

Dissertation Guidelines
SIUC Department of History

1. Once a student has passed preliminary and oral examinations, he/she should, in consultation with his/her advisor, create a dissertation committee. The dissertation committee should consist of at least five professors, including the advisor as the chair. Three of these professors, including the chair, must be a tenured member of the SIUC history faculty (except if student is enrolled in Co-op –then chair may be either from SIUC or SIUE, and at least one of the three history professors must be from either SIUC or SIUE). Two professors may be from different disciplines, and one may, with approval of the committee chair, be a historian from a different university whose work corresponds to that of the student. Paperwork confirming members of the committee should be filed in the graduate secretary's office as soon as the committee is created (see reverse).
2. Within 1 semester after completion of prelims, the student should prepare, present, and defend a prospectus to his committee. A prospectus should consist of a narrative of the project to be undertaken with relevant historiography, statement of project objectives, a plan of research including a description of libraries, archives and document collections where research will be undertaken, and a bibliography. A prospectus should be 15-20 pages. See additional instructions for prospectus at the [American Historical Association](#) and [Social Science Research Council](#). All members of the committee must receive the prospectus at least 3 weeks prior to its defense date. Defense date should be scheduled at that time with the graduate secretary.
3. Typically, Ph.D. candidates spend at least one year researching, and at least an additional year writing their dissertations. See the [American Historical Association](#) for other resources for dissertating. During research and writing, the candidate should be in close contact with his/her chair. As candidate completes sections or chapters of writing, these should be submitted to chair for approval. As candidate and chair deem best, candidate may solicit feedback from other committee members during the writing process. A defense of the dissertation *may not* be scheduled unless and until the candidate receives feedback and approval from chair of the entire dissertation.
4. Candidate should distribute the dissertation in its entirety to members of his/her committee at least 30 days prior to defense date. Defense date should be at least 30 days prior to the deadline for dissertation submission (usually mid-November for December graduation, 1 April for May graduation, 1 July for August graduation).
5. At defense, candidate can expect to answer queries about but not limited to their method, place in the relevant historiography, interpretation of evidence, and conclusions. Committee members assess candidate on oral exposition, research skills, use of primary and secondary sources, style, organization and clarity. A candidate may pass, be passed pending revisions decided upon by committee and chair, or fail the defense. A failed dissertation may be re-defended after significant revision at the discretion of the chair and committee.
6. Once the dissertation passes, it must be prepared for submission to the graduate school, following their guidelines, which can be found at <http://www.gradschool.siuc.edu/dtrguide.htm>.