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LMU | Carter & Moyers School *of* Education
LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

# Doctor of Education Handbook

**Lincoln Memorial University**
**EdD Program**
**Carter and Moyers School of Education**
**2025-2026 Academic Year**

**Table of Contents**


Doctor of Education Program Requirements ..... 4
- Full-Time Status and Engagement Expectations ..... 4
- Grading Policy ..... 5
- Late Work Policy ..... 5
- Incomplete Policy ..... 6
- Academic Misconduct ..... 6
- Behavior and Dispositions ..... 6
- Grievance and Complaint Procedures ..... 7
  - Complaint Procedure ..... 7
  - Formal Grievance Appeal Process ..... 8
- Comprehensive Exams ..... 9
- Leave of Absence ..... 10
- Continuous Enrollment Requirement ..... 11
- Time in the Doctor of Education Program ..... 11
- Reapplying to the Doctor of Education Program ..... 11

Being a Doctoral Student ..... 13
- Self-directedness ..... 13
- Attention and Awareness ..... 13
- Dedication ..... 14

Dissertation Journey ..... 15
- Chair Determination ..... 15
- Committee Determination ..... 15
- Dissertation Hours (EDLC 899) Grading and Adequate Progress ..... 15
- Milestones in the Dissertation Process ..... 16
  - Criteria for Scheduling a Proposal Meeting ..... 16
  - Criteria for Submitting an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application ..... 16
  - Criteria for Scheduling a Dissertation Defense ..... 17
  - Criteria for Graduation ..... 17
- Dissertation Expectations ..... 17
  - Candidate Expectations ..... 17
  - Chair Expectations ..... 18
  - Committee Expectations ..... 20

Technical Components of the Dissertation Journey ..... 20
Forms ..... 20
Proposal Defense Checklist for Chairs ..... 21
Final Defense Checklist for Chairs ..... 22
Graduation and Completion Deadlines ..... 24
Candidate Dissertation Checklist for Chapters I-V ..... 25
References ..... 26
Appendix A Disposition Form ..... 27
Appendix B Candidate Dissertation Checklist for Chapters I-V ..... 32

## Doctor of Education Program Requirements

The purpose of this document is to supplement the graduate catalog and encompass all LMU Doctor of Education (EdD) program policies and expectations. All faculty, students, and candidates must adhere to these policies. All students and candidates must sign these policies, including students currently enrolled in EDLC 899 hours (i.e., Independent Dissertation Research), and the form must be uploaded to the student's or candidate's forms section of the LMU EdD Dissertation Portal. *Student* refers to anyone in coursework who has not yet taken and passed their comprehensive exams. *Candidate* refers to anyone who has completed coursework and has passed their comprehensive exams.

Components of the EdD program at LMU include coursework, comprehensive exams, and dissertation work. To prepare you for this journey, in this EdD program handbook, we have included program requirements, what it means to be a doctoral student, and what the dissertation journey will bring. Use this handbook and the graduate catalog to set yourself up for success throughout your journey in this program.

This section of the EdD Handbook outlines all program requirements. These requirements may also be written in the graduate catalog. As the EdD Handbook is a supplement to the graduate catalog, should there be discrepancies, the graduate catalog is what students shall follow. The following sections should be referenced during the student or candidate's time in the program, should any need arise outside of normal operating procedures.

### Full-Time Status and Engagement Expectations

Students in the EdD program must be enrolled full-time, which means taking at least nine hours per semester during the coursework portion of their program and remaining continuously enrolled during the fall, spring, and summer terms. Should a student fail to enroll in at least nine hours per semester during coursework, or fail to remain in continuous enrollment until graduation, they will be withdrawn from the EdD program. While in coursework, we expect students to have meaningful interaction with the instructor and the content of the course. As the courses in the EdD program meet online, weekly modules will be provided, including some or all of the following items: readings, interactive assignments, written assignments, discussion posts, major assignments, reflective exercises, and other assignments at faculty discretion. Students are required to complete all activities and assignments in each weekly module to be considered attending the course. No late assignments will be accepted in any course in the EdD program. Thus, course attendance in the EdD program is determined by completing weekly module items and is reflected in the student's grades in the course (i.e., missing an assignment results in a zero for that assignment).

Candidates in EDLC 899, or dissertation hours, must remain enrolled in at least one 899 credit hour per term. While either nine hours (36-hour students) or twelve hours (48- and 63-hour students) are required in EDLC 899 to complete the dissertation phase of the EdD program, candidates are responsible for continuously taking at least one hour per term until their dissertation is deemed complete by their chair and committee, which may include hours beyond the

required amount. Candidates should meet with their chair as needed. Candidates and chairs will work together to find times to meet. Additional engagement expectations are reviewed in the Attention and Awareness section of this document.

**Grading Policy**

**EdD Faculty do not assign Incompletes.** Per program policy, a student must earn a grade no lower than a B- to successfully complete the course. If a student earns a C+, they must repeat the course. In the event a student earns a grade lower than a C+, they will be administratively withdrawn from the EdD program.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A | Superior | Quality of work exceptional |
| A- | Excellent | Quality of work above course expectation |
| B+ | Very Good | Quality of work better than satisfactory |
| B | Good | Quality of work satisfactory |
| B- | Average | Quality of work meets minimum requirements |
| C+ | Must repeat the course before moving forward | Quality of work does not meet requirements for the doctoral program |
| C | Dismissal from the doctoral program | |

*A grade of B- is the minimum grade a candidate can receive to pass an LMU doctoral course successfully.*

A grade of an A is an expectation of a doctoral student; however, if a faculty member notices a problem with work, including but not limited to lack of quality (e.g., not using the provided template, failure to write at a doctoral level), lack of completion (e.g., grossly not meeting expectations of length requirement), lack of growth (e.g., not making appropriate changes to writing using feedback on previous drafts), not meeting specific requirements (e.g., page numbers, word counts), or other reasons via faculty discretion, the grade should reflect this issue. Faculty members will deduct half a letter grade for **each instance of each issue**. Faculty members should meet with students if any of these issues occur and document this meeting.

**Late Work Policy**

As the courses in the EdD program operate in an online, weekly module format, it is paramount that students meet their deadlines to make adequate progress in their courses. Thus, faculty do not accept late work under any circumstances in any course in the EdD program. Assignment due dates and times are posted in Canvas. If a student misses the deadline, faculty will not grade the work, and a zero will be automatically entered in Canvas for that assignment. Faculty may still provide feedback should the work be an important checkpoint in academic progression; this is at faculty discretion. Should an emergency arise where a student needs an extension on their work, the student should contact the appropriate faculty member and the Program Director immediately for consideration of an extension. There is no guarantee of any extensions at any

time. Candidates enrolled in EDLC 899 work with their chair on their deadlines. The chair has full discretion on due dates for EDLC 899.

**Incomplete Policy**

Instructors do not assign a grade of Incomplete (I) in the EdD program unless under emergency circumstances. Instructors may assign a grade of Incomplete (I) only in cases where a student has a documented emergency, after consultation with the Program Director. *Emergency* refers to a sudden, often medical, situation where the student is physically unable to complete coursework and is up to the discretion of the Program Director. If a grade of Incomplete (I) is assigned, students must satisfy all course requirements, including outstanding assignments, within six weeks of the end of the term (the day on which final course grades are posted) in which they receive an incomplete. Dissertation chairs are not permitted to assign an Incomplete (I) in 899 for any reason, including for documented emergencies. Grading in 899 is explained in a future section.

**Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct is a serious offense that jeopardizes a candidate's academic, career, and personal success. Candidates may be dismissed from the EdD Program for academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for drafting written work, falsifying data, etc.). If that occurs, the candidate will receive an email and a letter indicating the infraction and the effective date of dismissal. Candidates who are dismissed will not be readmitted to the EdD Program.

