

Ed.D. in Educational Leadership Dissertation Guide

Doctorate in Educational Leadership for Equity and Justice
Program
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



DELEJ
DOCTORATE IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Department of Educational Leadership, School Counseling, and Psychology

This handbook is a guide to the dissertation process for the California State University Channel Islands Ed.D. in Educational Leadership students. It does not constitute a contract and is subject to change at the discretion of CSUCI Department of Educational Leadership, School Counseling, and Psychology. This revised version of the dissertation handbook supersedes all previous versions.

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Introduction

Introduction to the Doctoral Journey and Dissertation Process

The Ed.D. in Educational Leadership culminating experiences include those required by 5 CCR 40511:

1. Passage of a qualifying examination by the end of the Fall semester of the second year. The qualifying exam will consist of an e-portfolio in which students demonstrate acquisition of program learning outcomes by documenting their scholar-practitioner performance on courses in the program that demonstrate equity and justice-focused leadership. Through reflection and self-assessment of growth in performances during the doctoral program, students will demonstrate acquisition of knowledge and preparedness to design research based on an existing problem of practice in equity or justice and conduct and produce a dissertation-in-practice. A committee of DELEJ core faculty will score the e-portfolio based on a task-specific, analytically scored rubric that will be provided to the students with the qualifying examination.
2. Approval of a proposal defense before a committee of a dissertation chair and professors and/or other scholar-practitioners.
3. Approval, by a dissertation committee, of a written dissertation that is a product of systematic, rigorous research on a significant professional issue. The dissertation is expected to contribute to an improvement in professional practices or policy. It shall evidence originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. The dissertation shall identify the research problem and question(s), state the major theoretical perspectives, explain the significance of the undertaking, relate it to the relevant scholarly and professional literature, set forth the appropriate sources for and methods of gathering and analyzing the data, and offer a conclusion or recommendation. The dissertation shall directly, or through explicit recommendations to practitioners or policymakers, impact a problem of practice toward more equitable and just outcomes. It shall include a written abstract that summarizes the significance of the work, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation.
4. Approval of an oral defense of the dissertation. A dissertation-in-practice studying an equity and/or social justice issue in education will be encouraged.

This dissertation guide sets forth the requirements for the preparation and submission of the dissertation for the *California State University Channel Islands Ed.D. in Educational Leadership program*. The doctoral journey consists of six primary components: a) Coursework, (b) Qualifying Examination, (c) Dissertation Proposal, (d) Dissertation Proposal Defense, (e) Dissertation, and (f) Dissertation Defense.

All doctoral coursework is critical to the student's development of their dissertation. Therefore, it is expected that the student satisfactorily completes all required coursework. (See Student Handbook) The capstone of the doctoral program is the Dissertation and the Dissertation Defense. Prior to this culminating experience, students must satisfactorily complete a) the Qualifying Examination, b) the Dissertation Proposal, and d) the Dissertation Proposal Defense. The purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to assess the student's ability in synthesizing theory and practice and requires the student to draw upon and reflect on the knowledge and skills developed during the coursework. The Dissertation Proposal is generally used as the basis for the first chapters of the dissertation. The capstone project, the Dissertation and the Dissertation Defense are designed to evaluate the student's capabilities as a scholar and researcher in educational leadership.

Purpose of the Manual

The purpose of this guide is to clarify the steps leading to the development of the dissertation and the steps of the dissertation process itself.

It is the student's responsibility to prepare the dissertation in accordance with the instructions in the CSUCI "Format and Evaluation Guidelines for Dissertation Preparation." Students should consult the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), (henceforth referred in this handbook as the APA Manual) as the writing style.

It is expected that every dissertation will demonstrate advanced written communication skills, clarity, correctness, and organization. The student may want to consider the employment of a professional editor in the final editing of the dissertation.

While the successful completion of a dissertation is emphasized for earning an Ed.D., it is only one of the requirements. It is the student's responsibility to understand and satisfy all of the requirements of the doctoral program and of the University. Ultimately, the student remains responsible for the caliber and integrity of his or her doctoral work.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

The following are the Program Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply knowledge of equity, ethics, and social justice to bring about solutions to complex problems of practice by addressing issues of diversity, equity, and opportunity, including attention to special populations.
2. Apply modern theories of management of complex organizations to education by constructing and applying knowledge to make a positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.
3. Develop and demonstrate effective collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities and to build partnerships, by demonstrating leadership based on a shared vision of learning grounded in moral principles and ethical decision-making.
4. Navigate political, legal, and historical contexts affecting local, state, and federal educational policy and decision-making by utilizing field-based opportunities to analyze problems of practice and using multiple frames to develop meaningful solutions.
5. Develop a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research, which links theory with systemic and systematic inquiry for achieving reform and improvement within California's P-12 or community college/post-secondary education institutions.
6. Generate, transform, and utilize professional knowledge and practice by demonstrating leadership based on a shared vision of learning grounded in moral principles and ethical decision-making.
7. Design internal and external accountability processes and use them in data-driven planning by conducting research in relevant field settings, including collection, analysis, and use of original data as well as institutional research and other existing data to improve educational outcomes.
8. Assess learning outcomes and use data for student interventions and program decision-making and improvement, by formulating researchable questions, collecting quantitative and qualitative data, designing statistical and qualitative analyses, and interpreting results to make equity-focused decisions.

Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination consists of a written exam and e-portfolio completed in the first semester of the second year of the program, in EDD 720: Qualifying Examination and Dissertation Proposal Preparation and Defense. The e-portfolio contains evidence of student work in the program in order to demonstrate students' facility with drawing connections across courses and with examining issues of equity and justice in educational institutions, as well as students' narrative reflections of learning and growth. In the e-portfolio, students will choose a minimum of four Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and self-assess and reflect on their progress as it relates to issues of equity and justice. Students will self-select evidence that supports their self-assessment. The qualifying exam paper is a cumulative representation of the student's work, reflecting major themes and topics of the program.

Qualifying Exam Prompt

Identify and discuss a problem of practice that you would like to investigate through your dissertation study. Describe the context in which the problem is situated and discuss the significance of the problem in relation to the educational context and communities it affects. Describe how this issue relates to local community, school, district, and/or college or university needs, particularly with respect to equity and social justice. Explore, critique, and synthesize how this topic has been conceptualized and researched using various perspectives. Draw from the work you have done throughout the DELEJ program.

Qualifying Exam Committee

The qualifying examination committee shall have a minimum of three members, including the chair. The qualifying examination committee chair shall be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member at CSUCI and except in special cases shall be a member of the Ed.D. program faculty. Special cases shall be reviewed and decided by the core doctoral faculty. At least two members of the committee must be members of the Ed.D. program faculty whose primary affiliation is with the CSU campus administering the Ed.D. program, at least one of whom shall be a member of the core doctoral faculty. The committee may include a member who holds an appropriate professional position in a P-12 institution, a community college, or another postsecondary educational institution

Qualifying Exam Rubric

	Missing	Developing	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Identify and discuss a problem of practice that you would like to investigate through your dissertation study.	No problem is defined.	The problem is described with limited detail, and the content shows limited understanding of the problem.	The problem is described with adequate detail, and the content shows an understanding of the problem.	The problem is thoroughly described and content shows an in-depth understanding of the problem.
Describe the context in which the problem is situated and discuss the significance of the problem in relation to the educational context and communities it affects.	No context is included.	The context of the problem is not adequately detailed. There is limited discussion of how the problem affects educational communities.	Attention is given to the context of the problem and how that shapes the problem. There is insightful discussion of how the problem affects educational communities.	There is significant attention to the context of the problem and how that shapes the problem. There is insightful discussion of how the problem affects educational communities.
Describe how this issue relates to local community, school, and/or district needs, particularly with	One or more of these components is missing or not addressed.	The problem is defined in a limited way and may not explore the complexities of the problem or challenge conventional perceptions and beliefs. Limited	The problem is defined in from multiple perspectives and with adequate attention to context. The paper adequately explores the complexities of	The problem is defined using multiple perspectives to explore the complexities of the problem and challenges conventional

respect to equity and social justice.		connections are made between the problem and the needs of the context or community. There is limited connection to issues of equity or justice.	the problem and challenges conventional perceptions and beliefs. Clear connections are made between the problem and the needs of the context or community. Issues of equity or justice are identified and discussed.	perceptions and beliefs. Thoughtful, comprehensive connections are made between the problem and the needs of the context or community. Issues of equity or justice are identified and discussed in detail.
Explore, critique, and synthesize how this topic has been conceptualized and researched using various perspectives.	One or more of these components is missing or not addressed.	The problem is not fully situated in the existing literature, and existing understanding is not synthesized. The breadth and depth of information may be inaccurate and may not be current or representative. Multiple perspectives are not included.	The problem is situated in the existing literature, and existing understanding is synthesized. The breadth and depth of information is accurate and mostly current and representative. Multiple perspectives are included, but may not be comprehensive.	The problem is well-situated in the existing literature, and there is a clear synthesis of existing knowledge. The breadth and depth of information is accurate, representative, and current. Multiple perspectives are included.
Draw from the work you have done throughout the DELEJ program.	The student does not draw on the work they have completed in the DELEJ program.	The student does not draw on the work they have completed in the DELEJ program in a meaningful way. Student growth and learning may or may not be apparent or connected to the students' discussion of the problem of practice.	The student draws on the work they have completed in the DELEJ program in a meaningful way. Student growth and learning is apparent and connected to the students' discussion of the problem of practice.	The student draws on the work they have completed in the DELEJ program in a significant and meaningful way. Student growth and learning is apparent and connected to the students' discussion of the problem of practice.
Writing Conventions	The writing is not clear and organized. The project may not adhere to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and/or professional presentation.	The writing is somewhat clear and organized. The project sometimes adheres to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.	The writing is mostly clear and organized. The project mostly adheres to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.	The writing is clear, organized, and adheres to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.
Formatting	APA format is not used. Does not use anti-bias language.	There are many formatting errors. Inconsistently uses APA style conventions to reduce bias in language	There are a few formatting errors. Generally adheres to APA style conventions to reduce bias in language	APA style is used correctly throughout. Consistently adheres to APA style conventions to reduce bias in language

Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal is foundational to the dissertation manuscript. Its purpose is to describe the research idea, critically explore the multiple perspectives in the literature, and present a discussion on the appropriate methodology to conduct the inquiry. In proposing a dissertation study, the proposal demonstrates that the student has a command of both the topic area and the methodologies needed to conduct the research. The proposal should follow the most recent version of the CSUCI Format and Evaluation Guidelines for Dissertation Preparation.

