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OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION PROCESS

Purpose of the Dissertation
The dissertation phase of the Doctor of Education program begins after the candidate has completed course work and passed the comprehensive examination. The dissertation requires the candidate to conduct an intensive, scholarly, and in-depth examination of a topic that is relevant to the discipline of educational leadership and of professional interest to the student.

The dissertation has a two-fold purpose. First, it allows doctoral candidates to demonstrate their ability to conduct, write and defend an independent doctoral level research study. Second, it allows the candidate to explore thoroughly and critically and to offer an informed perspective of a challenge or problem within the field of education.

The Dissertation Prospectus
The first phase of the dissertation process is the development, submission, and oral defense of a prospectus. The purpose of the dissertation prospectus is to provide the faculty with evidence of the significance and rationale of the proposed study; the philosophical/theoretical knowledge base within which the dissertation topic is developed, the methodology or procedures to be employed, and the anticipated implications of the findings or conclusions are presented. The proposal reflects the candidate's preparedness to conduct the investigation and write the dissertation.

The prospectus is the first four chapters of the dissertation. These chapters will be revised once the research is complete and with two additional chapters (chapters five and six) the manuscript will become the dissertation.

Candidates prepare the prospectus in consultation with their dissertation chair and committee. Once the committee chair determines that the prospectus is theoretically, methodologically, and structurally sound, an oral defense of the prospectus will be scheduled. After the oral prospectus defense, the candidate’s committee will indicate (1) approval to conduct the intended research, (2) corrections needed for final approval, or (3) the need to revise the prospectus entirely. The successful defense of the prospectus marks the beginning of the final phase of the doctoral process. At this important juncture, the candidate is admitted to candidacy for the Doctor of Education degree, and is permitted officially to begin the research phase of the dissertation.


**Selecting a Topic**

The selection of the dissertation topic should be done with great care. The topic should be of interest to the candidate in keeping with the conceptual framework of the School of Education and should be relevant to the discipline and practice of educational leadership and administration. Further, the topic should make a contribution to the field while being significant and innovative. Candidates should also consider such issues as access to possible research sites and populations, economic feasibility, and time constraints.

Prior to selecting a dissertation topic, the candidate should conduct a thorough review of related literature in order to determine the current academic thought on and discourse around the intended area of study. It is advisable to conduct a computerized literature search (with a librarian, if necessary). The preliminary literature review should cover professional books and journals (e.g., *Dissertation Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, Psychological Abstracts, etc.*).

**Role of the Dissertation Committee Chair**

The role of the dissertation committee chair is to work closely with the candidate in choosing a research topic; selecting a research methodology and identifying appropriate research. Ideally the dissertation topic should be closely aligned with the major interests and expertise of the chair and members of the committee. The committee chair should schedule a meeting with the candidate and the other committee members as soon after the formation of the committee. The main purpose of this meeting is to discuss and refine the dissertation topic and to develop a plan of action and timetable.

While the dissertation committee assists the student as needed, *developing the prospectus/dissertation is the primary responsibility of the candidate as a demonstration of her/his ability to engage in scholarly independent research.* The candidate is expected to maintain a close relationship with the committee chair and committee members and to establish a schedule for consultation.

**The Dissertation Committee**

The dissertation committee is composed of the dissertation chair and a minimum of two additional persons. The dissertation chair must be a full time faculty member in the Department of Educational Leadership. At least one other member of the committee must be a full-time faculty member in the department. The third member of the committee may be a faculty member at Clark Atlanta University with expertise in the area of the proposed research or a person outside the university with comparable academic credentials. If the candidate desires to have a committee member who does not work at the university or who is an adjunct faculty member, this person must have an earned doctorate and possess expertise in the dissertation area. Additionally, the candidate must submit a copy of the person’s curriculum vitae to the department chair for review and final approval.

The dissertation chair and committee members should receive sections of the proposal and dissertation prior to the scheduling of meetings so that the ensuing discussions will
be productive. The committee will determine if the candidate and the document are ready for the oral defense of the dissertation.

