

***UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE***

***COLLEGE OF EDUCATION***

***EDLS***

***DISSERTATION***

***GUIDE***

Spring 2017

Version 3.16 – February 2, 2017

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
DISSERTATION GUIDE

Version 3.16-February 1, 2017

**Table of Contents**

PREFACE	2
APPOINTMENT OF DISSERTATION COMMITTEE CHAIR	2
APPOINTMENT OF DISSERTATION COMMITTEE	3
DISSERTATION HOURS	3
DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL	5
COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL	6
GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF A DISSERTATION PROPOSAL	7
DISSERTATION DEFENSE AND APPROVAL	7
FINAL EDITING AND SUBMISSION	10
DISSERTATION TIMELINE FOR GRADUATION	10
GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF A DISSERTATION	10
ATTACHMENT 1	13
ATTACHMENT 2	14
ATTACHMENT 3	15
ATTACHMENT 4:	16
ATTACHMENT 5	17

## **PREFACE**

This dissertation guide provides information on policies and procedures related to the dissertation process as well as material on the formatting and structure of the dissertation itself. While intended to be comprehensive, certainly there are omissions and questions that will arise. As a candidate working through the dissertation process, you should keep in close contact and clarify any questions with your dissertation chair. It is better to ask questions first, rather than having to go back and correct problems that could have been prevented. Students also are referred to the academic calendar for submission dates that may apply.

The time frame for completion of the doctoral program is seven years from the start of the program. At the end of the seventh year, a doctoral candidate is allowed to petition the associate dean for a one-year extension if the candidate's dissertation proposal has been approved. If necessary to successfully complete the dissertation, the candidate can petition the associate dean of the College of Education (COE) for a second and final one-year extension to complete the dissertation.

## **APPOINTMENT OF DISSERTATION COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Following the successful completion of the doctoral examination the student advances to candidacy and may select a dissertation chair and a dissertation committee. The chair of the doctoral program provides the student with a list of graduate faculty who are eligible to serve as dissertation chairs. Eligibility to serve as a dissertation committee chair requires that the faculty member have successfully served on a minimum of two doctoral dissertations, i.e., the faculty member must have served on two dissertation committees that completed their work, not necessarily requiring dissertation completion and approval. In the case of dissertation committee co-chairs, at least one of the co-chairs must be eligible to serve as chair. A full-time UHCL faculty member, outside the College of Education, may serve as chair or co-chair in exceptional cases, with the approval of the associate dean. A Dissertation Chair Appointment Form (Attachment 1) must be completed to appoint a dissertation chair/co-chair. Unless someone else

is approved by the associate dean, the dissertation chair or co-chair must serve as the student's faculty advisor.

### **APPOINTMENT OF DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

The dissertation committee requires a minimum of four members, but may have more, who can support the candidate in the completion of the dissertation. All but one member of the committee must be faculty from the College of Education. One of the members must be a faculty member who can support the candidate with the research design that is typically having a strong background in statistics or qualitative research methodology. One member of the committee may be a professional from the workplace/field setting (e.g., superintendent) or can be a faculty member from another UHCL college or from another accredited university. Each member of the dissertation committee must hold a research-based doctoral degree from an accredited university.

The committee selection process should include members who bring strengths to the process (e.g., knowledge of the dissertation topic). The dissertation committee is responsible for: (1) advising the candidate on the research, (2) advising/reviewing the dissertation proposal and dissertation in its entirety, (3) approving the dissertation proposal, (4) approving/disapproving the dissertation defense; (5) approving and signing off on the final dissertation, and (6) certifying that all degree requirements have been fulfilled, and thus the candidate is entitled to be awarded the doctoral degree. A Dissertation Committee Appointment Form (Attachment 2) contains the names of the student, dissertation committee chair(s), and members of the committee. It is signed by the student and the dissertation chair(s) and approved by the chair of the doctoral program and the associate dean.

