehensive exam and identified a topic and committee. Preferably, they will also have written and defended their dissertation proposal.

Depending upon the situation, either a six-month or one-year extension may be recommended. That recommendation will be contingent upon an appropriate understanding between the Director and the student regarding what the student is to accomplish within that period. Normally, the goal will be to be finished with the dissertation by the end of the extension period with a fall back goal of substantial progress toward completion by that time.

If a student is still not finished by the end of the first extension period, the review process will begin anew. The Director will again seek input on the student's progress, particularly regarding his or her progress since the first extension was granted. An appropriate recommendation will be based on the Director's assessment of that input. Clearly, a second extension is more difficult to get than is the first. Nonetheless, a student who has continued to make progress and is now relatively close to completion would generally be recommended for an additional extension. That extension could be for either six months or a year.

In some circumstances students may require more than two extensions. Such extension requests will be considered on a case by case basis. In general, however, the Director will need a lot of convincing to recommend more than two extensions for any student, particularly if that extension would carry them into the seventh year.

Students should realize that an extension in the statute of limitations is designed to facilitate students who continue to work and to make steady progress toward their degree. Where circumstances do not permit such progress, the appropriate course of action is to request a leave of absence.

12. TEACHING AND RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

Prior to graduation all doctoral students must have had one year of teaching experience in their field of study prior to graduation. This requirement may be met by presenting satisfactory evidence of previous teaching experience within their field of study, or by serving as a teaching assistant in the School of Management in which the student has full responsibility for teaching courses. In some exceptional situations, a student may fulfill the teaching requirement by teaching only one course and serving as a TA for a professor for the other semester.

Every student prior to teaching their courses will have to pass a teaching seminar, SOM 897T, on "how to teach." This course on teaching will consist of workshops, classes, and observations of classroom teaching and will prepare the student for teaching in the classroom. For most students, it will most likely be during the summer of their first and second years. The Brown Bag lunch seminars will supplement this teaching course.

All doctoral students must also have had one year of experience conducting research under the guidance of a faculty member. Such experience is gained by services as a research assistant to a faculty member or members.

Administrative Procedure

The Doctoral Director, in consultation with the major area coordinator, is responsible for certifying that all teaching and research requirements have been met.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### *Director of Program & Area Coordinators*

- PhD Programs Director: Professor D. Anthony Butterfield  
Tel: 413-545-5678, [dabutter@mgmt.umass.edu](mailto:dabutter@mgmt.umass.edu)
- Accounting: Professor Thomas Kida  
Tel: 545-5650, [tkida@som.umass.edu](mailto:tkida@som.umass.edu)
- Finance: Professor Bing Liang  
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- Management Science: Professor Anna Nagurney  
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- Marketing: Professor Easwar Iyer  
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- Organization Studies: Professor Melissa Woodard  
Tel: 545-5628, [mwoodard@mgmt.umass.edu](mailto:mwoodard@mgmt.umass.edu)
- Strategic Management: Professor Mzamo Mangaliso  
Tel: 545-5698, [mangaliso@mgmt.umass.edu](mailto:mangaliso@mgmt.umass.edu)

### *Isenberg School of Management PhD Programs Office*

- Nicole Tominsky, Director of Operations. Contact with questions regarding TA/RA contracts and travel reimbursements. Tel: 545-5659. [ntominsky@som.umass.edu](mailto:ntominsky@som.umass.edu)
- Keri Jane Crist, Student Support Services Coordinator. Contact for questions regarding admissions, degree requirement forms, student status issues, statute of limitations (SOL) extensions, and course registration issues. Tel: 577-3305. [kcrist@som.umass.edu](mailto:kcrist@som.umass.edu)

### *Other helpful contacts:*

- Graduate Records Office, 534 Goodell Building, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003. Tel 545-0722. Tel: 545-0024.
- Degree Requirements Office, 534A Goodell Building, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003. Tel 545-0722. Tel: 545-0025.
- Graduate Students Payroll Office, 525 Whitmore Administration Building, Amherst, MA 01003, 545-1620 and 545-0640