



# HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY™

## *Dissertation Manual*

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<https://www.stcloudstate.edu/graduate/hied-edd/dissertation.aspx>



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## **Purpose of the Manual**

This manual is designed to provide information and direction regarding the dissertation process for students enrolled in the Higher Education Administration Ed.D. at St. Cloud State University (SCSU). The purpose of the guide is to direct students towards a smooth and successful completion of their dissertation and to assist in students' timely graduation.

**\*Disclaimer:** The most current edition of SCSU's Higher Education Administration Ed.D. Dissertation Manual supersedes all previous versions. Please check the program website for the most recent version. Every effort was made to ensure that information in this Dissertation Manual was accurate at the time of publication. All policies and other information are subject to change without notice and do not constitute an irrevocable contract between any student and St. Cloud State University.

*When a conflict exists in standards, format, or style, the manual published by the School of Graduate Studies takes precedence over The APA Manual.*

## **Qualifying Exam**

The qualifying exam can be taken after completion of 30 credits toward the Ed.D. degree, which is typically after completion of the second year in the program. Students must be in good academic standing, with at least a 3.00 cumulative GPA within the doctoral program to be eligible to take the qualifying exam. Students must be enrolled in at least 1 credit during the semester they take the qualifying exam.

You may also opt to take the exam in the fall semester of the third year. If you have a grade indicating a lack of successful completion (I (Incomplete), IP (In progress), N (No grade reported), W (Withdrawal), F (Failure), FN (Failure for nonattendance), FW (Failure for not withdrawing)) in a course, that course cannot count toward the 30 hours needed to take the qualifying exam. If the required credits are not complete, you should speak with your program advisor about completing a [Petition Form](#) to take the qualifying exam. Only mitigating circumstances will be allowed.

The program faculty decides on the qualifying examination procedure. Typically, there is a written and oral component to the exam. You will be notified of the deadline for submitting the written portion of the exam and how to schedule the oral portion of the exam.

The Qualifying Examination Rubric will be used to evaluate the qualifying examination. You will be notified during the oral examination whether or not you passed.

If you do not pass the exam, you will be allowed to re-write their responses based on the feedback provided by faculty. You will be given two weeks from the oral exam date to submit the re-write. The revised examination will be reassessed to determine whether you passed the exam. If you do not pass based on the revisions, you must retake the qualifying examination in a later administration.

You will not be allowed to schedule their proposal during the term they are re-taking the exam. You can only take the examination twice. After failure to pass two administrations, you will not be allowed to complete the program.

### **Qualifying Exam Instructions**

- You are required to write a 20 page (maximum limit, excluding title page and references) prospectus about the topic you are considering for your dissertation. This will include a section that states the problem and research topic, a pertinent literature review to show a foundation for the study, and a method section to describe the study that will take place for your dissertation.
- Please follow all APA guidelines for your paper, and use your Ed.D. Dissertation Manual to format the paper according to the advice for Chapters 1, 2, and 3 in Appendix B.

### **Qualifying Examination Timeline**

- Beginning of Semester – Doctoral students receive their instructions for chapters 1 through 3.
- Mid-Semester – Doctoral students must submit their paper to Doctoral Center Facilitator in the Center for Doctoral Studies – [hied@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:hied@stcloudstate.edu) – by 11:59 p.m. of the specified date provided by program coordinator.
- End-Semester – Begin scheduling the oral portion of the exam. You will be contacted by the Doctoral Center Facilitator for the Center for Doctoral Studies to schedule the one-hour oral exam. The oral presentation is 5 minutes, with the remaining time spent attaining feedback and discussing your research topic.
- You will be notified by mail when you have passed the qualifying exam.

### **Candidacy**

After passing the qualifying exam, you will move on to Candidacy. If you pass the exam, you can register for the dissertation research course (HIED 899 – Dissertation Proposal Development) and focus on their dissertation topic. You may not schedule a Dissertation Proposal until you pass the qualifying exam.

After advancing to doctoral candidacy, you may maintain continuous registration until the university confers the doctoral degree. Please refer to the [continuous registration policy](#) online.

## **Dissertation**

A dissertation involves the design and implementation of empirical research by you, the student, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctorate in Higher Education Administration (Ed.D.) at SCSU. This research makes an original contribution to your field of study. You design the study, obtain and/or develop data collection tools, set up and follow up on the data collection procedures, process and analyze the data, and write the findings, analyze, interpretations, and conclusions of the study.

## **Dissertation Format**

Doctoral dissertations are to be formatted according to the publication style recommended by the American Psychological Association (APA) Sixth Edition and this dissertation manual. The following APA style supports are available to you:

- The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition) can be purchased at the [Husky Bookstore](#) on the SCSU campus.
- The OWL at Purdue provides [APA Style](#) online support for basic formatting.
- The APA website at [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org).

After you have passed your Dissertation Final Defense, you will follow additional formatting requirements provided by the School of Graduate Studies. The doctoral program utilizes the [electronic submission of culminating projects](#) formatting guidelines.



## Dissertation Course Registration

If you pass the qualifying exam, you can register for the dissertation research course (HIED 899) and focus on your dissertation topic.

Course registration is completed online via the e-Services system. To log in e-Services, you need your SCSU HuskyNet ID and password. Directions for registration can be found through the [Online Registration Guide](#) *Please ensure you register for the correct course section number based on what is listed on the course schedule for your cohort number and advisor.* If you receive an error message while registering, please contact Center for Doctoral Studies and include the error code number and message in your e-mail or voice message. This will help provide you with assistance.

## Dissertation Course Schedule

Academic Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Year One	HIED 800 (3 cr.) HIED 807 (3 cr.)	HIED 810 (3 cr.) HIED 820 (3 cr.)	HIED 801 (3 cr.) HIED 830 (3 cr.)
Year Two	HIED 803 (3 cr.) HIED 808 (3 cr.)	HIED 809 (3 cr.) HIED 821 (3 cr.)	HIED 806 (3 cr.) HIED 814 or 822 (3 cr.)
Year Three	HIED 804 (3 cr.) HIED 805 (3 cr.)	HIED 812 (3 cr.) HIED 813 or 823 (3 cr.)	HIED 899 (3 cr.)
Year Four	HIED 899 (6 cr.)	HIED 899 (3 cr.)	Take HIED 891 (1 cr.) until you Graduate

After passing the qualifying examination, you can begin registering for HIED 899-Dissertation Research. *Please note that you must pass your qualifying examination before taking HIED 899.* You will be notified by mail when you have passed the qualifying exam. You should follow the schedule provided above, taking 3 credits of HIED 899 the summer of year three, six credits of HIED 899 the fall of year four, and 3 credits of HIED 899 the spring of year four. When all 12 dissertation credits of HIED 899 are complete and you have not completed your final defense, please register for HIED 891-Continuous Enrollment for 1 credit to maintain continuous enrollment in the doctoral program. If you do not begin your dissertation research as scheduled, please contact your advisor and/or the doctoral center facilitator for assistance in determining your course sequence for dissertation research along with which course sections to register for.

**Please note:** Enrollment in six doctoral course credits a semester may be needed to obtain financial aid or a graduate assistant. Your loan payments may become due after two semesters when you are not enrolled in at least six doctoral course credits. However, you may want to work with your student loan vendor or the Financial Aid office to obtain a deferral on your student loan when you continue to work on your dissertation and enroll in less than six credits from dissertation research (HIED 899) or continuous enrollment (HIED 891).

## HIED 899 - Dissertation

This course provides guidance by the adviser for dissertation writing, including preparation and conduct of the Dissertation Proposal, and of the Dissertation Final Defense to the committee. You can take a total of 12 credits for this course spread over three semesters.

## **HIED 891 - Enrollment Continuation**

This course is intended for doctoral students who have completed all 12 dissertation credits in HIED 899, coursework, and interdisciplinary elective credits and who have not completed the Dissertation Final Defense.

This course allows a student to maintain continuous registration required by the School of Graduate Studies. Please refer to the [Continuous Registration Policy](#) on the School of Graduate Studies website. Students take one credit a semester for a minimum of two of every three semesters (summer, fall, spring). The course is repeatable up to 10 credits.

**Note:** You must be enrolled in either HIED 899 or HIED 891 during the semesters of your Dissertation Proposal Defense and Dissertation Final Defense meetings.

## **Ten Steps to Complete a Dissertation**

The journey of your dissertation may be completed in ten steps listed below:

1. Select a Topic
2. Select Chair and Committee Members
3. Research Your Topic
4. Create a Timeline & Dissertation Deadlines
5. Write Chapters 1 through 3
6. Conduct your Dissertation Proposal
7. Obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval
8. Conduct Your Study and Analyze the Results (Chapters 4 and 5)
9. Conduct Your Dissertation Final Defense
10. Submit Dissertation for Format Review

While these are presented as steps above, some may occur simultaneously.



## Step 1: Select a Topic

[Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website.

