

## Dissertation Writing and Defense Guidelines

*A condensed guide to completing the dissertation requirement of your PhD degree. For complete details, see the Graduate Studies Handbook.*

### Dissertation Writing

**The Dissertation Topic:** You must **pass** the *Doctoral Comprehensive Examination* in order to proceed with the following steps, and the topic on which you actually write must correspond to the dissertation proposal that was approved as part of your *Doctoral Comprehensive Examination*.

**Researching and Writing:** You will need to work with your dissertation supervisor, and if possible with the second reader, who will oversee your research and writing. The dissertation supervisor must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member from the Philosophy Department.

**Preparation of the manuscript:** Your manuscript must conform to the specifications given by the graduate school on <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-students/dissertation-checklist.html>. See also "Dissertation Layout" in appendix to the present document.

### Preparing the Defense of your Dissertation

When you, your dissertation supervisor, and the second reader, agree that your dissertation is ready for defense, you will:

- ❖ **Organize a Dissertation Defense Committee**, comprised of your dissertation supervisor and **at least** two other readers, one of whom must be a tenured or track member of the department. Please refer to the Graduate Studies Handbook for details.
- ❖ **Complete Form A, Approval of the Composition of the Defense Committee:** Please submit this document to the Philosophy Department **at least** two months before your planned defense date. Fill out the form with the names of your supervisor and your readers. Return the form to the Graduate Program Administrator in Stokes N303. If you have a tentative date and time for your defense, this is a good time to reserve a room.
- ❖ **Complete Form B, Submission of the Dissertation to the Department:** A minimum of 30 days before your scheduled defense, return Part B (with signatures of the dissertation supervisor and the second reader), to the Graduate Program Administrator along with **an electronic** copy of your Dissertation and a separate electronic copy of your Abstract. Your defense will be announced to the Philosophy Department and your dissertation will be available for review. If you have not already done so, reserve a room for your defense.

## Dissertation Defense and Graduation

- ❖ **Defend your Dissertation:** You will defend your dissertation in a public, oral examination. If you wish to graduate in May, you must defend before April 1<sup>st</sup>. After that date, your graduation date will be in August or December.
- ❖ **Three copies of the Morrissey College "Signature Page"** (aka "ballot") must be prepared for the day of the defense. Type in the names of your advisor and readers as designated under the signature line. Each committee members will sign all three original documents AFTER you have successfully defended. Digital signatures are NOT allowed; the documents must be signed in person, by hand. If a board member has participated to the defense by video, the three pages must be sent to this member by mail (not email) and returned by mail too.
- ❖ **Ballot Signatures:** You are required to turn in two original Signature Pages to the Graduate School and the third original to the Philosophy Graduate Program Administrator. Photocopies or digital copies will **NOT** be accepted. Do NOT include a copy of the signature page in the electronic-submission copy of your dissertation; bring the two original paper signature pages to the dean's office.
- ❖ **Submit your Dissertation to the Dean:** After the successful defense, you are required to submit an **electronic** copy of your dissertation to the Graduate Dean's Office through eTD@BC. Please see attachment as well as this website for complete instructions on formatting and submitting your dissertation: <https://libguides.bc.edu/graduate-etc>. You must also submit a **hard** copy of your dissertation to the graduate program assistant.
- ❖ It is the responsibility of the candidate to comply with the regulations of the Morrissey Graduate School and with the requirements of the University Registrar: (<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-students/dissertationchecklist.html>).

If you have additional questions, please refer to the Graduate Studies Handbook or contact the Graduate Program Administrator at X23847.

## DISSERTATION LAYOUT

From the specifications given by the graduate school on <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-students/dissertation-checklist.html> (NB: you can download a template from that web page):

The following elements should be included in this order:

- Traditional Title Page
- Copyright Page
- Abstract
- Dissertation itself

### 1. Traditional Title Page

The title page must conform to the sample given in the template referred to above; otherwise, the Graduate School reserves the right to require the page to be redone. The dissertation title should be concise and meaningful, and the title on the signature page and title page should match.

### 2. Copyright Page

Regardless of which option you select with UMI, this page is required and must conform to this sample; otherwise, the Graduate School reserves the right to require the page to be redone. The copyright year should match the date of defense.

### 3. Abstract

The abstract must include the title of your dissertation, your name, and that of your dissertation advisor as the heading. The abstract must be double-spaced in the same type font as the dissertation text.

### 4. Dissertation Form and Style

The signature page, traditional title page, copyright page, and the abstract must not be numbered.

The Graduate School does not require use of one particular style manual; however, make sure that you consistently follow one method of reference and bibliographic notation throughout your dissertation.

