

## Welcome to the Journey! Or Everything You Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask About The Dissertation

“It’s not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves.”  
Sir Edmund Hillary

Welcome to the journey! Writing a dissertation, indeed any research paper, is a challenge, an opportunity, exciting, daunting, desirable and perhaps frightening. Imagine, you have to put your own thoughts on paper for all the world to see: your thoughts, your research, your insights, your conclusions. It’s all there, and it can be intimidating and confusing. But it is also exhilarating and liberating. Writing a dissertation and being awarded the doctorate is the pinnacle of your educational achievement and may be your first major contribution to the scholarly literature. The metaphor of climbing a mountain is apt. While you ultimately must do it on your own, you also must have help. You must have the courage to leave base camp far behind, and the stamina and perseverance to continue the climb in spite of the difficulties you encounter. Like reaching the summit of Everest, it is a transformative experience. You will not be the same person you were when you started the climb. We assume that you have the determination, the heart, and the passion for the task. What we offer here are some thoughts to consider as you begin the climb, and then the administrative requirements, the logistics, that will make sure you officially reach your goal.

It must be emphasized that the information contained in this *Handbook* are guidelines and in no way serve as a contract between a student and Temple University or the College of Education. Moreover, **it is your responsibility to become aware of requirements that are unique to your program and to find the means to fulfill these requirements.** As in all matters relevant to doctoral study, you should check with your academic advisors if there are questions about program, College or Graduate School requirements.

There are a number of books and articles which have been published during the last ten years that might be of help in completing the dissertation. Several of these are listed in the references and some are in the Graduate Programs Office. In addition, the Graduate School has published a dissertation handbook which covers the current regulations on formatting and style required for submitting the dissertation. It is invaluable and can be found at:

<http://www.temple.edu/dissertationhandbook>.

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## What Exactly is a Dissertation?

The dissertation is the defining component of a doctoral education. It is expected to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge and demonstrate that the author understands and is capable of original, high-quality research.

There are some basic questions you should consider in formulating your topic and in conducting the research for your dissertation. These questions might reasonably be asked of you at the final defense, so should be born in mind from the outset.

- (1) Can the dissertation meet the accepted standards in the field for the specific type of methodology used? Could it be published in the top journals?
- (2) In light of the range of possible methodologies that might have been used, given the topic and purpose of the dissertation, has the best methodology been employed?
- (3) Does the dissertation have some implications for educational practice?
- (4) Is the topic of the dissertation interesting and substantial?
- (5) Do the findings advance current theories of some phenomenon or otherwise fill an important gap in the scholarly literature?

To put this another way, at many dissertation defenses the question of "So what?" is raised about the research. All students should have an answer to this question.

## Definition of Terms

There are several terms which are used throughout this *Handbook* which have specific meanings within the Graduate School and/or the College of Education. These include the following:

### Candidacy

A graduate student achieves "candidacy" when he or she has passed the preliminary examination and has submitted a signed dissertation proposal to the Graduate School.

## Courses Taken During the Dissertation Phase

- 9994 (799) after coursework and before preliminary exam
- 9998 (899) after preliminary exam and before proposal defense
- (999) after proposal defense and advancement to candidacy

## Dissertation Advisory Committee

The Dissertation Advisory Committee consists of three graduate faculty who have agreed to oversee the dissertation and who approve the dissertation proposal. Two of them must be from the student's degree program. The third member is normally from outside the student's program. Check with your advisor if in doubt. A committee may be expanded to include other Temple faculty and/or qualified experts from outside Temple University, provided that a majority of the members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee are members of

the Temple University Graduate Faculty.

### **Dissertation Examining Committee**

The Dissertation Examining Committee evaluates the dissertation and conducts the student's final oral defense. It consists of the members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee plus two additional graduate faculty members. One of these additional members must be from outside the student's program area (not necessarily outside the department).

### **Graduate Faculty**

A faculty member holding a full-time presidential appointment, nominated by his or her college as graduate faculty, and approved by the Graduate Board. See the Graduate School website listing of Graduate Faculty:

<http://www.temple.edu/grad/faculty/index.htm>

### **Candidate's Department**

The College of Education has three departments, which include the following programs or concentrations offering the doctorate:

Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology in Education  
Language Arts (Language and Literacy or TESOL)  
Science and Mathematics Education

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies  
Educational Administration  
Urban Education

Department of Psychological Studies in Education  
Educational Psychology  
School Psychology

## The Nuts and Bolts of the Dissertation Process

While there is no single set of steps which characterize all dissertations, there are elements and procedures which are more-or-less common to all. While this list might look daunting, it really isn't that complicated.

