

From Comprehensives to “ABD”

Once a PhD student has passed the Comprehensive Examinations, the next steps are:

Becoming ABD (All But Dissertation)

Choose a topic and a dissertation director. Usually these things happen together.

Choose three faculty (at least one not from English) to complete your committee.

Various regulations about the composition of a dissertation committee are in the UNM Catalog. Consult the Graduate Advisor or Graduate Director.

Have these professors sign a form appointing your dissertation committee.

The form is available from the Graduate Advisor and online.

Write a prospectus and have it approved. Usually the “approval” can be accomplished by collecting signatures on a cover sheet or your title page from your director and committee members.

Changes in the life of PhD Teaching Assistants

Receive a raise. This happens automatically in the semester following your successful completion of the Comprehensives and is figured into your stipend for the remainder of your time as a TA.

Receive a reduced-course semester. ABD students are entitled to at least one semester in which they teach only one course and do a small amount of assisting in some program or office. This reduction almost always comes in the Spring semester.

In order to receive this reduction, you must file your approved dissertation prospectus with the Graduate Director by the end of the fourth week of the Fall semester.

Teach courses beyond the normal TA curriculum. Once you are ABD, you are eligible to apply for more advanced undergraduate courses including 150 (Intro. to Literature for non-majors), 250 (Intro. To Literature for majors), and the literary history surveys numbered 292-293 (World Literature), 294-295 (Earlier and Later English Literature), and 296-297 (Earlier and Later American Literature). These courses are particularly important experience as you move toward graduation and the job market.