First, as a doctoral student, you should define a topic that meets your research interests. You may know what topic you want to research right away; or you may need longer to determine exactly what they want to do. It is never too early to begin selecting your topic. Consider the following as you select a research topic:

- **Select a topic you are passionate about.** Make your choice based on your highest personal and/or professional interests. It may be a topic that is compelling to you now, or it may be a topic related to your future professional career. This will keep you motivated during the entire research process.
- **Brainstorm ideas.** What topics and questions have continually interested you throughout your coursework? Was there a journal article or critical issue you learned about that struck a chord with you? Are there any topics that you could apply to your current or future professional career interests? Are there any topics in your field that research does not answer? When you find something that seems particularly interesting, write it down. Maybe that idea will become the springboard for your research, or the problem you will investigate. These signals may be broader than the research questions that make a good, focused dissertation. They are a good place to start but need further refinement.
- **Chronicle of Higher Education & Inside Higher Ed.** Subscribe and follow the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed* to attain topic ideas.
- **Utilize resources in your library.** Utilize SCSU [library](#) resources to help you select a topic and find background information on topics at the same time.
- **Utilize HIED Subject and Course Guides on library website.** The SCSU Library has [HIED course guides](#) specifically compiled for HIED doctoral students to assist in finding resources for your field of study.
- **Read professional journals and attend conferences in your career field.** This will help you gain insight into topics that professionals are working on or critical issues affecting your career field. This will also help you identify gaps in research that need further investigation.
- **Consult your program adviser.** Your adviser can assist you in finding a relationship between your research topic and future career that is exciting and intellectually engaging.
- **Select a topic that is original and substantial.** A dissertation involves the design and implementation of empirical research that makes a substantial contribution to the student's field of study.

## Step 2: Select Chair and Committee Members

One of the most important considerations when beginning a dissertation is the selection of committee members. [Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website.

### Tips to select the right adviser and committee members:

- Select an adviser who will help you develop a vision for your professional research that draws on your future career goals.
- Select an adviser who has a proven success record of graduating students in a timely manner.
- Find committee members that have expertise in your research area and/or methodology.
- Consider the availability of the committee members you choose. Be sure they will be available to meet or converse when you need and can respond in a timely manner. Many faculty members are not available during the summer or may be on sabbatical.
- Select committee members that have a good reputation with other professors, students, and those in your field of study.
- Select committee members that you have a good working relationship and can provide you with constructive feedback and encouragement.

### Selecting Committee Members

Each graduate student, after consulting their advisor, should ask three other graduate faculty members to serve on the committee, based on each member's potential advisory value regarding the research project or method.

### Doctoral Dissertation Committee Structure

Doctoral dissertation committees consist of four members. A minimum of two committee members, including the chair, must be active graduate faculty members in the student's doctoral program. The remaining two committee members should be active graduate faculty members from the academic unit or a related discipline, or be a content expert eligible for temporary membership in the graduate faculty (holding a terminal degree). Fifth readers serving as content experts are not required but may be included on a student's dissertation committee.

- **Active Graduate faculty members** have been recommended for a permanent appointment to the graduate faculty by their department and School and are currently employed at SCSU.
- **Chair of Committee** serves as the student's primary adviser and must be rostered with the student's graduate program.
- **Academic Unit** is defined as the next unit larger than the graduate program. It may be the department or School in which the graduate program is located.
- **Related discipline** is any discipline/academic unit having an active graduate faculty member who can provide insight to a specific student topic.
- **Content expert eligible for temporary appointment to the graduate faculty** is any individual currently employed at SCSU, an emeriti faculty member from SCSU, or an individual from another academic institution or community agency or business holding a degree equivalent or higher than the student and who brings specific content expertise to the committee. The individual must seek temporary appointment to the graduate faculty by completing the [Dissertation Committee Approval](#) form.
- **Fifth readers** are optional non-voting members of the committee proving content matter or some other expertise.

### **Committee Chair**

The Chair of the committee serves as the student's primary adviser and must be rostered with the student's graduate program. The student's adviser serves as the committee chair. The chair needs to be an active graduate faculty member in the Higher Education Administration (HIED) program. The student should make sure that the chair is available throughout the course of the dissertation. If the student, in consultation with the adviser, determines that her or his topic better matches the expertise of some other member of the program faculty, she or he should consider changing advisers or have co-chairs for the committee. The impact of changing advisers is relatively small provided it is done early in the process of designing the research project. The [Change of Advisor](#) form for changing advisors can be found online.

### **Inside Committee Member**

The inside committee member must be an active graduate faculty member who has been recommended for a permanent appointment to the graduate faculty by their department and school and are currently employed at SCSU.

### **Outside Committee Member**

Another committee member fills the role of an "outside reader" and must be from outside the Educational Leadership and Higher Education Department. The outside reader need not have expertise in the student's specific topic, but should be in an area that complements the planned project or the field of higher education administration.

### **Fourth Committee Member**

The fourth member can be from either inside or outside the department. If other members of the committee do not have familiarity with the planned method of the study, the student should consider choosing a member for the committee who has such knowledge and expertise. A student may also consider the membership of a higher education administrator/practitioner who might apply for membership on the graduate faculty for the purpose of serving on the committee.

### **Fifth Readers**

Fifth readers are optional non-voting members of the committee proving content matter or some other expertise.

### **Committee Member Approval**

The dissertation committee must be approved via the [Dissertation Committee Approval](#) form. If a potential committee member is not a member of the graduate faculty, they must be approved via the [Approval of Outside Committee Member](#) form. These forms must be completed at least 30 days prior to a proposal meeting. Please return the form to the Center for Doctoral Studies and they will attain the signatures for you and will forward to the School of Graduate Studies for final approval. You will be notified via your SCSU email once a decision is made.

### **Understanding the Purpose of the Committee**

Your committee acts in the role of reviewer, partner and mentor to provide knowledge and support as you begin, execute, and complete your dissertation. A student should discuss with her/his advisor the expected role and contribution for each member of the committee. A student will need to meet with the committee at least twice, once for a proposal defense and again for a final defense of the completed project.

### **Working With Your Committee**

The student makes all decisions in discussion with the chairperson first, including the composition of the committee, IRB forms, drafts of chapters, etc. In addition, dates for the dissertation proposal and dissertation final defense meetings are scheduled only after the chair has reviewed and approved the working draft of the dissertation document. Appendix A presents lists of responsibilities for the committee chair, committee members, and the student throughout the dissertation process.

The student should ask the chairperson and committee members about the logistics of the involvement of committee members. Some committee members prefer to see all drafts and be involved throughout the process, whereas other members may give early input in terms of conceptualizing the project or research design and then prefer to see only the final drafts. Students should have committee members clarify their preference at the outset.

Students are advised to work closely with their chair from the very beginning and throughout the entire length of the dissertation. They may want to seek advice about methods for their study while taking HIED 808 (Quantitative Research Methods) and HIED 809 (Qualitative Research Methods). It would not be advisable for a student to do most of the work of a proposal on her/his own and then take it to her/his chair in hopes that the chair would “sign on.” The dissertation is intended to be a process during which the advisor and student work closely throughout.

Another logistical procedure the student, chair, and committee members should discuss and agree upon is the amount of time that the student must allow for the chair and committee members to read submitted written material. For example, how many days or weeks does the chair need in order to review materials for your next meeting? When the final draft is completed, how much time will committee members need to prepare for the final defense? These important procedural considerations should be clearly delineated at the outset of the dissertation process and updated as needed. Keep in mind that the needed time many also change with the rhythms and workload of the semester. In addition, committee members should be asked if they want hard copies or electronic copies of all drafts. It is the student’s responsibility to deliver a copy to committee members in the format they prefer.

### **Step 3: Research Your Topic**

In order to increase your knowledge about the topic you have chosen and its theoretical framework, read as much as you can through scholarly research journals, books or dissertations. A theoretical framework is the underlying structure, also referred to as the scaffolding of your research (Merriam, 2009, p. 64). [Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website.

The SCSU Library has [HIED course guides](#) specifically compiled for HIED doctoral students to assist in finding resources for your field of study.

Typically research should focus on studies published in the last five or ten years, but it should also refer to landmark studies and scholarly works published prior to this time if they are significant in the development of research on the topic or in shaping the direction of your study. It may be beneficial to start with the most recent research first to help you establish what the current issues of concern are in the field. In order to save time, read abstracts or introductory chapters first to determine if the research is *relevant* to your study.

As you review and synthesize the literature, you will discover the aspects of the issue that scholars seem to agree on (there is little need to study these further) and the aspects that are still unknown or in dispute. These unknown items can take many forms: For example, a process, trend, concept, or group that is under-researched and not well understood, theorized connections as yet unproven; a situation or population that a theory or model has not been tested on yet; a program, procedure or intervention that has not been fully tested and verified yet; or a study that has some design flaws that limit its inferential value, but that you can repair in another project. It is in these areas that you may be able to formulate questions that can guide dissertation research.

In addition, most research articles include suggestions at the end regarding gaps in research literature and questions that need further investigation. These hints by other scholars can help students define the purpose of their study and refine their statement of the problem. In the end, the goal is to narrowly focus your research into an achievable and manageable project that contributes to the further development of scholarship and effective practice in the field of higher education administration. Devise a theoretical framework. Keep photocopies of the materials you read from books and bookmark electronic sources in a single place so you can refer back to them throughout your entire research project.

Organizing your research will prevent you from becoming overwhelmed by all the information you discover. It is wise to group the literature relevant to your study systematically by similar topic, approaches, arguments, findings, or other means. This organization may prove beneficial as you develop an outline for your literature review and map the plans for your own study.

**HINT: Back up your research materials.** You may want to save your information to your personal computer, and then back up your information on SCSU's web space.

#### **Step 4: Create a Timeline and Dissertation Deadlines**

[Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website.

Timelines are helpful for staying focused and completing the research in a timely fashion. Students can consult with their dissertation chair to periodically review and update a timeline.