- (1) Choose the topic in consultation with your advisor
- (2) Choose the Dissertation Advisory Committee
- (3) Complete an Initial Draft of the Dissertation Proposal
- (4) Obtain final approval of the Dissertation Proposal, schedule and hold the proposal defense, and submit the signed "Dissertation Proposal Transmittal" form along with 2 copies of the final proposal and IRB request for approval to the Director of Graduate Programs
- (5) Submit the proposal to IRB for approval. Prepare the request simultaneously with the proposal defense procedures but wait until your final draft is approved (but before your proposal defense) to submit to IRB in case there are changes to the research design. **You may not begin your research until you have received final IRB approval.** Otherwise your research may be invalidated and you will have to start over.
- (6) Distribute abstract of the Dissertation Proposal to departmental faculty
- (7) Implement the study and complete the dissertation
- (8) Form the Dissertation Examining Committee
- (9) Obtain approval to schedule the Final Oral Defense
- (10) Make an appointment with the Graduate School to review your dissertation with you (optional).
- (11) Submit copies of the dissertation to the Dissertation Examining Committee and the Graduate Programs Office prior to the actual Defense
- (12) Defend the dissertation and obtain final approval of the Dissertation Examining Committee
- (13) Get signatures on the "Report on Final Exam" and submit to the Graduate Programs Office.
- (14) E-File the dissertation at <http://dissertations.umi.com/temple/>

### **(1) Choose the Topic in Collaboration With the Dissertation Advisor**

Perhaps the most difficult part of the dissertation for some students is choosing a topic, and perhaps the most common reason for this is that many students wait until the end of their coursework to begin thinking about the issue. Ideally, a dissertation should be the logical culmination of the courses and experiences which constitute a student's program. As such, the search for a dissertation topic begins with the first course that a student takes and continues until the dissertation proposal has been signed by the student's Dissertation Advisory Committee. Throughout, it is critical that the student begin to work closely with the faculty member who will chair the dissertation as soon as possible, since this person is the key to a successful dissertation experience.

Ideally, the chair of your dissertation will be someone who actively publishes or is recognized for expertise in the topic area of your dissertation because he or she will

know what gaps in knowledge exist for that area, what methodologies are judged to be acceptable for examining the topic, and what it takes to be published in the main journals that accept articles on your topic. It is also helpful if you conduct several pre-dissertation studies with this individual. This makes the dissertation considerably less daunting and also more likely to reflect your own contribution rather than your advisor.

## **(2) Choose the Members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee**

After the selection of the topic for the dissertation, the next step is to obtain the additional members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee who will guide you through the dissertation process. This committee must include at least three members of the Temple University Graduate Faculty. Two of them, including the Chair, must be members of the candidate's degree program (or approved to serve in that capacity with the advanced written approval of the Dean of the Graduate School).

Take, as an example, the dissertation advisory committee for a student in Educational Psychology. The criteria for a Dissertation Advisory Committee specify that the chairperson and one of the remaining two committee members must be from Educational Psychology, while the final member may be from one of the other program areas in the College, or from other any program, department or college in the University as long as the person is a member of the graduate faculty.

In general, students should attempt to find additional members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee who are knowledgeable about and interested in the topic of the dissertation and also know what it takes to get studies published in top ranked journals. They are likely to apply the same standards to your dissertation. Consultation with the dissertation advisor is crucial in this decision.

In the College of Education, formal College approval of the Dissertation Advisory Committee is given by the Director of Graduate Programs when the student submits the "Request to Schedule the Proposal Defense." Changes in the composition of the Advisory Committee after that are made by submitting a "Dissertation Committee Change" form to the Graduate Program office.

## **(3) Complete an Initial Draft of the Dissertation Proposal**

Dissertation proposals take many forms depending on the nature of the dissertation and the requirements of the Dissertation Advisory Committee. In some cases, the proposal will be very similar to what constitutes the first two or three chapters of the dissertation. In other cases, the proposal is relatively brief (10 - 20 pages) and contains only the core elements necessary for the Dissertation Advisory Committee to evaluate the proposed work. There are, however, certain core elements of a dissertation proposal which are fairly common. Minimally, every dissertation proposal should contain the following elements:

- a statement of the purpose of the study, including such topics as the need for the study
- the research questions which the dissertation will attempt to answer
- a literature review containing at least a brief presentation of relevant research so that the proposed study is placed in a theoretical context;

- a detailed presentation of the methods that will be used in the study;
- a proposed timeline, containing a best guess estimate of when each of the separate parts of the dissertation (data collection; data analysis; completion of first draft; oral defense, etc.) will be completed.