**Timetable and Deadlines**
The candidate must adhere to the printed departmental, school, and university deadlines for submission of materials and the holding of oral defenses. *No exceptions will be made to these dates.* The submitted document must be edited (free from grammatical, structural, spelling, and punctuation errors). Additionally, the candidate must ensure that the documents are free of any plagiarism or other violations of academic standards and ethics. **The candidate is responsible for submitting the final draft of the dissertation to each committee member at least two weeks prior to a scheduled oral defense. No exceptions will be made to the deadlines for submission of documents.**

**Reference Guides**
The prospectus and the dissertation must adhere to the standards of most recent edition of the *Office of Graduate Studies’ Thesis and Dissertation Guide* which is available online at www.cau.edu. Additionally, the prospectus and dissertation must be written in accordance with the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

**Candidate's Responsibilities**
The candidate should feel free to consult the committee chair and/or other committee members as needed. When in doubt or confused, ask! The candidate is responsible for the content, structural quality, and editing of the prospectus/dissertation. Further, the comments and suggestions arising from consultations with the chair and committee should be reflected in the document. The prospectus/dissertation is an independent project that represents the candidate's original writing. **Accordingly, the candidate is responsible for ensuring that citations from other authors are given proper credit.** It is the candidate's responsibility to insure that the prospectus/dissertation complies with the previously noted reference guides.

**Typing the Paper**
The person who types the prospectus and dissertation should be familiar with APA style and be able to type with accuracy. Drafts should be submitted to the typist as early as feasible in order to provide for a reasonable turn-around time. It is important to seek a professional who has documented experience in typing dissertations and theses. **The candidate is ultimately responsible for the timely submission and accuracy of these documents**

**Research Timelines**
A reasonable timeline for completing each phase of the prospectus and the dissertation should be developed and discussed with the committee chair early in the process. The timeline should include the estimated month and day for the completion of related sections and must be in keeping with departmental, school, and university deadlines.
CHAPTERS 1 - 4 (THE PROSPECTUS)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction
The beginning of the dissertation should consist of a brief introduction consisting of two or three paragraphs that place the study in national and local context. The introduction presents an overview of the study and should conclude with a statement that gives the intent of the investigation.

Statement of the Problem
The problem statement should be written with assertion, clarity, and specificity. The problem should be viewed in terms of the dependent variable of the study. That is, what is the area (dependent variable) to be impacted through the research? A concise problem statement should establish clearly the specific issue of concern and demonstrate that it is a viable and legitimate problem in educational administration. Where possible, empirical data should be provided to support the importance of the issue to be examined.

Purpose of the Study
Following the introduction, the writer should indicate the exact intent of the research/investigation as related to addressing the problem. For example, while the dissertation may be concerned with the problem of school finance in low income districts, the purpose of the research may be to examine the community determinants of school financing schemes in order to develop and test the effects of a leadership training model on creative funding of schools. For ex post facto studies, the independent variables selected to be examined as possible predictors of variation in the dependent variable should be identified in this section. The purpose section of the dissertation provides indication of the general intent of the research and how the researcher plans to approach the problem.

Research Questions
The general problem lends itself to a number of interrelated areas to be addressed in order to conduct a comprehensive investigation. Therefore, research questions should be generated that enumerate each of the specific inquiries of the problem to be addressed through the research. The nature of these questions will depend upon whether the proposed inquiry is to be quantitative or qualitative or mixed method in approach. For quantitative studies, the research questions should tie the dependent variable to each independent variable in questions asking about relationships or about possible differences.

Significance of the Study
The significance of the proposed research should indicate how the potential findings will benefit current theory and/or practice in educational leadership. How might the findings be used? What implications will the expected findings have for policies and procedures?
What impact can be expected? In this section, the writer asserts the potential value of the outcome and the need for the study.

**Chapter Summary**
The first chapter concludes with a summary of the highlights contained therein. It is not appropriate to introduce new information in this section. The intent is to address in a comprehensive, yet succinct manner, the chapter's major areas of emphasis or emergent themes. Each of the chapters of the prospectus and dissertation should conclude with a summary.

**CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RESEARCH LITERATURE**
The review of the related literature is one of the most important sections of a dissertation or thesis. The literature review demonstrates the writer's awareness and understanding of the current knowledge base regarding the dissertation topic. Through the literature review, the proposed study is placed in theoretical and/or historical context. The review should begin with an introduction that explains what is to be reviewed and how it will be presented or organized.

The researcher should try to limit the review to the most recent research. Often there are "benchmark" or classic pieces of literature that are necessary to place the research in historical context; therefore, these may and, in most cases, should be included. The bulk of the citations, however, should be as recent as possible, preferably within the past five-to-seven years. This chapter typically includes at least three sections
- Organization of the Review
- Emergent Themes (Analysis)
- Summary of the Literature Review related to the topic and the independent variables

**Organization of the Review**
The researcher must decide how and around what sub-topics the review will be organized. This may be done in a number of ways according to the nature of the topic. A convenient way to do this that provides clarity to the review is by the variables selected in chapter one. Preferably, this should be explained in an opening paragraph.