<b>Year Two:</b>	Select Research Topic and Read Research Materials Select Chair and Committee Members Write Chapters 1 through 3
<b>After Year Two Completion:</b>	Take the Qualifying Examination (Oral & Written) Complete Chapters 1 through 3
<b>Year Three-Spring/Summer:</b>	Register for HIED 899 after Passing Qualifying Exam Complete IRB Training and Application Materials Conduct the Dissertation Proposal Meeting
<b>Year Four-Fall:</b>	Collect and Analyze Data after IRB Approval Write Chapters 4 and 5
<b>Year Four-Spring:</b>	Apply for Graduation Complete Chapters 4 and 5 Conduct Dissertation Final Defense Meeting Complete Dissertation Format and Graduation Requirements

**Notes:** Some things to consider when developing a realistic timeline:

- If you get behind at any point in your research, it will delay your graduation.
- Set aside a lot of time to work on your research. The work takes longer than one realizes. Use the time you attended courses and did homework as time to work on your research.
- Your timeline should include a realistic time frame to write and carry out your research.
- Your timeline will be uniquely determined by your own circumstances and may not be completely predictable or under your control. Plan for unexpected delays associated with the research itself and your family and employment obligations.
- Your timeline should allow two weeks or more for your advisor to read and respond to drafts.
- Create a structure where you set aside several hours every week to work on your dissertation.
- Consider meeting with your cohort members and provide support for each other.
- The dissertation committee must be approved via the [Dissertation Committee Approval](#) form. Submit at least one month prior to your Dissertation Proposal meeting.
- If a potential committee member is not a member of the graduate faculty, they must be approved via the [Approval of Outside Committee Member](#) form. Submit at least 1 month prior to Dissertation Proposal meeting.
- Complete [Dissertation Meeting Request](#) at least 2 weeks prior to Proposal and Final Defense.
- Complete the IRB online training and bring IRB application materials to the Dissertation Proposal meeting for your adviser's signature. The IRB approval may take 4 weeks or more.
- The format review approval process may take 3 weeks or more.
- Select a date you want to be done with the dissertation process and then work backward from that point. Consider using a [Dissertation Calculator](#) such as the one at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

## Dissertation Deadlines

The Dissertation Proposal meeting is conducted at least one semester prior to the Dissertation Final Defense. Doctoral students will obtain their official diploma at the commencement ceremony. Therefore, the [DISSERTATION DEADLINES](#) established by the School of Graduate Studies must be adhered to.

Description	Timeline
Select Chair & Committee Members	
Obtain approval for committee members not on roster	Complete <a href="#">Dissertation Committee Approval</a> and <a href="#">Approval of Outside Committee Member</a> forms at least one month prior to proposal meeting.
Schedule Dissertation Proposal Meeting	Complete <a href="#">Dissertation Meeting Request</a> at least one month prior to the proposal meeting
Send committee members copy of proposal	At least 2 weeks prior to the Dissertation Proposal
Dissertation Proposal	At least 1 semester prior to the Dissertation Final Defense
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval	Process takes approximately 1 month
Schedule Dissertation Final Defense Meeting	Complete <a href="#">Dissertation Meeting Request</a> at least one month prior to the Dissertation Final Defense meeting
Send committee members final copy	At least 2 weeks prior to the Dissertation Final Defense meeting
Dissertation Final Defense	Meeting no later than mid-semester
Make Final Revisions	
Submit for Format Review	Please allow at least three weeks
Final Approval Received from Committee	Signature sheets submitted to Graduate Studies at least two weeks in advance of commencement.
Submit Formatted and Approved Copies for Binding	
Official Graduation Date	
Eligible to Participate in Commencement	

### Step 5: Write Chapters 1 through 3

[Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Now that you have conducted comprehensive research regarding your topic, it is time to organize your ideas to complete Chapters 1 through 3 of your research study. *A suggested outline for the chapters of a dissertation is presented in Appendix B.* Chapter 1 through 3 include an introduction to your research, literature review, and methodology. Some tips you may want to consider include:

- You may want to start by defining your purpose of your study and statement of the problem in Chapter 1. These sections will lead the researcher throughout the entire dissertation.
- The literature review in Chapter 2 helps you understand what has been done in relation to the chosen issue before your research. It guides you towards stating the problem in more concrete terms and the significance of your study.
- In Chapter 3, define research questions and the methodology of your study (quantitative, qualitative or mixed) that best suits the scope of your research, your world view, and your abilities.
- Be sure to narrowly focus your research into a doable and manageable project.
- Give your research project a title as soon as possible. You can refine it later, but keep it as your guide. Put the most important words in the beginning and keep it short.
- As you develop your chapters, send drafts to your adviser in order to receive constructive feedback for improving your research. You may also want to have classmates, or people inside or outside your field review your materials.
- Remember to use the latest version of APA style. Check APA Style online, or order it at the Husky Bookstore.
- Look at samples of previous dissertations using a similar methodology in the SCSU Library. The Center for Doctoral Studies has a special collections library of dissertations from prior students that can be checked out to currently enrolled students.
- You may elect to take HIED 880 – Dissertation Proposal Development. This elective course will help you prepare for your dissertation proposal. It will help you review literature, identify problems, synthesize literature, apply theoretical concepts, and design your research project to address your research questions. **NOTE:** You must pass the qualifying exam prior to registering for this course.
- Students may want to consider providing a presentation during the Student Research Colloquium held in April each year. This presentation could cover Chapters 1, 2, and 3 as a way to prepare for the Dissertation Proposal meeting.

Some committee chairs will provide editing, formatting, spelling correction, and/or grammatical advice for students, whereas other chairs prefer to focus their attention on the content rather than the structure or mechanics of student work. Students are advised to discuss this aspect of their dissertation with their committee chair. Resources and consultation for editing and formatting are available from SCSU's [WritePlace](#). Services, hours and location are available on their website. Some students find it helpful to engage someone to provide editorial assistance with their dissertation writing. **It is the student's responsibility to persist with the writing and revision process until the final document is satisfactory to the chair and, then, each committee member.**

## Statistical Consulting and Research Support

If you are looking for help in drawing on the power of statistics or to develop survey questions to support your research, turn to the [Statistical Consulting & Research Center](#) in St. Cloud State University's Integrated Science & Engineering Laboratory Facility (ISELF). **This free service is available to graduate and undergraduate students, faculty members and staff.**

## SPSS

For those conducting quantitative research, SPSS is available through the SCSU Virtual Lab:

- Login the Virtual Lab at <https://appsanywhere.stcloudstate.edu/vpn/index.html> using your SCSU username and password (also known as your HuskyNet). First time you login, you may be asked to install certain software.

## Step 6: Conduct Your Dissertation Proposal Meeting



[Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. The next step in the thesis process is the development of a dissertation proposal. The proposal is required for the dissertation proposal meeting with your committee. A student will work with his/her committee chair on the proposal prior to disseminating to other committee members. Appendix A presents lists of responsibilities for the committee chair, committee members, and the student throughout the dissertation process.

*A suggested outline for the chapters of a dissertation is presented in Appendix B.*

Once the proposal has been prepared and approved by the chair, students must arrange for a dissertation proposal meeting. ***A rubric for the dissertation proposal is included in Appendix C.*** The purpose of the dissertation proposal meeting is to elicit committee members' input and insight related to the research problem and the proposed method of inquiry in order to improve the plan for the research and enhance the likelihood of success.

A dissertation proposal is a comprehensive presentation of the plan for the project. It should include an introduction, the main research problem, research questions/hypotheses, a review of relevant literature, and the proposed methodology. It should also include a proposed timeline for the project. Proposals for the dissertation proposal are expected to be a mostly completed draft of the first three chapters for the dissertation. It is important that the details of the research plan be specified and approved in the proposal before the data are collected.

Students should be prepared to be open minded about receiving suggestions and criticisms, and be prepared to accept changes that are reasonable and promise to add value to the study. However, students do not have to accept all suggestions made by committee members. Sometimes, a polite, "That is not the focus of my study" can be an appropriate response.

The dissertation proposal meeting must occur at least one semester prior to the dissertation final defense. These meetings are not typically scheduled during final examination week or during the summer.

**TIPS:**

- You should not set or announce the proposal meeting until your advisor says that your research material is acceptable.

**Deadlines**

[Deadlines](#) are found online and are established by the School of Graduate Studies.

**Gain Adviser Approval**

Please work with your chair to gain approval to hold your meeting. After gaining approval, students can arrange a Dissertation Proposal meeting date with the adviser and committee members.

**Complete Dissertation Meeting Forms**

Several forms are completed for the dissertation proposal meeting approval process. Please return all forms to Michele Braun-Heurung in the Center for Doctoral Studies Office. She will attain appropriate signatures, verify eligibility to hold your meeting, and notify you of meeting approval and location.

- [Dissertation Committee Approval](#) This form is used to gain approval for an external committee member or those from SCSU who are fixed-term or adjunct faculty members and is due **1 month** prior to holding a meeting.
- [Approval of Outside Committee Member](#) This form is used to gain temporary approval for an outside committee member.
- [Dissertation Meeting Request](#) (This form is used to schedule the meeting space and is due **2 weeks** prior to proposal or defense)

**School of Graduate Studies Dissertation Proposal Eligibility Requirements**

In order to be eligible to hold your dissertation proposal meeting, students must follow the School of Graduate Studies eligibility requirements listed below:

- Student is fully admitted to a graduate program.
- Student has an approved program of study on file.
- Student has a GPA of 3.00 or higher in the graduate program.
- Student maintained continuous enrollment following doctoral candidacy.
- Committee Approval form has been approved by the School of Graduate Studies.
- Student meets program specific requirements for eligibility to hold dissertation proposal conference (if applicable).

**Higher Education Administration Dissertation Proposal Eligibility Requirements**

In order to be eligible to hold your dissertation proposal meeting, students must follow the Higher Education Administration eligibility requirements listed below:

- Student must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the HIED doctoral program.