**Behavior and Dispositions**

Appropriate dispositions and behavioral expectations are discussed in the EdD orientation. After orientation, students are required to sign dispositions stating they will adhere to the expectations during their time in the EdD program. This signed form is uploaded to the student's portal under forms. Faculty will monitor students' behavior while they are engaged in coursework. If any issues are noted, the following procedure will be implemented.

1. First offense with any behavioral issue: Faculty sends an email about the issue to the student (e.g., the student did not meet the quality of the assignment) and forward it to the Program Director.
2. Second offense with any behavioral issue: Faculty meets with the student (including the Program Director), documenting the issue using the Developmental Plan form; student, faculty, and Program Director must sign the form; then send via email to the student and copy the Program Director. The grade in class should reflect this second offense. Students in this situation should not score above a B in the class.
3. Third offense with any behavioral issue: Administrative withdrawal – Faculty sends an email communication that the student has had two offenses previously and has not improved and copies the Program Director. The Program Director sends an Administrative Withdrawal letter

to the student. The grade in the class should reflect this third offense. Students should score a C in the class.

All offenses will be shared internally, during faculty meetings (under candidate concerns).

Additionally, regular disposition forms are collected each term (see Appendix A). Each term, each instructor will complete a disposition form for each student in their class. Forms are completed within five days after the last class. This also includes candidates in 899 hours – all chairs are required to complete disposition forms. Should there be any issues noted, the same procedures above will be followed, unless one of the procedures was already started with an in-class issue, in which case, the procedure will resume at the next appropriate step.

**Grievance and Complaint Procedures**

There is a distinct difference between a grievance and a complaint. Generally, a complaint addresses a process that is used and the interpretation of that process. A grievance is an action or inaction that impacts a student or class only by applying a specific policy or procedure. For our purposes, the catalog defines the following terms. The grievance is defined as an alleged violation of a specific policy or procedure in the catalog or student program handbook.
The complaint is defined as a disagreement made by the faculty or staff.
The following paragraphs address procedures to be met and expectations of faculty, staff, and students, whether it is a grievance or complaint.

***Complaint Procedure***

The following steps outline the informal process:

1. A documented meeting between the complainant and the faculty or staff member to discuss the reason for the student's complaint. Faculty/staff will memorialize this meeting in writing with the issues identified and the proposed level of aid available to the student. This is not meant to be a discussion of a grade or assignment unless the grade or the assignment is the basis of the complaint.
    a. At the termination of the discussion, the faculty member will ask the complainant if the matter is resolved to the student's satisfaction.
    b. If the student replies affirmatively, then the faculty/staff member will memorialize the meeting with the date, time, and issue identified along with the resolution.
    c. If the student states that the issue is not resolved, the student will be given the appeal results and referred to the complaint procedure in the catalog. The faculty/staff member will memorialize the meeting, the determination, and the basis for the determination in writing.
2. The complainant will submit the complaint in writing to the Program Director within 10 calendar days. This complaint must specifically list the issue(s) and the proposed resolution from the complainant. Upon receipt

of the written complaint, the Program Director shall hold a meeting with the complainant and the faculty/staff involved to hear the complaint.

a. If the informal meeting between the faculty/staff member and the complainant did not resolve the issue as required in step 1, the faculty/staff member shall send the memorialization document of the meeting to the Program Director within 3 calendar days of the meeting.
b. The Program Director shall hear the complaint and the faculty/staff person(s); this meeting shall be for finding an agreeable resolution.
c. If a resolution is reached, the Program Director shall memorialize the meeting.
d. If a resolution is not reached, the Program Director shall memorialize the meeting and send the document to the Dean of the Carter & Moyers School of Education or Dean's designee within 3 business days. The decision of the Dean or designee is final.

***Formal Grievance Appeal Process***

The following steps must be followed

1. A documented meeting between the grievant and the faculty or staff member to discuss the reason for the student's grievance must occur. The grievant must specify in writing and document the specific language of the handbook or catalog that the grievant alleges to have been violated. Faculty/staff will memorialize this meeting in writing with the issues identified and the proposed level of aid available to the student. This is not meant to be a discussion of a grade or assignment unless the grade or the assignment is the basis of the grievance.
    a. At the termination of the discussion, the faculty/staff member will ask the grievant if the matter is resolved to the student's satisfaction.
    b. If the student replies affirmatively, then the faculty/staff member will memorialize the meeting with the date, time, and issue identified along with the resolution.
    c. If the student states that the issue is not resolved, then the student will be given the appeal results and referred to the grievance procedure in the catalog. The faculty/staff member will memorialize the meeting, as well as the determination and the basis for the determination, in writing.
2. The grievant will submit the grievance to the Program Director in writing within 10 calendar days. This grievance must list the issue(s) and the grievant's proposed resolution. Upon receipt of the written grievance, the Program Director shall meet with the grievant and the faculty/staff involved and hear the grievance.
    a. If the informal meeting between the faculty/staff member and the complainant did not resolve the issue as required in step 1, the faculty/staff member shall send to the Program Director the

memorialization document of the meeting within 3 business days of the meeting.

   b. The Program Director shall hear the grievant and the faculty/staff person(s), and this meeting shall be for finding an agreeable resolution.
   c. If a resolution is reached, the Program Director shall memorialize the meeting. If a resolution is not reached, the Program Director shall memorialize the meeting and send the documents to the Appeals and Grievance Committee of the Carter & Moyer's School of Education or Dean's designee within 3 business days.

3. The Appeals and Grievance Committee shall hear the grievant's case on the record and will not accept any new documentation/evidentiary information from the grievant or the faculty/ staff personnel. The voting committee members shall have no conflict of interest or prejudice in the case. The voting committee members cannot include faculty/staff who have heard the case before. The hearing shall occur in a reasonable amount of time, and a decision will be reached within ten business days of the meeting. If the grievant is satisfied, the process is completed with prejudice and cannot be repeated with the same issues or alleged violation.
   a. If the grievant wishes to pursue the grievance process further, the grievant has 3 business days from the decision of the Appeals and Grievance Committee Chair to appeal to the Dean of the Carter & Moyers School of Education. This appeal must be in writing and identify with specificity the specific language of the catalog or handbook violated, with written documentation of the violation.
4. The Dean shall hear the grievance. The appeal shall be on the record, and neither party will be allowed to provide new information or documentation. In the event the Dean allows the grievant's case to be valid, the process ends.
   a. If the Dean upholds the prior decision, the grievant may appeal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs within 3 business days. The appeal must be in writing and identify with specificity the policy, procedure, or action/inaction violated as specified in the catalog or handbook.
5. The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall hear the case on the record, and the decision of the Vice President of Academic Affairs is binding and final. Lack of adherence to the timelines in the process by the grievant shall cause the grievance to be mooted and the process to be terminated with prejudice.

**Comprehensive Exams**

Students must have successfully completed all appropriate coursework (i.e., B- or above) as deemed by the EdD Program Director before they can take comprehensive exams. Comprehensive exams are typically taken after the student completes the quantitative research course, the qualitative research course, and the dissertation design course, or at the Program Director's discretion. Comprehensive exams will be given at the end of each semester, if appropriate, to

provide anonymous scoring. Students will be sent an email from the Program Director or designee with the comprehensive exam dates for the two available terms, and students must declare which term they will take the comprehensive exams by a designated date, which is prior to the offering of either exam. Students take one comprehensive exam, called the Core Comprehensive Exam, and potentially a concentration-based exam, at the discretion of the EdD Program Director.

Students who do not pass the comprehensive exam will be permitted to retake the exam. Students who do not pass the comprehensive exam on their second attempt will be administratively withdrawn from the program.

