



**BREN SCHOOL OF
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & MANAGEMENT**
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

PhD Degree Timeline and Requirements



This document references University policies, procedures, etc. applicable to all graduate students, but it does not duplicate all of the information in the UCSB Graduate Division [Student Handbook](#) which applies to all graduate students. Please note that all forms discussed in this document may be found at <http://bren.ucsb.edu/services/student/index.html>.

Timeline Checklist

- Submit Bren Annual Review Report Form by the end of week 5 of fall quarter (first year PhD students are exempt from this requirement).
- Submit Graduate Division PhD Form I and Bren Justification of PhD Committee Form no later than the end of fall quarter of your second year.
- Submit Graduate Division PhD Form IA and Bren Justification of Change to PhD Committee Form to make changes to your PhD Committee.
- Schedule written exams.
- Complete written exams (normally by the end of spring quarter of your second year).
- Prepare dissertation proposal within 6 months of successful completion of written exams.
- Schedule oral exams.
- Submit final dissertation proposal to your PhD Committee.
- Complete oral exam (normally by spring quarter of your third year).
- File Graduate Division PhD Form II when oral examinations have been passed.
- Complete research and dissertation.
- File dissertation in library.
- Defend dissertation.
- Submit Graduate Division PhD Form III upon successful completion of defense.
- Provide a copy of dissertation to Student Affairs upon completion



Required Units

There is no minimum unit requirement. The Bren PhD is not a unit-count degree but rather a research degree awarded upon demonstration of academic excellence and performance of original research. To this end, you must pass doctoral qualifying examinations to demonstrate mastery of your chosen field and produce a dissertation acceptable to your PhD Committee.

Required Courses

Bren PhD students entering fall 2007 and thereafter are required to complete a minimum of at least two units of each of the following interdisciplinary seminars over their PhD career at Bren.

Problem Based

ESM 595PB: seminars with a focus on exploration of a problem oriented-topic; for example: management of invasive species, fisheries management, climate change and policy responses. (2 units)

Skills Based

ESM 595SB: seminars with a focus on developing important skills such as interdisciplinary collaboration, academic writing, proposal writing, critiquing. (2 units)

Speaker Series

ESM 595SS: seminar in which Bren faculty members present their research. Students and the seminar leader discuss the research in a separate session after the faculty talk. Note: students must complete at least two units and hence will enroll in this course two quarters. (1 unit)

Grading is S/U. Substitutions are only possible under special circumstances and with approval of your PhD Committee and the Bren PhD Program Committee.

Time-To-Degree Standards for Student Entering Prior to Fall 2010

Under Graduate Council policy, students admitted prior to Fall 2010, have four years from beginning graduate study at UC Santa Barbara to advance to doctoral candidacy, and seven years total from beginning graduate study to complete a doctoral degree.

These are the maximum times allowed which are distinct from normative time, which is the number of years considered to be reasonable by the faculty of an individual department/School for completion of a PhD by a student in that program. Normative time is measured from the time you begin graduate study at any level at UCSB.

The Bren School's a normative is six years unless you are continuing into the PhD after having completed a MESM in which case the normative is 7 years. You may finish in less than the normative time (and are encouraged to do so) as long as you meet the residency and degree requirements.

In the case of Leave of Absence for medical, family emergency, or pregnancy/parenting reasons, three quarters of Leave of Absence are permitted during which no time shall accrue toward the normative time deadline. More Leaves of Absence or periods of lapsed status will not stop the normative time clock.

Students who exceed time-to-degree requirements (or normative time) are not eligible for Bren School fellowships, University fellowships, or teaching assistantships.



Time-To-Degree Standards for Students Entering Fall 2010 or Later

Students entering fall 2010 or later must adhere to time-to-degree standards set by the Bren School. For the Bren School the time to degree standards from the time you commence the doctoral program are:

- Advancement to candidacy—three years (four years maximum)
- Degree completion—six years

In the case of Leave of Absence for medical, family emergency, or pregnancy/parenting reasons, three quarters of Leave of Absence are permitted during which no time shall accrue toward the time-to-degree deadlines. More Leaves of Absence or periods of lapsed status will not stop the time-to-degree clock.

