**Recommended Dissertation Timeline**

We understand that writing and defending a Dissertation can be an exciting, rewarding, invigorating, exhausting, and stressful process. BASP is committed to supporting our students in ways that emphasize the former and minimize the latter. As such, we believe that the four key components of a smooth dissertation process are planning, accountability, communication, and flexibility.

**Planning.** The Dissertation Process involves many steps and deadlines that are set by the Graduate Center. During the Dissertation Proposal process, it is recommended that the student discuss with their advisor and the core committee to set a reasonable and realistic proposed timeline for the Dissertation process. **The GC Psychology EO’s office has created a series of sample timelines, corresponding to each target degree date (see links** [**on this webpage**](https://www.gc.cuny.edu/Page-Elements/Academics-Research-Centers-Initiatives/Doctoral-Programs/Psychology/Forms-and-Procedures/Dissertation-Defense%2C-Final-Forms%2C-and-Electronic-Deposit)**).** We encourage students and advisors to review these timelines when creating a specific timeline for the student. In addition, BASP has the following recommendations when creating timelines:

* Students and advisors should plan for at least two rounds of revisions prior to submitting materials to the larger committee.
* In general, Advisors/Committee Chairs should be given at least two weeks to review and respond to materials.
* In general, Committee Members should be given at least three weeks (preferably four) to review and respond to materials.
* It is useful to build in a little “cushion” of extra time in the original timeline, in order to allow for unforeseen delays (see flexibility, below).
* Students and committee members should be explicit about their agreement on a proposed timeline as early in the process as possible, and should review and reaffirm the timeline at regular intervals (at least once/semester).

**Accountability.** As members of the BASP community, we take our responsibilities to each other very seriously. As such, both faculty and students agree to follow proposed timelines and deadlines to the best of their ability. Both faculty and students recognize that when one fails to meet a target submission date for the other, additional deadlines must be adjusted accordingly. Because the deadlines and requirements set forth by the GC prior to graduation are so complex, this adjustment can have a ripple effect on the student’s timeline. Both students and faculty are committing to accountability the proposed timeline, and to the principles of communication and flexibility (see below).

**Communication.** Despite our best efforts, challenges and snafus may arise as part of the dissertation process. Data collection rarely goes exactly as planned; personal emergencies arise; circumstances require revisions. The best way to deal with unexpected challenges is to discuss them early and often. It is best for students to communicate even potential roadblocks with their Advisor/Committee Chair and committee members as early as possible. In the event that a Committee member may have a challenge meeting an agreed upon deadline for feedback, they should communicate this to the student as early as possible as well. Communication is a core component of accountability (see above) and flexibility (see below).

**Flexibility.** To every extent possible, BASP community members are committed to granting each other grace and flexibility in the interest of a positive and meaningful Dissertation process. In some cases, this may mean agreeing to a tighter turnaround (of review on the part of the faculty, or of revisions on the part of the student) in order to address unforeseen challenges. In other cases, it might mean recognizing that an original goal is not possible, and deadlines need to be extended to allow everyone appropriate time to complete their components. The Dissertation is not intended to be a student’s “magnum opus,” but is intended to be a high-quality, thoughtful, and meaningful piece of work. Flexibility means that students and faculty are willing to recognize when a dissertation is a high-quality, thoughtful and meaning piece of work (even if it was not 100% what was originally intended) and are also willing to recognize when a student needs more time to ensure to that the dissertation meets these standards.