

Anthropology, PhD, Biological Anthropology Concentration

Degree Requirements

Doctoral Candidacy

To earn a PhD at Washington University, a student must complete all courses required by their department; maintain satisfactory academic progress; pass certain examinations; fulfill residence and Mentored Experience Requirements; write, defend, and submit a dissertation; and apply to graduate via Workday Student. For the details of doctoral degree general requirements in Arts & Sciences, including an explanation of Satisfactory Academic Progress, students should review the Doctoral Degree Academic Information page of the Arts & Sciences *Bulletin*.

Program Requirements

- **Total Units Required:** 60
- **Degree Length:** Up to 6 years
 - Students are expected to complete the degree within 6 years (12 semesters).
 - **Note:** Students must be enrolled in 9 graduate credits each semester to retain full-time status. As students complete their coursework, if enrolled in fewer than 9 graduate credits, they must enroll in a specific Arts & Sciences graduate course that will show 0 units but does count as full-time status. Students should connect with their department to ensure proper enrollment prior to Add/Drop.
- **Grade Requirement:** B-

Universal Departmental Requirements

The following is an abbreviated list of requirements that apply to all concentrations of the PhD in Anthropology. Each concentration also has its own additional guidelines and requirements. A more comprehensive description of the requirements (including additional requirements for each of the three concentrations: archaeology, biological anthropology, and sociocultural anthropology) can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook (PDF). All students in the PhD program are expected to satisfy the academic performance requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, which can be found in the General Requirements section of this *Bulletin*. Similarly, all concentration requirements are in addition to those set out here for the department as a whole.

Degree Length and Course Units

Students are expected to complete the degree within six years. All students must complete a minimum of 60 units of graduate-level coursework for the PhD, but they must not exceed 72 units of credit. A typical semester course load for the first year of study is 12 units. The semester course load for the second and third years is typically 9 units. After 60 units have been completed, students will work with their advisors to identify the appropriate registration options to maintain full-time status.

Master's Degree

The department does not admit students for a stand alone master's degree; completion of the MA degree is a required step in the process of earning the PhD

Students are expected to receive their MA degree by the end of their second year or fourth semester of full-time study.

The universal requirements for the MA in Anthropology are as follows:

- **Theory requirement.** All students are required to take ANTHRO 5712 during their first year. Under special circumstances, this requirement may be delayed or waived by petitioning the departmental faculty. This request should be initiated through the student's advisor.
- **Two subdisciplinary course requirements.** Graduate students earning a PhD in Anthropology are expected to have familiarity across the subdisciplines of anthropology. To this end, all MA students must complete at least one course taught by a faculty member in the anthropology department in each of the two concentrations other than their own. ANTHRO 5712 may satisfy the sociocultural requirement. Courses taken in other concentrations should strengthen the student's understanding of the subfield, complement their research, and ideally, enhance their ability to teach across subfields. Students with good cause to substitute prior extensive coursework in the subdiscipline — especially in the context of a master's degree from another university — for one or both of the other subdisciplinary requirements may petition the relevant subdisciplinary faculty to do so.
- **Courses with six faculty.** All graduate students are required to have had courses with at least six different departmental faculty members. Team-taught courses may count for both faculty members.
- **Credit units.** The Department of Anthropology requires 36 credit units for the award of an MA degree without a thesis.
- **Petition for the award of the master's degree.** Once a student has completed all requirements for the MA degree, the student and their advisor submit a petition to the chair. The chair circulates the petition to the entire faculty and reports the successful completion of requirements to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.



Doctoral Candidacy

Although the Department of Anthropology only accepts students who wish to pursue the PhD, students are not officially admitted to candidacy for the PhD immediately upon entry into the program. Admittance to candidacy for the PhD program requires the successful completion of the requirements of the MA degree as well as of the requirements listed below. Continuation for the PhD requires that the student be advanced to doctoral candidacy. The successful defense of the doctoral proposal and admission to doctoral candidacy are expected by the end of the third year.