To assist reviewers in reading the proposal, it is requested that all proposals contain a table of contents in which, minimally, the elements presented above are listed.

In general, the more information provided in the proposal, the more effectively the Dissertation Advisory Committee will be able to evaluate the proposed work. The “long form” of the proposal, comprising a completed first three chapters of the dissertation (introduction, literature review, and methodology) gives the most complete background available and potentially reduces the amount of work needed later on. The “short form” of the proposal provides the basic information, but will need expansion when the dissertation is completed. As in all of the issues discussed in this *Handbook*, it is critical that students check with their advisors and other committee members for their preferences.

While all Dissertation Advisory Committees work differently, the most common practice is for the student and his or her dissertation chairperson to develop an initial draft of the proposal. It is a very good idea to revise this document several times. A polished draft is then circulated among the remaining members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee for discussion. At some point, the Dissertation Advisory Committee will agree that the proposal is ready for a proposal hearing. This hearing constitutes the final step in the Dissertation Proposal approval process

#### **(4) Obtain Final Approval of the Dissertation Proposal**

The final step in the proposal approval process is an open hearing on the proposal. All dissertation proposals must be defended by the student in an open hearing. In some programs in the College, this hearing is publicly announced so that faculty members outside the Dissertation Advisory Committee can attend. Minimally, it is expected that the Dissertation Advisory Committee members attend the proposal hearing. At this hearing, specific issues about the proposed dissertation are discussed by the Advisory Committee. If the Advisory Committee decides that significant work still needs to be completed on the proposal, the student will be given directions for revisions. In such a case, an additional hearing will be scheduled. When all issues have been resolved and a final proposal is ready, the following steps must be completed:

- a. The student completes the “Request to Schedule the Proposal Defense” form and submits it to the Office of Graduate Programs who notifies the College of the proposed defense date.
- b. At the proposal defense, the Advisory Committee members sign the “Dissertation Proposal Transmittal for Elevation to Candidacy” Form which signifies their approval of the proposal.
- c. Two (2) copies of this signed proposal along with the Dissertation Proposal Transmittal form is submitted to the Director of Graduate Programs **within 30 days of the proposal hearing.**

- d. Obtain IRB approval for the dissertation research. The Director of Graduate Programs will forward the proposal, the transmittal form and the request for IRB approval form to the Graduate School for posting. (Refer to #5 below)

At this point, if the student has passed his or her Preliminary Examination, and if there are no I's, MGs or NR's on the student's transcript, the student will be elevated to candidacy by the Graduate School. If the proposal transmittal indicates approval within the first two weeks of the semester the student will be elevated for that semester. If approved after the first two weeks, the student will be elevated at the start of the next semester. Students should remember that Graduate School regulations require that 6 credits of 9999 be taken after candidacy so the timing of when the proposal is submitted to the Graduate School is important. The College of Education requires that students take three units of in each of the next two semesters following advancement to candidacy and then may register for one unit each semester thereafter until the dissertation is defended and filed.

The Graduate School website contains the following statement about the Dissertation Proposal:

When all members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee have signed the proposal, the proposal represents an agreement between the student and the Committee that the theoretical and methodological approach being taken will be considered acceptable and the work is conducted appropriately and within the time-line proposed. The Dissertation Advisory Committee may not unilaterally require significant theoretical or methodological changes. The Committee and the student may jointly agree on such changes but are advised to put these changes in writing.

## **(5) Submit the Proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

All research involving human subjects must be approved by Temple's Institutional Review Board. A section of the *Guidelines and Policies and Procedures of the IRB* is reproduced below:

To assure the protection of human subjects and to comply with federal law, Temple University requires that, **prior to initiation**, all research projects involving human subjects or human materials be reviewed and approved by the IRB. This policy applies to all biomedical and behavioral research involving human subjects or human materials conducted by faculty, staff, and students of Temple University. If the research program or study is a part of an application to a Sponsoring Agency, the human protocol must be submitted for either Subcommittee B's or Subcommittee A's review prior to or when the application is processed by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research.

Research involving human subject(s) is defined as research involved with any living individual about whom an investigator (whether faculty, staff, or student) conducting research obtains data through an intervention or an interaction with that individual or acquisition of identifiable private information. "Intervention" includes both a



manipulation of the human subject's environment or physical acquisition of data performed for research purposes. "Interaction" includes any communication or interpersonal contact between the investigator and the subject for research purposes. "Private information" includes all information about an individual or the behavior of an individual that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation is taking place, and/or information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual who reasonably expected would not be made public. Such information must be individually identifiable by the investigator to constitute research involving human subjects.

