Appendix A.3

Culminating Experience Guidelines

Master of Arts in Education

School of Education
California State University Channel Islands

September 5, 2008

University Policies
California State University Channel Islands

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inventing false information or citations, plagiarism and helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty. For further information on academic dishonesty and disciplinary actions, please visit the Administrative Policy manual Website at http://policy.csuci.edu or the Academic Senate Policy Website at http://senate.csuci.edu/policies.htm.

Students with Disabilities

Individuals who have any disability, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class, are requested to inform the professor and the campus Disability Accommodation Office in writing. Adaptation of methods, materials, testing, or practicum may be made as requested and required to provide for equitable participation in the course. For further information contact the University's Disability Accommodation Office at 437-8528.

Culminating Experience Committee

A thesis, project, or exam committee may consist of tenured and tenure-track faculty and/or lecturers with doctoral degrees.

Graduate Student Status

1. Conditional classified:
   - Educational leadership: Candidate is missing one or more of the following requirements: CBEST, advanced technology, a course in special education
   - Special education: A bachelor's degree, teaching credential optional
2. Classified: Conditional requirements met
3. Advance to candidacy: Candidate may only register for culminating experience in their final semester, candidate has met the requirements for eligibility for a Masters degree.

Eligibility for a Masters Degree in Education

To be eligible for the Master's degree, the candidate shall have completed the following minimum requirements:

1. Requirements for the Degree:
   a. The completion of a specified course of study approved by the Curriculum Committee at CSUCI and/or CCTC
   b. A minimum of thirty semester units of approved graduate work. (SP05-28)
   c. Completion of graduate work in no more than 7 years. (SP05-23)
   d. At least 21 semester units must be completed in residence as indicated in the University Catalog..
   e. Seventy percent of the degree must be at 500 and 600 level. When undergraduate 400-level courses are taken, extra work must be completed. (SP05-24)

      f.   No more than six semester units shall be allowed for a thesis, project, or comprehensive exam preparation. (SP05-25)

2. Advancement to candidacy: A candidate who has been granted classified standing will be advanced to candidacy after a request is filed for graduation by the student and an affirmative recommendation is made by the graduate advisor. An overall minimum grade point average is 3.0 (B) and a minimum grade point average of 3.0 for all study plan course work is required. A course in which no letter grade is assigned, shall not be used in computing the grade point average. Other scholastic requirements, professional standards, passing of examinations, and other qualifications may be required.

3. Satisfactory completion of a thesis, project, or comprehensive examination.

Timeline for Completion
Candidates must check approval dates outlined by the Graduate Office and Admissions to ensure a reasonable timeline for completion of the culminating experience, and submission of the completion of a degree.

1. Fill out and file the Application for Graduation form with the Admissions office the semester *before* completing the culminating experience. Check the form deadlines with Admissions.
2. During final semester, submit graduation check form to Tina Torres.
3. For the semester when completing the culminating experience, register for the Thesis/Project preparation EDUC 616 or Comprehensive Exam preparation EDU 618.
4. Students who do not complete their degree programs at the end of Spring semester, may participate in Commencement if they have no more than 10 units pending toward their degree. (SP02-05). This means that their degrees will be conferred at the next available graduation term, which is summer. Summer has a degree date of August 31.

Culminating Experience Options

TYPE	WHO SHOULD CHOOSE THIS OPTION?	DESCRIPTION
Thesis	Candidates interested in research, learning to conduct research on their own instruction or their students' learning, trying to test a solution to an identified problem.	A thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis is required.
Project	Candidates interested in providing leadership beyond the classroom level.	A project is a significant undertaking appropriate to the professional field. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology and a conclusion or recommendation. An oral defense or presentation may be required.
Exam	Candidates interested in integrating and synthesizing research and theory to analyze and solve real life problems.	A comprehensive examination is an assessment of the candidate's ability to integrate knowledge of the area, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The results of the examination evidences independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis and accuracy of documentation.

Culminating Experience:
THESIS

Thesis should be completed by:
Candidates interested in research, learning to conduct research on their own instruction or their students' learning, trying to test a solution to an identified problem.

Description
A thesis is a written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. A presentation and an oral defense of the thesis may be required.