- **Credit units.** Students must have completed 48 units before filing the petition to advance to candidacy.
- **Forming the Doctoral Research Advisory Committee (RAC).** Students are encouraged to work with a variety of faculty while shaping their dissertation proposal. Prior to scheduling their dissertation proposal defense (Qualifying Exam) during their third year, students must formally assemble a Doctoral RAC in consultation with their advisor. This committee must consist of a minimum of three full-time tenured or tenure-track members of the Anthropology faculty who must approve the dissertation proposal defense (Qualifying Exam) and also sign the RAC Form and — along with the department chair — the Notice of Title, Scope, and Procedure of Dissertation. This committee typically forms the basis of the Dissertation Defense Committee.
- **Student-specific requirements for doctoral candidacy.** Prior to admission to candidacy, students may be asked by their committees to fulfill additional requirements that are directly relevant to their doctoral dissertation research. These requirements may include a foreign language or specialized training outside of the anthropology department in areas such as statistics, computer programming, or laboratory techniques. Students will be formally notified by their advisor of such additional requirements.
- **Qualifying Exam.** All students must defend a doctoral proposal prior to admission to PhD candidacy. PhD proposal defenses should be carried out by December 15 of the student's third year and must be carried out no later than the end of the third year. Proposals must be defended before the RAC.
- **Petition for admission to doctoral candidacy.** After a student's doctoral proposal has been successfully defended and after all other requirements set by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences; the Department of Anthropology; the subdiscipline; and the student's committee have been met, the student and their advisor should submit a petition to the chair for advancement to candidacy. The chair will then inform the entire faculty and report the successful advancement to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

Qualifying Examinations

Progress toward the PhD is contingent upon the student passing examinations that are variously called *preliminary*, *qualifying*, *general*, *comprehensive*, or *major field exams*. The qualifying process varies according to the program. In some programs, it consists of a series of incremental, sequential, and cumulative exams over a considerable

time. In others, the exams are held during a relatively short period of time. Exams may be replaced by one or more papers. The program, which determines the structure and schedule of the required examinations, is responsible for notifying the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, of the student's outcome, whether successful or unsuccessful.

The completion of the Qualifying Exam in the Anthropology is the successful defense of the dissertation proposal.

Mentored Experience Requirements

Doctoral students at Washington University must complete a department-defined Mentored Experience. The Mentored Experience Requirement is a doctoral degree requirement that is notated on the student's transcript when complete. Each department has an established Mentored Experience Implementation Plan in which the number of units that a student must earn through Mentored Teaching Experience(s) and/or Mentored Professional Experience(s) is defined. The Mentored Experience Implementation Plans outline how doctoral students within the discipline will be mentored to achieve competencies in teaching at basic and advanced levels. Some departments may elect to include Mentored Professional Experiences as an avenue for completing some units of the Mentored Experience Requirement. Doctoral students will enroll in ASGS 8005, 8010, or 8015 Mentored Teaching Experience - Assistant in Instruction; ASGS 8020 Mentored Teaching Experience - Mentored Independent Teaching; or ASGS 8120 Mentored Professional Experience to signify their progression toward completing the overall Mentored Experience Requirement for the degree.

The Doctoral Dissertation

A Research Advisory Committee (RAC) must be created no later than the end of the student's third year; departments may set shorter timelines (e.g., by the end of the student's second year) for this requirement. As evidence of the mastery of a specific field of knowledge and of the capacity for original scholarly work, each candidate must complete a dissertation that is approved by their RAC.

A Title, Scope & Procedure Form for the dissertation must be signed by the committee members and by the program chair. It must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, at least six months before the degree is expected to be conferred or before the beginning of the fifth year of full-time enrollment, whichever is earlier.

A Doctoral Dissertation Guide and a Dissertation Template that give instructions regarding the format of the dissertation are available on the website of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Both should be read carefully at every stage of dissertation preparation.

The Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, requires each student to make the full text of the dissertation available to the committee members for their review at least one week before the defense. Most degree programs require two or more weeks for the review period; students should check with their faculty.