Human research is defined as any activity initiated by Temple University faculty, staff, or student which has the intent of securing information from humans for the purpose of advancing generalized knowledge. There is no distinction whether the activity is funded or non-funded. The IRB of Temple University must review all research protocols involving human subjects. It is assumed by the IRB that the investigator has included in the submission of the research protocol explicit objectives and formal procedures of the research so suitable review can be undertaken.

Any student proposing research which involves the use of human subjects as defined above must submit his or her proposal to the IRB. To avoid unnecessary delays, the proposal should be submitted to the IRB as early as possible, but minimally no later than after approval by the Advisory Committee at the Proposal hearing. Since the Graduate School will not accept a proposal unless the IRB approval has been requested, it is desirable for the student to submit a request to the IRB immediately upon approval of the proposal at the proposal hearing.

If you start your research before you receive final IRB approval, and it is not approved, your research will be invalidated and you will have to start over. Please be sure you have IRB approval before you start!

## **(6) Distribute the Abstract of Dissertation Proposal to Departmental Faculty**

Some programs in the college require students to distribute a one-page abstract of their approved proposal to all faculty members in the student's department. Check with your advisor as to whether your own department requires this distribution.

## **(7) Implement the Proposal and Writing the Dissertation**

After the proposal has been approved by your committee and the IRB you may begin the process of implementing the study. As noted above, the critical element in this process is close contact and collaboration with the dissertation chairperson. Other members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee should also be involved, although their input at this stage may be less intense. Graduate School policy states that:

The chairperson of the Dissertation Advisory Committee is responsible:

- To see that the candidate receives regular and continuing guidance in his or her research, including timely response from all committee members to work

- submitted to them by the candidate;
- To coordinate the responses of committee members, so that the candidate does not receive fundamentally conflicting advice
  - To inform candidates who are not making reasonable progress what they must do to avoid being dismissed for failure to make such progress.

In addition, if for some reason the candidate has not completed data collection and analysis one year after the proposal is approved, the Dissertation Advisory Committee should meet with the candidate to do the following:

- Review the candidate's progress;
- Make suggestions concerning future research
- Record the findings of the committee and the suggestions made

A copy of this record must be placed in the graduate student's file and given to the graduate student.

## **(8) Form the Dissertation Examining Committee**

Remember, all Dissertation Advisory Committees are unique and it is important for students to clarify exactly what each member of the Committee expects. In general, however, the major input into the original draft of a dissertation will come from the dissertation chairperson. In some cases, the additional members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee may want to see each chapter of the dissertation as it is being written; in others, the committee members may want to see a complete draft after it has been revised several times and given tentative approval by the chairperson. Whatever procedure is used, there will come a time when a majority of the members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee agree that the dissertation is ready for the oral defense. At this point, the student, in consultation with the dissertation chairperson, will choose the members who will comprise the examining committee and select the chair. The Dissertation Examining Committee evaluates the dissertation and the student's final oral defense. In the College of Education, the Dissertation Examining Committee consists of at least five members: the three from the Dissertation Advisory Committee plus two additional members. One of these additional members must be from outside the student's program area.

Occasionally, a student might want to have someone outside of Temple University on the Dissertation Examining Committee because of specific expertise not available at Temple University. To do this, the Chair of the Dissertation Advisory Committee requests approval by submitting the request form and a current curriculum vitae to the Director of Graduate Programs at least four weeks in advance of the scheduled defense. The College will forward it to the Dean of the Graduate School. Approval must be received prior to posting the Oral Defense.

## **(9) Scheduling the Final Oral Defense**

To schedule the final defense, the "Announcement Of Oral Defense" form is completed by the student and sent to the department chairperson who will submit it to the Director of Graduate Programs in the College. It will then be submitted to the Graduate School for

final approval. An oral defense of a dissertation normally takes from 1½ to 2 hours. In consultation with the dissertation chairperson, the usual procedure is for the student to find a day and time at which it is possible for all members of the Dissertation Examining Committee to meet.

All members of the Examining Committee must have a complete copy of the written, formatted dissertation. A majority of the Dissertation Advisory and Examining Committee members must stipulate in writing that the written dissertation is of sufficient quality to be defended. (Approving the holding of a defense does not signify approval of the dissertation.)

You must turn in your form scheduling the oral defense to the department chairperson at least **three weeks** prior to the defense. This is in order for us to meet the Graduate School requirement that a minimum of ten working days must elapse from the time the oral defense is announced to the exam itself. A defense cannot be held without written confirmation of approval and receipt of the defense paperwork from the Graduate School.