- Student may not have any course grade of IP-incomplete.
- Student must be enrolled in a minimum of 1 credit the semester of the proposal.
- Student must pass the HIED doctoral program qualifying exam and attain candidacy.
- The student's DARS report must indicate the same advisor as the dissertation chair.
- The dissertation proposal meeting must be conducted with the student present in person. Meetings via other formats must be approved by the committee chair.
- The dissertation proposal meeting will be held on the St. Cloud or Twin Cities Graduate Center campus. Meetings at other locations must be approved by the committee chair.
- All voting committee members or their proxies must attend the meeting in person, online, or via phone.



### **Send proposal to committee.**

Students are advised to provide Chapters 1 through 3 to committee members at least two weeks prior to the Dissertation Proposal meeting. Please ask your committee members whether they prefer the proposal be sent to them electronically, printed, or both. It is the student's responsibility to deliver a paper or electronic copy to all committee members in the format they prefer.

### **Prepare for and Attend Dissertation Proposal Meeting.**

During the Dissertation Proposal meeting, the student presents the planned dissertation research and provides a rationale for the research to the committee. The student presents Chapters 1, 2, and 3 including the introduction and research questions, literature review, and proposed methodology. The committee is looking to ensure the student is well prepared to move forward with the research and has developed a viable research structure.

Typically, students will provide a brief presentation (15-20 minutes) where they highlight the pivotal studies and research related to their topic and an outline of how they propose to conduct their dissertation study. The information about the presentation is just a guide and individual committees may vary this process depending on the topic and committee interest in the research.

The dissertation proposal meeting is considered a working meeting and is not open to the public. The meeting usually lasts 1½ to 2 hours. You should keep in mind that all members of the committee will have read the proposal recently. It is common (but not required unless your chair says so) for students to use presentation software during their presentations. These presentations can be displayed on the TV monitor in the room.

Committee members will ask questions to assess the student's understanding of the pertinent research grounding their study and gain the rationale the student has used in developing the study. Following the presentation, committee members will ask questions and make comments regarding various elements the proposal. Written notes of what is discussed and agreed upon in the proposal defense are very helpful in keeping the chair, committee members, and student on track with timely completion of the study. A student may continue with the dissertation when each committee member approves the proposed project by signing and returning the Report of Preliminary Evaluation Committee form to the Center for Doctoral Studies office. If a student does not pass the proposal defense, she/he may revise the proposal and arrange for another meeting of the committee. A student may have up to three attempts to defend a proposal. If the third attempt at a proposal defense is not successful, the student will be withdrawn from the Ed.D. program.

To be eligible for the Dissertation Proposal meeting, doctoral students must be in good academic standing, with at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA. Students must be enrolled in at least 1 credit during the semester they present at their Dissertation Proposal meeting.

### **Step 7: Obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval**

[Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Once the committee approves the proposed research, all students and faculty conducting the research must receive approval from the [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects at SCSU prior to commencing the dissertation research. Please work with and obtain approval from your adviser prior to submitting your [application](#).

SCSU requires all research activities involving human subjects—whether or not they are supported by Federal funds—to comply with the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46). According to this policy, research activities that (1) intervene in people's lives, observe human behavior, or (2) use data obtained directly or indirectly from living individuals must be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board to ensure:

- Risks to subjects will be minimized and reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits,
- Informed consent will be obtained from subjects and appropriately documented, and
- The privacy and safety of subjects will be maintained.

Application materials include:

- IRB Training completed;
- Completed IRB Application;
- Copies of Data Collection Instruments (surveys or questionnaires);

- Copies of Consent Forms. Approvals from participating institutions or organizations must be obtained on letterhead prior to submitting a completed proposal;
- Copies of Written Support (letters of support from cooperating institutions);
- Copies of Debriefing Statement (if applicable).

IRB applications may receive either full or expedited review. Research that does not fit Expedited Review categories or that involves more than minimal risk will receive full review by the entire IRB at a regularly scheduled, biweekly meeting. Applications must be submitted at least two weeks before a meeting to be considered for full review. Research that involves no more than minimal risk and falls into one or more of the IRB's Expedited Review categories may be reviewed by a subcommittee of the IRB. Expedited Review is usually completed within 5 to 10 working days after applications have been submitted.

### **Changes in the Research Plan/Project**

It is anticipated that the research design may need to be modified over the course of the project. Revisions to the proposal are not necessary under such circumstances. However, if the committee chair determines that major changes in the research design are necessary or if a new topic is selected, the student must submit a new proposal and repeat the dissertation proposal as described above.

If changes to the procedures of the research project affect the experiences of the research subjects, for example, changes to a questionnaire or changes in the criteria for participation, those changes must be reported to the IRB.

### **Step 8: Conduct Your Study and Analyze Results (Chapter 4 and 5)**

[Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Once your Dissertation Proposal has been approved, it is time to collect and analyze the data. During this step you will write Chapters 4 and 5.

- For those conducting quantitative research, SPSS is available through the SCSU Virtual Lab. Just log into the [Virtual Lab](#) using your SCSU username and password. The first time you log into the system, you may be asked to install some software. Once the system comes up, click on the Campus Lab Desktop. Once the desktop comes up, select the Start button, choose All Programs, choose the SPSS Inc. Folder, and select the PASW Statistics 18 (or other version) software. You can then run a tutorial by selecting which tutorial you wish to take or you can start using SPSS and incorporate your data and analyze reports.
- For those conducting quantitative research, you may find it helpful to utilize the [Statistical Consulting Center](#).

## **Step 9: Conduct Your Dissertation Final Defense**

[Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Please work with your chair to gain approval to hold your meeting. After gaining approval, students can arrange a Dissertation Final Defense meeting with the adviser and committee members.

Some tips you may want to consider include:

- Students may want to provide a presentation during the Student Research Colloquium held in April each year. This presentation could cover Chapters 1 through 5 to prepare for the Dissertation Final Defense.
- You may want to attend 1-2 other Dissertation Final Defenses before taking your own. You may also want to share your findings, problems and issues with peers prior to your Dissertation Final Defense and gain feedback from them.
- You should not set or announce the defense meeting to committee members until your advisor says that your research material is acceptable.

### **Gain Adviser Approval**

Please work with your chair to gain approval to hold your meeting. After gaining approval, students can arrange a Dissertation Final Defense meeting date with the adviser and committee members.

### **Complete Dissertation Meeting Forms**

Several forms are completed for the dissertation final defense meeting approval process. Please return all forms to Michele Braun-Heurung in the Center for Doctoral Studies Office. She will attain appropriate signatures, verify eligibility to hold your meeting, and notify you of meeting approval and location.

- [Dissertation Meeting Request](#) (This form is used to schedule the meeting space and is due **2 weeks** prior to proposal or defense)
- [Petition](#) – If any of your committee members have changed since your dissertation proposal, you will need to complete the Petition to gain approval of your new committee structure.

### **School of Graduate Studies Dissertation Final Defense Eligibility Requirements**

In order to be eligible to hold your dissertation final defense meeting, students must follow the School of Graduate Studies eligibility requirements listed below:

- Student has a GPA of 3.00 or higher in the graduate program.
- Student passed a dissertation proposal conference in a prior semester.
- Student maintained continuous enrollment following doctoral candidacy.
- Student is enrolled in a minimum of 1 credit the semester of dissertation final defense conference.
- Committee Approval form has been approved by the School of Graduate Studies. Any changes to committee have been approved by the School of Graduate Studies through a Petition.
- Student meets program specific requirements for eligibility to hold dissertation proposal conference (if applicable).

## **Higher Education Administration Dissertation Final Defense Eligibility Requirements**

In order to be eligible to hold your dissertation final defense meeting, students must follow the Higher Education Administration eligibility requirements listed below:

- Student must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the HIED doctoral program.
- Student may not have any course grade of IP-incomplete.
- The student's DARS report must indicate the same advisor as the dissertation chair.
- Dissertation final defense meeting must be conducted with the student present in person. Meetings via other formats must be approved by the committee chair.
- The dissertation final defense meeting will be held on the St. Cloud or Twin Cities Graduate Center campus. Meetings at other locations must be approved by the committee chair.
- All voting committee members or their proxies must attend the meeting in person, online, or via phone.
- All doctoral program coursework must be completed prior to or during the semester of the dissertation final defense.

### **Send dissertation research to committee.**

Students are advised to provide Chapters 1 through 5 to committee members at least 2 weeks prior to the Dissertation Final Defense meeting. Please ask your committee members whether they prefer the proposal be sent to them electronically, printed, or both.

### **Dissertation Final Defense Information**

Appendix A presents lists of responsibilities for the committee chair, committee members, and the student throughout the process.

A dissertation final defense meeting is required of all students and is given orally. The student's advisor presides over the defense meeting. The dissertation final defense is not a perfunctory event. It is a formal occasion for discussion, dialogue, and defense of the project the students has completed. A rubric for the dissertation final defense is included in Appendix C.

Students will register for credits of HIED 899 (Dissertation Research) or HIED 891 (Continuous Enrollment) during the semester of the dissertation proposal meeting. The Dissertation Final Defense cannot be held in the same semester as the Dissertation Proposal meeting.

You will receive your real diploma at the commencement ceremony. Therefore, all dissertation formatting requirements for your dissertation must be completed prior to commencement.

[Deadlines](#) established by the School of Graduate Studies must be adhered to.

It is the student's responsibility to schedule the dissertation final defense with their committee members and reserve a room. Membership consists of the same committee that served on the dissertation proposal, unless the committee membership is altered in the interim.