### **DISSERTATION HOURS**

Below are the rules for the dissertation hours which must be a part of the doctoral program:

1. There are two dissertation courses: EDLS 8939 (3 credits) and EDLS 8969 (6 credits). This allows a candidate to fulfill the minimum amount of dissertation hours (6 credits). The

decision of how many credits to be taken in a given semester is left up to the candidate in consultation with the dissertation chair. Students do not meet as a class for these courses but rather work independently with their dissertation chair and dissertation committee members in the writing of their dissertation.

2. The EdD program requires that a candidate take at least 6 hours of dissertation during the program. These hours may be completed in one or more semesters, as recommended by the dissertation chair. Based on a candidate's dissertation study, more than 6 hours of dissertation may be required, but only 6 hours will count toward the completion of the program.
3. Students cannot register for dissertation hours until they have been admitted to doctoral candidacy. To be admitted to doctoral candidacy, students must have passed the doctoral examination.
4. In order to register for dissertation hours, candidates or their dissertation chair must email the associate dean their student identification number and the name of their dissertation chair.
5. Once registered for dissertation hours, candidates must maintain continuous registration in dissertation at least during long semesters until graduation. Once initially registered for dissertation hours (regardless of which course), candidates will be automatically registered for EDLS 8939 in all subsequent long semesters until graduation. If the dissertation chair decides that a candidate should register for the other dissertation course (EDLS 8969), then the candidate should drop EDLS 8939 and email the associate dean requesting that EDLS 8969 be added. See 6 and 7 below for the exceptions.
6. Once registered for dissertation hours, registration may be waived during the summer semester if the candidate will not be using any university resources (e.g., faculty, library, computers, etc.) during the summer semester. This waiver is for the summer semester only. Candidates wishing to enroll in dissertation hours during the summer semester must email the associate dean with the course number (EDLS 8939 or EDLS 8969), their student identification number, and the name of their dissertation chair.

7. If, for any reason, the graduation semester is delayed until after the semester in which the dissertation is completed (e. g. the dissertation defense falls outside of specified deadlines to meet graduation for that semester), then registration in dissertation during the semester of graduation may be waived. The request for the waiver must be sent by the dissertation chair to the associate dean by the Friday of the week before the start of classes in the semester of graduation. The request must include an explanation of why graduation has been delayed beyond the semester in which the dissertation was approved and a statement that the candidate will not be using any university resources in the semester of graduation.

### **DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

In the development and approval of the dissertation proposal the following steps are followed:

Step 1: The candidate and dissertation chair work to focus the candidate's area of research toward developing a dissertation proposal. In advancing the process of identifying a dissertation topic, the candidate will submit to the dissertation chair a four-to-five-page outline which describes: (1) the background or context of the proposed research study; (2) a problem statement, along with research questions or hypotheses; (3) a statement noting the significance or importance of the research topic; and (4) an outline of the methodology to be utilized.

Step 2: The dissertation chair reviews the proposal, determining whether to move forward on the research topic or to have the candidate develop a new topic. Once the topic is sufficiently developed, committee members are selected who can support the candidate in the completion of the research topic. These members provide feedback on the development of the dissertation proposal. The proposal typically consists of the first three chapters of the dissertation, with the understanding that the literature review may not be fully developed. Typically, the proposal is approximately 35 to 40 pages in length.

When the committee has agreed that the candidate's proposal is sufficiently well developed, an oral defense of the dissertation proposal is scheduled. There is no set deadline for

when the dissertation proposal defense is scheduled. While it is preferred that all members of the committee be present at the defense, if extenuating circumstances exist, the defense may be held with one member absent. Approval of the proposal must be unanimous, although final approval may be contingent on required changes to the proposal. Any member not attending the defense must also approve the proposal before the candidate can proceed with the study. Once the committee approves the dissertation proposal, the candidate may move forward on the dissertation's development. Following the defense, a copy of Attachment 4 (Approval of the Dissertation Proposal), signed by all members of the committee is to be forwarded to the associate dean along with the copy of the approved proposal.