**Leave of Absence**

A candidate who wishes or needs to interrupt study temporarily because of personal exigencies may request a personal leave of absence. A candidate who is current with their degree requirements is eligible for a personal leave after satisfactory completion of at least one term of study. Personal leaves cannot be granted retroactively and will not be approved after the tenth day of a term.

To request a personal leave of absence, the candidate must complete the appropriate form explaining the reasons for the leave, stating both the proposed start and end dates of the leave, and the address at which the candidate can be reached during the leave period. A copy of this form is available on the Dissertation Portal. Upon program re-entry, the candidate must schedule a meeting with the Program Director and complete a re-enrollment form, a copy of which will be sent to the LMU Registrar. The following information further explicates the leave of absence process.

1. The Dean, on the recommendation of the Doctoral Program Director, must approve all leaves of absence.
2. Candidates in the doctoral program may be granted a leave for up to one (1) academic year (three terms). The expected last date of registration will be adjusted by one term for each term of the leave.
3. Candidates on leave may complete outstanding work in courses for which they have been granted approved incompletes. They may not, however, fulfill any other degree requirements during the time on leave.
4. A leave of absence does not exempt the candidate from meeting the tuition requirement or payment of fees already accrued.
5. A candidate on leave of absence is not eligible for financial aid, including loans, and in most cases, candidate loans are not deferred during periods of non-enrollment.
6. Candidates should consult the University Financial Aid Office to ascertain financial aid implications prior to applying for a leave of absence.
7. A candidate on leave of absence is not eligible for the use of any University facilities normally available to enrolled candidates.
8. Candidates on leave of absence must file a formal application for readmission and submit it to the doctoral program office. The doctoral program office will forward a copy of the application to the Registrar.

Such notification should be given at least four weeks prior to the end of the approved leave.

9. Candidates who fail to register for the term following the end of the approved leave will be administratively withdrawn from the doctoral program.
10. Candidates who do not apply for a personal leave of absence, or whose application for a personal leave is denied, and who do not register for any term, will be administratively withdrawn from the doctoral program.

**Continuous Enrollment Requirement**

Candidates and students must maintain continuous enrollment in the EdD program. Continuous enrollment means the candidate or student is enrolled in their coursework, including 899 hours, by the day of the start of the EdD program courses. The EdD program start dates coincide with the University's Academic Calendar. If a student or candidate is not enrolled by the first day of the start of the EdD program courses, the student or candidate will receive a letter of administrative withdrawal. It is the candidate or student's responsibility to keep up with their hours and to follow and abide by all registration deadlines.

**Time in the Doctor of Education Program**

Each student has a maximum number of years to complete their doctoral degree. This section refers to the full completion of all requirements in the EdD program. The number of years is determined by the hour program in which the student is enrolled.

- 36-year program – 5 years maximum
- 48-year program – 6 years maximum
- 63-year program – 7 years maximum

Once candidates reach the maximum year for their program, they will be administratively withdrawn from the program, unless they are (1) actively working on their dissertation and (2) making adequate progress toward completing it. The Program Director will send a letter to the candidates who have met their year maximum and explain that the Program Director will review all progress in the dissertation portal at the end of every term to ensure the candidate is making adequate progress**. This review of progress is in addition to and above the chair's determination of adequate progress.** Should the Program Director find that the candidate is not making adequate progress, the candidate will be administratively withdrawn from the program and not allowed an appeal.

**Reapplying to the Doctor of Education Program**

If a former student was administratively withdrawn or self-withdrew from the EdD program, they can reapply to the EdD program. The application process for a student who would like to reapply is the same as that for a new student (including timeline and materials); however, if a student reapplies, they should include a letter to the Program Director within their application materials explaining how their situation is different now than it was when they were removed or removed themselves from the program initially. This should include

how they will budget their time for doctoral-level work, dedicate themselves to the program goals, and respond quickly and professionally to professor communication as well as how this *differs from* their previous time in the program.

For any student who chooses to reapply for the EdD program, the individual's previous time in the program, including grades, behaviors and dispositions, and dissertation progress, will be considered along with all new application materials. The faculty will meet to discuss any reenrolling student and make a determination based on all data presented. Should a student be granted readmission, the student must begin in the next available term and may be required to repeat any courses deemed necessary by faculty. In general, **if a student has not been enrolled in the EdD program for three years or more, they will be required to retake all core courses**, as determined by the Program Director.

## Being a Doctoral Student

Entry into a doctoral program means you have the utmost readiness for scholarly learning. You have completed previous graduate degrees and coursework to get to this point. Your mind is ripe for constructive, critical thinking. You will dive deeply into research and discover there is so much more to learn. You will reflect on and think about your thinking and your world space. In this section, we will discuss your way of being as a doctoral student, which includes self-directedness, attention and awareness, and dedication. Roberts and Hyatt (2019) describe this journey:

> Obtaining a doctorate degree is the summit of academia—the highest degree any university can bestow. The journey to 'doctor' is difficult, with obstacles and demands along the way; however, once completed, the pride and exultation are a lifelong affirmation. (p. 3)

### Self-directedness

As doctoral students, you should approach this degree as self-directed learners. You are the only one who knows best how you learn and what you need to learn. According to Knowles (1975):

> In its broadest meaning, self-directed learning describes a process in which individuals take initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (p. 18)

To be a self-directed learner, you must determine how you learn best. You should think about when you work and how you work to keep you moving forward in this program. Also, you should take the initiative to learn about and find things out yourself related to the policies for the program, the learning that is to occur, and the dissertation process. This handbook, as well as the graduate catalog, can serve as your guide. Should you have a question about something in the program, try to figure it out for yourself before you ask for help. For example, if you wonder how your grade will be determined in a course, you can reference the Grading Policy section of the Graduate Catalog, p. 80, and you can also refer to your course syllabus. If you wonder what will happen should you miss a class or class session, you can refer to the Attendance Policy section of the Graduate Catalog, p. 79, and you can also refer to your course syllabus. These resources are here to assist you with questions you may have as you progress through the program. Continue to strengthen, or begin work toward, self-directedness in your approach to learning, wherever you may be starting.

### Attention and Awareness

In the LMU EdD program, it is important to pay attention to how you act and to have awareness about how your actions affect others. We have established norms and expectations for our students. These norms have come from years of working closely with students to foster a constructive and productive program

experience. We have the following norms, which are expectations of all students, candidates, and faculty in our program.

- Engage in all coursework, including attending to all weekly modules and assignments on time.
- Complete all pre-work for classes as assigned.
- Take advantage of all learning opportunities, including optional synchronous sessions.
- Share your voice in conversation.
- Engage respectfully with other students and professors.
- Assume positive intent in all interactions.
- Respond constructively when engaging in feedback discussions with peers.
- Respond constructively when receiving feedback from professors.
- Continuously improve your writing by applying feedback from faculty and peers.
- Portray positivity in your verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Check your LMU email and respond to it regularly (within 48 hours).
- Be a self-directed learner.

Should all students, candidates, and LMU faculty follow these norms, then our environment will be productive, constructive, and pleasant. Unfortunately, we do sometimes have students who, for whatever reason, do not follow these norms and have had to meet that disregard with consequence; therefore, we do have a Behavior and Dispositions Policy, which can be found in the Graduate Catalog, p. 80. You are an adult. What you choose to do in this program is your decision; however, you have also enrolled yourself in an EdD program. Please understand that these norms and expectations are for *everyone* to have a successful journey.

**Dedication**

Finally, this program takes dedication. Obtaining an EdD is hard. Life will continue to happen while you are enrolled in this program. You will need to persevere. "One form of perseverance is the daily discipline of trying to do things better than we did yesterday" (Duckworth, 2016, p. 91). Hard work and perseverance through obstacles are necessary parts of this program.