The announcement of the oral defense must be posted publicly. Any member of the Graduate Faculty has the right to request a copy of the dissertation from the Dean of the School/College in advance of the defense and may participate in the defense.

### **(10) Requesting a Graduate School Draft Review (Optional)**

As a service to students, the Graduate School will review the dissertation for format and other technical issues. This will not be a substantive review, but will assist the student to make the final product acceptable. In general, the student should reserve a day and time approximately two weeks prior to the oral defense to meet with the Graduate School's Assistant Dean.

### **(11) Submit Copies of the Dissertation to the Dissertation Examining Committee and the Graduate Programs Office**

The College of Education requires that one copy of the dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate Programs Office at the time the dissertation oral defense is scheduled. This copy is to be used by members of the academic community who wish to read the dissertation and attend the dissertation defense. Each member of the Doctoral Examining Committee must receive the version of the dissertation which has been submitted to the Graduate Programs Office. Since dissertations often are revised, the student must ensure that all members of the Examining Committee receive the most recent version of the dissertation, prior to the oral defense.

### **(12) Defend the Dissertation and Receive Final Approval**

To be defensible, a doctoral dissertation must:

- meet the standards for original research or other creative work in the field
- uphold the ethics and standards governing research or creative work in the discipline

- demonstrate mastery of the research methodology and subject matter
- demonstrate an understanding of the contribution of the body of knowledge to the discipline or disciplines involved and
- meet the standard of writing and presentation expected in any academic or scholarly publication or production including grammar, spelling, formatting and general readability

Attendance at the defense is limited to the following:

- members of the Dissertation Examining Committee
- the graduate student,
- members of the academic community, and
- members of the student's family

All members of the Dissertation Examining Committee **must** be physically present for the defense, except in the case of an emergency. The Dean of the Graduate School may, in serious circumstances, give prior written approval for no more than one member to be absent. The candidate and Chair of the Dissertation Advisory Committee must, however, both be present for a valid defense.

A member of the Dissertation Examining Committee whose absence has been approved by the Dean of the Graduate School must still participate in the defense through some means (e.g., telephone, video-conference, written comments and/or questions to be asked by another member), except in the case of a sudden, serious emergency.

If others wish to attend, permission must be obtained in writing from the graduate student and members of the Dissertation Examining Committee at least five days prior to the defense. If consent is not granted, those seeking permission for others to attend must petition the Dean of the School or College (in which the student is enrolled). If there is need for additional appeal, the petitions should be forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Note: Students in the College of Education are considered to be "members of the academic community." In practice, however, it is advisable for students to check with the doctoral candidate before the oral defense to ascertain if attendance at the oral is acceptable.

The outcome of the oral defense is decided by an open vote of the Dissertation Examining Committee. The decision of the Committee (Pass or Fail) is determined by a majority of those present and voting.

The Dissertation Examining Committee evaluates both the dissertation and a candidate's performance in the oral examination to determine whether or not the candidate passes. Only officially recognized members of a Dissertation Examining Committee have the authority to determine whether or not the candidate passes the final defense. Even though you pass the oral defense, your committee might require revisions to the dissertation as a condition of passing. The final revised dissertation must be submitted to

the Graduate School within 30 calendar days of the oral defense or the defense is nullified and another oral defense must be scheduled.

If a Dissertation Examining Committee requires substantial revisions that cannot be made within 30 calendar days, the Committee must suspend the defense until a majority agrees that the dissertation is sufficiently revised to be defensible. A candidate must repost the oral defense with the Graduate School. The Chair of the Dissertation Advisory Committee is responsible for notifying the Graduate School that a defense was suspended.

### **(13) The Paperwork - Signatures**

At the completion of a successful oral defense, the members will sign two forms: the “Final Examination Report for Doctoral Candidates” and the “Final Signature Page” (which is signed in duplicate). The “Final Examination Report for Doctoral Candidates” should be handed in to the Graduate Programs Office at the completion of the final defense. This form, as well as the “Final Signature Page” is included in the materials the student receives from the College and Graduate School when the final defense is scheduled and must accompany the dissertation when it is handed in to the Graduate School.

### **(14) Final Editing and Submission of the Dissertation**

Although the Graduate School lists three style manuals which it will accept, the standard practice in Education is APA (the American Psychological Association). A detailed listing of all Graduate School formatting requirements is presented in the Graduate School's *Dissertation Handbook*. Detailed preparation and formatting instructions can also be found at: <http://www.temple.edu/dissertationhandbook/>.

