Planning Backwards

Once you have a date in mind for completing and defending your dissertation, plan backwards from that date to include the major milestones in your research and processes that you need to complete. This will help you flesh out a timeline that you and your advisor and committee can work with. Remember to build in time to

1. Edit & revise.
2. Have things go wrong or take longer than anticipated. It’s Murphy’s Law – something will go wrong or take more time than you’ve allowed on your timeline.

The Dissertation Tracker from the University of Minnesota Libraries will take your date for (anticipated) completion and the current date, and build out a timeline for you based on typical percentages for where dissertation time is spent (for example, they estimate 25% of your time will be spent on writing out the Results and Discussion sections). Find the Dissertation Tracker at https://www.lib.umn.edu/ac/dissertation-calculator.