The dissertation final defense is open to the public and notice of the meeting will be emailed to students in the program, posted on the Center for Doctoral Studies bulletin board, and e-mailed to the School of Education listserv. If a student wishes they may invite their family and friends to attend the defense. Only members of the dissertation committee are allowed to comment or

pose questions during the defense. The specific format and requirements of the dissertation final defense vary according to the nature of the project.

Generally, at least two weeks prior to the final defense the student must distribute a final draft copy of the dissertation to each member of his/her committee. It is the student's responsibility to deliver a copy to all committee members in the formats (online or paper) they prefer. Much like the proposal defense meeting, dissertation final defense meetings usually lasts 1½ to 2 hours. Typically, the student makes a brief presentation focusing on the findings, implications and significance of the dissertation research. It is common (but not required unless your chair says so) for students to use presentation software during their presentations. All members of the dissertation committee are afforded the opportunity to ask questions and make comments regarding the dissertation and research project. Once questions and comments are exhausted, the student and all observers will leave the room while the committee deliberates. The committee will vote to approve, approve with revisions, or reject. A majority vote of the final evaluation committee is required to pass the final defense. If the student has passed the defense, the committee signs the appropriate forms and the chair returns it to the Center for Doctoral Studies.

A candidate who fails the dissertation final defense in the first attempt may, with the approval of the advisor, attempt a second defense of the dissertation, but the candidate may not undertake a second final defense during the same semester in which the original defense was failed. A third chance to pass the dissertation final defense is not permitted.

### **Step 10: Submit Dissertation for Format Review**

[Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Once it is determined that the student passed the Dissertation Final Defense, students need to make the necessary modifications based on the suggestions of the committee members. Next, the student must follow the School of Graduate Studies process to format the dissertation research.

- A good point to start with the formatting requirements is the [Graduate Studies Culminating Project website](#) which provides guidelines and directions for the electronic submission of your dissertation.
- Tip: Keep your dissertation in APA format, utilizing the general specifications from the School of Graduate Studies website. When APA provides format guidelines (i.e. headlines, fonts) utilize APA format. When no format guidelines are provided through APA, utilize the general specifications below.

## **School of Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures**

### **Doctoral Dissertation Requirements**

To participate in commencement and receive the graduation date for the application term, doctoral students must have completed all School of Graduate Studies requirements for the degree including final submission of the doctoral dissertation prior to the deadline for submission of the culminating project. Please see the recommended [timeline](#) and the [doctoral completion checklist](#) as well as the [electronic submission of culminating projects](#).

## **Dissertation Support Services**

[Dissertation research](#) policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the Higher Education Administration dissertation research website. These resources include:

- Dissertation Manual;
- Meeting forms to approve your dissertation committee and request your dissertation proposal and final defense meeting;
- Policies and procedures related to dissertation research;
- Institutional Review Board (IRB);
- Link to dissertation deadlines;
- Time management tips and calculator;
- Library research tips and citation guidelines;
- Higher Education research guides;
- SCSU electronic dissertation examples;
- The Write Place;

## **Student Research Colloquium**

The annual campus-wide Student Research Colloquium (SRC)

<https://www.stcloudstate.edu/src/default.asp> promotes research, scholarship and creative work in collaboration with faculty as a vital component of higher education.

**Tip:** Students can provide their dissertation research during this event even if only part of the process is complete. For instance, students could present Chapters 1, 2, and 3 as one way to prepare for the Dissertation Proposal meeting. Alternatively, students may choose to present Chapters 1 through 5 to prepare for the Dissertation Final Defense.

## Resources

Below are examples of books providing valuable information and guidance for preparing and completing your dissertation. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, simply a start point.

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Balian, E. S. (1994). *The graduate research guidebook: A practical approach to doctoral/masters research*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bolker, J. (1998). *Writing your dissertation in fifteen minutes a day: A guide to starting, revising, and finishing your doctoral thesis*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Brause, R. (2000). *Writing your doctoral dissertation: Invisible rules for success*. London: Falmer Press.

Cone, J. D., & Foster, S. L. (2006). *Dissertations and theses from start to finish: Psychology and related fields* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Ernst, M. O. (1981). *A guide through the dissertation process*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press.

Fisher, E. & Holtom, D. (1999). *Enjoy writing your science thesis or dissertation!: A step by step guide to planning and writing dissertations and theses for undergraduate and graduate science students*. London: Imperial College Press.

Fitzpatrick, J., Secrist, J., & Wright, D. J. (1998). *Secrets for a successful dissertation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Gardner, D. C., & Beatty, G. C. (1980). *Dissertation proposal guidebook: How to prepare a research proposal and get it accepted*. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C Thomas Publisher, Ltd.

- Glatthorn, A. A. (1998). *Writing the winning dissertation: A step-by-step guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Higgins, R. (1996). *Approaches to research: A handbook for those writing a dissertation*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Irby, B. J., & Lunenburg, F. (2007) *Writing a successful thesis or dissertation: Tips and strategies for students in the social and behavioral sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2001). *Practical research: Planning and design* (7th ed.). New York: Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W.W., Silverman, S. J. (2000). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Madsen, D. (1992). *Successful dissertations and theses: A guide to graduate student research from proposal to completion* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mauch, J. E., & Park, N. (2003). *Guide to the successful thesis and dissertation: A handbook for students and faculty*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: M. Dekker.
- Meloy, J. M. (1994). *Writing the qualitative dissertation: Understanding by doing*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Newman, I. (1997). *Theses and dissertations: A guide to writing in the social and physical sciences*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Nickerson, E. T. (1993). *The dissertation handbook: A guide to successful dissertations*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

- Piantanida, M., & Garman, N. B. (1999). *The qualitative dissertation: A guide for students and faculty*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Preece, R. (1994). *Starting research: An introduction to academic research and dissertation writing*. London: Pinter Publishers, Ltd.
- Pyrczak, F. (2000). *Completing your thesis or dissertation*. Los Angeles, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.
- Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2007). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Simon, M. K., & Bruce, F. J. (1998). *The dissertation cookbook from soup to nuts: A practical guide to help you start and complete your dissertation or research project*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.
- Sternberg, D. (1981). *How to complete and survive your doctoral dissertation*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Teitelbaum, H. (1998). *How to write a thesis*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Macmillan.
- Thomas, R. M., & Brubaker, D. L. (2000). *Theses and dissertations: A guide to planning, research, and writing*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Van Wageningen, K. (1990). *Writing a thesis: Substance and style*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Webster, W. G. (1998). *Developing & writing your thesis, dissertation or project: A book of sound advice about conceptualizing, organizing, developing and finalizing your Terminal graduate research*. San Ramon, CA: Academic Scholarwrite.
- Zerubavel, E. (1999). *The clockwork muse: A practical guide to writing theses, dissertations, and books*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

## Appendix A: Student and Dissertation Member Responsibilities

### Student

It is the responsibility of the student to:

- Select an adviser and committee members meeting program and Graduate School requirements.
- Work with the chair to develop realistic timelines for completion of the dissertation and abide by all program and Graduate School deadlines.
- Obtain editorial help if necessary to meet the standards of the program and University for quality and presentation of the dissertation.
- Ensure that a high standard of writing quality is maintained throughout the project using APA writing principles and to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this program manual and the [School of Graduate Studies Guidelines for Electronic Submission](#).
- Uphold the ethical and scholarly standards of research, including the protection of human subjects and the probation against plagiarism.
- Complete and submit all required forms appropriately and on time.
- Decide, in consultation with the committee chair, an appropriate and worthy topic for research study or project that meets a high standard of quality for originality, significance, research, analysis, accuracy, and overall scholarship.
- **After approval from the chair**, schedule the dissertation proposal and final defense committee meetings, providing the date, time, and location to all members.
- **After approval from the chair**, the student will complete the appropriate paperwork within appropriate deadlines to meet program and Graduate School requirements to attain approval for dissertation proposal and final defense meetings.
- Work with adviser and committee members to schedule consultation and dissertation proposal and final defense meeting times. Consider the availability of the committee members you choose. Be sure they will be available to meet or converse when you need and can respond in a timely manner. Many committee members are not available during the summer.
- Determine in consultation with the committee the roles and needs of the committee members in working through the approval process and the timelines and deadlines for submitting written work for approval.
- Understand that re-writes will be necessary and that the guidance of the committee is to be taken seriously if the work is to be satisfactorily completed and approved.
- Provide the chair, committee members, and Center for Doctoral Studies accurate contact information (i.e. e-mail, phone) and provide updates as necessary.
- Complete the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application, training, and other requirements and attain IRB approval prior to conducting the research study.
- Propose and defend the dissertation; understand that final acceptance of the dissertation is determined by the student's committee and the School of Graduate Studies.
- Follow all program and University dissertation policies and procedures including continuous enrollment.
- There may be additional responsibilities as determined by the student's dissertation chair.