If there is a need to change the dissertation chair or other committee members, this change, along with a rationale for the change and a recommendation for a suitable replacement, should be discussed by the candidate with the current chair(s), chair of the doctoral program, or associate dean. Request for approval of the new dissertation chair or committee member is directed to the chair of the doctoral program and associate dean. A new Dissertation Committee Appointment Form (Attachment 2) will need to be completed and approved.

#### **COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL**

Candidates are required to receive approval for their proposed research from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). The CPHS application must be completed and submitted to the candidate's dissertation chair. Information related to the CPHS application and related forms can be obtained from the College the Education's website at <http://prtl.uhcl.edu/education/forms-information/students>. It is essential that the steps outlined below be followed carefully, as deviation from these steps is a violation of federal regulations and can nullify the use of data collected prior to CPHS approval.

The candidate should submit their CPHS application form, along with any supporting documentation listed in the application (e.g., instruments, interview questions, consents, assents, site approval letters), to their dissertation chair for review. Once the dissertation chair has

approved the candidate's CPHS packet, the chair will submit it via email to the chair of the College of Education's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. The CPHS will not accept any applications directly from the candidate.

Candidates and faculty members conducting joint research prior to the approval of the dissertation proposal must also submit a CPHS application. This research may lead to the candidate's dissertation and the data collected would be considered archival. However, it is still expected that once the dissertation proposal is formally approved, any necessary CPHS modifications to the original CPHS application and/or CPHS extensions will be submitted by the candidate. For candidates not involved in joint research with a faculty member the CPHS application may not be submitted to the CPHS until the dissertation proposal has been formally approved. Candidates may not proceed with their research until CPHS approval is received. Any work with human subjects prior to such approval will be nullified. The candidate should note that a minimum of two weeks should be allowed for the CPHS review. CPHS approval is for one year and if the research extends beyond one year, the candidate must let the CPHS committee know by applying for an extension to continue the research.

### **GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF A DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

The dissertation proposal will parallel the format of the dissertation for the first three chapters. An example of the approval page for dissertation proposals is included in Attachment 4. In the dissertation format presented above, the proposal would essentially be the first three chapters, although it is understood that the review of the literature may not be complete. Candidates should consult their dissertation chairs regarding the actual format to be followed.

### **DISSERTATION DEFENSE AND APPROVAL**

To officially schedule the defense, there must be general agreement among dissertation committee members regarding the readiness of the candidate to defend the dissertation. An

Application for the Dissertation Defense form (Attachment 3) must be completed and signed by the candidate and committee members, and approved by the chair of the doctoral program and the associate dean. The scheduled date of the defense must be at least 21 days after the committee's decision. The signing of the Application for the Dissertation Defense Form does not constitute approval of the dissertation.

The candidate and the candidate's dissertation chair are responsible for completing the Application for the Dissertation Defense form, setting the date for the defense, scheduling the room for the defense, handling equipment needs, and so forth. The candidate must provide copies of the completed dissertation to the dissertation committee at least 14 days prior to the scheduled date of the defense. While it is preferred that all members of the committee be present at the defense, if extenuating circumstances exist, the defense may be held with one member absent. Any member not attending the defense must be afforded the opportunity to review and approve or not approve the dissertation. Dissertation chairs must be present at the dissertation defense.

The dissertation defense includes a presentation of the study (not to exceed 30 minutes) and an oral examination where each committee member has the opportunity to ask questions. At an appropriate time, typically after one to two hours, the dissertation chair invites the candidate to leave while the dissertation committee deliberates on the performance of the candidate. The committee, as a whole, judges the quality of the candidate's work and recommends approval/disapproval of the dissertation. Later, the candidate returns to receive the results.

The committee shall decide one of the following:

1. Pass, with minor or no editorial revisions to the written document. Revisions are to be approved by the dissertation chair.
2. Pass, with substantive revisions of the written document. Revisions are to be approved by the dissertation committee unless the dissertation committee delegates approval to the dissertation chair, or the dissertation chair and specified members of the committee. When substantive revisions are required, the dissertation chair

requests each dissertation committee member to present desired revisions, with the dissertation chair informing the candidate of the expected changes. Once the revisions have been completed, unless a different approach is recommended by the dissertation committee, the dissertation chair will either (1) contact each dissertation committee member to determine acceptance of the revisions, or (2) hold a meeting of the dissertation committee with the candidate to discuss the written revisions. If a meeting is scheduled, then the candidate must provide the dissertation committee a copy of the revised document at least 14 days prior to the scheduled meeting.