Students who exceed time-to-degree requirements (or normative time) are not eligible for Bren School fellowships, University fellowships, or teaching assistships.

Doctoral Levels

- P1 status—student has not advanced to candidacy
- P2 status—student has advanced to candidacy; students can maintain P2 status for up to 9 quarters and remain in good standing
- P3 status—student has exceeded maximum time allowed for P2 status (9 quarters).

Please note that P3 status makes you ineligible for some sources of financial support.

The PhD Advisor

All PhD students at the Bren School have a PhD Advisor. This is the faculty member who agreed to be your sponsor when you applied for the program unless you switch advisors (with the new advisor's approval) after commencing the program. Your PhD Advisor acts as the chair of your PhD Committee and as an advocate for you as a student. Your advisor is responsible for providing you mentoring and assisting you in identifying and trying to secure financial support. Your advisor helps you define a thesis topic, develop a study plan, and select PhD Committee members. You should meet with your advisor on a regular basis. The importance of having a PhD Advisor that you can communicate well with cannot be understated. You are expected to be proactive in creating and maintaining open lines of communication. The other members of your PhD Committee should assist you in producing an excellent thesis. At a minimum, you should meet with your entire PhD Committee once per year.

Please note that the Bren School is somewhat unique in that final decisions on all students' progress in the program lie with the entire faculty and annually a majority of the faculty (2/3 vote) must approve continuation in the program for each student. In addition, your PhD Committee and any changes to your PhD Committee must be approved by a majority of the Bren faculty.

Annual Review

Every winter quarter (excluding your first year in the program), your progress and performance will be reviewed by the Bren faculty in a Bren faculty meeting. For the review, you must prepare a progress report using the [PhD Annual Review Form](#) and submit it to the Student Affairs Office.



Before submitting your report, you must convene a meeting of your PhD committee and present your progress report for approval. All committee members must sign the report, indicating that they have reviewed and approve your report. Concurrent telephone participation in a committee meeting is acceptable; however, the report must be signed by the committee member who participated by telephone

The Bren School PhD Program Committee reviews your Annual Review Form and presents to the Bren faculty (at a faculty meeting) a report on your progress. The faculty vote to recommend (a) continuation in the program, (b) conditional continuation, or (c) dismissal. The first two require a simple majority vote; a recommendation for dismissal requires a 2/3 vote. All students receive an [Annual Review Reporting Form](#) with the results of the faculty vote, including any concerns and conditions set. If recommended by the Bren School, the Graduate Division may place you on probation if you are making inadequate degree progress.

STAGE 1: Forming Your PhD Committee

You must form your PhD Committee by the end of fall quarter of your 2nd year. The Committee Chair must be a Bren School faculty member. The committee must:

- Be composed of least three members of the University of California Academic Senate Include at least two members of the Bren School faculty, at least one of who must have an appointment greater than 0% time.

Your committee may include more than three members, and it may include members outside the UC Academic Senate who are knowledgeable in your subject matter as long as they have a PhD degree or equivalent.

To nominate your committee, you must complete Graduate Division's [PhD Form I: Nomination of Qualifying Exam Committee for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy](#). On the Form 1, you will list the faculty members who have agreed to be on your committee. Do not list a faculty member unless you have received firm confirmation that s/he has agreed to serve on your committee. Along with the PhD Form 1 must include Bren's [Justification of Proposed PhD Committee Form](#) .

All of the above forms should be submitted to the Student Affairs office which will facilitate review by the Bren faculty at a faculty meeting. You should inform you PhD Advisor that you have submitted the form for review and approval by the Bren faculty. If the faculty approve your committee (by a 2/3 vote), the Student Affairs Office will inform you and will submit the Form 1 to the Graduate Division. If your form is not approved, the Student Affairs Office will inform you and provide you relevant information to guide revision and resubmission of the form.