## **Dissertation Chair**

It is the responsibility of the chair to:

- Determine the appropriateness of the topic selected by the student.
- Determine the adequacy of the project design before the student begins work.
- Assist the student in the selection of other committee members and provide guidance on the Graduate School requirements for an outside reader eligibility.
- To determine the readiness of a student to conduct a dissertation proposal and final defense and to provide the student with feedback and approval regarding when it is appropriate to schedule committee meetings and forward a draft of the dissertation to committee members.
- To advise the student on the completion of appropriate paperwork to meet program and Graduate School requirements to attain approval for dissertation proposal and final defense meetings.
- To advise the student on the protocols and process to ensure the students are adequately prepared for the dissertation proposal and final defense meetings.
- Work effectively with the student to set realistic timelines for completion of the dissertation and to provide guidance on the program and Graduate School deadlines.
- Review, approve, and sign the student's Institutional Review Board (IRB) application.
- Ensure the student has obtained the required clearances from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research involving human subjects before the research study begins.
- To be accessible to students for dialogue and formal meetings throughout the dissertation process, review the study, and provide timely and thorough guidance on the various elements necessary for the planning and execution of a scholarly dissertation study.
- Inform students and assure that all procedures and continuous enrollment are carried out fairly and according to the guidelines of the doctoral program and Graduate School.
- To attain and maintain graduate faculty status and human subjects research certification.
- Review the student's work, evaluate, and make a final determination of the acceptability of the dissertation study assuring it meets a high standard of quality of originality, significance, research, analysis, accuracy, and overall scholarship.
- Provide guidance and ensure that a high standard of writing quality is maintained throughout the project using APA writing principles.
- Chair the dissertation proposal and final defense meetings and submit all required paperwork to the Center for Doctoral Studies once the proposal is approved.
- Review the final format of the dissertation and ensure all necessary changes have been incorporated before providing final approval.
- To ensure that the grade on the dissertation courses are properly recorded. A mark of "RC" (research continuing) is recorded for 899 until approval of the dissertation final defense. A mark of "R" (registered) is recorded for 891 until dissertation final defense approval. Upon approval of the dissertation final defense, the grade changes to an "S".
- To be present at graduation to hood the student unless alternative arrangements are made.
- Follow all program and University dissertation policies and procedures.
- There may be additional responsibilities not listed above.

## Committee Members

It is the responsibility of the committee members to:

- Attend and participate in the dissertation proposal and dissertation final defense meetings.
- In collaboration with the dissertation chair, to provide timely and thorough guidance to a student on the various elements necessary for planning and execution of a scholarly dissertation study. (i.e. topic selection, appropriateness, and academic value)
- Review the student's work, evaluate, and make a determination of the acceptability of the dissertation study assuring it meets a high standard of quality of originality, significance, research, analysis, accuracy, and overall scholarship.
- Hold a terminal degree and attain and maintain graduate faculty status and human subjects research certification.
- Provide guidance and ensure that a high standard of writing quality is maintained throughout the project using APA writing principles.
- Complete all paperwork associated with the dissertation proposal and final defense.
- In collaboration with the dissertation chair, a committee methodologist guides and assists the student in the selection of methods (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) and/or procedures and appropriate software to collect and analyze data.
- The outside reader is typically someone outside the university or in another department that serves as a content expert which complements the program discipline or may provide expertise in the student's research topic.
- Follow all program and University dissertation policies and procedures.
- There may be additional responsibilities not listed above.



## **Appendix B**

### **Dissertation Chapter Outline**

Dissertations in the social sciences typically contain five chapters as outlined below. However, this is common practice rather than a requirement. The outline below is merely a suggestion. If the student and advisor think a different array of chapters fits a project better, they should seek the agreement of the committee.

### **Chapter One – Introduction**

#### ***1. Introduction***

The purpose of this section is to provide a context in which the problem exists and that supports the rationale for the proposed study. It is supposed to lead the reader to want to continue reading the study.

#### ***2. Statement of the Problem***

This section provides a clear statement of the research problem and why it needs to be addressed. It is supposed to lead the reader into understanding or concluding that this is an issue that needs to be formally studied.

#### ***3. Description and Scope of the Research***

This section tells what the study will do to address the problem. How is this problem framed and discussed in the research literature? What theories and concepts are used to guide the discussion? Which of these theories will form the backbone of the study and why did you choose it? (This will be the conceptual framework for the study.) This section also explains what the study will do, describing the who, what, when, where, and how of the study. But address all these matters in a summary fashion in Chapter 1, knowing that fuller descriptions of the literature will follow in Chapter 2 and of the research method in Chapter 3.

#### ***4. Research Questions***

This section lists your research questions, which are the questions that will drive your study. The study aims to answer these questions. Also remember that the data collected must provide the evidence to justify answers to these questions. There is no magic number, but typically, dissertations will have two or three research questions. Avoid questions that can be answered “yes” or “no” unless the study is an experimental or theory-testing design.

#### ***5. Research Hypotheses***

This section is not needed in qualitative studies or in quantitative studies using a correlation design or only descriptive statistics (i.e. percents, means, modes, median, ranges, and frequencies). For quantitative experimental and theory-testing designs, hypotheses are typically written as null hypotheses, stating that there will be no difference or effect. For example, “Female and male administrators will not differ in their desire to advance to a higher administrative position.”

#### ***6. Purpose and Significance of the Study***

This section clearly states that the purpose of the study is to examine specific research questions and to test certain hypotheses (in the case of a quantitative study) or to explore certain themes related to

the research questions (in the case of a qualitative study). This section addresses the importance and significance of the study and how the results may benefit the field.

### ***7. Assumptions of the Study***

This section describes the things that you have assumed to be true for the study. Assumptions may include things such as honesty in interview or survey responses, a representative sample, or global postulates (claims about your field that most or all would assert to be true, e.g. “High quality teaching leads to improved student learning” or “participation in decision making increases implementation”).

### ***8. Delimitations/Positioning Yourself***

This section sets the parameters for the study and tells the reader what aspects of the topic will be included in the study and what aspects will not be included. One study cannot address all components of a topic, and readers should know what components are being left out to make the study more manageable. In effect, indicate the elements that may be relevant to the topic but that the study will not address. One frequently noted delimitation is when generalizability is compromised because the sample is not randomly from the full population.

Note: This differs from the limitations section that is included in chapter five. Limitations, or issues encountered while carrying out the study, should not be included in chapter one.

A section on delimitations would be less important for qualitative studies, since they are intentionally focused and context bound. However, a section that describes the researcher’s own position vis-à-vis the research topic is appropriate, including lived connection to the issues, pre-judgments and expectations about the study, and expected results.

### ***9. Summary***

This section summarizes chapter one and provides a paragraph or two indicating how the dissertation is organized.

## **Chapter Two – Literature Review**

### ***1. Introduction***

The purpose of the review of the literature is to explore research on the issues that are relevant to the proposed study. Begin chapter two with a brief description of your study. Next, list and preview the critical topics/issues in the order in which they will be discussed in the review. This should include information on the theoretical/conceptual framework for your study and studies that have used your specific data collection mechanism (e.g. survey instrument). The subheadings of the subsequent sections of the review should reflect the critical topics/issues identified in this section.

### ***2. Review of the Research on Issues Relevant to the Study***

Organize and present the literature or sets of literatures that have a bearing on the study. These include the research done to build a theoretical and conceptual framework for understanding and studying the problem and the research done on the critical issues and factors used in social research to the explain the topic and problem.

It is particularly important that the literature review is built primarily around literature that reports the results of empirical studies, although it is also important to refer to foundational and conceptual

pieces about the topic. In addition to discussing the major findings of studies, the student should also include pertinent information about how each study was conducted, such as the number of subject/participants, relevant characteristics of the subjects, types of instruments and/or methods used (e.g., not necessarily the specific names of the tests or instruments, but whether they were interviewed, responded to questionnaires, tested, observed, etc.). The synopsis should also mention any major weaknesses in study design.

The review should also attempt to represent the range of literature on the topic, including the disputes in the field and perspectives that represent alternative views and explanations of the issues.

The literature review should be an effort to synthesize the literature to demonstrate the development of thought about the topic in the field. It is not enough to present a list of studies with evaluative comments on each one. The review should look across sources to identify general trends in the literature and discuss their viability. The synthesis should seriously critique the literature looking for gaps, contradictions and criticisms of the studies included.

As the student reviews the research on each issue, s/he should use the most recent version of APA Manual for formatting citations.

### ***3. Relevance of the Synthesis for the Research***

This section synthesizes the major findings of the research as it relates to the proposed study. Does the research just reviewed:

- support the development of the proposed dissertation?
- indicate how the study should be designed and/or implemented?
- lead to a theoretical framework, which is the system of concepts or assumptions that are the underlying structure or scaffolding of the study?
- identify other studies that are similar to the proposed study? If so, how would the proposed study differ from or improve upon existing similar studies?

How does the study advance the field from the literature syntheses discussed and how might the study help respond to any areas of dispute or critique.

### ***4. Summary***

This section summarizes chapter two, relating the review to the purpose statement and study.

## **Chapter Three – Method**

This chapter specifically describes the plan for conducting the study. Remember anyone should be able to read Chapter Three and repeat the study without ever speaking to you – it should be that detailed and focused. For the proposal, this chapter will be in future tense, while for the final dissertation text, it will be in past tense and describe what was actually done.

### ***1. Introduction***

Restate the research question(s) and/or hypotheses for the proposed study. Briefly delineate the organization of this chapter.

## ***2. Research Design***

Describe the research design. Explicitly address why the design is appropriate for the research questions driving the study. Refer to relevant methodological literature to support your design choices. If the study is an experimental or quasi-experimental study, what research design will be used? What are the comparison groups and when are measurements taken? How does the design address each of the hypotheses? If it is a qualitative study, what research design will be used? How do the design and instruments address the research questions?

## ***3. Participants***

Describe the population and/or sample of the study, including a description of how many participated and what populations or groups they represent. For quantitative studies, you may want to talk about the number of surveys sent out versus the response rate, all other relevant descriptors (typically including age, ethnicity, gender, psychological condition, etc.), how participants were selected (random, intact group, stratified sample, etc.), and if they were grouped in any way. For qualitative studies, describe the purposive nature of the sampling, the factors that directed the choice of participants, and how participant selection evolved over the course of the research.