You will spend at least four semesters in this program, and many of you will spend a few more. Prepare yourself, your life space, and your relationships to fully engage in this work. Prepare yourself to receive more feedback than you have ever received before and love it. This program will take effort. "Without effort, your talent is nothing more than unmet potential. Without effort, your skill is nothing more than what you could have done but did not. With effort, talent becomes skill, and effort makes skill *productive*" (Duckworth, 2016, p. 51). Like Duckworth (2016) shares about grit, the EdD program is a marathon, not a sprint.

## Dissertation Journey

In this section of the Dissertation Handbook, we explain the dissertation journey. We also explain your expectations as a dissertation candidate, your chair as the leader of your dissertation journey, and your committee as support along your journey. Also found here is the use of forms, including the purpose of each form and at what point in your journey you submit each form.

### Chair Determination

Candidates choose, or may be assigned, a dissertation chair. The Program Director will alert students when it is time to select a chair or will notify students once a chair has been assigned. It may be necessary to assign chairs should EdD capacity be an issue, such as low faculty numbers in the EdD program. The EdD Program Director must approve chairs. The Program Director maintains a list of approved chairs. The Program Director reserves the right to change a candidate's chair should it be determined that the chair/candidate relationship is not conducive to the candidate's progress or if the relationship does not represent the standards of the EdD program. The chair is the ultimate decision-maker in the candidate's dissertation process.

### Committee Determination

A candidate's committee consists of a chair and at least two committee members. The candidate may add a third committee member, with chair approval. Committee members should be chosen in consultation with the chair. If a committee member is chosen without the knowledge of the current chair, the chair may remove the committee member at any time. **All candidates must have at least one full-time EdD Faculty member on their committee, ideally as the chair. Full-time EdD Faculty are those whose sole responsibility is to teach in the EdD Program.** If the chair is external to the EdD faculty, the chair and candidate will work with the EdD Program Director to determine a full-time EdD faculty member for committee placement. Any external committee members, those outside LMU, must submit a CV, dissertation, and statement of commitment to attend the candidate's proposal and final defense, which may occur in-person or via Zoom during daytime hours. This documentation must be sent to the Program Director for approval. The committee must be chosen prior to scheduling the proposal. It is highly recommended that the candidate and chair include a methodologist as a committee member. Committee members are not financially compensated for any portion of their work on the committee.

### Dissertation Hours (EDLC 899) Grading and Adequate Progress

Chairs will meet with candidates within three weeks of the beginning of each term and complete the Form 12 - 899 Planning Form to agree on adequate progress goals and work products for the term. **The expectation is that each candidate sets goals to fully complete at least one chapter in their dissertation per term**. Candidates are responsible for arranging the meeting within the three weeks of the start of the semester to complete Form 12 with their Chair.

Candidates will upload their co-signed 899 Planning Form to the portal within the first three weeks of each term, after the candidate and chair have met.

Candidate grades for 899 include A, B-, or C. No other grades shall be used for EDLC-899/Independent Dissertation Research coursework. Adequate progress is marked by a grade of A. Inadequate progress at the end of the term is marked by a grade of B-. If a candidate has already obtained a B-, a second semester of inadequate progress, or B-, becomes a C, and the candidate is administratively withdrawn from the EdD program. In the EdD Program, as reflected in the Grading Policy section of this document and the graduate catalog, a C is the equivalent of failing a course (F). Candidates cannot have more than one term of inadequate progress while enrolled in EDLC-899/Independent Dissertation Research hours. If a B- is obtained in 899, the candidate will receive a letter of warning. If a second B- is obtained, and a C is reported, the candidate will receive a letter of administrative withdrawal from the program.

**Milestones in the Dissertation Process**

Milestones in the dissertation process occur after the candidate passes comprehensive exams. The candidate drafts the dissertation and progresses in the following order: Chapter II, Chapter I, Chapter III, proposal, IRB, collect data, Chapter IV, Chapter V, and final dissertation defense. These components are more thoroughly explained below.

***Criteria for Scheduling a Proposal Meeting***

For a chair to schedule a proposal meeting for a candidate, the candidate must have successfully completed all coursework in their primary concentration and passed their comprehensive exam. A completed Chapters I-III must be approved by the chair and, after chair approval, sent to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the proposal defense date. The candidate may not send these to the committee without the chair's approval. Candidates must be enrolled in at least one (1) EDLC 899 hour and otherwise be in good standing with the EdD program and the university. The proposal will be offered in-person or via Zoom during the daytime or after hours. The committee must agree on a day, time, and format that works best for all members; the chair has final discretion.

***Criteria for Submitting an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application***

Candidates must meet all criteria to schedule a proposal, including passing the comprehensive examinations, and must have successfully passed their proposal before they can submit their IRB. Candidates must have obtained permission, or tentative permission, from all district and school-level sites used for study, as applicable. Candidates (and chairs) must have an active CITI certificate. If all of the above is complete, the candidate should submit their IRB application through Sitero Mentor. The IRB application must be updated if the study changes and must be extended if the study lasts beyond one year. When the candidate submits the IRB application, the email must include the chair and EdD IRB representative.

### *Criteria for Scheduling a Dissertation Defense*

To schedule a final defense, candidates must have completed Chapters I-V, which must be approved by the committee chair and, after chair approval, sent to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the dissertation defense date. The chair can utilize the EdD Candidate Dissertation Checklist for Chapters I-V to verify that the dissertation is ready for defense (see Appendix B). Candidates must have a valid (non-expired) active IRB approval. The defense will be offered in-person or via Zoom during the daytime or after hours. The committee must agree on a day, time, and format that works best for all members; the chair has final discretion. For the dissertation defense, the candidate must complete all edits from the committee and obtain the chair's final approval. The chair then sends the final dissertation to the Program Director for approval and then to the Dean for approval. Finally, the candidate sends all final paperwork to the designated librarian for publication. The chair facilitates the process a candidate goes through for all final edits and final steps in the dissertation process.

### *Criteria for Graduation*

Candidates must have completed and signed Form 9 - Intent to Graduate; this form must be filed to the registrar by September 1st for December graduates, February 1st for May graduates, and June 1 for summer graduates. The form requires the chair and the Program Director's signature. Candidates who have not successfully passed their dissertation defense may not file an Intent to Graduate form. Candidates must have completed their Program of Study, passed their dissertation defense, and be in good standing with the university. Candidates must have completed all 899 hours, final revisions, closed out the study with the IRB (if applicable), submitted the dissertation to ProQuest through the LMU library, and obtained Form 11 with all necessary signatures.

## Dissertation Expectations

As candidates progress through the milestones listed above, they do so under the direction of their chair, who serves as the leader of the candidate's dissertation process. Chairs are assigned by the LMU EdD Program Director. Additionally, the chair and candidate work together to form a committee, who also assist with various aspects of the dissertation process. The candidate always includes the chair, and the chair leads all decision-making. In the following three sections, we describe the expectations of the candidate, the chair, and the committee.

### *Candidate Expectations*

The beginning of this dissertation handbook was about how to be a doctoral student. Those are not only suggestions but also expectations of the student during coursework, and also as students transition to candidates in the dissertation journey. Additionally, candidates are expected to use the Dissertation Template, which can be found in the Dissertation Resources section of the LMU EdD portal. The current template being used is the *Dissertation Template Fall 2024.* The following are additional dissertation expectations and are also

mentioned in the graduate catalog. Overall, the candidate must have chair approval for all steps in the dissertation journey, including but not limited to topic choice, methodology/instrumentation, committee selection, timeline or scheduling of any meetings or defenses, and creation of EDLC 899 goals.