3. Fail, with major revisions necessary prior to second and final defense option, unless a second defense is not agreed upon by the dissertation committee.

The dissertation committee as a whole shall handle differences of opinion, with the dissertation chair guiding the candidate on agreed upon required changes. The dissertation chair may choose to consult with the chair of the doctoral program or associate dean in resolving dissertation committee conflicts. When consensus among dissertation committee members is not possible, a candidate may pass the examination with one dissenting vote. A dissenting member has the option of not signing the dissertation approval form. It is anticipated that this option will happen rarely, since dissertation committee members will seriously attempt to resolve differences.

If there is a failed oral examination, the dissertation committee may approve the scheduling of a second defense no sooner than 6 weeks from the time of the first oral examination and the candidate will work with the dissertation chair and other members of the dissertation committee to make required changes to the dissertation. The candidate must provide copies of the complete dissertation to the dissertation committee at least 14 days prior to the scheduled defense.

If the dissertation committee determines that a second defense will not be allowed or the candidate fails the dissertation defense a second time, the candidate may petition the dean for the opportunity to initiate dissertation work on a different topic and with a different committee. At

the conclusion of the dissertation defense, a copy of Attachment 5, Final Defense of the Dissertation, is to be signed by all members of the committee and forwarded to the associate dean.

### **FINAL EDITING AND SUBMISSION**

Candidates must make any changes prescribed by the dissertation committee, typically under the supervision of the dissertation chair and other members of the dissertation committee. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure submission of completed work with sufficient time to meet a graduation deadline. Sample copies of all front matter pages are provided in the Sample Pages document.

### **DISSERTATION TIMELINE FOR GRADUATION**

There is a structured sequence of deadlines that must be met in order to graduate in a given semester. These deadlines relate to the defense of the dissertation, making required revisions, library review, and final approval by the dean and associate dean. In general, the dissertation must be completed early in the semester in which graduation is anticipated. Students are advised to check the academic calendar for specific deadlines in a given semester, including the deadline date to apply for graduation, and candidates should consult with their dissertation chair if there are any questions.

### **GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF A DISSERTATION**

#### **A. Library.**

Candidates are encouraged to take full advantage of support from the Neumann Library. Library support is available throughout the proposal and dissertation process. Librarians can help you identify information resources such as databases, books, and secondary datasets relevant to your research, construct searches in article databases, use EndNote to manage references, and other

tasks. To schedule an appointment with a librarian, complete the form at:

<http://libguides.uhcl.edu/dissertation/contact>

### **B. Writing Center.**

The UHCL Writing Center offers regular appointments and tailored programming for graduate students drafting, writing, revising, and editing major projects, such as dissertations and theses. Please contact Conor Bracken, Assistant Director and Graduate Programming Coordinator, for more information.

### **C. Deadlines**

Consult the College of Education calendar distributed by the office of the associate dean or check the library website for deadline dates related to the completion of a dissertation

<http://libguides.uhcl.edu/dissertation>. Also, the candidates should check with his/her advisor or dissertation chair prior to beginning the dissertation for any additional requirements or regarding any questions not answered by this *Guide* or the UHCL *Graduate Catalog*.

Once the dissertation chair and the committee have agreed that a dissertation defense may be scheduled, copies of the final dissertation to be considered for approval by the dissertation committee must be submitted to the dissertation committee at least 14 calendar days in advance of the defense.

Following the successful defense of the dissertation and having made all changes required by the committee, the dissertation must be uploaded to the Vireo Thesis & Dissertation Submission System at <https://uhcl-etd.tdl.org/> by 5:00 PM on the submission deadline date. The University of Houston-Clear Lake College of Education accepts electronic dissertations in PDF format only.