In EDD 720, the student will be guided to build on the qualifying examination to bring together the knowledge, skills, and insights to develop a full dissertation proposal. Coursework is designed to ensure the research design includes scholarly references, demonstrates a thorough understanding of research design and analysis, and clearly identifies the “gap” in literature that is being addressed with the research.

The proposal includes a title page, an abstract, an introduction, review of the literature, proposed methodology, a reference page, and any relevant appendices, including research instruments, surveys, protocols, etc. The dissertation proposal should use the current edition of the APA Manual style

Key Elements of the Dissertation Proposal:

1. **Title:** The title of the proposal, and later of the dissertation, gives a clear, concise description of the study topic and scope. The title page includes the title; author's name; the degree to be conferred; the university, school, and department; and month and year of approval. Title should be in all capitals.
2. **Abstract:** The abstract is a summary (250–350 words) of the dissertation project's area of investigation. It should reflect the current issue in the field and raise research questions suggested by findings in the current literature. In addition, the student should briefly describe the proposed methods and expected conclusions.
3. **Table of Contents:** The table of contents for the proposal list all of the elements of the proposal with accompanying page numbers. These elements generally include: Abstract, Table of Contents, Statement of the Problem, Review of the Literature, Methodology, Appendices, and References.
4. **Section One, Introduction and Problem Statement:** This section provides a general introduction to the area of study, presents the problem of practice to be investigated by the study, and explains the study purpose. This section should include the following:
 - A. Study background, including an overview of the topic and context of the study
 - B. Problem statement
 - C. Study purpose
 - D. Research questions
 - E. Overview of methodology
 - F. Study significance and rationale
5. **Section Two, Review of the Literature:** This section provides a comprehensive synthesis of relevant literature and outlines the theoretical/conceptual framework to be used in the study. This section should include the following:
 - A. An introduction that outlines the scope of the literature review and gives an overview of this section.
 - B. Comprehensive review and synthesis of the existing relevant literature
 - C. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature
 - D. Connections between the literature and the proposed study
 - E. A comprehensive description of the theoretical/conceptual framework (if applicable) and how it will be applied
6. **Section Three, Methodology:** The methodology section describes in detail how the study will be conducted. The information presented will employ future tense because the work has not yet been done. This section usually begins with an overview of the study purpose, a restatement of the research questions, and the context in which the study will be conducted. This section will vary depending on the methodology chosen for the research, but generally includes the following:
 - A. Introduction: Contains an overview of the study purpose, a restatement of the research questions, and the context in which the study will be conducted, as well as an overview of the section.
 - B. Research Design/Methodology: Contains a comprehensive description of the design that will be used in this study, including methodology/methods to be employed.

- C. Rationale: A discussion and justification of the selected research design to explain the rationale for the design choice in terms of the research problem(s) identified.
- D. Research Sample and Data Sources, including Selection Criteria of Participants: A discussion of the sample and population, the participants, the criteria for the selection of participants, and a description of the method that will be used to identify participants.
- E. Description of the Setting: Describes the Context and/or Setting in which the study will take place.
- F. Measures/Instruments: A detail description of the instrument(s) for data collection.
- G. Variables: Detailed description of any variables that will be measured/included.
- H. Data Collection: Detailed description of how the data will be collected and how the data to be collected will answer the research question(s).
- I. Data Analysis: Describes the data analysis process as it relates to the research question(s) and the methodology.
- J. Issues of Validity/Trustworthiness: Discusses issues of validity, reliability, and/or trustworthiness, as appropriate.
- K. Researcher Positionality: Discuss the role, the position, and the factors influencing the researcher in relation to the population and the topic.
- L. Limitations and Delimitations: In-depth analysis of the anticipated limitations of this study. Limitations should include any limitations in the research design, the proposed instrumentation, any bias that may be present in the selection of participants, the participant(s), and the researcher. Once the limitations are thoroughly discussed, strategies that will be used to minimize their impact should be explored. Delimitations are conditions or parameters that are intentionally imposed by the researcher in order to limit the scope of the study and should be explained here.

7. Appendices: Appendices contain supplementary material too lengthy to be included in the text or not immediately essential to the reader's understanding of the text. Any research instruments, including surveys, interview protocols, observation protocols, etc. should be included. If numerous types of artifacts are included as appendices, each type should have a section labeled as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc. Materials that document important components of the dissertation should also be included.

8. References: All references cited within the text must be listed in accordance with the most recent edition of the APA Manual and the CSUCI Format and Evaluation Guidelines for Dissertation Preparation. This section includes only works cited in the dissertation proposal.