The typing of all textual material must be double-spaced; notes, bibliographic references, and long quotations may be single-spaced. The font size must be minimum (10) point. While the font size and style should be consistent throughout your text, the notes, bibliographic references, and long quotations may be in a size smaller than your text, but must still be at least (10) point.

**Margins and Page Numbers:** Left and right margins must be 1.25 inches. Top and bottom margins must be (1) inch. Page numbers must be 1 inch from paper edge on top or bottom of page. These margins must be strictly maintained throughout your work.

**Pagination:** The signature page, traditional title page, copyright page and abstract cannot be numbered and should be presented in that order. Table of contents, acknowledgments (optional), lists of tables, etc. are considered the introductory material of the manuscript; therefore, the pages should be numbered in lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, etc.). Every page of the dissertation body, i.e., after the introductory material, must be sequentially numbered in Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.).

**Charts, Graphs, Tables:** Illustrative material may be included (in color, greyscale, or black and white). If you have any questions about the format of your dissertation contact the Dean's Office, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Gasson 108, at 617-552-3268. Dissertations not conforming to the minimum standards described here in may be returned to the candidate and the awarding of the degree delayed.

## PHD DISSERTATION DEFENSE PREPARATION (Form A)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### A. Approval of the Composition of the Defense Committee

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Name of the dissertation supervisor (first reader):

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Name of the second reader

Institution

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Name of the third reader

Institution

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Name of the fourth reader

Institution

#### 1. Approval of the Defense Committee:

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Signature of the Graduate Program Director

Date

#### 2. Filing with the MCAS Graduate Dean's Office:

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Signature of the Graduate Program Director

Date

# PHD DISSERTATION DEFENSE PREPARATION (Form B)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## B. Submission of the Dissertation to the Department

### 1. Approval of the dissertation by the first and second readers:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reader 1 Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reader 2 Signature Date

2. Date of the defense: \_\_\_\_\_

(Must be a minimum of 30 days after submission of Dissertation to the department)

### 3. Submission to the Department:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Graduate Program Assistant Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Graduate Program Director Date

**BOSTON COLLEGE**  
**Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences**  
**Graduate School**

The Dissertation of: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student's Name)

Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Submitted to the Department of: \_\_\_\_\_

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:  
\_\_\_\_\_

in the Graduate School of the Morrissey College of Arts & Sciences has been read and approved by the Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(Sample Signature Page aka Ballot)

Please visit this website for full instructions: <https://libguides.bc.edu/graduate-etd>

## ETD Checklist for Students

This to-do list is compiled by Boston College Libraries and includes action items for students who will be submitting dissertations or theses to ProQuest.

### Decide

- Do you want to make full text available in [eScholarship@BC](#)?  
*Note: Optional but recommended. Open Access works see an average 17% increase in citations compared to works behind a paywall such as ProQuest.*
- If yes, do you want to apply a [Creative Commons](#) license? Which one?
- Do you need a temporary embargo? How long? (6 months, 1 year, or 2 years)
- Do you need to prevent search engines from accessing your dissertation in ProQuest?
- Have you registered for an [ORCID](#)?  
*Note: Optional but recommended.*
- Do you want ProQuest to register your copyright?  
*Note: ProQuest charges \$55 to register a copyright for you. You may register it yourself at [Copyright.gov](#) for \$35.*

### Prepare

- Have you followed your school/department guidelines for the format and structure of your dissertation?
- Are the first three pages (in order) title page, copyright page, abstract page?
- Is the title consistent on the title page and the abstract page?
- Is your name consistent on the title, copyright, and abstract pages?
- Did you review your document for third-party copyright materials and acquire any necessary permissions or document any [Fair Use](#) rationale?
- Did you check to ensure that all fonts are [embedded in your PDF](#)?  
*Note for LaTeX users: Make sure you are not using Type 3 fonts, which cannot be embedded.*
- Check the security settings on your PDF. Are they set to *Security Method → No Security*?
- Check the Document Restrictions Summary. Is it set to *Document Restrictions Summary → Everything allowed*?

### Submit

- Have you gathered together the information you need for your ProQuest submission?
  - Your current and future contact information
  - Name of your committee chair
  - Year your manuscript was completed; year your degree was awarded
  - Type of degree
  - Department
  - A copy of your abstract that you can cut and paste into your ProQuest account
  - PDF of your dissertation/thesis; any supplemental files
  - Subject categories and additional keywords or phrases
  - If your dissertation/thesis is in a foreign language, the title and abstract in English
- Is your name and the title of your thesis or dissertation on the ProQuest account the same as on your PDF?

For details, more information, and the link to ProQuest, visit [bc.edu/etd](https://bc.edu/etd).

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