**Emergent Themes**
It is important for the literature review to be written with an indication of the interrelationships among reviewed research studies. The researcher reports on the similarities and any contradictions contained in the literature. In general, the literature review should build a strong indication of the researcher’s awareness of what is currently being written about the topic. By synthesizing the literature, the researcher pulls the various parts together and interprets their meaning.

Because there needs to be a strong indication of how the proposed study relates to the current body of literature, the review should demonstrate in-depth understanding of that
relationship. What are the implications of the literature for the study? How might the findings of the study fill existing voids in the empirical and/or theoretical literature?

In addition to reviewing the substantive findings and conclusions of the literature, the review should also examine critically the methodology used in each article and/or book. This chapter is not a collection of book reports; instead it is a summative analysis of contemporary scholarship that contextualizes the study within the discipline. The review should be done in a scholarly manner that demonstrates familiarity with the existing body of knowledge and ability to relate the intended study to that body, both in content and procedure.

**Summary**

The literature review chapter should conclude with a general summary of the highlights of the chapter. The summary should also indicate how the candidate’s proposed study can fill a gap in the body of related literature.

**CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The process of scholarly inquiry, your research method, should be decided in consultation with your dissertation committee chair. Educational researchers utilize various methods to study phenomena. However, typical methodological choices in the Department of Educational Leadership can be broadly classified as quantitative or qualitative.

"Quantitative studies" test specific hypotheses, usually stated in advance, and incorporate measures that can be analyzed statistically. This type of research uses tables or charts to display findings that can (hopefully) generalize beyond the sample to a wider population." (Suter, 1998, p. 87)

"Qualitative studies, by contrast, often allow a hypothesis to emerge after careful exploration, observation, or interaction." They often use narrative to describe their observations. These stories capture a rich understanding which may not generalize beyond the research setting and unique characteristics of the sample." (Suter, 1998, p. 87).

**Research Design**

The design selected for the study will be determined by the researcher's intent. Basically, the design gives indication of the type of study that is proposed and how it will be conducted. There are numerous types of designs, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Quantitative research designs allow the researcher to investigate relatively large amounts of data and subjects using descriptive, correlation, survey, experimental, ex post facto, inferential, and other techniques. Qualitative approaches include ethnographic studies, case studies, policy analyses, historiography, and other techniques.
Theory of Variables
The independent variable(s) are the situations or events that the researcher suggests will have an impact on the dependent variable(s). The dependent variable(s) are the situations or events that rely upon the independent variables. The researcher sets out to determine if the two sets of variables really do act as predicted by the theory.

Definition of Variables & Other Terms
The variables that are used in the study should be operationally defined as they are applied by the researcher, within the context of the dissertation. Dictionary definitions are not always suitable in the particular context of most studies. Treatment variables in experimental studies should be described fully and comprehensively to allow for replication.

Terms are to be defined separately from variables. Terms that are widely used in educational circles should not be defined (i.e. "school"…"principal"…"teacher"…etc.) Only those terms with definitions that will lend clarity to the intent of the study should be defined. The definitions should be comprehensive, brief, and clear.

Relationship Among Variables
The predicted relationship among the independent and dependent variables should be presented and explained clearly. The writer should indicate, with appropriate diagram(s), how these variables impact upon each other through input/output connections.

Summary
The chapter should conclude with a brief summary of the general highlights of the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter on methodology sets forth the framework for carrying out the research inquiry. It describes the design, the setting, the procedures for selecting the participants, the setting, the instruments or other methods of gathering information as well as the methods for assessing the data and drawing meaning from such data.

Research Design
The design selected for the study will be determined by the researcher's intent. Basically, the design gives indication of the type of study that is proposed and how it will be conducted. There are numerous types of designs, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Quantitative research designs allow the researcher to investigate relatively large amounts of data and subjects using descriptive, correlation, survey, experimental, ex post facto,
inferential, and other techniques. Qualitative approaches include ethnographic studies, case studies, policy analyses, historiography, and other techniques.