Do not under any circumstances take comprehensive exams without an approved PhD Committee.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Opportunities for graduate students to work in the private sector as part of their education are rapidly increasing. These experiences complement the academic curricula and enhance its relevance. However, situations where a faculty member has a financial interest in the private entity have the potential to compromise the student's academic interests, which include the ability to move freely from advisor to advisor and to change topic areas or research directions



free from influence or pressures outside the realm of scientific appropriateness and personal choice; the ability to complete and publish a dissertation and to freely publish, present, and otherwise disclose the results of research both within the academic community and to the public at large; and the ability to use research results in future research and educational activities.

To protect these interests Graduate Division has adopted a [Conflict of Interest Policy](#). You are encouraged to review the full policy, but in summary, this policy affirms joint student and faculty responsibilities, as members of the University of California, in relationship to potential conflicts of interest and provides mechanisms to ensure that outside activities are consistent with University policies. Specifically, this policy seeks to identify cases where a faculty member's financial interest may have negative effects on a student's academic interests. Answers to common questions about the Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy may be found [here](#).

Therefore all PhD students must submit a Graduate Student Conflict of Interest (COI) form. This is imbedded in Grad Division's [PhD Form I: Nomination of Qualifying Exam Committee for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy](#). However, a potential conflict of interest may (and should) be reported at any point in a student's career by submitting a stand-alone [Graduate Student Conflict of Interest Form](#) to the Graduate Division.

The COI stand-alone form should be used in graduate student employment situations where the University of faculty advisor is a party to the agreement or arrangement and the faculty member has a financial interest in the private entity.

PhD Form IA – Changes in Dissertation Committee

If you decide to make changes to your approved committee you will complete Graduate Division's [Form IA – Changes in Thesis or Dissertation Committee](#). In addition to this Graduate Division form, you must also complete Bren's [Justification of Proposed Changes to PhD Committee Form](#). Both forms should be submitted to the Student Affairs Office which will facilitate review by the Bren faculty at a faculty meeting. You should inform your PhD Advisor that you have submitted the form for review.

The Student Affairs Office will inform you of the faculty's decision and if the proposed changes are approved (by a 2/3 vote), the Student Affairs Office will submit the Form 1A to the Graduate Division. Your proposed change is not valid unless approved by the faculty.

Substantive Changes in Dissertation Research

Major changes in a program of study represent substantive changes in the course of study and research (change of the Chair to a Chair in a different field, new thesis topic, etc.). The decision whether a change is minor or major is made by your PhD Committee (or new Committee). The Committee first submits its recommendation to the Bren School PhD Program Committee for review and then to the entire faculty for majority approval.

If a new thesis topic is chosen, and the change is considered major, you may [petition](#) the PhD Program Committee to have your Bren timeline reset to allow you sufficient time to prepare for written and oral exams in the new field. If you have already passed your written and/or oral exam, you may be required to retake one or both.



STAGE 2: Written Examination

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in compliance with the Bren School's timeline for PhD examinations and to work closely with your PhD Committee to maintain an adequate schedule. You are responsible for initiating the scheduling of your examinations as appropriate.

Registration Requirements

You must be registered the quarter you take qualifying exams. Registration as a graduate student in the spring quarter maintains graduate status until the beginning of the next fall quarter. If you are registered in spring quarter, you may take examinations or file a dissertation during summer without additional fees.

The Examination

Normally, in spring of your 2nd year and under no circumstances later than spring of your 3rd year, your Committee prepares a written examination that tests your knowledge in your area of expertise in the context of environmental science and management as well of research skills, problem solving skills, ability to do academic work, and readiness to undertake dissertation research. Please note that although students pursuing the Economics and Environmental Science (EES) Emphasis are required to take the Economics Department's written examinations, these DO NOT count as the Bren written examination. EES students have to take both.

It is recommended that well in advance of the examination you organize and schedule a meeting with your PhD Committee to prepare a reading list as a guide for study. Every PhD student has the right to receive a written description at least, one month in advance, of the nature of their qualifying exam, including the broad subject matter covered and the format of the exam. Students are encouraged to request such a description from their Committee Chair.

All members of your PhD Committee must participate in the preparation of the written examination. The Chair of your Committee coordinates the questions before giving them to you. The duration of the exam may not exceed 5 days. Within a month of the exam's completion, your PhD Committee will prepare a written evaluation of the examination and give you an overall grade in one of three categories:

1. Pass

2. Conditional Pass – you must repeat a portion of the written exam or in some way satisfy the deficiencies. The deficiencies must be corrected within six months of notification. If for some reason the deficiency cannot be corrected within six months (i.e. a class is only offered once a year), you may have up to 12 months to rectify the conditional pass.