The Dissertation Defense

Approval of the written dissertation by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) is strongly recommended before the student can orally defend the dissertation. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee that examines the student during the defense consists of at least five members. Normally, the members of the RAC also serve on the Doctoral Dissertation Committee. The dissertation committee is then additionally augmented to ensure that the following criteria are met:

1. Three of the five members (or a similar proportion of a larger committee) must be full-time Washington University in St. Louis faculty members or, for programs involving Washington University in St. Louis-affiliated partners, full-time members of a Washington University in St. Louis-affiliated partner institution. All members must be authorized to supervise PhD students and have appropriate expertise in the proposed field of study. One of these three members must be the PhD student's primary thesis advisor, and one may be a member of the emeritus faculty.
2. All other committee members must be active in research/scholarship and have appropriate expertise in the proposed field of study whether at Washington University in St. Louis, at another university, in government, or in industry.
3. At least one of the five members must bring expertise outside of the student's field of study to the committee, as judged by the relevant department/program and approved by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

The approval processes outlined in the RAC section of the Doctoral Council bylaws also apply to the doctoral dissertation committee, including approval of each dissertation committee by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

The student is responsible for making the full text of the dissertation accessible to their committee members for their review in advance of the defense according to program rules. Washington University in St. Louis community members and guests of the student who are interested in the subject of the dissertation are normally welcome to attend all or part of the defense but may ask questions only at the discretion of the committee chair. Although there is some variation among degree programs, the defense ordinarily focuses on the dissertation itself and its relation to the student's field of expertise.

Attendance by a minimum of four members of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee, including the committee chair and an outside member, is required for the defense to take place. This provision is designed to permit the student's defense to proceed in case of a situation that unexpectedly prevents one of the five members from attending. Students should not plan in advance to only have four members in attendance. If four members cannot attend, the defense must be rescheduled. The absence of all outside members or of the committee chair also requires rescheduling the defense.

Students, with the support of their Doctoral Dissertation Committee chair, may opt to hold their dissertation defense in person or by utilizing a virtual or hybrid format.

Submission of the Dissertation

After the defense, the student must submit an electronic copy of the dissertation online to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. The submission website requires students to choose among publishing and copyrighting services offered by ProQuest's ETD Administrator. Students are asked to submit the Survey of Earned Doctorates separately. The degree program is responsible for delivering the final approval form, signed by the committee members at the defense and then by the program chair or director, to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Students who defend their dissertations successfully have not yet completed their PhD requirements; they finish earning their degree only when their electronic dissertation submission has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

Concentration Requirements

In addition to the degree requirements outlined in the Universal Departmental Requirements for the PhD degree, students specializing in Biological Anthropology have other requirements and deadlines to satisfy and guidelines to follow, as described below. The Biological Anthropology faculty reserves the right to allow exceptions to any of the below rules in special cases.

Master's Degree Requirements for Biological Anthropology

First-Year Mentoring Meeting

All students are required to meet with the full Biological Anthropology faculty at the end of the first year (second semester) to present and discuss previous and planned course work, progress on developing their research ideas, summer plans, any completed research projects or research presentations, and any other professional/academic activities.

Reading Course and Portfolio

During the second year, the student will take a year-long independent reading course (Anthro 5250 Advanced Reading) with their faculty advisor or a designated alternative faculty mentor covering the background materials relevant to the planned doctoral dissertation and creation of the portfolio. The portfolio includes a research prospectus, an evaluation of academic progress, samples of their written work from courses taken or other relevant academic writing, and a CV. This reading course will result in the final version of the portfolio, which may serve as a foundation for the doctoral dissertation proposal.

The portfolio will be submitted by end of the third semester to be reviewed by Biological Anthropology faculty. For the student to remain in good standing, they must revise the portfolio based on faculty feedback and resubmit it by end of the fourth semester for approval by the Biological Anthropology faculty. The student will be notified of portfolio approval or revisions in writing at the time of their second-year annual review letter.



Committee

With the advice of the faculty advisor, the student is expected to have formed a doctoral research advisory committee consisting of three Anthropology faculty members (an external committee member may be substituted for an Anthropology faculty member if approved by the Biological Anthropology faculty) prior to the end of the second semester of the second year (fourth semester). The faculty welcomes co-advising and encourages students to utilize research opportunities and resources from different faculty based on projects and faculty expertise.

Second-Year Mentoring Meeting

Students are required to meet with the Biological Anthropology faculty at the end of the second year (fourth semester) to present and discuss their progress in the program, including plans for the dissertation proposal, plans to apply for external funding, any completed research projects or research presentations, and any other professional/academic activities.

Requirements for Advancement to PhD Candidacy in Biological Anthropology

Items 1 through 4 below must be completed before the student's committee and the department can recommend to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, that the student advance to PhD candidacy.

