



School of Accountancy

DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Effective August 1, 2022

General. The University of Missouri-Columbia is a nationally ranked doctoral program with exceptional faculty. The program is currently ranked in the Top 20 by *Public Accounting Report*. The purpose of our Ph.D. program is to train and prepare students for an academic career at institutions having research and teaching missions. The program is designed to be completed in four years. We focus on training students for state-of-the-art archival research. The faculty's research expertise is primarily in the areas of financial accounting, corporate governance, taxation, and auditing. You should read faculty bios on the College's website to gain a better understanding of the research currently being done by our faculty.

We admit two new students per year to the program, and admission decisions are made by the Ph.D. Policy Committee. Completed applications must be received no later than the prior February 1, but earlier applications are encouraged. Admission decisions are made by April 15 for new students starting in the fall semester. We do not make mid-year admissions.

Criteria for admission include a record of outstanding prior academic performance, a minimum GMAT score of 700, and strong letters of reference. Prior graduate study and work experience are highly desirable. Students admitted to the program normally have an accounting background and some professional work experience. However, we do consider applications from highly qualified applicants without work experience, and with backgrounds in other fields. Before an admission decision is made, the Ph.D. Policy Committee generally requires a campus interview to ensure a good match between our program and the applicant's background and career goals.

International Applications. A high level of English proficiency is essential to admission and success in the program. We do not admit international students if English is not the applicant's primary language, unless the applicant can demonstrate a very high level of English proficiency such as having worked or studied in an English-language country. Without this experience international applicants are unlikely to be admitted unless they can in some other way, beyond a TOEFL score, demonstrate that they have a very high level of English proficiency. See also the further discussion below on language proficiency requirements for international students.

Application Instructions

Applicants should complete the [MU Online Graduate Application](#) which allows applicants to continually monitor the status of their application. We currently only accept applications for fall semesters.

The following items must be submitted directly to the Graduate Admission Office: (To be considered complete, all applications for admission must include the proper application fee by mail or online: \$75.00 for U.S. Citizens/Permanent Residents and \$100.00 for International/Non-Resident Alien.)

- The Graduate Application for Admission with application fee.
- Your official transcripts from every college or university you have attended (sent directly from the college or university).
- Your official TOEFL scores, sent directly from the Educational Testing Service. (This applies to international applicants only). According to university rules, if you have received a degree in the U.S., you do not have to re-submit a new TOEFL score.

Graduate Admissions

210 Jesse Hall
Columbia, MO 65211
800-877-6312
573-882-6311

The following items are also required and may be sent through the Graduate School's online application system (Apply Yourself), or can be sent directly to the School of Accountancy:

1. Statement of Purpose, which describes why you want to do a Ph.D. in Accounting (3 pages maximum)
2. Three letters of reference
3. Résumé
4. Your official GMAT scores (sent directly from Pearson VUE to the School of Accountancy).

It is also strongly recommended that you send an unofficial copy of your transcripts and GMAT score directly to the School of Accountancy.

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Program Requirements

Prerequisites for admission to the Ph.D. program are a minimum of two calculus courses (and preferably three), an introductory statistics course, and a course in intermediate-level microeconomic theory. Students generally enroll for ten hours a semester, and the course work requirements are completed in two and one-half years (five semesters). Comprehensive exams are taken in the sixth semester (winter of the third year), and the fourth year is spent in writing and defending the research thesis. The University of Missouri requires 72 total hours of course work beyond a baccalaureate degree. Specific course work requirements are:

1. 18 hours in doctoral-level accounting research courses;
2. 15 hours of course work in supporting theoretical fields;
3. 18 hours of course work in research tools (statistics, research design, quantitative methods); and,
4. a minimum of 14 hours in **ACCT 9090: Research in Accounting**.

Accounting Requirements. Students are required to take five 9000-level accounting research seminars in these areas: accounting research methods, financial accounting, auditing, international accounting, and taxation. In addition, students enroll in a sixth 9000-level research seminar while completing the first-year summer paper (see below).

Supporting Field. Students are required to take 15 hours in a supporting field. There is flexibility in tailoring each student's program, though generally the choices come from the fields of economics, finance, or organizational studies.

Research Tools. Students are required to take **Economics 7370: Introduction to Quantitative Economics**, and **Statistics 7510: Regression**. In addition, a minimum of **four additional** courses related to the student's program emphasis is required. Students typically select an empirical emphasis and take courses in econometrics, statistics, and research design.

Friday Morning Research Workshop Presentations. An important part of learning research skills is participating in research workshop presentations. The School of Accountancy has a research workshop series that meets on Friday mornings to discuss current research-in-progress presented by faculty and Ph.D. students, and by invited faculty from other universities. Attendance and student participation is required at these workshop presentations, and written critiques of selected papers may also be required.

Dissertation Hours. The University requires a minimum enrollment of two credit hours per semester and one credit hour per summer in **ACCT 9090** to maintain full-time enrollment in the Ph.D. program after completing course work requirements and comprehensive exams. This enrollment continues through the final semester of the dissertation defense, typically the summer following the 4th year in the program.

Language Proficiency Requirements for International Students

All non-native-English-speaking applicants are required by the Graduate School to provide proof of English language ability, even if you have studied in the United States. As proof, the University of Missouri Graduate School accepts scores from either the [Test of English as a Foreign Language \(TOEFL\)](#) or the [International English Language Testing System \(IELTS\)](#). The Graduate School requires electronic reporting of IELTS examination scores. To be considered for admission, non-native English speakers must score a minimum of 550 on the paper-based TOEFL or 80 on the Internet-based test, or have a score on the IELTS exam of 6.5 or higher.