3. Fail – you must retake the written exam within six months of notification. If you fail a second time (or fail the written exam after a conditional pass), the Bren School will recommend that you be dismissed from the PhD program.

You must submit the Bren Form [Report on Written Exam](#) AND your written exam questions (not answers) to the Student Affairs Office within 30 days of the examination.



STAGE 3: Your Dissertation Proposal

No later than 6 months after passing the written examination, you must prepare a written dissertation proposal that:

- Describes the dissertation topic
- Summarizes the relevant background literature
- Presents a comprehensive research plan for your doctoral dissertation
- Includes a timetable and budget that identifies any financial support essential for preparation of the dissertation

The comprehensive research plan must address the use of any human subjects in the research (see next section).

In developing the dissertation proposal, you will work closely with your PhD Advisor. The process typically involves you drafting a proposal of your initial ideas, and then working with your PhD Advisor to improve the proposal prior to distribution to the entire PhD Committee. You and your PhD Advisor determine the exact nature of proposal development and dissemination to the rest of the PhD Committee.

The final draft of the proposal should be 15 pages or less and must be submitted to your PhD Committee at least one week prior to your oral examination date. Your PhD Committee can request a change in the page or time limits (for example, if you have an outside member who needs more time). You should be receptive to reasonable deviations in length/time as long as they are communicated well in advance.

Your dissertation proposal is not formally approved until the oral examination.

Use of Human Subjects

Faculty and students who engage in research involving human subjects must first obtain prior approval from the UCSB Human Subjects Committee (HSC). "Human Subject" means a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (i) data through intervention or interaction with the individual or (ii) identifiable private information. This means that even if you are just going to be conducting a survey, you **MUST** obtain HSC approval in advance. Approval is required no matter who you will be interacting with - even your friends or family!

If you are going to use human subjects, please review the [Office of Research site](#). You must understand and abide by the policies and procedures. It can take some time to obtain approval, so this cannot be tackled at the last minute. There are serious consequences if you are not in compliance. Under no circumstances can human subjects be used if prior approval has not been obtained.

STAGE 4: The Oral Examination

Normally in spring quarter of your 3rd year and under no circumstances later than spring quarter of your 4th year, you take your oral examination. You may take it sooner than this; however, Graduate Division requires that three consecutive quarters of residence must be completed prior to taking the oral qualifying examinations.

All members of your PhD Committee must participate in the oral examination. The general objective of the oral examination is to ensure that you possess the full knowledge and



competence required to carry out your dissertation proposal. Thus, your PhD Committee will base the oral examination on your dissertation proposal, your readiness to do the required research, and your preparation and aptitude for completion of the PhD program. It is your choice if the exam is closed (attended only by your Committee members) or open for anyone to attend.

Immediately after the oral examination, your PhD Committee votes to (1) admit you to PhD Candidacy, (2) recommend your dismissal from the program, or (3) allow you to take a second oral exam within 6 months. If a second oral exam is recommended, the Committee will vote for advancement or dismissal following that exam.

STAGE 5: Advancing to Candidacy

Advancement to candidacy requires successful completion of your oral examinations and submission of a Graduate Division's [PhD Form II: Report on Qualifying Examinations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy](#), which must be signed by all members of your PhD Committee. We recommend that you bring a copy of this form to your oral examination so that you can obtain signature immediately if you pass.

Once the form has been signed, you must then take the completed Form II to the Cashier's Office, pay the advancement to candidacy fee, and then file the form with Graduate Division. We recommend that you provide the Student Affairs office a copy of the form for your Bren file prior to submission to Graduate Division (just in case it gets misplaced in Graduate Division, which has happened).

You have until the last workday before the next quarter officially begins (as indicated in the University's quarterly Schedule of Classes) to submit the Form II which will officially advance you to candidacy at the start of the next quarter.