Dissertation Proposal Rubric

	Missing	Developing	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Introduction	The introduction is missing one or more components.	The introduction does not fully introduce the topic, justify the need for the study, and/or explain the study purpose. A problem statement may not be included or does not support the study. Research questions may be unclear.	The introduction introduces the topic, somewhat justifies the need for the study, and mostly identifies the study purpose. A problem statement is included that identifies the problem of practice and mostly supports the need for the study. Research questions are identified.	The introduction clearly introduces the topic, justifies the need for the study, and identifies the study purpose. A problem statement is included that clearly identifies the problem of practice and supports the need for the study. Research questions are clearly identified and explicitly connected to the study purpose, problem, and methodology.
Literature Review	The literature review minimally addresses relevant literature. The literature review does not support the study.	Some relevant literature is explained, but may not be synthesized or explicitly connected to the study. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature may or may not be included. The	Relevant literature is mostly explained and synthesized. Its connection to the current study is mostly explicated. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature are outlined and connected to the study. The	Literature review is comprehensive and relevant literature is clearly explained and synthesized. Its connection to the current study is explicated. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature are comprehensively

		literature somewhat justifies the need for the study.	literature review mostly justifies the need for the study.	outlined and deeply connected to the study. The literature review clearly justifies the need for the study.
Theoretical or Conceptual Framework	There is no theoretical or conceptual framework.	The theoretical/conceptual framework is somewhat described and may or may not be applied.	The theoretical/conceptual framework is described and some justification for choice of framework is provided. The theoretical framework is applied to shape the study and/or make sense of the findings.	The theoretical/conceptual framework is clearly and comprehensively described, and justification is provided for choice of framework. The framework is utilized to shape the study and make sense of the findings.
Research Design/ Methodology (including, but not limited to, study purpose, design, methodology, methods, data collection, sample, variables, data analysis, procedures, validity and/or trustworthiness, limitations)	Research design may not be clearly explained and/or does not include most of the relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Rationale is not provided for design choices. Design is not tied to research questions. The project does not use appropriate research methods to answer the research questions.	Research design is somewhat explained and includes some of the relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Rationale may not be provided for design choices. Design is somewhat tied to research questions. The project sometimes uses appropriate research methods to answer the research questions.	Research design is explained and includes most of the relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Some rationale is provided for design choices. Design is tied to research questions. The chosen research methods are appropriate for the research questions and study purpose	Research design is thoroughly explained and includes all relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Rationale is provided for design choices. Design is clearly tied to research questions. The chosen research methods are appropriate for the research questions and study purpose, and there is explicit justification for the chosen research methods.
Writing Conventions	The writing is not clear and organized. The project may not adhere to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and/or professional presentation.	The writing is somewhat clear and organized. The project sometimes adheres to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.	The writing is mostly clear and organized. The project mostly adheres to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.	The writing is clear, organized, and adheres to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.
Formatting	APA format is not used. Does not use anti-bias language.	There are many formatting errors. Inconsistently uses APA style conventions to reduce bias in language	There are a few formatting errors. Generally adheres to APA style conventions to reduce bias in language	APA style is used correctly throughout. Consistently adheres to APA style conventions to reduce bias in language

Submission to the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Students wishing to conduct research involving human subjects are required to review the policies and procedures for research involving human subjects for CSU Channel Islands.

IRB procedures protect the rights and welfare of research subjects and assure their informed consent to research procedures and assurance of ethical treatment of participants in research projects. Research that

involves human subjects cannot begin prior to the full approval from the CSUCI Institutional Review Board (IRB). In compliance with The National Commission for the Protection of Human Rights and the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46, all research projects involving faculty, staff, or students — either as investigators or as participants — must be submitted to the CSUCI Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review prior to data collection.

After the successful completion of the dissertation proposal, the student will work with the dissertation chair (and possibly committee members) to begin the IRB process. Under the direction of the dissertation chair, the student will complete the university's IRB application.

Upon completing of the university's application, the student will then work with their chair to ensure the application and supporting documents are complete. Once approved by the chair, the student will submit their completed application and all supporting documents for review to the University IRB. Data cannot be collected until IRB approval. Any data collected before IRB approval cannot be used.

Advancement to Candidacy

A doctoral candidate is a student in good standing that has been deemed ready to start a dissertation study. Advancement to candidacy is based on the student successfully defending one's proposal. However, before the student can be admitted to candidacy and move forward in the dissertation process, all coursework and qualifying examinations must be satisfactorily completed, in addition to the successful defense of the dissertation proposal. (See Student Handbook)

The Dissertation Committee

The doctoral student benefits greatly from the input and support of faculty members and is not expected to work in isolation. Dissertation committee members constitute a range of expertise that is pertinent to the student's topic under study and the methodology likely to be studied. Committee members are called on to advise the candidate throughout the process in areas appropriate to their expertise and interests. Members will also comment on written materials developed by the candidate when these are presented in a timely manner. Committee members are also responsible for evaluating and approving both the dissertation proposal and the completed dissertation work.

The student's Dissertation Committee counsels the student on all aspects of the doctoral research to foster the student's progress and to monitor the quality of the research and resulting dissertation. The doctoral student should begin to consider faculty who might make appropriate committee members during the Specialization Phase.