1. **Requirements:** The student must complete the requirements for the MA as described above, including 36 units of course work, the completion of the first- and second-year reviews, and the submission of the portfolio and the second-year paper.
2. **Third-Year Mentoring Meeting:** The student is required to have a mentoring meeting no later than the end of the third year of study. This meeting usually will coincide with the dissertation proposal defense. The purpose of this meeting is to review the student's progress and to update the mentoring plan submitted during the first year and revised during the second year.
3. **Dissertation Proposal:** The student must defend their dissertation proposal to their doctoral committee by the end of the fifth semester (third year). Advancement to PhD candidacy will be given upon formal acceptance of a written research proposal and an oral defense of that proposal before the doctoral research advisory committee. The research proposal will be written in the form of a National Science Foundation doctoral dissertation improvement grant (NSF DDIG). Students who fail to successfully defend their dissertation proposal by the end of the fifth semester will be placed on probation during the sixth semester (third year).
4. **External Funding:** After the successful defense of the dissertation proposal, the student should submit their NSF DDIG grant proposal — as well as any other grant proposals deemed appropriate by the dissertation research advisory committee — at the first available opportunity. These may include (but are not limited to) the Fulbright Program, the Leakey Foundation, and the

Wenner-Gren Foundation. It is generally recommended (but not required) that students who do not receive funding during the first submission should utilize all opportunities to resubmit revised grants; opportunities will vary by granting agency.

Post-Candidacy Requirements

1. **Fieldwork Write-Up Outline:** Within 60 days after the final field season, a detailed outline of the dissertation must be provided to the student's Research Advisory Committee (Doctoral Committee).
2. **Post-Fieldwork Meetings:** The student must meet with their dissertation committee every semester. *Scheduling semester meetings with the candidate's committee is the responsibility of the candidate.*

Deadlines and Time Frames for Submission of Hard-Copy Drafts for PhD Dissertations

A printed copy of the dissertation draft must be submitted a minimum of one month in advance of the defense during the academic term (either the fall or spring semester). A doctoral dissertation must demonstrate the student's ability to make a scholarly contribution in the discipline and to handle theoretical issues. It must conform to the directives of the department and to the regulations of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Dissertation defense guidelines require an external reviewer (i.e., from outside of the Department of Anthropology) on the dissertation committee. Faculty in Neuroscience and Anatomy are, as of 2023, considered external committee members.

The internal members of the dissertation committee (i.e., from within the Department of Anthropology) are required to review the dissertation draft and to certify to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, that it is "ready to come to defense" before it is distributed to an external reviewer. Internal departmental committee members must have two weeks to read and review the dissertation draft to reach the decision of whether to certify the document as being "ready to come to defense." The external reviewer must also receive the dissertation draft at least one month before the dissertation defense.

After certification by internal members of the dissertation committee that the document is "ready to come to defense," the student will provide draft copies to the external reviewers and submit the requisite forms and materials to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Academic Coordinator, who will schedule the defense with the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. The minimum total elapsed time to secure a defense date is one month: two weeks as required for internal departmental review, plus 15 more days as required by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

Guidelines for Oral Defenses

At the beginning of an oral defense of a research proposal, an MA thesis or paper, or a PhD dissertation, the student should provide a short oral synopsis of the research, the length of which will vary with the document coming to defense. Such a synopsis should include the following:



- A short resume of the problem, including a description of how and why the student selected the problem
- A discussion of data collection methods
- A summary of the analytical techniques employed
- A short recap of the results of the research
- A case for the significance of the research

For a research proposal defense, all the above topics except results should be addressed. The oral defense of the doctoral dissertation will consist of the following:

1. A formal presentation to the department and the university community (at which the committee will be present)
2. A question session by the whole audience
3. A closed session for the candidate and committee
4. An executive session of the dissertation research advisory committee.

Please consult the Graduate Student Handbook (PDF) for more information regarding specific requirements for each concentration.

Master's Degree Along the Way/ In Lieu of a PhD

Normally, the Department of Anthropology does not offer a standalone master's degree. However, if a student fails to maintain satisfactory progress toward the completion of the PhD, they may withdraw from the PhD program with a master's degree in lieu of a PhD if all requirements for the MA have been met.