Almost all dissertations require at least minor editing after the oral defense. As mentioned above, the student has four weeks from the date of the defense to complete these editorial changes and make sure that the dissertation is properly formatted. Once that is done, the dissertation is submitted in to UMI

Create an account (<http://dissertations.umi.com/temple/>). Then, check back here ([www.temple.edu/dissertationhandbook](http://www.temple.edu/dissertationhandbook)) every so often as this is the means by which the Graduate School will update information. There is also a FAQ website that can answer many of your technical questions: <http://dissertations.umi.com/pdffaq.html>. This may seem like a lot of electronic references, but with e-filing, we are definitely in the electronic age.

Your graduation application fees to Temple will no longer include the microfilming or copyright fees; but the fees do still exist. They have been slightly reduced, slightly renamed, and must be paid through the new ETD site rather than through the University. The microfilming (now *publishing*) and copyright fees will not be due until you are ready to submit the pdf of your final dissertation, after a successful defense.

The Survey of Earned Doctorates (included in Final Defense packet received from Graduate School) and also found on line here [http://www.temple.edu/dissertationhandbook/documents/SED08\\_09.pdf](http://www.temple.edu/dissertationhandbook/documents/SED08_09.pdf) is completed and turned in to the Graduate School.

The Graduate School reserves the right to reject any dissertation which is not prepared in accordance with an approved style or does not meet the criteria listed in the Graduate School's *Dissertation Handbook* or does not demonstrate a graduate's knowledge of and ability to conduct original research. The Dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate Board must approve all completed dissertations. By signing, the major advisor attests that he or she has read the final copy and that the content and form, including grammar, spelling, and general readability are accepted. If major problems are discovered when the dissertation is reviewed by the Graduate School, the dissertation may be returned to the major advisor. It then becomes the major advisor's responsibility to work with the student in bringing the dissertation up to an acceptable standard.

### **(15) Filing for Graduation**

Don't forget that you must file an application for graduation as well as file your dissertation. Applications are done electronically through the College's EdPortal. Linda Pryor in the Graduate Programs Office can help you with any questions you might have on the online application.

## **Some Additional Rules and Regulations Affecting Doctoral Students**

### **Change in Committee Members**

Don't forget that if you change any committee members, whether the Advisory or the Examining Committee, there is a form that you must fill out in advance of either proposal or final defense. The "Request for Change in Dissertation Committee Form" can be found on the Graduate School website.

### **Full-time Status**

A doctoral student is considered to be full-time if the student has completed all requirements for a doctoral degree except the dissertation, is certified by her or his dissertation advisor to be engaged full-time in graduate work, and is registered for at least one credit of dissertation or research work. Students may be certified as full-time under these conditions for no more than three years (six regular semesters). The Graduate School will certify that a student is full-time while registering for either 9994 (799), 9998 (899) or 9999 (999). However, students may only be certified as full-time for one semester of 9994 and two semesters of 9998.

A student must take and pass the preliminary examination within one semester of completing coursework in order to be considered full-time. The proposal must be approved within three semesters of completing coursework.

A doctoral student who has completed coursework and requests designation as full-time (i.e., to be eligible for Code 23 Status to defer loans) must file the Full Time Status Form, signed by the appropriate advisor, with the Graduate School by the first day of classes each semester.

Students must complete all of the requirements for their degree and be working on their dissertation full-time to be considered for full-time status. Any exception to these rules is contingent on the decision of the Graduate Board in response to a formal appeal. Recipients of university fellowships and assistantships are required to be full-time students.

### **Dissertation Credit Post Candidacy**

A doctoral student must complete a minimum of six credits of research after achieving candidacy and before graduation. Normally, these will be in Dissertation Research (9999). However, credits earned in courses with other numbers, provided they are clearly research or dissertation research credits, will also be counted. As these credits reflect continuing work on a single project, a grade is assigned only for the last semester before graduation (A, B, C, D, F, or P). All previous semesters of such work are transcribed as "R" (for "Registered").

### **Registration During Dissertation Defense**

Students must be registered during the semester they defend and the semester they submit their final work to the Graduate School. A student must be registered unless all degree requirements, including submission of the dissertation final copies, have been completed prior to that semester, but an application to graduate has not been filed by the appropriate deadline.

Deadlines for registration have been determined for each academic period. Specifically, student must register:

- in the fall semester if the oral defense of the dissertation is held from the first day of classes to the day before the beginning of classes for the spring semester.
- in the spring semester if the oral defense of the dissertation is held from the first day of classes in the spring semester through May 31.
- in the summer if the oral defense of the dissertation is held from June 1 through the first day of classes for the fall semester.