- Candidates write using the APA 7th edition style guide.
- Candidates write entirely in past tense. (Present perfect is acceptable. It is also acceptable if a student begins a statement with past tense but keeps remaining verbs present.)
- Candidates upload all versions (drafts) of their dissertation to the LMU EdD Portal. Candidates should name each version with a different name for a running log of draft uploads.
- Candidates must sign all appropriate forms.
- Candidates must use a preexisting, valid, and reliable instrument; they cannot develop their own instrument for quantitative research.
- Instruments for qualitative research must be created based on previous literature and documented.
- Candidates must receive permission to use existing instrumentation.
- Candidates must triangulate or show reliability/validity for data.
    - A qualitative study must include at least two forms of data collection, unless another form of triangulation has been approved.
    - A quantitative study must include a valid/reliable, existing instrument.
- Expert methodologists must be consulted while a candidate is drafting their methodology section.
- Conducting a study in one's own school or district alone is strongly discouraged (researcher bias).
- Decisions based on convenience are inappropriate. Decisions should be based on literature and study conditions.
- Dissertations are drafted using Microsoft Word in the Dissertation Template.
- All IRB guidelines must be followed.
- Candidates must remain continuously enrolled in EDLC 899 hours while working on their dissertation under their current chair. Enrollment must occur by the first day of the term. Candidates must complete at least nine (36-hour students) or twelve (48- and 63-hour students) EDLC 899 hours.

***Chair Expectations***

Expectations for the chair are as follows:

- Review roster to ensure all candidates have registered for EDLC 899 **by the first day of each term**. If a candidate is not registered, alert the Program Director.
- Meet with all candidates who are registered for EDLC 899 within the following dates for each term, with forms due by the last day as listed:

Fall: August 1 – August 20; Spring: January 1 - January 20; Summer: May 1 – May 10.

- Work with the candidate to co-create obtainable goals on their EDLC 899 form to demonstrate adequate progress. While the intent is to co-create the EDLC 899 goals, the chair should be the one to fill out the form. Obtainable goals include:
    - At least three goals per semester
    - Goals that are incremental in nature.
    - Adequate progress, or at least one chapter per term.
    - Only chapters the candidate will work on that term should be included.
    - The candidate's signature on Form 12.
- Submit the EDLC 899 form to the designated EdD faculty member responsible for collection or Program Director.
- Hold the candidate accountable for goals set.
- Monitor the dissertation portal for candidate submissions.
- Review any drafts candidates upload to the portal and provide feedback **within two weeks** of the date of the candidate's submission, as it aligns to the candidate's agreed upon 899 form date. Note: chairs may not be able to give feedback in the two-week period should a candidate submit work ahead of their 899 goal dates or later than their 899 goal dates as chairs pace candidate submission dates based on candidate progress and chair capacity.
- Provide feedback as comments or track changes in MS Word.
- Follow APA 7th edition or the most recent APA edition.
- Adhere to the LMU dissertation template and process, including all LMU specific items, such as writing in past tense, among others.
- Respond to candidate and Program Director emails within 48 hours.
- Recommend and approve committee members and facilitate communication with committee members (the committee is directed by the chair, not the candidate).
- Coordinate committee member schedules to schedule the proposal and final defense.
- Provide committee members **at least two weeks** to review the candidate's document before the scheduled proposal or final defense meeting.
- Schedule the proposal and final defense in-person or via Zoom.
- Schedule and communicate appropriate milestones for the candidate, including proposal and final defense, including presence at each event.
- Communicate any candidate issues with the Program Director.
- Sign and return all necessary forms for the candidate.
- Complete disposition forms for each candidate each semester, per the behavior and discipline policy in the graduate catalog.
- Finally, the Program Director reserves the right to revoke chair privileges at any time.

***Committee Expectations***

Expectations for all committee members are as follows:

- Assist candidate with goals and expectations.
- Review any drafts provided by the chair and provide feedback to the chair prior to the scheduled proposal or final defense. The chair has the final say on all feedback and is permitted to delete or edit committee feedback as needed.
- Provide feedback as comments in MS Word.
- Follow APA 7th, or the most recent, edition.
- Adhere to the LMU dissertation template and process, including all LMU specific items, such as writing in past tense, among others.
- Respond to candidate or chair emails within 48 hours. If chair is not copied, include chair as a copy in response to candidate on all email communication.
- Attend the proposal in-person or via Zoom for the entire duration of the defense, **which may be scheduled during daytime hours** (committee members are consulted prior to scheduling the proposal).
- Attend the final defense in-person or via Zoom for the entire duration of the defense, **which may be scheduled during daytime hours** (committee members are consulted prior to scheduling the defense).
- Sign and return all necessary forms for the candidate.
- Program Director or chair reserve the right to remove any committee members at any time.

**Technical Components of the Dissertation Journey**

In this section, specific technical components are explored, including forms, chair processes, committee processes, and candidate processes. The candidate should be aware of all sections here, although it is not necessarily the candidate's responsibility to carry out these items; candidates should, if functioning in a self-directed manner, prompt the chair or committee to follow through when needed.

***Forms***

The following bulleted list shows the forms that we require in the EdD program. Some may be optional in the EdD program, and some are used only when applicable to the specific situation. All forms are found in the LMU EdD portal in the main Forms section (not within the candidate portal). All forms, once complete, should be placed in the candidate's Forms library in the LMU EdD portal after obtaining all necessary signatures. Many forms that are required also require the Program Director's signature.

**Required.** All forms below have a place for Program Director signature and thus should be sent to the Program Director upon completion by the chair and candidate.

- Form 1A - Doctoral Dissertation Committee chair
- Form 1B - Doctoral Dissertation Committee Members

- Form 3 - Proposal Defense Approval
- Form 6 - Dissertation Defense Announcement
- Form 9 - Intent to Graduate
- Form 11 - Final Dissertation Approval
- Form 12 - EDLC 899 Planning Form

**Used if applicable.** These forms are for specific situations and are only used should those situations arise. Once complete, send to the Program Director.

- Form 8, if applicable - Change in Dissertation Committee
- Form 10, if applicable - Request for Leave of Absence
    - Dissertation chair does not do this.
    - Direct students to reach out to the Program Director if they request a leave of absence.

**For guidance.** The following forms are not used at this time; however, the chair could determine that they need to be used in specific situations.

- Form 2 - Request Permission for the Defense of the Proposal
- Form 4 - Oral Proposal defense Rubric
- Form 5 - Request Permission for the Oral Defense of the Dissertation
- Form 7 - Final Dissertation defense Rubric

***Proposal Defense Checklist for Chairs***

This checklist is for the chair to use to facilitate the proposal process with their candidate. The candidate is also responsible for knowing the steps of this process. The IRB application is found in Sitero Mentor, through MyLMU Quicklinks.

***Proposal checklist***:

- Ask the candidate to complete the IRB application in Sitero Mentor prior to the proposal, but not to submit the application.
- Reach out to the committee to gather times available for a two-hour proposal in-person or via Zoom.
- Email the proposal document, Chapters I-III, to all committee members two weeks before the scheduled proposal for feedback.
- Set up a meeting in-person or via Zoom and send a calendar invite to the committee and candidate.
- Reserve two hours; reserve a room at Cedar Bluff with Erick Dugger if in person.
- Once feedback is received from all committee members, combine all documents with comments and filter comments to remove anything that goes against what you already told the candidate (the chair has final decision-making on all comments).
- Open Zoom early for the candidate if applicable.

- Candidates have about 15 minutes to talk through Chapters I-III. This should be an informal discussion, mostly focusing on why they are conducting the study.
- Then, the chair leads the discussion chapter by chapter, addressing comments that require more discussion. Comments that are self-explanatory or minor need not be discussed.
- End the proposal defense once all chapters are discussed. Ask the committee if they want to see it again or if all edits can come to the chair.
- Release committee members and discuss the IRB application with the candidate. If only minor changes are needed to the IRB application, this can be submitted prior to changes in the paper. If significant changes are needed for the IRB application, the chair and candidate form a plan for completion.

