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 both parts of 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 who will oversee your research and writing as well as your second reader throughout the process. The dissertation supervisor must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member from the Philosophy Department. We encourage you to have a third reader from outside of Boston College.

Preparation of the manuscript: Your manuscript must conform to the specifications given by the graduate school: https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-graduate-students/dissertation-checklist.html#elements_of_your_dissertation. 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: Your committee is comprised of your dissertation supervisor and at least two other readers, one of whom must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the department. Please refer to the Graduate Studies Handbook for details.

❖ Schedule a time and date for your defense: Please note that your defense may not be scheduled from June 1st-September 15th without permission from the department chair and graduate program director.

❖ 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 at Dustins@bc.edu.

❖ 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 assistant 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:** After your defense is announced, all members of the Philosophy Department have access to read your dissertation and attend your defense. If you wish to graduate in May, you must defend on or before April 1st. After that date, your graduation date will be in August or December. Please avoid scheduling your defense between June 1 and August 31. If a summer defense is unavoidable, notify the Graduate Program Director by April 1st.

❖ **The Morrissey College Result Form “Signature Page”** (aka “ballot”) is now an online document that can be signed electronically. Please see complete instructions at the end of this document. If all signatures are electronic, your supervisor may send the signature page to Sarah Dustin Smith at dustins@bc.edu. For an in person defense, three original signature pages are required and should be returned to Sarah Dustin Smith.

**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](https://libguides.bc.edu/graduate-etc). You will not be cleared for graduation until after your dissertation is submitted.

❖ You must also submit one printed 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/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-graduate-students/policies-and-procedures.html](https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-graduate-students/policies-and-procedures.html)

If you have additional questions, please refer to the Graduate Studies Handbook or contact the Graduate Program Assistant at Dustins@bc.edu.
DISSERTATION LAYOUT

From the specifications given by the graduate school https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-graduate-students/dissertation-checklist.html#elements_of_your_dissertation

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 herein may be returned to the candidate and the awarding of the degree delayed.
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 $30.

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.
PhD DISSERTATION DEFENSE PREPARATION (Form A)

Name: _________________________________________ Date: _____________________

A. Approval of the Composition of the Defense Committee

Name of the dissertation supervisor (first reader):

Name of the second reader ______________________________________________________________________
Institution

Name of the third reader ______________________________________________________________________
Institution

Name of the fourth reader ______________________________________________________________________
Institution

1. Approval of the Defense Committee:

Signature of the Graduate Program Director ______________________________________________________________________ Date

2. Filing with the MCAS Graduate Dean’s Office:

Signature of the Graduate Program Assistant ______________________________________________________________________ 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 ______________

1. 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 ______________
The dissertation of ____________________________ Student's name ____________________________
whose ORCID is ____________________________ Student's ORCiD ____________________________
entitled Title: Including Any Subtitles
submitted to the Department of ____________________________ Department (if applicable)
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree ____________________________ Degree
in the ____________________________ Choose School
has been read on ____________________________ 01 January 2000 and approved by the Committee:

Role | Print Name | Signature
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Instructions on signing forms electronically can be found at this link:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JKdOgtqaxyLAL_VXY9QTmyBPlmNNqNF-4XQOAe5xw/edit?usp=sharing