**Description of the Setting**
A description of the setting will include the physical location and key components of the locale. If the setting is a school district, it should be described in as comprehensive manner. If specific schools therein are to be used, they should be given particular attention. If the researcher is required to provide anonymity of the setting, the description should be done in such a way to honor this requirement.

The researcher must secure written permission to conduct the study at the selected location. If the study is using a school district, it is good to secure permission as early as feasible since many school districts have set deadlines for receiving proposals for research.

**Sampling Procedures**
Rarely is an entire population used to conduct a study. It is, therefore, necessary to explain whether the entire population was selected. Because there are several techniques that are acceptable for sampling procedures, the researcher should select the appropriate sampling technique for the study. The population should be described in a comprehensive manner. If the study is qualitative in nature and does not lend itself to sampling techniques, the researcher should indicate how and why the setting and subjects were selected.

In experimental studies, experimental and control groups should be described and compared explicitly so that results can be validly ascribed to the treatment without contaminating effect of other variables.

**Working with Human Subjects**
All research with human subjects should be conducted so that no harm will come to those involved. The researcher should guarantee anonymity and confidentiality so that participants will not be identifiable in any printed documents. Subjects must voluntarily participate in the research.

Most school districts require that (after receiving administrative approval) a letter from the researcher requesting the voluntary participation of students be on file. Additionally, letters of consent signed by the parents of participating students must be on file at each school.

All potential researchers operating under the umbrella of Clark Atlanta University must complete an IRB application for approval from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.
**Instrumentation**
Any instruments used to collect data for the study should be described in detail, including how the instrument was developed and by whom. The instruments may range from a published standardized test to an interview scale developed by the researcher.

If the selected instrument is a published test, it should be described to include information regarding authorship, standardization, reliability, validity, etc. It is the researcher's responsibility to secure written permission from the author to use instruments that are not published.

**Participants/Location of Research**
Specify who or what was investigated and where the research took place. How were the participants selected? How did the researcher gain access to the research setting?

**Data Collection Procedures**
The steps used to collect the necessary data should be enumerated clearly and carefully. Because this section must be written so that another researcher could replicate the study easily using the same procedures, the writer must insure that all procedures are detailed.

Indicate the exact procedures and sequence of events the researcher followed to collect the data. Also specify the nature of the materials and/or instruments that were used to gather the data.

**Statistical Applications (Quantitative)**
The statistical tools that will be used to analyze the data must be selected carefully and explained fully. The appropriate tools will depend upon the hypotheses and the best methods for addressing them. The writer should select the appropriate statistics for data analysis.

If the researcher is conducting a qualitative study, the method of accepting or rejecting hypotheses should be addressed indicating what tools and procedures will be applied.

**Description of Data Analysis Methods (Qualitative)**
Indicate how the data were analyzed. How did the researcher make sense out of the evidence that was collected? How was the data interpreted and brought to bear on the research questions that were investigated?

**Summary**
The chapter should conclude with a summary of the general highlights of the methodology section.

**Limitations of the Study**
Whenever an investigation is conducted, there are a few areas that cannot be controlled by the researcher. These areas represent limitations (or assumptions) that may cloud the
interpretation of the findings. For example, if the study requires subjects to complete a questionnaire, the researcher assumes that the self reported data contained therein are truthful. Accordingly, a limitation of such a study is that the obtained data may rely on the accuracy (honesty) of the respondents. The limitations of the study allow the researcher to enumerate those areas over which he or she has limited or no control.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data analysis chapter demonstrates how the hypotheses or research questions were addressed and what the outcome of the analyses yielded. If the study was quantitative, the findings should be displayed in tabular format and explained through accompanying narratives. Tables included in this chapter describe the data and the findings therein. Each hypothesis is restated followed by a data table which illustrates how the data are analyzed (what statistical procedures are applied), what the outcome is, and if it is significant. The table is followed by a statement which indicates if the hypothesis is accepted or rejected and why.

If the study is qualitative in nature, the findings will be presented with more emphasis on narrative discussion. However, tables should be used where possible to provide a visual display of and support for the narrative presentation. For qualitative research, the writer must develop and present a theoretical paradigm for data analysis and presentation that demonstrates rigorous standards for addressing the research questions. The data analysis section should conclude with a summary related to the highlights of the section.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The final chapter of the dissertation allows the student to "make sense" of the entire study. What was found? What does it mean? How do the findings relate to previous research? How can the findings be used to improve current practice, affect policy, or suggest further research related to the investigation? This chapter is the culminating scholarly synthesis of the research and should be reflective of the researcher's newly acquired knowledge base.