The Dissertation committee will consist of at least three members; one will serve as chair. Co-chairs are allowed. More than three committee members are acceptable and may be requested by the student and the chair. All committee members should have appropriate expertise in educational practice or policy. The committee shall include at least two tenured or tenure-track faculty members at CSUCI, and at least one member who is primarily affiliated with a California P-12 institution or community college. The tenured or tenure-track faculty members shall be drawn from the core doctoral faculty or affiliated doctoral faculty. The director may approve an exception to the membership criteria stated above, if the individual nominated has expertise particularly relevant to the candidate's dissertation research. One member of the committee must be an individual who is considered a professional practitioner who also holds a doctorate.

Qualified individuals whose expertise is relevant to the topic but who are not members of the DELEJ Core Faculty must be recommended to the Director and Dean of the School of Education. All members of the dissertation committee must have an Ed.D. or Ph.D. A curriculum vita must accompany the request. Only DELEJ Core Faculty can chair a dissertation committee. The student and advisor together shall propose the membership of the student's dissertation committee.

A change of dissertation chair should only occur on very rare occasions. Reasons for the change should be documented in writing and should reflect extenuating circumstances. The change must be signed off by the current chair and the newly proposed chair and approved by the Director of the DELEJ program.

Meetings of the Dissertation Committee may be called at any time by the chairperson. The most important meetings are the Preliminary Oral Defense, where the proposal is presented to the committee for approval, and the Final Oral Defense where the completed dissertation is presented to the committee for final approval.

The Dissertation

Overview of Dissertation Materials

Dissertation manuscripts should include all of the following:

1. **Title Page:** The title gives a clear, concise description of the study topic and scope. The title page includes the title; author's name; the degree to be conferred; the university, school, and department; and month and year of approval. Title should be in all capitals.
2. **Abstract:** The abstract is a concise, comprehensive summary of the contents of the dissertation study, including the problem statement, purpose, background, data sources, methodology, key findings, and implications. Abstract should be limited to 350 words.
3. **Dedication/Acknowledgements Page:** The acknowledgements page is a brief section that should express personal thanks to the individuals who have assisted you in your research work and the production of the dissertation. (However, do no break any confidentiality by identifying the subjects of your research.) The dedication, when included, should be brief and placed on a separate page preceding the acknowledgment page or at the end of the acknowledgment section on a separate page.
4. **Table of Contents:** The Table of Contents lists, in order of appearance, the various chapters and subsections of the manuscript along with their page numbers. The table of contents should include the acknowledgement, list of tables, list of figures, chapter titles, references, appendix or appendices.
5. **List of Tables:** The List of Tables lists, in order of appearance, all tables and the corresponding pages of each table.
6. **List of Figures:** The List of Figures lists, in order of appearance, figures and the corresponding pages of each figure.
7. **Chapters:** The chapter numbers should be written rather than in numerical form. The entire chapter title should be capitalized and centered. Titles longer than one line should be single-spaced; all contents of the chapters should follow the most recent edition of the APA manual.
8. **Appendix or Appendices:** Appendices contain supplementary material too lengthy to be included in the text or not immediately essential to the reader's understanding of the text. Any research instruments, including surveys, interview protocols, observation protocols, etc. should be included. If numerous types of artifacts are included as appendices, each type should have a section labeled as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc. Materials that document important components of the dissertation should also be included. IRB approval, if applicable, should be included here.
9. **References:** All references cited within the text must be listed in accordance with the most recent edition of the APA Manual and the CSUCI Format and Evaluation Guidelines for Dissertation Preparation. This section includes only works cited in the dissertation.

Development of the Dissertation Manuscript

With modifications and additions as appropriate, in general, the dissertation proposal is used as the basis for the first chapters of the dissertation. The proposal's literature review is likely to need updating, but the research question(s) and hypotheses should not be modified to match later findings. In addition, students should ensure that the proper grammatical tenses are used in the final document and describe the work in past tense as opposed to the proposal, which should be written in future tense.

Students should work with their chair to determine the exact structure of their dissertation, but the following serves as a general guide:

Chapter One: Introduction

The purpose of the introduction chapter is to provide the background and framing for the research. This chapter should provide an overview of the topic, identify the problem of practice and provide background and context for the problem, identify the study purpose and research questions, identify the methodology,

describe the significance of the study, and offer definitions of terms. The introduction includes several subsections as listed below:

1. **Introduction:** The introductory section provides a brief overview of the current problem that the research study is addressing, and identifies the purpose of the study, why it is significant, how it was conducted, and how it will contribute to professional knowledge and practice.
2. **Study Background:** This section presents the student's area of inquiry by laying out what is known about the issue from the published literature. The background section contains a discussion summary of the most relevant literature to provide the historical (e.g. how the problem has evolved over time), and the social (e.g. contexts) and theoretical (e.g. important variables, the theoretical concepts, and the principles underpinning the research) contexts for the research problem. The candidate should effectively link and relate the background of the study to the proposed research. Questions that may be addressed in this section may include but are not limited to: What is the problem and why it is of interest? Who is affected by the problem? What research has been done to investigate or address the problem? How will the proposed research extend or refine the existing knowledge in the area under study? Who will benefit or use the proposed research?
3. **Problem statement:** This section defines the problem of practice that exists in the literature, theory, or practice that leads to a need for the study. The problem statement clearly summarizes the context for the study and the main problem the study seeks to address. It usually identifies the general problem, the specific problem, the focus of the research, and the context of the problem. The purpose of a problem statement is to: a). Introduce the reader to the importance of the topic being studied in order to orient them to the significance of the study and the research questions or hypotheses to follow; b). Place the problem into a particular context that clearly defines what is to be investigated. The problem statement provides context for what the researcher is doing and why the research is necessary and valuable.
4. **Purpose Statement:** The purpose statement clearly and succinctly states the focus and intentions of the proposed research and should follow the problem statement. The statement usually begins with "The purpose of this study is..." It foreshadows the research questions and and/or hypothesis(es). **Note:** Although brief in nature, both the problem statement and the purpose statement are two very important aspects of the manuscript. These statements support the importance of the study and identify the goal of the research. All proceeding aspects of the manuscript support and further expand upon the problem and purpose statements.
5. **Significance of the Study:** The significance of the study section may be included in the purpose statement or be contained in its own section and includes a brief description of how/why the study is important. It contains a description of the contribution that the study makes to the knowledge base, the discipline, and or the context of the research.
6. **Research Questions:** Research questions are directly tied to the study purpose and to the problem. They should be specific and feasible. A typical dissertation contains two to five research questions, with each question listed on a separate line.
7. **Definition of key terms:** In this section, define any key terms that are necessary for the study.
8. **Organization of the dissertation:** This brief concluding explanation identifies the contents of the rest fo the dissertation manuscript.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Chapter two presents an overview of the literature in which the research is founded and identifies the theoretical or conceptual framework for the study. The purpose of this chapter is to place the dissertation study in context of previous research and to situate the study in the relevant field of inquiry. This section should include the following:

1. **Introduction:** This section provides an introduction that outlines the scope of the literature review and gives and overview of this section.
2. **Literature Review:** This section provides a comprehensive review and synthesis of the existing relevant literature. The literature review should communicate what is already known about the topic, the limitations or gaps in the literature, including what has not been examined or how understanding on the topic is still developing, as well as how this study can specifically address gaps in the existing literature. This section also grounds the proposed study in the relevant work that has been done in the field.
3. **Theoretical or Conceptual Framework:** This section contains a comprehensive overview of the theoretical or conceptual framing, including the background of the framework, major theorists, rationale for the framework, and how it was used to guide the study.

4. **Conclusion:** Chapter two should end with a focused summary of what currently is known, what is not known, and how the study can specifically address gaps in the existing knowledge. This should explicitly connect to the methodology to be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The methodology chapter describes in detail how the study was conducted. In this chapter, the candidate provides the reader with the details of what occurred during the execution of research. Descriptions in this chapter should be comprehensive and in sufficient detail as to permit the replication of the study. This section usually begins with an overview of the study purpose, a restatement of the research questions, and the context in which the study will be conducted. This section will vary depending on the methodology chosen for the research, but generally includes the following:

1. **Introduction and Purpose of the Study:** The introduction may begin with a brief statement of the nature and purpose of the study, along with the research questions, and may concisely describe the contents and organization to the chapter.
2. **Research Design:** The chosen research design(s) should be consistent with the research question. In the design section, the methodology and research design is comprehensively explained and all design choices are justified. This section provides rationale for why the design is most appropriate for the study. The rationale also needs to be supported by substantive and methodological literature. The design of the study describes the way in which the study was carried out.
3. **Participants:** In the participant section, the population, the sample size, the type of sample, the sampling procedures (e.g. convenience sampling, etc.), and the sample characteristics should be explained. The sample selection procedures (who, what, when, where, how) need to be explained in enough detail for the study to be replicated. The actual sample size and the needed sample size for the chosen research design and analysis need to be specific. Participants of the study are also described in detail, and should include a description of the demographic information. The candidate should also include an in-depth discussion of how the sample was identified, who selected the sample, and how the study was introduced to the sample, including gaining participation.
4. **Setting:** The setting of the study is described (e.g. school system, school, testing location, etc.) in this section. Real names for people, schools, and school districts should never be used. Use pseudonyms for people and descriptors when necessary.
5. **Instrumentation:** In the instrumentation section, the instrument(s) that are used to collect data or to measure each variable needs to be identified. The instruments may be tests, surveys, questionnaires, interview protocols, observational protocols, or other measurements. A description of each instrument must include its content, origin, and its appropriateness. If applicable, scoring information for the composite and subscales needs to be included (e.g., range of possible scores and interpretation of scores) as well as the validity and reliability statistics should be cited.
6. **Procedures/Data Collection:** The data collection section describes the exact procedures used to collect the data. The connection between the data collection processes and the methodology should be explained. All protocols or related materials (coding guides, etc.) should be included in an appendix.
7. **Data Analysis:** In the data analysis section, the type of data analysis is identified, connection to the methodology is explained, and a concise rationale for the type of analysis is provided. The chosen procedures should be consistent with the research questions, hypotheses, type of data collected, and the chosen methodology.
8. **Limitations of the Study:** Discussion of the study limitations in context of the threats to internal or external validity and/or trustworthiness, as well as steps taken to limit the threat and how the limitation influenced the study.
9. **Researcher Positionality:** Discuss the role, the position, and the factors influencing the researcher in relation to the population and the topic.