***After Proposal***

- Direct the candidate to complete the IRB before they make changes to their document (the IRB is written in the present tense).
- Then, the candidate makes edits/revisions to the dissertation and returns them to the chair at the chair's communicated time.
- Chair completes Form 3, signs it, and emails it to the committee to sign.
- After approval from the chair, the candidate submits their IRB application, being sure to include the chair and the EdD IRB representative. The candidate should make sure to include all attachments, including the CITI certificate.
- Make sure the candidate knows they have one year to complete the study after IRB approval.

***Final Defense Checklist for Chairs***

This checklist is for the chair to use to facilitate the final defense process with their candidate. The candidate is also responsible for knowing the steps of this process. These sections include before, during, and after, as this is the most important step in the journey.

***Before Final Defense Checklist***

- Gather and schedule times from committee members and the candidate for final defense planning.
- Send the final document, Chapters I-V, with all front matter and references checked to all committee members two weeks in advance via email for feedback.
- Schedule the final defense in-person or via Zoom
- Reserve two hours; reserve a room at Cedar Bluff with Erick Dugger if in person.
- Complete Form 6 after scheduling to announce the defense and email to the Program Director, who will take care of coordinating the

announcement. The Zoom link can be shared with attendees. Include the dissertation title in regular caps on Form 6, not all caps.

- Once feedback is received from all committee members, combine all documents with comments, and filter comments to remove anything that goes against what you already told the candidate (chair has final decision-making on all comments).
- Instruct the candidate to complete the Intent to Graduate form (Form 9).
- Prepare the candidate for the final defense presentation. Use examples as guides. The focus of the presentation is on the candidate's study, not on the literature review.

***During the Final Defense***

- Introduce yourself as the candidate's chair as well as the committee members, for others in attendance, and provide an overview of the process, which is:
    - 30-minute presentation by student, formal presentation.
    - 30 minutes of questions from the chair and committee; if time permits, it can be opened to additional audience, at the chair's discretion.
    - Place all attendees, including candidate, into a breakout room.
    - Allow 30 minutes for the committee to discuss progress and make a determination of whether the candidate passed the defense. It may not take 30 minutes to do this.
    - Return all attendees to the lobby, including the candidate, and celebrate by calling them doctor!
    - Once you call the candidate doctor, dismiss the remaining attendees after allowing them to say words if needed.
- Set a timer for 30 minutes for the candidate's presentation; keep the candidate on track if they need to skip a section.

***After the Final Defense***

- Announce the candidate as DR. _____
- Take a picture after the defense (or ask them to send you one), complete the PPT template for the announcement, and send it to the Program Director to post on social media. (Use PPT template from Program Director.)
- Make notes for the candidate's corrections and email the updated document with comments.
- Debrief about corrections once the candidate celebrates.
- Tell the student to review their Web Advisor completion status and alert the Program Director of any inconsistencies (web advisor for students> academic planning> program evaluation> check for completion status).
- Gather committee signatures on Form 11 via email after the defense.
- The candidate must make all necessary changes to the final dissertation draft. And send the document back to the chair for final review.

- Get final signatures from all, including the chair, Program Director, and Dean, on Form 11.
- If a candidate has an IRB number, the candidate should also complete the IRB closure form.
- Direct the candidate to contact the appropriate librarian to publish the dissertation; the chair sends the email to connect the candidate to the librarian. This is the final step, and all steps must be completed by the deadline to graduate in the appropriate term (March 31, October 31, June 30).

***Graduation and Completion Deadlines***

The deadlines below represent when a candidate must complete requirements to either graduate or not enroll for the next term. The graduate catalog holds the exact dates. These are final deadlines and do not include anything that may come up that may cause a delay (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**
*Graduation and Completion Deadlines Figure*

| | Spring | Summer | Fall |
|---|---|---|---|
| All five chapters complete, approved by chair, and sent to committee by chair | February 1 | June 1 | September 1 |
| Final dissertation defense completed by | March 15 | June 15 | October 15 |
| All edits returned to chair/committee | March 22 | June 22 | October 22 |
| Dean's Signature | March 31 | June 30 | October 31 |
| Intent to Graduate Form | February 1 | June 1 | September 1 |
| Graduation Ceremony | May | December | December |
| To not register for next semester | April 30 | July 31 | November 30 |

***Candidate Dissertation Checklist for Chapters I-V***

The *Candidate Dissertation Checklist for Chapters I-V* (see Appendix B) should be used by the candidate to complete their own review of their document as they draft their dissertation. It is especially important to go through these items at both the proposal defense and the final defense stage. Purchasing a reciteworks.com account is also a helpful strategy, as this website assists with APA related to citations. The *Candidate Dissertation Checklist for Chapters 1-V* can also be found in the Dissertation Resources section of the LMU EdD main portal.

## References

Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance.* Scribner/Simon & Schuster.

Knowles, M. S. (1975). *Self-Directed Learning: A guide for learners and teachers.* Cambridge Books.

Roberts, C., & Hyatt, L. (2019). *The dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation* (3rd ed.). Corwin.

**Appendix A**
**Disposition Form**

Directions: Please use the following numbers to rate the individual on each disposition based on the following scale by marking the corresponding number. Lastly, please add comments to support ratings as needed.

0-Needs Improvement: minimal evidence of understanding and commitment to the disposition

1-Developing: some evidence of understanding and commitment to the disposition

2-Meets Expectations: considerable evidence of understanding and commitment to the disposition

1. Demonstrates Effective Writing Skills*

| | -Does not consistently demonstrate academic writing skills as evidenced by making major errors in language, grammar, and word choice<br>-Multiple errors are noted in the student's writing<br>-Rigor or expectations of the writing assignments have not been met<br>-0 Points | -Sometimes demonstrates academic writing skills, but still makes more errors than classmates<br>-Some errors are noted in the student's writing<br>-Rigor or expectations of the writing assignments have barely been met<br>-1 Point | -Demonstrates strong academic writing skills and follows most grammar and APA rules.<br>-Few or no errors are noted in the student's writing<br>-Rigor or expectations of the writing assignments have been met<br>-2 Points |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Demonstrates Effective Written Communication Skills | | | |

Comments:

2. Demonstrates professional interactions/responsibilities with instructor and other students*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| -Does not respond to communications and does not submit all assignments<br>-Fails to exhibit punctuality and/or attendance<br>-Crosses major boundaries of ethical standards of practice<br>-Functions as a group member with no participation | -Delayed response to communications and late submission of assignments<br>-Not consistently punctual and/or has absences<br>-Crosses minor boundaries of ethical standards of practice<br>-Functions as a collaborative group member as evidenced | -Responds promptly to communications and submits all assignments<br>-Consistently exhibits punctuality and attendance<br>-Maintains professional boundaries of ethical standards of practice<br>-Functions as a collaborative group member as evidenced by high levels of |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | -Does not assume positive intent in all interactions as evidenced by defensiveness or antagonism through interactions<br>-0 Points | by minimal levels of participation towards productive outcomes or monopolizes conversation<br>-Sometimes assumes positive intent as evidenced by showing cooperation, acceptance, and a growth mindset through interactions<br>-1 Point | participation towards productive outcomes<br>-Assumes positive intent in all interactions as evidenced by showing cooperation, acceptance, and a growth mindset through interactions<br>-2 Points |
| 2. Demonstrates professionalism | | | |

Comments:

3. Demonstrates a positive and enthusiastic attitude*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | -Often complains when encountering problems and rarely offers solutions<br>-Resists change and appears offended when suggestions are made to try new ideas/activities<br>-Demonstrates a neutral affect as evidenced by lack of expressive gestures and vocal expressions<br>-0 Points | -Seeks solutions to problems with prompting<br>-May tentatively try new ideas/activities that are suggested yet is often unsure of how to proceed<br>-Overlooks opportunities to demonstrate positive affect<br>-1 Point | -Actively seeks solutions to problems without prompting or complaining<br>-Tries new ideas/activities that are suggested<br>-Demonstrates an appropriately positive affect with students as evidenced by verbal and non-verbal cues<br>-2 Points |
| 3. Demonstrates a positive and enthusiastic attitude | | | |