Discussion of Findings

Begin the discussion by reminding the reader of the main focus of the study and the major findings. This discussion should be organized by research question. Specifically, what do the accepted or rejected hypotheses actually mean? What do the answers to the research questions really mean? How does the researcher interpret the findings of the research?

Keep stats to the minimum. For each research question, the researcher should describe how the results of the current study relate to previous findings cited under Review of Research Literature. Elaborate on expected and unexpected results.
Implications
The implications are inferential in nature. What does the study allow the researcher to infer? What implications do the findings have for current and future theory and practice related to the purpose of the research? The implications may be related to improvement of practices, additional policies, new procedures, innovative training, etc. They must, however, be related to the findings of the study.

Limitations of the Study
The limitations identify methodological matters that may have impacted the findings of the study, including threats to internal and external validity (In the final version of the dissertation, this section should be removed from Chapter 4, where it was included as part of the Prospectus).

Recommendations for Future Research
The recommendations represent the section in which the researcher indicates what he or she would recommend to policy makers and administrators based on the findings of the study. Recommendations also include future research to explore or expand on based on the findings of the study. Recommendations may include ways to address the limitations of the study by suggesting improvements in the methodologies used by future research.

Conclusions
Conclusions are more interpretive. Based on the findings, what does the study allow the researcher to conclude?

OTHER IMPORTANT RELATED INFORMATION

Timeline for Completion
A reasonable schedule for completing research tasks should be included. Specifically, this should include when data will be collected, anticipated timeline for analyzing data, projected completion and submission of drafts, and tentative date for the defense. The timeline is based upon the candidate's and dissertation chair's best predictions and will likely change as the process unfolds.

References
The reference list must consist of all published and unpublished articles, dissertations, books, and manuscripts that are cited in the dissertation. The reference list should only contain references that are cited in the body of the document. It is the student's responsibility to insure that the reference list corresponds to the requisites of the APA format.
Data Collection Instruments

Drafts of all data collection instruments (surveys, interview protocols, etc.) must be included in the appendix.
BACK MATTER: REFERENCES AND APPENDICES

References
The reference list will consist of all published and unpublished articles, dissertations, books, and manuscripts that are cited in the dissertation. The bibliography should contain no references that are not cited in the body of the document. It is the researcher’s responsibility to insure that the bibliography corresponds to the requisites of the APA format.

Appendices
All documents that support the research but are inappropriate for the main body of the dissertation should be included in the appendix section. These items will include letters of approval or authorization to conduct the research, samples of the data collection instruments, samples of letters, and other items of importance.
SUGGESTED SOURCES

In addition to texts directly related to your topic or methodological resources, the following resources may be helpful:

**Essential**

**Recommended**

*Writing the Winning Dissertation* by Allan Glatthorn & Randy Joyner

*Dissertations and Theses from Start to Finish* by John Cone & Sharon Foster

*Secrets for a Successful Dissertation* by Jacqueline Fitzpatrick, Jan Secrist, and Debra J. Wright

*Guide to the Successful Thesis and Dissertation* by James E. Mauch and Jack W. Birch

*Proposals That Work* by Lawrence Locke, Waneen Wyrick Spirduso, and Stephen J. Silverman
The Systematic Format for the Prospectus in Alignment with Proposal and Dissertation This format was approved by the Department of Educational Leadership, January 2010.

Chapter or Section I
The Problem in Context

a. Purpose
b. Problem with the dependent or outcome variable. Justify.
c. Significance of the study
d. Strategies tried, if any, by the system that did not make a difference
e. Sources/causes of the problem. Justify
f. Problem statement and research questions

Chapter or Section II
Review of Research Literature

a. Identify and categorize studies on dependent and independent variables as related to the problem in context.
b. Analyze the research studies to show that: (i) The problem as identified (a) has not been studied (b) if studied, excluded variables that were significant in other studies and that might explain the problem, (ii) An exploratory, or an integrated study is required, accordingly.
c. Demonstrate the relevance/significance of the study to practitioners, other researchers, and for theory building.

Chapter or Section III
Suggestions about Theoretical Framework (Quantitative) or Conceptual Framework (Qualitative)

a. Statement of Theory of selected variables, and diagram, or Conceptual Framework (Qualitative)
b. Definition of variables (Quantitative), or operational concepts (Qualitative)
c. Explanation of Linkages among variables or concept.
d. Research hypotheses or research questions.

