Some of you have wondered about the right time to advance to candidacy. You must advance to candidacy for the PhD by the end of your 4th year, typically Spring quarter although if you have taken an approved medical leave of absence, this means your time to degree can be extended for the same amount of time as the medical leave. Summer does not count against your time to degree and is considered an extension of Spring. So, if you are in your 4th year and still haven't had your "little conversation" to defend your preliminary dissertation proposal, you can do it over Summer without penalty. But if you do that, be careful to advance to candidacy by early September. There is a deadline for students who wish to do this for which you should check with the Grad Program Asst.

If you are done with all of your requirements including the draft dissertation proposal a little early, perhaps at the end of your third year or early fourth year, you may be wondering if you should advance to candidacy immediately.

Well, that depends.

Many fellowships, particularly from the Graduate Division and other agencies will not consider your application until you've advanced to candidacy. So, you need to think about that. Say, you want the department to nominate you for a Grad Division continuing fellowship in April. Well, you will need to be advanced to candidacy for many of the fellowships the quarter preceding the potential nomination. So, if you want to be considered for these fellowships, make sure to advance to candidacy in time for this. Again, check with the Grad Program Asst. or the Graduate Division for the deadlines.

Remember, once you advance to candidacy, your final clock begins to tick. You now have 3 years, or 9 quarters excluding Summer, to complete the dissertation. If you go beyond the 3 years, you will be considered "P-3" and not eligible for TAships, Fee Fellowships, Continuing Fellowships or Awards, or any other departmental or Grad Division support.

I hope this informational memo is useful. Ultimately, it is best to consult with your dissertation advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies about ways to meet your research and program goals. If you have any questions, please contact either myself or Sharon Applegate.

Warm Best,

Denise Segura