Chapter Four: Findings/Results

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings/results of the analysis. chapter should begin with a brief restatement of the study purpose, along with a brief discussion of the chapter content. This chapter should include a summary of findings and should answer each of the research questions. The types of evidence presented and the manner of presentation will vary depending on the research tradition (mixed methods,

quantitative, or qualitative) and the methodology chosen. Presentation of findings should adhere to the standards of the research tradition and the methodology.

Chapter Five: Discussion/Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter five interprets and discusses the findings of the research in the context of the literature and the theoretical/conceptual framework. This chapter should also identify the implications of the study, providing recommendations for practice, policy, and/or future research. Solutions for the problem of practice should be included here.

Appendix or Appendices

Appendices contain supplementary material too lengthy to be included in the text or not immediately essential to the reader's understanding of the text. Any research instruments, including surveys, interview protocols, observation protocols, etc. should be included. If numerous types of artifacts are included as appendices, each type should have a section labeled as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc. Materials that document important components of the dissertation should also be included. IRB approval, if applicable, should be included here.

References

All references cited within the text must be listed in accordance with the most recent edition of the APA Manual and the CSUCI Format and Evaluation Guidelines for Dissertation Preparation. This section includes only works cited in the dissertation.

Dissertation Rubric

A rubric score of 1 or 2 in any section of the dissertation will require revision and resubmission of that section.

	Missing	Developing	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Introduction	The introduction is missing one or more components.	The introduction does not fully introduce the topic, justify the need for the study, and/or explain the study purpose. A problem statement may not be included or does not support the study. Research questions may be unclear.	The introduction introduces the topic, somewhat justifies the need for the study, and mostly identifies the study purpose. A problem statement is included that identifies the problem of practice and mostly supports the need for the study. Research questions are identified.	The introduction clearly introduces the topic, justifies the need for the study, and identifies the study purpose. A problem statement is included that clearly identifies the problem of practice and supports the need for the study. Research questions are clearly identified and explicitly connected to the study purpose, problem, and methodology.
Literature Review	The literature review minimally addresses relevant literature. The literature review does not support the study.	Some relevant literature is explained, but may not be synthesized or explicitly connected to the study. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature may or may not be included. The literature somewhat justifies the need for the study.	Relevant literature is mostly explained and synthesized. Its connection to the current study is mostly explicated. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature are outlined and connected to the study. The literature review mostly justifies the need for the study.	Literature review is comprehensive and relevant literature is clearly explained and synthesized. Its connection to the current study is explicated. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature are comprehensively outlined and deeply connected to the study. The literature review clearly justifies

				the need for the study.
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework	There is no theoretical framework.	The theoretical/conceptual framework is somewhat described and may or may not be applied.	The theoretical/conceptual framework is described and some justification for choice of framework is provided. The theoretical framework is applied to shape the study and/or make sense of the findings.	The theoretical/conceptual framework is clearly and comprehensively described, and justification is provided for choice of framework. The framework is utilized to shape the study and make sense of the findings.
Research Design/Methodology (including, but not limited to, study purpose, design, methodology, methods, data collection, sample, variables, data analysis, procedures, validity and/or trustworthiness, limitations)	Research design may not be clearly explained and/or does not include most of the relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Rationale is not provided for design choices. Design is not tied to research questions. The project does not use appropriate research methods to answer the research questions.	Research design is somewhat explained and includes some of the relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Rationale may not be provided for design choices. Design is somewhat tied to research questions. The project sometimes uses appropriate research methods to answer the research questions.	Research design is explained and includes most of the relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Some rationale is provided for design choices. Design is tied to research questions. The chosen research methods are appropriate for the research questions and study purpose	Research design is thoroughly explained and includes all relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Rationale is provided for design choices. Design is clearly tied to research questions. The chosen research methods are appropriate for the research questions and study purpose, and there is explicit justification for the chosen research methods.
Findings/Results	Findings section does not answer research question(s) or explain what was learned about the phenomenon under study. The findings section is not clear or well-organized. The findings themselves are not supported by the data. The findings are not presented in a way that aligns with the norms and requirements of the study's methodology.	Findings section somewhat answers research question(s) and explains what was learned about the phenomenon under study. The findings section is not very clear or well-organized. The findings themselves may not be fully supported by the data. The findings may or may not be presented in a way that aligns with the norms and requirements of the study's methodology.	Findings section answers research question(s) and explains what was learned about the phenomenon under study. The findings section is mostly clear and well-organized. The findings themselves are supported by the data. The findings are presented in a way that mostly aligns with the norms and requirements of the study's methodology.	Findings section answers research question(s) in a rich, descriptive manner with emphasis on what was learned about the phenomenon under study. The findings section is clear and well-organized. The findings themselves are supported by the data. The findings are presented in a way that clearly aligns with the norms and requirements of the study's methodology.
Discussion	The discussion section transcends the data. Discussion does not connect findings to the prior research or to the theoretical framework.	The discussion section somewhat transcends the data and/or rarely connects the findings to prior research or to the theoretical framework.	The discussion is related to the research questions, and mostly supported by the data outlined in the findings section. Discussion connects findings to prior research and the theoretical framing.	The discussion is clearly related to the research questions, and fully supported by the data outlined in the findings section. The discussion connects the findings to prior research and the theoretical framing in a deep and meaningful way.