Process
1. Check the approval dates outlined by the Graduate Office to ensure that you set a reasonable timeline for yourself for completion of the thesis and submission for completion of the degree. A Culminating Project that does not meet the deadline will force a later graduation date.
2. Fill out and file Application for Graduation form with the Admissions Office the semester before taking the examination. Check deadlines with the Admissions Office.
3. Inform your academic advisor who will work with you to identify a thesis chair.
4. Register for EDUC 616 Masters Thesis/Project.
5. Begin by having a discussion about your ideas with your thesis chair and identify a research problem you would like to investigate.
6. Prior to beginning the research, write a research proposal. The research proposal must be approved by the thesis chair (See form X). At the discretion of the chair, an The research proposal includes Chapters 1 through 3 of the thesis (introduction, a preliminary review of literature, methodology and procedures) and appendices (timeline and instruments you plan to use) and follows the procedures outlined in the research methods course (EDUC 615) for completion of the research project. For those students completing EDUC 617 (Action Research) those methods may also guide the thesis.
7. With the thesis chair's approval, complete the appropriate Institutional Review Board application prior to beginning the data collection phase of the study. During the process of collecting your data and writing your thesis, you will work closely with your thesis chair.
8. The thesis chair will provide you with feedback on each facet of the project and will guide you through the thesis process.
9. The thesis will be read by a minimum of two readers—the thesis chair and another faculty member. Both will use the same rubric to evaluate the thesis. In case of a disagreement, the chair will make the final decision.
10. Obtain a set of guidelines for completion and submission of the manuscript from the Library. http://www.library.csuci.edu/ThesisProcess/index.html
11. Once approved by the thesis chair, submit all completed and signed pages and a complete copy of the thesis on CD to the Director of the School of Education for

signature. The Director of the School of Education will forward the document to
Library.

In EDUC 615, Principles of Educational Research, you will explore quantitative and
qualitative methods of designing and conducting research in the context of school
settings. EDUC 615 is designed to help you improve your knowledge of research and
your understanding of various research methodologies, enhance your skills in planning
and conducting research, develop your abilities in summarizing and interpreting data, and
advance your abilities in critiquing educational research. You will develop an initial
proposal for a research project or thesis in EDUC 615. All graduate students take 615
and develop a research proposal, regardless of the type of culminating experience they
plan to complete. All students completing graduate degrees should be able to plan and
carry out research, analyze and write up the results, conclusions and implications of
research studies. Students completing EDUC 617 Action Research will also develop the
knowledge and skills needed to complete a project or thesis.

Thesis Chapters

The APA Style Manual contains information on the elements of a thesis as do most
educational research texts. Be sure to check with your faculty advisor to ensure that all
the desired elements are included. **Your advisor will provide you with additional
guidelines.** In general, a thesis contains the following:

Chapter One
   a. Introduction
   b. Statement of the Problem
   c. Research Question/s
   d. Researcher Perspective (at discretion of advisor)
   e. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework
   f. Definition of Terms
   g. Limitations/Delimitations

Chapter Two
   Literature Review –Summarize and synthesize major themes from current
   relevant literature including topics and sub-topics that illuminate your
   research question.

Chapter Three
   –Method -- include the following: sources of information, Contextual
   information (e.g., the school or community being studied, policies, legislative
   history, case law), people involved and how they were selected, use of various
   tests, measuring devices, instruments, interview, survey, focus group, etc.
   Procedures to be used in data analysis (group the procedures in categories –
   for example: sample, measurement, data analysis.)
   Implications for practice, reflections on the process.

Chapter Four
> Results: This section includes a discussion of the approach to data analysis, e.g., coding of data, themes, initial findings, interpretive analysis, including an analysis of the data, moving from basic findings to deeper analytical and critical presentation of the findings. Overall, the intent is to address the original research question/s and present the findings in this context.

Chapter Five
Discussion This Chapter is your chance to explain what you think the results of your study mean. Most masters thesis will use the following subheadings. Refer to your faculty advisor for an appropriate outline for your thesis.
> a. Conclusions
> b. Implications for practice and/or policy
> c. Future Research/next steps

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Culminating Experience:
PROJECT

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The Project should be completed by:

Candidates interested in providing leadership according to their program of study, e.g. professional development, school principal, central office, private industry.

<u>Description</u>

Define a need in area of study related to completed coursework such as Leadership, Special Education, Curriculum, or professional development. Meet the need through the design, development, and implementation of a project that has not been previously addressed by others.