## ***4. Instrument(s) for Data Collection***

Describe all instruments, tools, and procedures used to gather data. For quantitative studies, include the psychometric characteristics of the tests (e.g., validity and reliability indicators), how the tool was developed, or how the instruments were designed and piloted. Also outline all the variables collected and how they were operationalized – that is, how the variables relate to concepts in the theoretical framework. For qualitative studies, describe the techniques used, such as interviews, observations, or videotaping, and what protocols or interview guides were applied. For all studies, indicate which data collection questions relate to each of the research questions. Include examples of instruments in an appendix(es).

## ***5. Analysis***

Describe the procedures used to analyze the data collected during the research. For a quantitative study, state explicitly what statistical procedures were used for each research question, why those were appropriate for your study and type of data, what p-value was used to determine significance, etc. For a qualitative study, describe how the data were coded and compiled, and how they were integrated into themes or interpretations.

## ***6. Data and Study Quality***

In both quantitative and qualitative studies, describe what design elements and procedures were used to overcome research problems, to ensure data quality, and to establish solid analyses. Discuss the threats to study quality that have and have not been addressed through the study design and procedures. For quantitative studies, this addresses threats to validity, reliability and generalizability. For qualitative studies, this pertains to enhancement of the study's the credibility, dependability and transferability.

## ***7. Human Subject Approval – Institutional Review Board (IRB)***

This section outlines how the rights of human subjects were protected throughout the study. For more information see the IRB section of this manual.

### ***8. Procedures and Timeline***

This section is particularly for dissertation proposals. It should provide a detailed outline of all procedures involved in the proposed research and describe the logistics and the timeline for this study. When will the participants be selected and contacted, and when will the data be collected, processed, and analyzed? The dissertation timeline calculator discussed earlier in this handbook may be helpful while writing this section.

For the final dissertation, this section can be ignored, but the relevant information (e.g., when data collection was conducted) should be included in the textual description of the study methods.

### ***9. Summary***

This section summarizes chapter three.

## **Chapter Four – Results**

### ***1. Introduction***

Reiterate the research problem and the hypotheses and research question(s). Describe the organization of the chapter, which, in effect, is how the data will be discussed.

### ***2. Results for Each Research Question or Hypothesis***

Quantitative: Restate each research question or hypothesis. Discuss how each was tested by describing the method of analysis. Discuss whether or not the results support the hypothesis.

Qualitative: Restate each research question. Present the relevant data for each question and discuss how you organized the narrative information for interpretation and the outcomes. It is also common to organize qualitative finding by themes derived from the data.

### ***3. Synthesis***

Quantitative: Discuss the findings as a whole and synthesize the results. What were the major findings? What correlations were found and how strong are they, or how many of the hypotheses were validated? Were there any contradictory results, or any unexpected or confusing findings? Overall, what conclusion(s) can you draw from the data regarding the research question?

Qualitative: The synthesis discussion of qualitative research should be inductive in nature and interpretive. The purpose is to assist the reader in gaining a fuller understanding of the phenomenon, context, or culture studied.

### ***4. Summary***

This section summarizes chapter four.

Note: One common ambiguity students face is whether an interpretation or conclusion should be included in Chapter Four or Five. One way to think about this is that data never speak for themselves. Readers should have some analysis/interpretation in front of them while they also have the data in front of them, so they can judge for themselves how well the interpretation follows from the data. The analyses in Chapter Four should stay fairly close to the data, while the interpretations in Chapter Five can extend further and be a bit more speculative and broader.

Another way to think about this issue is that the research questions should be answered in Chapter Four. Chapter Five is for the extension of those findings in theory, research, and practice.

## **Chapter Five – Discussion**

### ***1. Introduction***

Summarize the preceding four chapters, starting with the purpose of the study. State the organization of the chapter as a bridge to the discussion.

### ***2. Conclusions***

Restate the overall findings from the data collected and analyzed.

### ***3. Discussion***

Reflect on what you have learned. Discuss the results in light of the review of the research literature and the study findings. In this section, you have the opportunity to write from your own voice. Present your interpretations of the findings and why they are important. You may also inject your opinions as supported by the data and/or review of the research. Point out new findings that are supported by the data and findings that contradict or expand upon existing research studies.

### ***4. Limitations***

List any problems encountered in the study that were not anticipated, i.e. low survey return rate, interaction effects during data collection, etc. Then make recommendations for further research based upon the limitations.

### ***5. Implications for Theory***

Explore what the research project and conclusions indicate about the conceptual framework used in the study. In what ways have the findings supported the theory or concepts studied? Do the findings suggest the need to amend some aspect of the theory or model and/or do the findings contradict some major component of the theory and the research literature?

### ***5. Implications for Practice***

Based on the review of literature and study, what recommendations would you make to the field? How might practitioners use the results of the study to improve their practice?

### ***6. Implications for Research***

Identify future research topics that were indicated by the study, and point to new avenues for further research – what subsequent questions arose from your study? What can be done in further research studies to build on the findings?

### ***7. Summary***

Briefly summarize chapter five.

## **References**

Provide a complete list of all the items cited in the dissertation. Do not include items that were reviewed but not cited in the body of the dissertation.

## **Appendices**

Each appendix should be listed A, B, C,... Include the original of the Human Subjects approval notice, as well as other items, such as a survey instrument or interview guide. Items should be in the order they are first referred to in the body of the dissertation.

### **Appendix C: Rubrics**

Appendix C includes three rubrics used by faculty members during the qualifying exam, dissertation proposal, and dissertation final defense. Please review these prior to these meetings.

Higher Education Administration, Ed.D.  
Qualifying Exam Rubric (Transition Point 2)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Score each of the seven criteria separately, using a rating scale of 0-1 Unsatisfactory, 2-3 = Satisfactory, or 4-5 = Exemplary, then add for a comprehensive score.

Criteria	Unsatisfactory (0-1)	Satisfactory (2-3)	Exemplary (4-5)	Score
<p><b>Topic:</b> Identifies, describes and defines a significant HIED research or research application topic of appropriate scope and depth.</p> <p><b>Introduction:</b> Introduces the topic and provides a rationale for the selection of topic; provides a clear statement of the problem; outlines the scope and rationale for the study; presents research question(s); establishes a connection between the problem and the research question; and defines relevant conceptual framework/ concepts.</p> <p><b>Literature Review:</b> Presents an up-to-date, research based review of literature relevant to the problem that includes scholarly sources and discussion.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b> Selects, defines, and describes appropriate research methods.</p> <p><b>Mechanics:</b> Uses correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and vocabulary; editing and citations conform to APA guidelines.</p> <p><b>Comprehension:</b> Accurately describes concepts of HIED core coursework, including US Higher Education, Research Design, Organizational Theory, College Students, Planning and Policy Development, and Leadership.</p> <p><b>Oral Presentation:</b> Demonstrates professional demeanor, confidence, and poise; answers questions clearly; uses scholarly terms; is open to feedback and suggestions; is respectful to committee members.</p>	<p>Topic is not clearly defined or it was too broad or too narrow; topic is not relevant to HIED; proposal does not demonstrate the topic's interest to the candidate or potential contributions to the field.</p> <p>Topic is ill-defined; research problem or problem statement is not clearly articulated; purpose or rationale for the study are ill-defined or does not match the problem or research question; research question(s) are not clearly articulated or do not relate to the problem; definitions of concepts or theoretical framework was omitted, incomplete, or inaccurate.</p> <p>Many sources are old or are opinion pieces that don't reflect the research-based progress in the field; review strays from the topic or ignores key points; sub-topics are disjointed or the overall flow is difficult to follow.</p> <p>Does not provide rationale for the method chosen; methods or procedures were not relevant to the research question or purpose of the study.</p> <p>Proposal contains many or major errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, or vocabulary use that greatly diminished readability; many or major errors in formatting to APA standards.</p> <p>Description of core concepts was omitted, inaccurate, or overly simplistic.</p>	<p>Scope is sufficient and feasible; topic is reasonably relevant to HIED; proposal demonstrates interest to the candidate and potential for contributions to the field.</p> <p>Topic is generally well-defined; research rationale are sufficiently outlined and connected to the problem and the research questions; all or nearly all relevant concepts are defined with clarity and accuracy; research delimitation are noted.</p> <p>Review of literature is solid; most sources are of scholarly/research nature reflecting current thinking on the topic in the field; review is generally well-organized, relevant to the problem, and adequately addresses the study.</p> <p>Provides a clear rationale for the methods chosen; methods and procedures suit the research.</p> <p>Proposal contains occasional errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, or vocabulary use that does not interfere significantly with readability; only minor errors in formatting to APA standards.</p> <p>Description of core concepts was generally complete, accurate, and of sufficient depth.</p>	<p>Scope is unquestionably feasible; topic is highly relevant to HIED; proposal demonstrates significant interest of the candidate and potential for significant contributions to the field.</p> <p>Topic is concisely described, contextualized, and includes multiple perspectives; statement of the problem is apt; rationale are extremely well presented and linked to the problem and research question; key concepts are clearly and precisely defined and articulated; research delimitations are well described.</p> <p>Sources are of high research quality and scholarly nature; sources include latest publications; review is comprehensive, pertinent, and extremely well-organized; review insightfully addresses the study.</p> <p>Provides a clear and fully developed rationale for the methods chosen; methods and procedures precisely suited the research; threats to internal and external validity are discussed.</p> <p>Proposal contains few or no errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, sentence structure or vocabulary use; precisely follows APA guidelines.</p> <p>Description of core concepts was comprehensive, consistently accurate, and highly sophisticated.</p> <p>Candidate is on-time and fully attentive; appears confident, poised, and enthusiastic; answers complex questions independently; uses scholarly language consistently; actively seeks and discusses feedback and suggestions; uses respectful language and gestures.</p>	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>Comments:</p>

