DOCTORAL/DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND DEFENSE PROCESS CHECKLIST (Effective Fall 2026)

Step One: Select a Doctoral Project/Dissertation Advisor & Submit Pre-Research Checklist Form
Deadline: By the time **27** credit hours have been attempted.

- ☐ **Requirement:** Advisor must be a **full** member of the graduate faculty
- ☐ **All students completing a thesis, doctoral project, or dissertation must complete the Pre-Research Checklist [Form Link Here] and submit to rescomp@ncat.edu between Step One and Step Two (no later than Step Two) and obtain any required approvals from the Office of Research Compliance and Ethics (ORCE) and any appropriate research compliance committee (IRB, IBC, and/or IACUC) before conducting research.**
- ☐ (Optional) To schedule a consultation to discuss your research, email ORCE: rescomp@ncat.edu

Step Two: Form the Doctoral/Dissertation Committee and Submit Committee Composition & Pre-Research Checklist Forms
Deadline: By the end of the third semester of the doctoral program.
Requirements:

Committee must be composed of:

- ☐ Four members who are members of the graduate faculty (including chair/advisor)
- ☐ At least three of the members must be **full** members of the graduate faculty
- ☐ Include no more than one member from another institution, if applicable
- ☐ Approved by graduate coordinator or department chair
- ☐ Advisor/department chair submits Report of Doctoral Committee Composition Form to the Graduate College for final approval.
- ☐ Graduate faculty representative appointed by Graduate College
- ☐ Student/advisor complete the Pre-Research Checklist **[Form Link Here– same link in Step One above]** and submit to rescomp@ncat.edu for research pre-approval from the Office of Research Compliance and Ethics (ORCE).

Step Three: Preliminary Examination / Oral Defense of Proposal
Deadline: Two weeks prior to the proposed oral defense of proposal date.

- ☐ Graduate Coordinator or advisor submits Request to Schedule Oral Defense form to the Graduate College at least two weeks prior to the planned defense date. The committee must already be approved before the scheduling form is submitted.
- ☐ Copies of the defense-ready proposal must be presented to committee no later than **one week *prior*** to oral defense
- ☐ The results of the preliminary exam/proposal defense will be communicated by the department to the Graduate College using the Oral Defense Results Form within **24 hours** from the date of the exam.
- ☐ A student who has not passed the Preliminary Exam by the time he/she has attempted **45 credit hours** will be ***dismissed*** from the program.

Step Four: Final Oral Defense of Doctoral Project/Dissertation
Deadline: After the doctoral project/dissertation research has been completed and approved for its defense by the committee, and at least two weeks prior to the proposed oral defense date.

- ☐ Graduate Coordinator or advisor submits Request to Schedule Oral Defense form to the Graduate College at least two weeks prior to the planned defense date.
- ☐ The student/advisor also need to submit the **Post Research Review Form [Form Link Here]** to rescomp@ncat.edu to request the final research clearance letter from ORCE. Some programs may require the clearance letter sooner. Check with your program director/coordinator.
- ☐ Copies of the defense-ready doctoral project/dissertation presented to committee no later than **one week *prior*** to oral defense
- ☐ Defense results are to be communicated to the Graduate College using the Oral Defense Results Form

Step Five: Submission of the Doctoral Project/Dissertation
Deadline: By the deadline posted on the academic calendar.
Requirements:

- ☐ Conform to the Graduate College's formatting guidelines for dissertations/doctoral projects (see the template/handbook on our webpage)
- ☐ Major Professor (Committee Chair) submits, by email to thesisforms@ncat.edu, the following documents *(must be received by the deadline posted on the academic calendar)*:
  - ☐ A PDF copy of the committee-approved version of the thesis/dissertation/doctoral project
  - ☐ The research clearance letter from ORCE (see Step Four above for details on how to request the research clearance letter).
  - ☐ A copy of the completed and signed Thesis/Dissertation/Doctoral Project Submission Checklist
- ☐ Complete the submission to the ProQuest Electronic Theses & Dissertations (ETD) system. A Non-Exclusive Distribution Agreement is part of the ProQuest submission. Instructions for this step will be provided upon receipt of the submission documents.

Step Six: Publishing the Doctoral Project/Dissertation
Timeline: After dissertation/doctoral project has been reviewed and approved by the Graduate College, and after the student's degree has been conferred.

- ☐ Final document published electronically to the ProQuest Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Database

**Note: Please see the thesis/dissertation website for further details regarding the dissertation completion process.