

Note. General information on doctoral residency is attached for review before you prepare a proposal.

OUTLINE OF PROPOSAL FOR ALTERNATIVE DOCTORAL RESIDENCY

Give the department name, degree level(s) for the alternative residency (Ph.D., Ed.D., DMA, etc.), and the name of the graduate faculty member submitting the proposal.

Four Components of the Proposal (whole proposal should be brief and to the point—no more than three single-spaced pages)

A. Statement of Need. State the problems with the traditional residency policy for your students and why the graduate faculty in the department want an alternative approved.

B. Documentation of how each of the five value constructs (see Attachment, Table 1) will be achieved in the proposed alternative. This section should be brief—one page should be sufficient for all but the most complex proposals.

C. Brief description of ongoing measures of academic success of students following the traditional and alternative doctoral residency, which in four years you will present as part of your comparison documenting the success of the two groups of students.

A few examples of measures appropriate for students in your department might be things such as the following. With this proposal, do not provide data for your traditional residency students.

- performance on comprehensive examinations
- publication rates for dissertations
- time to degree
- degree completion rates
- student satisfaction
- quality of student employments
- measures of employers' satisfaction with graduates
- other

D. Brief description of the proposed alternative residency that would appear in the Graduate Catalog and/or on the Graduate School website's list of departments the Council has approved for alternative doctoral residency in addition to traditional residency.

Submit the proposal as an e-mail attached Word file to John Schmitt in the Graduate School.
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Attachment

Doctoral Residency: Traditional and Alternative Tracks and Procedures

The residency requirement for the doctoral degree at The University of Alabama may be fulfilled by one of two options: traditional on-campus residency and an alternative residency track. Individual students must meet the requirements that are approved for the degree program in which they are enrolled.

Doctoral residency policies are designed to enhance retention and time-to-degree values and aid in the development of fully-independent doctoral scholar graduates at the University.

Background and Rationale: The recent Council of Graduate School's (CGS) 2007 policy publication, Graduate Education: The Backbone of American Competitiveness and Innovation, makes a compelling case for the centrality of quality graduate education, especially at the doctoral level, in future U.S. economic development and our competitiveness as a nation. At the same time, increasingly critical national attention has focused on quality indicators in doctoral education, including time-to-degree and retentions rates.

Nationally, research indicates only about 51% and 56% of all students who enroll in Ph.D. programs graduate with a Ph.D. within 8 years or 10 years, respectively (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008), and similar trends are apparent in the Ed.D. The University of Alabama is similar to the nation as a whole. Although many students leave doctoral programs due to financial difficulties, family crises, and other disincentives, *most Ph.D. attrition occurs in the first few years of study, i.e., prior to attainment of candidacy, and is due largely to students leaving programs in which they have not become emotionally and intellectually vested.*

This is a tragic waste of potential talent, for the individuals involved and the larger society. As a student-centered research university, The University of Alabama is committed to improving doctoral retention rates and time-to-degree with the goal of becoming a national leader in these areas. The new paradigm for doctoral residency approved by the Graduate Council in 2008 counters the major reasons for early attrition—lack of program engagement and scholarly identification .

Doctoral residency policies at The University of Alabama embrace the spirit of residency, rather than simply the letter of the law, as a primary means to enhance doctoral retention and facilitate the formation of 'doctoral scholar' graduates in the Carnegie Foundation model (Walker et al. 2008). That is, the UA doctoral residency requirement is intended to ensure that apprentice scholars receive the full set of five 'value constructs' (Table 1) required for them to develop as effective, independent scholars upon completion of the doctorate (e.g., Joint Doctoral Faculty in Agricultural Education, 1999).

In a traditional residency program, authority is implicitly delegated to the Graduate Faculty to ensure that students receive exposure to these value constructs. Walker et al. (2008), in The Formation of Scholars, propose a four-themed action plan to reform doctoral education: talking about purpose, the principles of formation, apprenticeship reconsidered, and the intellectual community. The major difference between the Carnegie Foundation approach and the traditional approach is in the process by which the spirit of residency is achieved. Through application of these four Formation themes, progressive, effective programs purposefully engage *both faculty mentors and students in a collaborative* process that sets program goals for learning, develops students as independent scholars, creates effective multi-generational mentorship models, and creates a thriving intellectual culture within the program.

