

University of Missouri-St. Louis
Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

Qualifying Papers Policy¹

Graduate students in the doctoral program are not officially classified as PhD candidates until they have passed the Qualifying Papers prerequisite defined below. The goal of this requirement is to establish a student's familiarity with the substantive literature, theory, and methods of criminology and criminal justice, and to demonstrate an ability to imaginatively and creatively use this knowledge to address criminological questions.

A three member Qualifying Papers Committee reviews two sole-authored papers that are submitted to the Graduate Director within nine months of the completion of all coursework.² The manuscripts must address distinct topics and theoretical approaches and are evaluated on the basis of the substantive knowledge reflected in the presentations, the application of relevant theory, the use of appropriate data and research methods (if applicable), the clarity of communication, and creativity. One of the papers must represent the application of an appropriate methodological technique to an innovative research question, and the other must demonstrate a proficient knowledge of and a new perspective on a fundamental theoretical issue. The papers must be limited to 40 pages in length (inclusive of tables, figures, appendices, and references) and formatted in the current style of the journal *Criminology*. Because a student needs to be enrolled at the time of the review, the manuscripts may only be submitted for the first time during the Fall or Spring semesters.

Proposals

After consulting with the student's advisory committee, the student initiates the Qualifying Papers process by submitting a one-page proposal for each paper, including references for literature cited in the proposal on a separate page, to the Graduate Director, who in turn forwards the proposals to the Qualifying Papers Committee for its review. Both proposals must be submitted simultaneously and must be submitted within three months of completing coursework. The qualifying paper committee will review the proposals independently before conferring with each other to reach a final decision. The Qualifying Papers Committee will strive to complete the review process within two weeks of receipt of the proposals. While this process could take longer than two weeks, it will take no longer than one month. The Committee chair will then provide written feedback to the student and convene an in-person debriefing session at the student's request.

Students have one opportunity to submit qualifying paper proposals. Students who fail to submit proposals within three months will be allowed to proceed to the final submission phase of the process, but they will not receive comments on the proposals from the committee or be afforded the opportunity to meet with the committee in-person to discuss their proposal. Failure to submit proposals within three months of the completion of coursework is an indicator of insufficient academic progress.

Papers – First Submission

Final qualifying papers should be submitted simultaneously to the Graduate Director, who in turn forwards the papers to the Qualifying Papers Committee for its review. Final qualifying papers must be submitted within nine months of the completion of coursework. The Qualifying

¹ Effective for the cohort entering Fall, 2015.

² The clock begins on the day of Fall or Spring commencement as denoted on the UMSL academic calendar.

Papers Committee will evaluate the papers and inform the student of a Pass or No Pass decision for each manuscript. Again, the Qualifying Papers Committee will strive to complete the review process within two weeks of receipt of the papers but this process could take longer depending on the number of submissions and the time of year (e.g., summer or winter break). The review process will take no longer than one month. Please see Qualifying Paper Due Dates for exact deadlines. Once the decision has been communicated to the student, the student then has an opportunity to meet with the Committee in a debriefing session during which the grounds for the decisions are discussed.

Papers – Second Submission

If the Committee deems that one or both papers is of insufficient quality to merit a Pass, the student must submit a new or revised paper to the Committee within four months of the original decision. If the second round of reviews, which will follow the same process as the first submission outlined above, also is not successful, the Committee will immediately notify the Chair and Graduate Director that the student has failed to meet this core requirement. This information is transmitted to the faculty, who then meet to discuss the case and to reach a collective agreement about the termination of the student from the program. This recommendation is sent to the Graduate Dean, who makes the final decision about the student's status.

For all paper submissions

Students are encouraged to seek advice from others on their papers, but the final products must represent their own independent work. The names and contact information of all persons who have commented on the papers must be included on the cover page.

QUALIFYING PAPER DUE DATES

Finish Coursework	Proposals Due No Later Than 5pm on:	1st Submission Due No Later Than 5pm on:	Decision Due No Later Than 5pm on:	2nd Submission Due No Later Than 5pm on:	Decision Due No Later Than 5pm on:
December 17, 2016	March 17, 2017	September 17, 2017	October 15, 2017	February 15, 2018	March 15, 2018
May 14, 2017	August 14, 2017	February 14, 2018	March 15, 2018	July 15, 2018	August 15, 2018
December 16, 2017	March 16, 2017	September 16, 2018	October 15, 2018	February 15, 2019	March 15, 2019
May 13, 2018	August 13, 2018	February 13, 2019	March 15, 2019	July 15, 2019	August 15, 2019

NOTE: All decision letters will be distributed to students on the same day.

Qualifying Paper Timeline