### **Oral Defenses During the Summer**

Students are discouraged from attempting an oral defense of the dissertation during the summer since it is often difficult to obtain an adequate Dissertation Examining Committee. Under unusual circumstances, however, an oral defense may be held during the summer. In this case, the student must register for the appropriate section of 9999

during either the first or second summer session. As presented above, this rule is in effect if an oral defense is held between June 1 and Labor Day.

## **Authorship and Prior Publication**

A doctoral dissertation may have only one author. A candidate's previously published work may be included in the dissertation if the work meets the following criteria:

- The research was conducted by the candidate while a doctoral student at Temple University.
- It has not been used to meet the requirements for another degree.
- It is not co-authored unless the role of the candidate was clearly defined in the co-authored work.
- It is logically connected with and integrated into the dissertation.
- By its inclusion, it does not violate any existing copyright or contractual agreement.

Co-authored works that do not meet the criteria above may be included as appendices if they include the names of all authors and the contribution of the candidate is stated.

## **Some Final Words of Advice**

To repeat a comment made several times in this *Handbook*, there is no single set of steps which will guarantee that the dissertation process will be smooth or trouble-free. There are, however, several guiding principles which should help.

### **Always meet deadlines.**

It is perhaps obvious to say that deadlines should be met, but experience has shown that one of the most common reasons that students have problems completing the dissertation is a failure to get things done on time. Students should remember that certain critical parts of the dissertation process are not under their control. For example, a draft handed in to a committee member for review will not always be returned within a reasonable time period. If the draft was handed to the committee member shortly before Graduate School deadlines for completion, it is quite likely that the dissertation oral cannot be scheduled in time to meet this deadline. The most reasonable way to avoid this sort of problem is to allow more than enough time for each step in the dissertation process.

### **Complete the dissertation proposal early in the process.**

This is a similar point to the first, but is presented separately since the dissertation proposal has proven to be one of the major obstacles to completing the dissertation. Many students wait too long to obtain a signed dissertation proposal. Students should remember that no data should be collected before the proposal is signed by the Advisory Committee and approved by the University's IRB. This process often takes at least a semester. This time must be considered when the schedule for completing the dissertation is created.



## **When in doubt, ask.**

It is evident from this *Handbook* that there are many regulations and rules which govern the dissertation process. The best way to avoid problems is to ask.

The central person in the dissertation for the student is the dissertation advisor, and this person should always be contacted first if questions arise. While the dissertation advisor and other committee members are the primary resource for substantive and research oriented issues, the following people can help you with administrative and procedural matters regarding the rules, regulations and requirements of the dissertation process:

### **Dr. Jan Price Greenough**

Director of Graduate Programs  
College of Education  
[jan.greenough@temple.edu](mailto:jan.greenough@temple.edu)  
215-204-1087

### **Linda Pryor**

Graduate Secretary  
Graduate Programs Office  
College of Education  
[linda.pryor@temple.edu](mailto:linda.pryor@temple.edu)  
215 204-5634

### **Marge Pippet**

Assistant Dean, Graduate School  
[pip@temple.edu](mailto:pip@temple.edu)  
215-204-1383

# Bibliography

## Books and Articles Specifically About the Dissertation

There are many fine books that address researching and writing the dissertation. We've assembled a partial list for you. The ones indicated with an asterisk are held in the Graduate Programs Office and are available for your use.

Balian, E.S. (1982). *How to design, analyze, and write doctoral research: the practical guidebook*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

\*Becker, H. (1998). *Tricks of the trade: how to think about your research while you're doing it*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

\* \_\_\_\_\_. (1986). *Writing for social scientists: how to start and finish your thesis, book or article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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

Cone, J. D. & Foster, S. L. (1993). *Dissertations and theses from start to finish: psychology and related fields*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

\*Garman, N. B. and Piantanida, M. (2006). *The authority to imagine: the struggle toward representation in dissertation writing*. New York: Peter Lang Press.

\*Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a literature review: releasing the social science research imagination*. London: Sage Publications.

\*Krathwohl, D. R. and Smith, N. L. (2005). *How to prepare a dissertation proposal: suggestions for students in education and the social sciences and behavioral sciences*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Lory, T.J., Convey, J.J. and Chwalek, A.R. (1985). *Completing dissertations in the behavioral sciences*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Madsen, D. (1992). *Successful dissertations and theses*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

\*Roberts, C. M. (2004). *The dissertation journey: a practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

## References

Kerlinger, F. N. (1957). The functions of the university professor of education. *School and Society*, 85, 35-37.

“Degrees conferred by Title IV institutions, by level of degree and field of study: United States, academic year 2003–04.” U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2004.