Implications/ Recommendations and Conclusion	The implications and conclusions are missing/there are no recommendations.	The implications/conclusions are somewhat explained, but may be unrelated to the research questions, or not supported by the data outlined in the findings section. There may or may not be recommendations for practice, policy, and/or future research.	The implications/conclusions are explained, related to the research questions, and mostly supported by the data outlined in the findings section. There are recommendations for practice, policy, and/or future research.	The implications/conclusions are clearly explained, related to the research questions, and supported by the data outlined in the findings section. There are clear recommendations for practice, policy, and/or future research.
Writing Conventions	The writing is not clear and organized. The project may not adhere to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and/or professional presentation.	The writing is somewhat clear and organized. The project sometimes adheres to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.	The writing is mostly clear and organized. The project mostly adheres to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.	The writing is clear, organized, and adheres to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.
Formatting	APA format is not used. Does not use anti-bias language.	There are many formatting errors. Inconsistently uses APA style conventions to reduce bias in language	There are a few formatting errors. Generally adheres to APA style conventions to reduce bias in language	APA style is used correctly throughout. Consistently adheres to APA style conventions to reduce bias in language
IRB Approval (if applicable)	Study has not been approved by the IRB			Study has been approved by IRB
	Missing	Developing	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Oral Defense of the Dissertation	Presentation missing key elements. Candidate did not adhere to timing requirements.	Presentation included most significant elements. Responded to questions. Candidate did not adhere to the timing requirements.	Presentation included most significant elements, conveyed in a logical, easy-to-follow format. Responded to questions. Candidate mostly adhered to the timing requirements.	Presentation included all significant elements, conveyed clearly in a logical, persuasive and easy-to-follow format. Responded to questions professionally. Candidate adhered to the timing requirements.

Dissertation Oral Defense Process

The oral defense of the dissertation has several purposes. The defense is a presentation of a student's research findings and conclusions to the dissertation committee for review, comment, and eventual approval. It is also an opportunity for the greater University and educational communities to learn about the significance of the research findings. Lastly, members of the University faculty and educational community are afforded time to interact with the student/researcher.

Ultimately, the dissertation chair, with recommendation from the committee members, decides when the manuscript is ready for defense. Once the candidate has completed the research process, has written a penultimate draft of the dissertation, and has had its final version reviewed by dissertation committee members, the student, working with the dissertation chair, will schedule the oral defense.

Pre-defense (Optional)

Two to three weeks prior to the defense, the dissertation chair may choose to schedule and conduct a pre-defense session to finalize all the defense details and to provide the candidate with an opportunity to complete a practice oral defense with the committee members.

Defense Procedure

The Chair establishes the specific outline of the student presentation to the dissertation committee. The Chair of the dissertation committee leads the defense meeting in which the candidate presents and defends the dissertation in the presence of the members of the dissertation, faculty, and other individuals who choose to attend. After the chair introduces the committee members, including the doctoral candidate, then candidate is expected to provide an overview of the research, which highlights significant aspects of the work. Generally this includes the student summarization of each chapter in the dissertation. The actual dissertation defense by the candidate is no more than 30 minutes in length.

Following the defense presentation, the committee members may ask questions. Once concluded, then other faculty members and guests will be provided with the opportunity to ask questions. The committee may pose further questions. Prior to the committee deliberation, the Chair will invite comments and questions that relates to the dissertation research from the audience. Following the questions, the chair will ask the audience, and the candidate to exit the room to provide the committee the opportunity to discuss the candidate's defense performance. Using the Dissertation Rubric for guidance, the committee will make a decision. When completed, the chair invites only the candidate to return. The candidate is brought back before the committee which shares its decisions and comments. Once completed, the chair will inform the student of the decision. The committee makes one of the following decisions:

Dissertation Defense Criteria

Action	Criteria
Approved with no further or minor revisions	The Oral Defense is satisfactory, and the manuscript is accepted as submitted with copy editing revisions to be completed. All forms are signed at the defense.
Provisionally approved with major revisions	The Oral Defense is satisfactory, but the need for substantive revisions of the manuscript is apparent. The committee members withhold signatures on all forms and the title page until changes have been made that satisfy the concerns of all members.
Not approved with recommendations to revise dissertation or write a new dissertation	The Oral Defense is judged to be unsatisfactory. The decision may be reached because the dissertation is judged to be acceptable, but the student fails to present it satisfactorily or because the dissertation itself is unacceptable. Committee members do not sign any forms or the title page. Another Oral Defense will be scheduled when the Chair deems the student is prepared, manuscript is ready, and the committee members agree that the required remediation has been accomplished.

If the committee makes the decision for "provisional approval" or "not approved," the chair delineates the required steps for revisions and specifies a timeline for completion (usually 7-14 days). It should be noted, at the discretion of the chair and dependent on the number of revisions that need to be made, the candidate is encouraged have the manuscript professionally re-edited.

Unanimous agreement of the Dissertation Committee is required for approval of the dissertation and recommendation that the Ed.D. degree be conferred. When the committee and chair have approved the final document, including changes from the defense, members of the dissertation committee then sign the candidate's signature page.

Publication

In EDD 717, students will be guided in preparing their dissertation for university publication as well as for publishing in other venues.