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_/35

Additional Comments:

**Higher Education Administration, Ed.D.  
Dissertation Proposal Conference Rubric (Transition Point 3)**

Candidate:	Evaluator:		Date:
Criteria	Unsatisfactory (0-1)	Satisfactory (2-3)	Exemplary (4-5)
<p><b>Topic:</b> Identifies, describes and defines a significant HIED research, or research application topic of appropriate scope and depth.</p> <p><b>Prefatory Material:</b> Provides an abstract; table of contents, and a list of tables and figures (if relevant to the proposal)</p> <p><b>Introduction:</b> Introduces the topic and provides a rationale for the selection of topic; provides a clear statement of the problem; outlines the scope and rationale for the study; presents the research question(s); establishes a clear connection between the problem and the research question; and defines relevant conceptual framework</p> <p><b>Literature Review:</b> Presents an up-to-date, research based, systematic, thorough review of literature relevant to the problem that includes scholarly sources and discussion.</p> <p><b>Methods:</b> Selects, defines, and describes appropriate research methods, including data collection procedures and data analyses.</p> <p><b>Mechanics:</b> Uses correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and vocabulary; editing and citations conform to APA guidelines.</p> <p><b>Oral Presentation:</b> Demonstrates professional demeanor, confidence, and poise; answers questions clearly; uses scholarly terms; is open to feedback and suggestions; is respectful to committee members.</p>	<p>Topic is not clearly defined or it was too broad or too narrow; topic is not relevant to HIED; proposal does not demonstrate the topic's interest to the candidate or potential contributors to the field</p> <p>Abstract is not provided or is outside the range of 350-700 words; table of contents is omitted or inaccurate; lists of tables or figures (if used) are omitted or inaccurate</p> <p>Topic is ill-defined; research problem or problem statement is not clearly articulated; purpose or rationale for the study are ill-defined or does not match the problem or research question; research question(s) are not clearly articulated or do not relate to the problem; definitions of concepts or theoretical framework was omitted, incomplete, or inaccurate.</p> <p>Many sources are old or are opinion pieces that don't reflect the research-based progress in the field; review strays from the topic or ignores key points; sub-topics are disjointed or the overall flow is difficult to follow.</p> <p>Does not provide rationale for the method chosen; methods or procedures were not relevant to the research question or purpose of the study; threats to validity (internal and external) are not clearly articulated; applications are poorly connected or ill-defined.</p> <p>Proposal contains many or major errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, or vocabulary use that greatly diminished readability; many or major errors in formatting to APA standards.</p> <p>Candidate is late or allows devices to interfere with exam; grows flustered or hostile; does not answer questions or relies heavily on notes; uses unscholarly terms; resists feedback or suggestions; uses disrespectful language or gestures.</p>	<p>Scope is sufficient and feasible given timelines; topic is reasonably relevant to HIED; proposal demonstrates interest to the candidate and potential for contributions to the field.</p> <p>Abstract adequately addresses the research within 350-700 words; accurate table of contents is complete; accurate lists of tables or figures (if used) are provided)</p> <p>Topic is generally well-defined; statement of the problem is clear; research delimitations and rationale are sufficiently outlined and connected to the problem and the research question; all or nearly all relevant concepts are defined with sufficient clarity and accuracy.</p> <p>Review of literature is complete; most sources are of scholarly/research nature reflecting current thinking on the topic in the field; review is generally well-organized, relevant to the problem, and adequately addresses the study.</p> <p>Provides a clear rationale for the methods chosen; methods and procedures suit the research; threats to validity (internal and external) and applications of the research are adequately described and discussed.</p> <p>Proposal contains occasional errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, or vocabulary use that does not interfere significantly with readability; only minor errors in formatting to APA standards</p> <p>Candidate is on-time and attentive; maintains composure; answers most questions independently; usually uses scholarly terms; willingly engages in discussions about feedback or guidance; uses respectful language and gestures.</p>	<p>Scope is unquestionably feasible given timelines; topic is highly relevant to HIED; proposal demonstrates significant interest of the candidate and potential for significant contributions to the field.</p> <p>Abstract provides a crisp, complete 350-700 word summary of the research; the table of contents, and titles and subheadings are complete and accurate; lists of tables or figures (if used) are complete and accurate</p> <p>Topic is concisely described, contextualized, and includes multiple perspectives; statement of the problem is apt and precise; delimitations and rationale are extremely well presented and strongly linked to the problem and research question; all key concepts are clearly and precisely defined and articulated.</p> <p>Sources are of high research quality and scholarly nature; sources include latest publications; review is comprehensive, pertinent, and extremely well-organized; review insightfully addresses the study.</p> <p>Provides a clear and full developed rationale for the methods chosen; methods and procedures precisely suited the research; threats to internal and external validity and applications of the research were coherently and fully described and discussed.</p> <p>Proposal contains few or no errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, sentence structure or vocabulary use; precisely follows APA guidelines.</p> <p>Candidate is on-time and fully attentive; appears confident, poised, and enthusiastic; answers complex questions independently; uses scholarly language consistently; actively seeks and discusses feedback and suggestions; uses respectful language and gestures.</p>
	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Comments</b>

Total Score: \_\_\_\_/35  
Comments

**Higher Education Administration, Ed.D.  
Final Dissertation Defense Rubric (Transition Point 4)**

Candidate:		Evaluator:		Date:	
Directions: Score each of the six criteria separately, using a rating scale of 0-4 = Unsatisfactory, 5-8 = Satisfactory with Revisions, or 9-11 = Exemplary.					
Criteria	Unsatisfactory (0-4)	Satisfactory with Revisions (5-8)	Exemplary (9-11)	Score	Comments
<b>Results:</b> Candidate provided an in-depth description of the results, including data collection and statistical analyses; and answered the research question(s).	Candidate provided an inaccurate or incomplete description of results; did not accurately or adequately describe data collection or statistical analyses; or did not answer the research question(s).	Candidate obviously understood the results, including data collection and statistical analyses, but had difficulty conveying the information clearly or had some difficulty answering the research question(s).	Candidate accurately and fully described results; accurately and completely described data collection and statistical analyses; and precisely answered the research question(s).		
<b>Synthesis:</b> Candidate tied the results and conclusions of the study to the research question, review of literature, and purpose of the study, and clearly articulated the study's benefit to the field.	Reporting of results was inconsistent with the research question(s), review of literature, or purpose of the study; conclusions did not reflect the research question(s), review of literature, purpose of the study; or benefits to the field were simplistic, irrelevant, or not discussed.	Reporting of results and conclusions were generally consistent with the research question(s), review of literature, and purpose of the study but ideas need further development; and discussion of benefit to the field may have missed or required further development of one or two significant points.	Reporting of results and conclusions were seemingly inevitable relative to the research question(s), review of literature, and purpose of the study; and benefit to the field went beyond the obvious, and was articulated with great profundity and clarity.		
<b>Conclusions:</b> Candidate provided a complete, accurate summary and interpretation of findings, and aptly discussed limitations, applications, alternate interpretations, recommendations for future research, and individual bias.	Candidate reached unsupported or erroneous conclusions; provided an incomplete or inaccurate summary and interpretation of results; did not provide a meaningful discussion of limitations, applications, alternate interpretations, recommendations for future research, or individual bias.	Candidate may have made minor conclusive errors; or made minor errors in interpreting and discussing limitations, applications, alternate interpretations, recommendations for future research, and individual bias.	Candidate provided a complete, precise summary and interpretation of findings, and provided highly insightful discussion or limitations, applications, alternate interpretations, recommendations for future research, and individual bias.		
<b>Mechanics:</b> Used correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and vocabulary; and edited according to APA guidelines.	Dissertation contained numerous editing errors that greatly diminished readability; or required substantial revision.	Dissertation may have contained minor errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary use, or format that required further editing.	Dissertation required cosmetic or no further editing. Dissertation "looks publishable."		
<b>Professionalism:</b> Demonstrated professional demeanor, confidence, and poise; answered questions clearly; used scholarly terms; was open to feedback and suggestions; and was respectful to committee members.	Candidate may have been late or allowed devices to interfere with exam, grew flustered or hostile, did not answer questions or relied heavily on notes, used unscholarly terms, resisted or dismissed feedback or suggestions, or used disrespectful language or gestures.	Candidate was on time and engaged, but may have quivered, appeared overly passive, or showed other signs of distress, answered most questions adequately, generally used scholarly terms, accepted feedback and suggestions, and used respectful language and gestures.	Candidate was on-time and fully engaged, appeared confident, poised, and enthusiastic; answered complex questions independently; used scholarly language consistently, actively sought and discussed feedback and suggestions; and used respectful language and gestures.		
<b>Oral Presentation:</b> Candidate presented the research topic, literature, methods, results, conclusions, limitations, and implications in a clear, organized manner.	Candidate relied heavily on notes, omitted significant elements of the dissertation, needed to be asked to clarify information multiple times, lost place several times, or presented information haphazardly.	Candidate may have relied on notes several times, omitted a significant element of the dissertation, or was occasionally unclear or disorganized.	Candidate rarely or never needed to access notes, included all significant elements of the dissertation, and conveyed information clearly and in a logical, easy-to-follow manner.		

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_/66  
**Comments:**



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