If you have Incompletes or No Grades on your record you are ineligible to advance to candidacy until the Incompletes/No Grades have been removed. There are no exceptions to this Graduate Division policy.

Advancement Privileges

Once advanced, Graduate Division notifies the Davidson Library that you are eligible for doctoral candidate borrowing privileges as long as you are in registered status or on approved leave of absence.

The quarterly non-resident tuition fee is waived for three years for doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy. Waiver eligibility begins with the first academic quarter following advancement to candidacy. Leave of absence or unregistered quarters do not extend eligibility. Because of this waiver, it is important that non-resident students, advance to candidacy as soon as possible so that they can take full advantage of this reduction.

STAGE 6: The Dissertation

To receive a PhD degree you must present a dissertation that demonstrates your ability to contribute significant, independent, and original research to your major field. Your PhD Committee guides you in this work and judges the merit of the completed dissertation. Following the completion of doctoral research, you will prepare a dissertation that must be approved by all members of your Committee as nominated on the Form I (or Form IA).



The dissertation must be presented in a form acceptable to the Davidson Library and meet the filing requirements of Graduate Division. For details, see the Graduate Division's [Guide to Filing of Theses and Dissertations](#) on their website.

You must file one copy of your dissertation with the Bren School by submitting it to the Student Affairs Office. The School's copy does not have to be on 100% cotton paper as is required for the library copy. While it is not mandatory to give a copy of your dissertation to your PhD Committee members, it is customary.

To obtain a bound copy or copies of your dissertation, you must fill out a [binding request form](#) and submit it to the Bren School's Business Officer in Bren Hall 2616 along with a check made out to UC Regents to cover the cost.

STAGE 7: Dissertation Defense

When you have completed your dissertation to the satisfaction of your PhD Committee, it is REQUIRED that you give a public lecture on the dissertation. This is part of your Dissertation Defense.

Normally, your PhD Advisor will help you decide when you are ready for the Defense. You should not schedule your Defense until your PhD Advisor and the rest of your PhD Committee believe you will pass.

It is your responsibility to schedule your PhD Committee members for the Defense. It is also your responsibility to email scheduling@bren.ucsb.edu at least two weeks in advance of your Defense to request that a room be scheduled and the event be publicized.

After the lecture, you will give a closed-door portion of the Defense before your PhD Committee. The PhD Committee grades your entire Defense in one of three categories and notifies you immediately of the result:

1. Pass

2. Conditional Pass – you must modify your dissertation as recommended by the committee.

3. Fail – you must re-defend your dissertation after a delay of at least two but no more than six months. A second failure will result in the School recommending your dismissal from the PhD program.

If you pass your Defense, you must complete Graduate Division's [PhD Form III: Report on Final Examination for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy](#), which must be signed by all members of your PhD Committee and then submit it to Student Affairs Office, who will file it with Graduate Division. If you file it directly with Graduate Division, please provide the Student Affairs Office a copy. We recommend that you bring a copy of the Form III to your oral examination so that you can obtain signature immediately if you pass.

Filing Fee Quarter Leave of Absence

The Filing Fee Quarter of Leave Absence status may be used in lieu of registration to maintain the relationship between you and the University for the express purpose of completing one final



requirement (e.g., filing the dissertation and/or defense). The filing fee is to be used only if you have completed all other requirements for the degree, will not be continuing on for another graduate degree, and will not be holding a student appointment title or extensively using University resources or faculty time.

This use of the Filing Fee Leave of Absence requires that you to be enrolled in full-time status and paying all required fees for the quarter prior to the filing-fee quarter. The filing fee is one half the amount of the registration fee (approximately \$200). You pay the filing fee the day you actually file for your degree. You may not carry forward a filing fee from one quarter to the next. If, for any reason, you do not complete your degree requirements during the approved filing fee quarter, you will have to register for the quarter in which you meet final degree requirements and pay full fees.

To pursue a Filing Fee Quarter Leave of Absence you must file a [Filing Fee Leave of Absence Petition](#). Your PhD Advisor and the Bren School's PhD Graduate Advisor must approve the petition verifying that you will finish during the quarter in question. The petition serves as a contract that commits you to file that quarter in return for the privileges a leave of absence confers.