Thus, authority for meeting the spirit of residency and accountability in meeting value constructs is jointly shared by faculty and students.

By wedding best practice residency value constructs with Walker et al.'s proactive, collaborative approach that uses these constructs to develop effective doctoral scholars, The University of Alabama has crafted a visionary dual-track doctoral residency policy that is both rigorous and flexible:

- 1) a traditional on-campus residency experience, informed and improved by application of Formation of Scholars themes at the program level, an approach that will continue to meet the needs of most UA programs, and
- 2) an alternate residency track that demonstrably meets the value constructs of doctoral residency and is developed through application of Formation themes.

Table 1. Wedding essential value constructs and themed action plans to develop exemplary doctoral residency programs at UA

UA doctoral residency programs should fulfill the spirit of residency by featuring all of the following value constructs:

- Immersion in advanced study and inquiry
- Interaction with faculty and peers
- Access to the education resources of the university
- Interchange of knowledge with the academic community
- Broadening of educational and cultural perspectives

Meeting the spirit of residency and using residency as a tool to create fully-independent Doctoral Scholar graduates requires a collaborative developmental effort by departmental faculty and students centered around four themes:

- What is the purpose of our program and its desired outcomes?
- What techniques and activities do we employ to insure that the three principles for doctoral scholar formation (development toward scholarly independence, integration of scholarship across contexts, and on-going collaboration with both peers and faculty) are a vital part of our residency requirement?
- How do we optimize the "signature pedagogy" of the residency experience—the traditional and critical apprenticeship experience that occurs between faculty and their doctoral candidates?
- How do we create a thriving doctoral intellectual community that is rich in shared purpose, diverse, multigenerational, and encouraging of risk-taking scholarship?

Traditional On-campus Residency

The on-campus residency track is already operative at UA and meets the needs of perhaps 95% of all doctoral candidates with minimal hardship or difficulties, especially with the recent Graduate Council ruling that **any combination of two consecutive semesters of full-time registration in on-campus coursework in residence is sufficient to meet the letter of the requirement.** For most UA departments and programs, campus-based residency will continue to offer the most efficacious method for faculty and students to work together to develop meaningful, value-construct residency experiences and ensure that graduating Ph.D. students have utilized these experiences to grow as doctoral scholars.

A department/program decision to maintain on-campus residency as the sole way to fulfill this requirement is only a first step on the road to re-envisioning doctoral residency at UA. We call on departments to engage in a collaborative faculty-student examination of the spirit of on-campus residency, centered around value constructs and Foundation themes in Table 1 above. What will emerge from this exercise is a living residency requirement, targeted to students in each specific discipline, with the explicit goal of forming doctoral scholar graduates and not simply meeting a set of temporal and locational criteria for doctoral study.

The Alternative Residency Track

The challenge in crafting a doctoral residency policy that actively decouples temporal and locational criteria from meeting the goals of residency is to ensure that the five “value constructs” in Table 1, implicit in any viable doctoral residency program, are being met. Given that the details of an alternative residency plan will vary depending upon the needs of the program, the Graduate Council invites proposals from departments wanting to institute a method for students in one or more of its doctoral programs to achieve doctoral residency by an alternative method. In such proposals,

- 1) The department would state why its doctoral students need an alternative doctoral residency and provide specific, explicit documentation on how the five value constructs in Table 1 will be achieved, utilizing the Carnegie Foundation’s collaborate faculty-student consensus-building exercise in Table 1.
- 2) Proposals should indicate what ongoing efforts will be used to measure the academic success of the program, including indices such as student satisfaction, time-to-degree and completion rate. Such indices would provide easy comparison between students following the traditional doctoral residency and those using the alternative. These comparisons should include historical data as well as tracking of newly admitted student cohorts.