## **Forms you will use during the dissertation process**

### **Request to Schedule the Dissertation Proposal Defense**

College of Education form. This form is filled out when the student is ready to defend the proposal before the full Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is submitted to the Graduate Program Office by the student after the student and advisory committee have scheduled the defense.

### **Dissertation Proposal Transmittal for Elevation to Candidacy**

Graduate School form. This form is the official notification from the College of Education to the Graduate School of the acceptance of the dissertation proposal. It is signed by the Dissertation Advisory Committee and submitted, along with two copies of the proposal and the request for IRB review, to the Graduate Program Office. Departmental approval is given and the proposal, the IRB form and the transmittal form are forwarded to the Graduate School.

### **Dissertation Advisory Committee Meeting Form**

College of Education form. This form is used to record the annual meeting of the Dissertation Advisory Committee regarding student progress.

### **Final Examination Report for Doctoral Candidates**

Graduate School form. The student fills out the top of the form, and then gets the signatures of the Dissertation Examining Committee in Section III, "Acknowledgement of Dissertation by Dissertation Examining Committee," to indicate they have read the dissertation, and by implication, that the student is ready to defend the dissertation. Once the signatures are obtained, the form is returned to the Graduate Program Office until the date of the final defense. At that point, the student should get the form and take it to the defense. The committee will sign Section V "Report on the Final Examination" at the conclusion of a successful defense.

### **Announcement of Oral Defense**

Graduate School form. This form is completed by the student and submitted to the Graduate Program Office when the student is ready to formally defend the dissertation. This form should be submitted three weeks in advance of the proposed date.

### **Final Examination Report for Doctoral Candidates (Redux)**

Graduate School form. Members of the Dissertation Examining Committee sign this form in Section V when the student has successfully defended the dissertation. It is submitted to the Graduate Program Office for signature in Section VI, "School/College Certification."

## Checklist for Completing the Dissertation

These steps will generally be completed in the order listed. However, there may be some individual variations among faculty/departments. Students should check with their advisors as they go through this process to make sure the order is correct and to determine if there are other steps that may be specific to the faculty member or department that should be added to the list.

<b>A. Obtaining a Signed Proposal</b>	
<b>Step</b>	<b>Completed</b>
(1) Select the dissertation chairperson & discuss topic	
(2) Select members of the Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC)	
(3) Submit first draft of proposal to dissertation chairperson & discuss revisions	
(4) Submit revised proposal to other members of the DAC and meet to discuss	
(5) Schedule the Proposal Defense. Fill out 'Request to Schedule the Dissertation Proposal Defense' form and submit it to the Graduate Programs Office	
(6) At the Proposal Defense, have the 'Dissertation Proposal Transmittal' form signed.	
(7) Within 30 days, submit it to the Director of Graduate Programs for approval and submission to the Graduate School	
(8) Elevation to candidacy	
<b>B. Obtaining Approval from the Institutional Review Board</b>	
(9) Submit proposal to IRB - note that the DAC chair is the PI for this purpose.	
(10) Final approval by IRB will be sent to student and dissertation chair	
<b>C. Researching and Writing the Dissertation</b>	
(11) Meet annually with the DAC and completion of the Advisory Committee form	
(12) Submit first draft to dissertation chair	
(13) Revise and re-submit as required	
<b>D. Scheduling the Dissertation Oral Defense</b>	
(14) In consultation with the dissertation chair, select the members of the Dissertation Examining Committee (DEC)	
(15) Members of the DAC and the DEC indicate that they have read the dissertation and that the final defense may proceed	
(16) Submit the 'Announcement of Oral Defense' form and the signed (in Section III) Final Examination Report to the Graduate Programs Office 3 weeks prior to the oral defense.	
(17) Submit one copy of the dissertation to the Graduate Program Office two weeks prior to the defense	
(18) Be sure all members of the DAC and DEC have a copy of the latest version	
<b>E. Completing the Process</b>	
(19) Prepare for the oral defense	
(20) The 'Final Examination Report for Doctoral Candidates' form as well as other necessary forms from the Graduate School will be sent directly to the Dissertation Advisor	
(21) Oral defense - usually 1 1/2 to 2 hours	
(22) Submit signed 'Final Examination Report for Doctoral Candidates' to the Graduate Programs Office	
(23) Finalize all editing, final revisions, etc.,	
(24) Submit the dissertation electronically as a pdf file, along with appropriate fees to: <a href="http://dissertations.umi.com/temple/">http://dissertations.umi.com/temple/</a>	
(25) Complete the online 'Application for Graduation' available at EdPortal	