Chapter or Section IV
Research Methods

a. Research Design: Describe if quantitative or qualitative, and explain how the design will control for sources of errors.
b. Description of Population.
c. Sample, Explain how method of sampling will control for sources of errors.
e. Administration of instrument (Quantitative), or steps in interviews or observations so as to control for sources of errors (qualitative).
f. Data Analysis
g. Limitations
HELPFUL ADVICE TO CANDIDATES


2. Acquaint yourself with all departmental, school, and university deadlines. A dissertation is a substantive research project that requires a substantial period of time to complete. In most cases it is unrealistic to present the prospectus one semester and defend the completed dissertation the next semester. The pace of your work depends largely upon the intensity and consistency of your work habits. Research, however, is a systematic inquiry that requires the researcher to follow specific procedures in an orderly manner. It takes time to conduct, analyze, and describe research.

3. Your research must be in keeping with your approved prospectus. You must incorporate recommendations from your committee into your research plan.

4. You must consult with and obtain approval from your dissertation chair and the department chair prior to disseminating any letters, surveys or other correspondence to anyone external to the department. This included adoption of any research instruments.

5. Your dissertation committee chair must review all drafts of your prospectus and dissertation and other related documents including letters, interview guides, etc.

6. Your dissertation committee chair will make every attempt to review your dissertation and /or related documents within two weeks (14 days). If you leave your telephone number or e-mail address, you will be notified when the review has been completed.

7. During this entire process, it is imperative that you meet with your dissertation chair and committee on a regular basis. That committee is assigned to assist you when you need assistance; however, it is your
primary responsibility to complete the research project. You will discover that rewriting sections of the dissertation is a standard process; therefore, you should keep accurate notes of recommendations provided by your committee. It is recommended that you seek the help of an external reader before you submit your drafts to your chair and committee. Your chair is not expected to serve as your editor.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR THE PROSPECTUS AND DISSERTATION

1. Prospectus reviewed and approved by the Prospectus/Dissertation Committee
2. Prospectus oral defense set by committee chair in conjunction with department chair
3. Revisions completed per recommendation from oral defense
4. Final approval of prospectus by committee and department chair
5. Candidate admitted to doctoral candidacy
6. Letter of support approved by department chair to go to school district or agency head authorizing candidate to conduct research
7. Copy of prospectus made available to designated department of agency for formal approval to conduct research
8. Completion of dissertation chapters drafts
9. Review and approval of chapter drafts by dissertation committee
10. Dissertation oral defense set by dissertation committee chair in conjunction with candidate and department chair
11. Revisions made to dissertation per recommendations from oral defense
12. Approval of the revised dissertation by dissertation committee
13. Submission of approved dissertation to department chair for review and approval
14. Submission of approved dissertation by department chair to associate dean for review
15. Approval of dissertation by Dean of School of Education
16. Submission of dissertation to Dean of Graduate Studies for review and approval
17. Completion of any recommendations by Dean of Graduate Studies
18. Final approval of dissertation by Dean of Graduate Studies
19. Award of the Doctor of Education degree (EdD)
A GUIDE TO THE ORAL DEFENSE

Prospectus Defense

1. Make your PowerPoint approximately 20-25 minutes.
   A. Include bullets but not entire paragraphs.
   B. Make your presentation a fluent delivery.
   C. Try not to read directly from your notes or your slides.
   D. Try to sit in on a presentation prior to your scheduled date.

2. Include in your presentation
   A. An introduction to the topic
   B. The problem statement
   C. The significance of the study
   D. Highlights of literature review
   E. The theoretical framework
   F. The methodology including any instruments and protocols
   G. Timelines for completion

3. Check with the Department Office regarding the number of copies to provide the faculty.

Dissertation Defense

1. Make your PowerPoint approximately 30-45 minutes.

2. Include in your presentation
   A. A summary of your first four chapters
   B. Your data analysis and findings, including any surprises
   C. Your conclusions and implications
   D. Your recommendations

3. Be prepared to field questions from your committee

4. Be prepared to follow up on recommendations provided by the committee.
NOTE: Please consider the fact that your dissertation will become a significant part of your academic and scholarship portrait to be viewed for years to come. Given this fact, you should wish to leave only the best effort that you can put forth. Diligence and perseverance, mixed with studious commitment, must become your constant companions during this challenging process.