For more details on dissertation submission, see the Format and Submission Guide

at <http://prtl.uhcl.edu/education/forms-information/form-files/dissertation-files/dissertation-guide-forms-submission-guidelines.pdf>

#### **D. Dissertation Format Check**

All dissertations, abstracts and proposals developed within the College of Education are to follow the format of the American Psychological Association's (APA) (2010) *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Whenever there are differences in format and layout between the specifications of the Dissertation Guide and the APA Publication Manual, the Dissertation Guide overrules the style guide. Additional information on the APA *Publication Manual*, including tutorials, can be found on the APA website at <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/>. Students are urged not to go to recent dissertations or journal articles to develop a format, but rather to purchase and follow the *APA Publication Manual*. Subsequent to the format check and making any corrections that may result from this, the dissertation must be submitted for approval to the Office of the Associate Dean. Upon approval by the associate dean, the dissertation will be forwarded to the dean.

**ATTACHMENT 1:  
DISSERTATION CHAIR APPOINTMENT FORM**

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Tentative Dissertation Title

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Candidate (Print/Type)	Candidate Signature	Student ID
------------------------	---------------------	------------

---

Candidate Email	Date
-----------------	------

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Print/Type)

Co-Chair (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

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Committee Chair Signature	Date
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Committee Co-Chair Signature	Date
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DENIED  APPROVED

---

Doctoral Program Chair Signature	Date
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DENIED  APPROVED

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Associate Dean Signature	Date
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**ATTACHMENT 2**  
**DISSERTATION COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT FORM**

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Tentative Dissertation Title

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Candidate (Print/Type)	Candidate Signature	Student ID
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Candidate Email	Date
-----------------	------

Dissertation

Committee Chair:	Name	Signature
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Co-Chair (if any):	Name	Signature
--------------------	------	-----------

Methodologist:	Name	Signature
----------------	------	-----------

Methodologist:	Name	Signature
----------------	------	-----------

Dissertation

Committee Members:	Name	Signature
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	Name	Signature
--	------	-----------

	Name	Signature
--	------	-----------

Attach current vita for any non-College of Education committee member.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Chair Signature	Date
---------------------------	------

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Committee Co-Chair Signature	Date
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The Dissertation Committee Chair's signature on the form signifies that the chair has confirmed that each member of the committee has agreed to serve on the committee.

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DENIED     APPROVED  \_\_\_\_\_

Doctoral Program Chair Signature	Date
----------------------------------	------

DENIED     APPROVED  \_\_\_\_\_

Associate Dean Signature	Date
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**ATTACHMENT 3**

**APPLICATION FOR THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE**

**University of Houston-Clear Lake College of Education  
Doctor of Education Degree (EdD) in Educational Leadership Program**

This application must be submitted to the Office of the Associate Dean after it has been signed by the EdD Candidate and Dissertation Committee Members. It must be submitted to the Office of the Associate Dean at least 21 days prior to the schedule dissertation defense.

Candidate (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

ID#: \_\_\_\_\_ Dissertation Defense Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Committee Signatures: The Chair signs last, but on the first line.**

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

Date Received in the Associate Dean's Office: \_\_\_\_\_

DENIED  APPROVED

\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Dean Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ATTACHMENT 4:  
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL SIGNATURE PAGE**

- 1.25" margin -

Proposal Title

by

Candidate

APPROVED BY

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

RECEIVED BY THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Dean

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Received

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean

**ATTACHMENT 5**  
**FINAL DEFENSE OF THE DISSERTATION FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Title

\_\_\_\_\_

Candidate

Student ID

Date of Final Defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Decision

- Pass, with minor or no editorial revisions (revisions are approved by the dissertation chair)
- Pass, with revisions (approved by the committee)
- Fail, with major revisions prior to a second and final defense option
- Fail, with no second defense option.

The Committee Decision is Approved By:

Dissertation Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Dissenting Vote, if any:

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

