



Dissertation Timeline Planner

Map Your Milestones from Proposal to Defense

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My Dissertation Information

Student Name

Program / Degree

Dissertation Title (working)

Advisor / Committee Chair

Target Defense Date

Institutional Submission Deadline

Phase-by-Phase Timeline

PHASE 1: Proposal Development		Months 1-3
Task	Target Date	Done <input type="checkbox"/>
Topic selection and committee approval		
Initial literature search – minimum 50 peer-reviewed sources		
Draft Chapter 1 – Introduction and Problem Statement		
Draft Chapter 2 – Literature Review		
Draft Chapter 3 – Methodology		
Incorporate committee feedback and revisions		
Proposal defense and formal approval		

PHASE 2: IRB & Data Collection		Months 4-6
Task	Target Date	Done <input type="checkbox"/>
Submit IRB application		

Receive IRB approval		
Recruit participants or collect data		
Complete transcription and data preparation		
Conduct preliminary data review		

PHASE 3: Data Analysis Months 7–9

Task	Target Date	Done <input type="checkbox"/>
Complete full data analysis		
Draft Chapter 4 – Results and Findings		
Advisor review of Chapter 4		
Revise Chapter 4 based on feedback		

PHASE 4: Writing & Revision Months 10–12

Task	Target Date	Done <input type="checkbox"/>
Draft Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusion		
Full manuscript review by advisor		
Complete all chapter revisions		
Formatting and reference compliance check		
Submit full manuscript to committee for review		

PHASE 5: Defense & Final Submission Months 13–15

Task	Target Date	Done <input type="checkbox"/>
Incorporate committee feedback		
Schedule and confirm defense date		
Prepare and rehearse defense presentation		
Final dissertation defense		
Post-defense revisions if required		
Final institutional submission		

Tips for Staying on Track

Set weekly writing goals – even 500 words per day adds up significantly over time.

Build buffer time into each phase for unexpected delays, revisions, or life events.

Communicate proactively with your advisor about timelines and challenges.

Track your sources and citations from Day 1 to avoid reference chaos later.

Celebrate small milestones – completing a chapter draft is a real achievement.

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