Comments:

4. Demonstrates appropriate responses to feedback from instructors and other students*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| -Rejects constructive feedback as evidenced by no implementation of feedback<br>-Possesses an inaccurate understanding of doctoral program expectations as | -Takes minimal action on constructive feedback<br>-Does not have a full understanding of doctoral program expectations as evidenced by minor or | -Accepts all constructive feedback as evidenced by implementation of feedback<br>-Possesses an accurate understanding of doctoral program expectations |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | evidenced by limited concept of how to improve<br>-Regularly comes to class unprepared<br>-Regularly turns in assignments late<br>-0 Points | minimal improvements<br>-Sometimes comes to class unprepared<br>-Sometimes turns in assignments late<br>-1 Point | -Comes to class prepared<br>-Always turns in assignments on time<br>-2 Points |
| 4. Demonstrates preparedness in teaching and learning | | | |

Comments:

5. Collaborates effectively with stakeholders*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | -Is inflexible, as evidenced by inability to work well with others and does not accept majority consensus<br>-Tone exhibits a general lack of respect for others as evidenced by interruptions and talking over others<br>-Rarely collaborates or shares strategies and ideas even when prompted<br>-0 Points | -Demonstrates some flexibility<br>-Maintains a respectful tone in most circumstances but is not consistent<br>-Shares teaching strategies as evidenced by some effort towards collaboration<br>-1 Point | -Demonstrates flexibility as evidenced by providing considered responses and accepts majority consensus<br>-Maintains a respectful tone at all times, even during dissent as evidenced by not interrupting or talking over others<br>-Proactively shares teaching strategies as evidenced by productive collaboration<br>-2 Points |
| 5. Collaborates effectively with stakeholders | | | |

Comments:

6. Demonstrates self-regulated learner behaviors/takes initiative*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| -Is unable to self-correct own weaknesses as evidenced by not asking for support or overuse of requests for support<br>-Does not conduct appropriate research to implement self-directed learning styles as evidenced by a lack of | -Is beginning to recognize own weaknesses and asks for support making some effort to become involved in professional growth<br>-Level of research needs further development to acquire fully and integrate | -Recognizes own weaknesses as evidenced by seeking solutions before asking for support<br>-Researches and implements most effective self-directed learning styles as evidenced by citing works submitted |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | citations in work<br>-Occupied by personal agenda/materials/devices as evidenced by a lack of attention to classroom tasks<br>-0 Points | resources leading to different and effective self-directed learning styles<br>-Sometimes occupied by personal agenda/materials/devices as evidenced by a lack of attention to the classroom tasks<br>-1 Point | -Occupied by instructor agenda/materials/devices as evidenced by attention to the classroom tasks<br>-2 Points |
| 6. Demonstrates self-regulated learner behaviors/takes initiative | | | |

Comments:

7. Exhibits the social and emotional intelligence to promote personal and educational goals/stability*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | -Demonstrates a lack of self-regulation and maturity as evidenced by overreacting to sensitive issues<br>-Does not demonstrate perseverance and resilience (grit) as evidenced by giving up easily<br>-Demonstrates insensitivity to feelings of others as evidenced by a lack of compassion and empathetic social awareness<br>-0 Points | -Demonstrates level of maturity to self–regulate after initial response is one of overreaction to sensitive issues<br>-Demonstrates perseverance and resilience (grit) most of the time<br>-Demonstrates sensitivity to feelings of others most of the time<br>-1 Point | -Demonstrates appropriate maturity and self-regulation as evidenced by remaining calm when discussing sensitive issues<br>-Demonstrates perseverance and resilience (grit) as evidenced by tenacious and determined ability to persist through tough situations<br>-Demonstrates sensitivity to feelings of others as evidenced by compassionate and empathetic social awareness<br>-2 Points |
| 7. Exhibits the social and emotional intelligence to promote personal and educational goals/stability | | | |

Comments:

# Appendix B
# Candidate Dissertation Checklist for Chapters I-V

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | ***Student:*** |
| | | ***chair*** |
| **Title Page** | | |
| | | **1" top margin**; **1.5" left margin**; **1.5" right and bottom margins** on all pages. |
| | | **The entire page is bold-faced.** |
| | | Title page follows formatting in dissertation template. |
| | | Student's name on this page is the same as registered with the university (and on signature page). |
| | | Title has no page number (counted as page i, but not numbered). |
| | | |
| **Copyright Page** | | |
| | | **The entire page is bold-faced.** |
| | | Copyright page follows format in Dissertation Template. |
| | | Each of the three lines is double-spaced. |
| | | Student's name on this page is the same as registered with the university. |
| | | Page number is Roman numeral ii. |
| | | Page number ii is centered at bottom of page, ½" from bottom of page. |
| | | |
| **Dedication (optional)** | | |
| | | The heading **Dedication** is **bold-faced**, but the text of the dedication is not. |
| | | Dedication is brief—one, two, or three complete sentences. |
| | | Page number is Roman numeral iii. |
| | | Page number iii is centered at bottom of page, ½" from bottom of page. |
| | | Personal or lifelong support of family or friends, if you want to acknowledge it, goes on this page. |
| | | |
| **Acknowledgments** | | |
| | | The heading **Acknowledgments** is **bold-faced,** but the text of the acknowledgments is not. |
| | | Acknowledgments comments are limited to only those individuals or organizations who helped with the research in an official capacity. |
| | | Personal or lifelong support of family or friends is not mentioned on this page. |
| | | Page number is Roman numeral iv (if Dedication page is included). |
| | | Page number is centered at bottom of page, ½" from bottom of page. |
| | | |
| **Abstract** | | |
| | | Abstract does not **exceed one page** |
| | | Abstract paragraph is **not** indented. |
| | | Page number is Roman numeral. |
| | | Page number is centered at bottom of page, ½" from bottom of page. |
| | | All writing is in past tense (e.g., reported) or present perfect (e.g., has studied) tense. |
| | | |
| **Table of Contents (TOC)** | | |
| | | The Table of Contents has two headings: **Chapter** on the left-hand side and **Page** on the right-hand side. |
| | | Table of Contents does not include preliminary pages (Dedication, Acknowledgments, or Abstract). |
| | | Headings and page numbers in Table of Contents mirror the headings and page numbers in the text of dissertation. |
| | | Only level-1 and level-2 headings are listed in the TOC. Level-3 headings are not listed in the TOC. |
| | | Page number is a Roman numeral and is centered at bottom of page, ½" from bottom of page. |
| | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **List of Tables** | | |
| | | The **List of Tables** has two headings: **Table** on the left-hand side and **Page** on the right-hand side. |
| | | **List of Tables** is used if document has 3 or more tables. |
| | | Table titles are clear and concise. |
| | | Tables in the appendices are **not** listed in the List of Tables. |
| | | Page number is a Roman numeral and is centered at the bottom of page, ½" from bottom of page. |
| | | |
| **List of Figures** | | |
| | | The **List of Figures** has two headings: **Figure** on the left-hand side and **Page** on the right-hand side. |
| | | Figure titles are clear and concise (e.g., NOT *Coding for Research Question 1*). |
| | | Figures in the appendices are **not** listed in the List of Tables. |
| | | **List of Figures** is used if document has 3 or more tables. |
| | | Page number is a Roman numeral and is centered at the bottom of page, ½" from bottom of page. |
| | | |
| **Chapter I: Introduction** | | |
| | | First page of Chapter I has no page number. |
| | | The second page of Chapter I has Arabic number 2 at the bottom of the page, centered, ½" from the bottom of the page. |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Statement of the Problem** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Research Questions** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Theoretical Framework** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Significance of the Study** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Description of the Terms.** Operational; come from research questions; more than simple definition. |
| | | Terms should be level 3 headings with descriptions starting on the following line.. |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Organization of Study.** |
| | | All writing is in past tense (e.g., reported) or present perfect (e.g., has studied) tense. |
| | | |
| **Chapter II: Review of the Literature** (Use continuous pagination.) | | |
| | | **Level 2 Headings** vary with research topic. |
| | | May have level 3 or level 4 headings. |
| | | All citations are correctly paraphrased in APA format (no plagiarism). |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Summary of Review of the Literature** |
| | | All writing is in past tense (e.g., reported) or present perfect (e.g., has studied) tense. |
| | | |
| **Chapter III: Methodology** (Use continuous pagination.) | | |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Research Design** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Role of the Researcher** (only for Qualitative Studies) |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Participants in the Study** (can be Sample of the Study for Quantitative studies) |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Data Collection** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Methods of Analysis** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Reliability and Validity** (should be Trustworthiness for qualitative studies) |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Limitations and Delimitations** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Assumptions of the Study** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Summary of Methodology** |
| | | All writing is in past tense (e.g., reported) or present perfect (e.g., has studied) tense. |
| | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **DISSERTATION PROPOSAL** | | |
| | | Dissertation proposals are offered in-person or via Zoom. |
| | | Dissertation chair approves and sends to committee members a minimum of two weeks before the proposal is scheduled. |
| | | Dissertation chair and sets date for Dissertation Proposal with committee members. |
| | | Candidate completes Dissertation Proposal defense. |
| | | Candidate prepares IRB Application / sends to chair for signature / submits for approval. |
| | | |
| **Chapter IV: Analyses and Results** (Use continuous pagination.) | | |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Data Analysis** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Research Questions** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Summary of Results** |
| | | Candidate is not making connections or including their voice / reasoning in this chapter. |
| | | All writing is in past tense (e.g., reported) or present perfect (e.g., has studied) tense. |
| | | |
| **Chapter V: Discussion of the Study** (Use continuous pagination.) | | |
| | | Candidate discusses findings and makes connections in the introduction of this chapter. This may be several pages long. |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Implications for Practice** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Recommendations for Future Research** |
| | | **Level 2 Heading: Conclusions of the Study** (different than other chapters; this is of the entire study, not just Chapter V) |
| | | Writing is this chapter can be in past tense, present tense, or future tense, depending on the section. Do not change tenses within paragraphs. |
| | | |
| **References Page** (Use continuous pagination.) | | |
| | | Reference section contains all in-text references cited in the body of the dissertation. |
| | | All references are cited in the text. |
| | | References are alphabetized in the References section. |
| | | References are current and relevant to the topic. Eighty percent of references should be from within the last 10 years. |
| | | Formatting of all references adheres to APA 7th edition. |
| | | |
| **Appendices** (Use continuous pagination.) | | |
| | | All appendices have a separate half-title page. |
| | | All half-title pages are vertically and horizontally centered. |
| | | All half-title pages are bold-faced and are descriptive of the appendix document. |
| | | Each half-title page is labeled with a letter (e.g., Appendix A). |
| | | Each appendix is mentioned in the body of the dissertation in the order of the appendices in the back. |
| | | Each appendix is position in the appendices in the order it appears in the dissertation document. |
| **FINAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE** | | |
| | | Dissertation chair approves final dissertation document. |
| | | Dissertation chair schedules dissertation defense with committee in-person or via Zoom. Schedule is based on committee availability. Dissertation candidates must be available according to committee members' schedules. |
| | | Dissertation chair forwards approved dissertation to committee at least 2 weeks before proposed defense. |
| | | Candidate creates presentation for final defense. This should include all chapters but focus on Ch. III-V. |
| | | Candidate completes dissertation defense |
| | | Candidate completes all edits from dissertation defense. |
| | | Candidate completes forms (e.g., IRB Closure, Intent to Graduate). |

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| | | Candidate submits headshot to chair for publication. |
| | | |
| **Miscellaneous Checks – Do these every time before you submit a document for review.** | | |
| | | **Mechanics** |
| | | Abbreviations, acronyms, and initialism: Avoid using abbreviations in formal writing. Acronyms or initialism can be used after one complete notation. List explanation first, for example, American Psychological Association (APA), Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM). Acronyms or initials should not be used in Research Questions, titles, or headings. |
| | | Oxford comma: Use comma before *and* in words in a series with three items are more. |
| | | Contractions: Do not use contractions unless quoting someone; use formal spelling. |
| | | Numbers: To form the plural of numbers or dates, add *s* without the apostrophe (1900s). Spell out numbers less than 10. |
| | | Spell out numbers less than 10. |
| | | Quotation marks: Do not use "quotation marks" or <u>underline</u> text to emphasize a word or phrase. Use italics. Make sure there's an even number of quotation marks; if there is not, find where quotations are missing. Quotes must be appropriately cited with page numbers. Quotes of 40 words or more must be in block quotes. Quotations marks can only be used with direct quotes. |
| | | Line spacing: Double space the text throughout the document. |
| | | Insert one space between p. # |
| | | Insert one space after each ending punctuation mark. . |
| | | p., pp., para. – Keep text together on same line as number after. |
| | | Hyphen – Keep text together. |
| | | Time increments should be numeric (e.g., 3 days). |
| | | Consistency: same capitalization throughout; use same "grade" format (3rd grade and grade 3 are not the same.). |
| | | et al. – no period after et; always a period after al.; keep text together on same line. |
| | | Make sure all headings are tagged as headings. |
| | | Update Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures |
| | | Use tabs for indentions (or use the ruler in Microsoft Word to set a first line indent); do not use the space bar. |
| | | Run grammar / spell check. |
| | | Use page breaks between pages (do not enter down) and use hanging indent in references |
| | | Check for one space after sentences (not two, find and replace) |
| | | **Wording** |
| | | Check use of *that* (objects) vs. *who* (people). |
| | | Colloquialism: Avoid colloquialism or slang. Avoid terms such as *way(s), thing(s), a lot,* and *there* in formal writing. |
| | | The word *that* is not used after verbs. |
| | | Use "which" in a prepositional phrase (e.g., in which, for which) OR have a comma before "which" and a dependent clause (e.g., The minute I finished my dissertation, which was in December 2000, was worth the effort.) |
| | | Plurals: *Data* is plural; check use of verb. |
| | | Significantly – only used in quantitative studies. |
| | | The words *however* and *therefore* should not be used to start a sentence. SEMICOLON HOWEVER COMMA (; however,). |
| | | "Sex" refers to male/female based on biological status; "gender" refers to how one identifies oneself. |
| | | Use U.S. as an adjective (the U.S. Constitution) but spell out United States when |

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| | | using as a noun (e.g., the Constitution of the United States). |
| | | Write in past tense (e.g., reported) or present perfect (e.g., has studied) tense throughout document except in Chapter V. You will shift to present or future tense in Chapter V. |
| | | "In effort to" should be "to"; "in order to" should be "to"; "in regards to" should be regarding |
| | | Do not end sentences with prepositions |
| | | Use personal pronouns when referring to yourself. |
| | | Do not use "time" words (e.g., today, now, soon, often, recent, currently); instead, include specific dates (e.g., in 2020). |
| | | Word choice: Use *toward* instead of *towards*; use *regard* instead of *regards*; use *significantly*, *impact, and effect* only in quant writing and only if you have a quantitative statistic to go with it |
| | | **References** |
| | | Remove hyperlinks (can leave URL if URL takes the reader to the full document being cited). |
| | | No "retrieved from" or "available at" unless references are blogs. |
| | | All citations in reference list; all references cited within paper; all years correct throughout. |
| | | All references alphabetized. |
| | | Adhere to APA guidelines. |