<u>Process</u>

1. Check the approval dates outlined by the Graduate Office to ensure that you set a reasonable timeline for yourself for completion of the project and submission for completion of the degree. A Culminating Project that does not meet the deadline will force a later graduation date.
2. Fill out and file Application for Graduation form with the Admissions Office the semester before taking the examination. Check deadlines with the Admissions Office.
3. Inform your academic advisor who will work with you to identify a culminating project chair.
4. Register for EDUC 616 Masters Thesis/Project.
5. After you have selected your faculty advisor and/or committee and have had a preliminary discussion about your ideas, identify a problem/topic for which you would like to explore a solution. Prepare a written three to five page synopsis outlining your project topic and submit to your advisor/committee. You should include the problem/topic you want to address and a brief description of how you plan to address it. The advisor/committee will provide feedback and approval for you to move forward wit your project.
6. Obtain IRB approval if your project involves the use of human subjects. You cannot submit an IRB application until your advisor/committee approves your project.
7. All projects must have a written component. The length of your paper will depend on the nature of your project work and the recommendation of your advisor/committee. Your paper should follow the most current APA format. The paper may include the follow following sections:
    a. Chapter 1 – Introduction
        i. ***Identify and clearly state the question you will explore.*** Explain what you hope to accomplish in your project. What issue is to be addressed and explored? ***What are your sub-questions?*** Be very clear ***about your question***. Definitions of terms must be very clear in this section. Do not assume that the reader knows what you mean when you use educational jargon. Everyone might not agree with your definitions, so you can define them and call them operational definitions.
    b. Chapter 2 – Literature Review –

> > > **i.** Review what is currently known (and not known) about the issue to be explored by reviewing scholarly articles and books relevant to your question. Frame your question/s in a theoretical context. On what theories/principles are you basing your project? What are your assumptions? The review of the literature puts the question into perspective and lets the reader know why the project is of significance. ***You must have a minimum of 15 refereed journal articles.***

> > c. Chapter 3 – Process/Product
> > > i. Outline the process that was used to develop the project. This chapter will highlight the conceptual grounding of Chapter Two and relate how you used the theoretical context in your project.

> > d. Chapter 4 – Implementation
> > > i. Discuss the implementation of your project. Outline step-by-step what you did.

> > e. Chapter 5 -- Results
> > > i.   What was the impact of your project? Summarize the effects of the project on your teaching, students, school, and district, and discuss any policy implications.

> > f. Chapter 6 – Conclusions/Next Steps
> > > i.   Describe what was learned from the implementation and what revisions or extensions might be developed in the future.

8. <u>Submit a final draft of your project to your advisor/committee for review and final recommendations.</u>

9. <u>Disseminate your project publicly. Dissemination can be a publication, or a presentation to relevant audiences.</u>

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Culminating Experience:
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

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Examinations should be completed by:
Candidates interested in demonstrating an ability to integrate and synthesize research and theory to analyze and solve real life problems.

Description:
The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to evaluate the candidate's ability to (a) analyze a real life (applied) problem from policy, research, and theoretical perspectives, using course work and other non-university experiences as evidence; and (b) make informed, evidence and research based suggestions on how to address the problem, and (c) what further questions to ask and data to collect to address the problem.

Program areas within the School of Education may determine the format to be either a take-home or an on-site exam for a specific cohort.

Process
1. Meet with the faculty advisor to determine if you are eligible for EDUC 618, for which students can register only during their last semester of completing MA requirements.
2. Fill out and file Application for Graduation form with the Admissions office the semester before taking the examination. Check deadlines with the Admissions office.
3. Check the approval dates outlined by the Graduate Office and Admissions to ensure that the candidate sets a reasonable timeline for completion of the examination, and submission for completion of the degree.
4. Register for the Comprehensive Examination Preparation Seminar EDUC 618 for the semester of taking the exam.
5. Attend seminar sessions.
6. Review course readings, hand-outs, and your notes from all courses to identify areas for review.
7. Begin to integrate and synthesize course content.
8. Raise questions.
9. Write sample essays.
10. Review exam rubrics to evaluate your sample essays.
11. Take the exam as designed by you program area.

NOTE: The program areas decide whether exams are read by one or more readers. In the event that responses are deemed inadequate, the faculty reserves the right to obtain a second reader, request an additional response or assign additional study to support an additional administration of the examination.