All proposals will be reviewed by the Committee on Program and Degree Requirements of the Graduate Council and then the entire Graduate Council for acceptance and implementation. As with other special programs and waivers, the Graduate Council would review each approved alternative residency requirement every four years. At minimum, alternative residency programs would be expected to show that student satisfaction, time-to-degree, and attrition/retention percentages are at least equivalent to the department’s on-campus residency track students.

Both the Chair of the Program and Degree Requirements Committee and Associate Dean John Schmitt in the Graduate School are available for guidance in preparing a proposal for an alternative doctoral residency. To aid departmental discussions and policy development, the Graduate School will provide each doctoral department, upon request, with a free copy of The Formation of Scholars.

Examples of alternative residence constructs from other universities may be found in the web references herein. Each successful alternative residency strategy resulted from an exhaustive, in-depth examination of program goals, aspirations, resources, and other attributes by both program by faculty and program students (the ethos of Formation of Scholars), which created a *detailed, program-specific, and assessable format for meeting the value constructs of residency with activities and programs that are not locationally or temporally proscribed*.

Many alternative doctoral residency tracks in place today at U.S. universities were designed to address the 21st-century needs and aspirations of distance learning students and programs with strong distance learning components. However, these approaches are equally efficacious in traditional, campus-based Ph.D. or Ed.D. programs. Departments and/or doctoral programs may design alternative residency tracks for subsets of students with recurring specialized needs. This latter option could be particularly useful in Ph.D. programs enrolling specialized cohorts of students and faculty who would be involved in extensive collaboration, course work, and research mentorship efforts between UA and another research entity (e.g., some emerging disciplines in biotechnology, bioengineering, and other inherently interdisciplinary fields).

Outcomes Envisioned

Development and implementation of the dual residency track policy above will ensure that all UA doctoral programs will meet the spirit and intent of doctoral residency provisions, not simply the letter of the requirement. All UA doctoral graduates would, at least in principle, leave the University with a firm grounding as independent Doctoral Scholars in the Carnegie Foundation mold. No other U.S. institution has embraced this comprehensive vision for excellence. The active and continual engagement that would occur between students and faculty in such a construct would greatly reduce doctoral program attrition caused by the current student 'drift' during early program years. Further, a dual residency track would provide forward-thinking programs with the flexibility to meet their pedagogical objectives and their mandate to develop doctoral scholar graduates without undo attention to temporal and locational strictures.

References

- Council of Graduate Schools. 2005. The Doctor of Philosophy Degree: A Policy Statement. Washington, D.C.
- Council of Graduate Schools. Graduate Education: The Backbone of American Competitiveness and Innovation. Washington, D.C.
- Council of Graduate Schools. 2008. Ph.D. Completion and Attrition: Analysis of Baseline Data from the Ph.D. Completion Project. Washington, D.C.
- Hoffer, T.B., Hess, M., Welch Jr., V, and K. Williams. 2007. Doctoral Recipients for United States Universities: Summary Report 2006. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center.
- Joint Doctoral Faculty in Agricultural Education. 1999. Transforming Study in Residence Based on Value Constructs. Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University.
<http://doc-at-a-distance.tamu.edu/degree.html>.
- Walker, GE., Golde, CM., Jones, L., Bueschel, AC, and P. Hutchings. 2008. The Formation of Doctoral Scholars: Rethinking Doctoral Education for the Twenty-First Century. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Stanford, CA.

Some Examples of Alternative Residency Programs

1. The Doc@Distance degree, Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University. Includes actual degree program construct, plus an extensive treatment of how the alternative residency track they developed meets the Value Construct principles of doctoral residency.
2. The EDFN doctoral program at the University of Oklahoma.
3. The Ph.D. in Latin and Roman Studies and Ph.D. in Classical Civilization degree programs at the University of Florida. Note: these two programs do NOT address the comprehensive alternative residency track model proposed here. There are included because they are one of the very few examples of extant Ph.D. programs at major universities that feature a non-traditional residency model catering to distance students.
4. The Ph.D. program in Educational Studies at Lesley University in New England.

(David Francko, Graduate Dean)