To be a competitive applicant for the School of Accountancy doctoral program, international students must demonstrate very strong English proficiency. Applicants are unlikely to be admitted unless they have a score of 28 or higher on the "speaking component" of the TOEFL exam, or a score of 8.5 or higher on IELTS exam.

If admitted to the program, international students must achieve Level 3 on a [language-screening test](#) administered by the University's International Teaching Assistant Program by the end of their first year in the program, and Level 4 by the end of their second year in the program. Failure to achieve Level 3 and Level 4 on this timeline can result in the immediate loss of the financial support package from the School of Accountancy (including tuition waiver) and possible dismissal from the program. Note that a TOEFL speaking score of 28, or a score of 8.5 on IELTS, will automatically satisfy the Level 4 requirement.

First-Year Summer Paper

An independent research project, under the guidance of a faculty member, is undertaken in the summer following the first year in the doctoral program. Students enroll in ACCT 9401 and receive three credit hours. It is the student's responsibility to develop a project in consultation with an interested faculty member. Students receive a research stipend from the School of Accountancy equivalent to a summer TA/RA appointment. A final draft

of the project research paper must be presented in one of the weekly Friday research workshops before the end of the subsequent winter semester.

Comprehensive Written Examinations

A comprehensive written examination in accounting is required following the completion of all doctoral course work requirements. Normally this occurs early in the winter semester of the student's third year in the program. Preparation of the exam is the joint responsibility of the Ph.D. Director, the Ph.D. Policy Committee, and faculty involved in doctoral course work. The exam consists of questions in the candidate's area of specialization, and general questions covering other areas of accounting research. At the discretion of the Ph.D. Program Director, a follow-up oral examination may also be required if deemed necessary. Failure to pass the comprehensive written and oral examinations can result in dismissal from the program. However, the Ph.D. Policy Committee may, if it is deemed appropriate, allow a student to retake the written examination a second time after a minimum of 12 weeks (in accordance with University of Missouri procedures described in the [Graduate Catalogue](#)).

Dissertation

The final requirement of the Ph.D. program is a research thesis. Preliminary work on defining the research topic should begin in the student's third year, leading to a written proposal and formal presentation in a Friday research workshop early in the fall semester of the fourth year in the program. Following completion of the comprehensive examinations, the student's Ph.D. Program Committee may be reconstituted to select appropriate faculty given the student's dissertation topic. An oral defense is required upon completion of the dissertation. **All students must complete and defend their dissertation within five years from the date of satisfactory completion of the comprehensive examination.**

Financial Support Package

All students receive a four-year commitment for a 12-month annual financial support package, subject to satisfactory performance in the program which is evaluated on a semester-by-semester basis (discussed below). Students are required to work 20 hours per week as a half-time research assistant (RA) or a teaching assistant (TA) during the fall and winter semesters, and in the summers are required to work as a half-time RA or TA. Additional scholarships may also be available from the School of Accountancy or the University of Missouri for exceptional applicants.

Acceptance of the financial support package requires that there be no substantive outside employment while receiving support from the University. If a student is not finished after four years but is making good progress on completing a dissertation, the Director of the School of Accountancy may, at his/her discretion and subject to teaching needs, appoint the student to a half-time TA. No financial support is provided after five years in any circumstances.

Research and Teaching Assistantships

Students are assigned to specific faculty members to work as research assistants during the program. This is a strong feature of the Ph.D. program as it facilitates the development of a mentoring relationship with research faculty throughout the program. A faculty member's willingness to mentor students is a prime factor in making RA assignments.

Students work as teaching assistants in semesters they are not assigned as research assistants. TA appointments are made by the Director of the School of Accountancy, in consultation with the Ph.D. Program Director.

Throughout the year, the University offers a number of programs for Ph.D. students designed to facilitate the development of teaching skills.

Performance Assessment

The Graduate College requires a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 for academic eligibility; however, the School of Accountancy requires a higher GPA of 3.25, both cumulative and in each semester in the program. Students who fail to maintain a GPA of 3.25, or who otherwise fail to achieve satisfactory progress in the program, may have their financial support package suspended, be placed on academic probation, or dismissed from the program. See the University of Missouri [Graduate Catalogue](#) for additional information on academic probation and dismissal.

Each summer, the Ph.D. Program Director evaluates the annual performance of doctoral students that are not yet at the dissertation stage, and prepares a written report to each student. Follow-up meetings may also be held at the Ph.D. Program Director's discretion. Information on student performance is solicited from the entire faculty. The Director of the School of Accountancy conducts teaching evaluations.

The dissertation chair is responsible for evaluating the progress of students at the dissertation stage. The dissertation chair reports any performance evaluation issues to the Ph.D. Program Director and the Director of the School of Accountancy.

Administration of the Program

The Ph.D. Program Director, members of the Ph.D. Policy Committee, and faculty members teaching Ph.D. seminars are required to be members of the University of Missouri doctoral faculty. The University requires each student to have a four-member Doctoral Program Committee (with one member from outside Accounting). This committee is initially assigned by the Ph.D. Program Director, who also chairs the committee until the comprehensive written and oral examinations are passed. At this point, the chair and committee membership will be reconstituted to select appropriate faculty given the dissertation topic area selected by the student. See the [Graduate Catalogue](#) for additional details on doctoral program general requirements and administration at the University of Missouri.

The following forms must be filed at appropriate stages of the program:

Forms D-1 and D-2 are filed upon successful completion of course work.

Form D-3. Filed at the completion of written exams.

Form D-4. Filed after the thesis defense.