



GSEHD

DOCTORAL HANDBOOK | 2016-2017 EDITION  
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Please note: Important forms are available online at <http://gsehd.gwu.edu/students>

## INTRODUCTION: OVERALL FRAMEWORK

This Doctoral Student Handbook states applicable policies and procedures to doctoral study at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD). The stated policies and procedures apply to all doctoral degree programs, but each doctoral program may impose additional requirements and most do.

GSEHD may change some of the policies, requirements, and procedures stated in this handbook during subsequent years. Students will be informed of important changes that affect them via their e-mail addresses, which must be maintained in GWeb. Changes will generally be applicable to all students at a specified date of implementation, but those changes will be implemented to assure no adverse consequences to current students.

The GSEHD Office of the Dean and the Office of Student Services provide overall administration and support of all GSEHD doctoral programs. Most student contact will be with the latter office. The Office of Student Services is located in the GSEHD Office of Student Life townhouse at 2136 G Street, NW.

### GSEHD'S OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

*The Office of Student Services exists to assist students in complying with GSEHD's policies and procedures and can be reached at:*

202.994.9283

<http://gsehd.gwu.edu/students>

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Graduate School of Education and Human Development is committed to providing the highest quality educational services. We develop innovative research programs, contribute in diverse ways to local communities and the nation, and actively participate in the international community of scholarship. Our unique location in the nation's capital, a vibrant, multicultural and multinational center, offers a broad range of resources and opportunities to our diverse students and faculty. We believe that continuous self-examination and improvement are fundamental to the education and human development professions.

The mission has been translated into four bridging concepts that guide the work of the faculty in the design of programs:

- **Research and Scholarship:** Research and scholarship are prerequisite to the improvement of educational practice.
- **Leadership in the Educational Endeavor:** Leadership is critical in the reform and redesign of education and human services at all levels.
- **Reflective Practitioners:** Building reflective practitioners through the integration of theory and practice is a priority of all programs.
- **Service to the Multicultural, Multinational, and International Community of Diverse Learners:** A community of diverse learners is prerequisite to success in the education and human service professions.

# PHASES AND STEPS OF DOCTORAL STUDY

Doctoral work at GSEHD is divided into two phases: pre-candidacy and candidacy, each of which involves specific steps:

**PHASE 1: Pre-Candidacy**

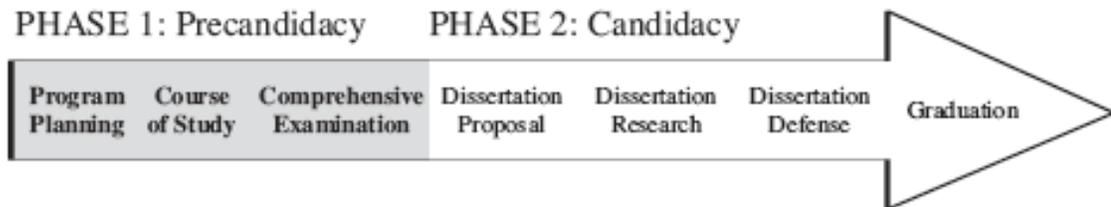
- Program Planning
- Course of Study
- Comprehensive Examination

**PHASE 2: Candidacy**

- Dissertation Proposal
- Dissertation Research
- Dissertation Defense
- Graduation

Each of these phases and steps entails specific requirements that must be met before you can progress to the next level. The remainder of this handbook details the applicable policies, regulations, and procedures. It is essential that at each step you are planning in advance for the subsequent steps. Do so with the guidance of this handbook and your advisor.

## PHASE 1: PRE-CANDIDACY



Pre-Candidacy is the period from formal admission and first enrollment in a doctoral program through successful completion of the comprehensive examination. Critical aspects of pre-candidacy include work with a primary advisor, program planning, the course of study, and the comprehensive examination.

## PRIMARY ADVISOR: YOUR GUIDE TO SCHOLARLY DEVELOPMENT

The doctoral study advising team includes a primary and secondary advisor. Both are assigned at the time of admission to doctoral study. Note: in some programs the secondary advisor assumes a less formal advising role.

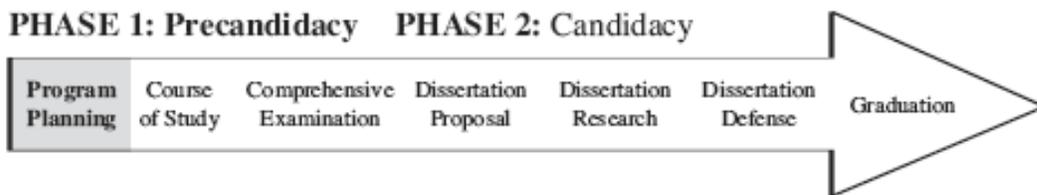
A doctoral primary advisor provides the doctoral student with guidance through the pre-candidacy period. This advisor may also become the chair or a member of the student's dissertation committee and provide further guidance through the dissertation work.

### *The Role of the Primary Advisor*

The role of the primary advisor is pivotal to candidates' progress through their program of study, to their development as independent scholars, and to their readiness for dissertation research. Specific tasks of the primary advisor include the following:

- Guide the student in the selection of appropriate electives and research courses.
- Guide the student in the selection of appropriate field, research, and publishing experiences that support scholarly development and prepare the student for the dissertation phase.
- Mentor the student in his or her development as a scholar and professional, including addressing interpersonal skills as necessary.
- Guide the student, from at least the second semester, in considering the focus of the dissertation research, exploring various potential topics and questions, and weighing the feasibility, advantages, and disadvantages of each.
- Set clear expectations and guide the student toward achieving a high level of quality in all written work.
- Guide the student's preparation for the comprehensive examination.

## PROGRAM PLAN: YOUR WORKING AGREEMENT



### *Program Plan of Study*

Each candidate for a doctoral degree receives an official Program Plan of Study upon accepting an offer of admission. This plan outlines the coursework and any additional requirements they will need to complete in order to graduate. Students must successfully complete all courses and requirements outlined on the official program plan to have their degree conferred. Students are encouraged to retain their program plan and refer to it frequently. It is a working agreement between a doctoral student and the faculty and may be modified only with agreement of the faculty.

### *Making Adjustments to Your Program Plan of Study*

Adjustments to the program plan of study may only be made in consultation with the primary advisor. To make adjustments to a program plan, students are to complete a [Program Plan of Study Change Request form](#), which must be signed by the primary and secondary faculty advisor. If a student is requesting a course-waiver, additional signatures may also be necessary. Signatures must be obtained before enrolling in alternate courses.

The Program Plan of Study Change form must be filed with the GSEHD Office of Student Services as soon as possible, and no later than when a student applies for the comprehensive examination.

### *Minimum Course and Research Requirements*

All students must complete at least 36 credits of coursework and at least 12 credits of dissertation research at GW while enrolled in their doctoral program. The course and dissertation requirements are as follows:

1. Research tool courses (9 credit hours). Students must take at least the following:
  - a. EDUC 8120, Group Comparisons Designs and Analysis (3 credit hours)
  - b. EDUC 8122, Qualitative Research Methods (3 credit hours)
  - c. After completing EDUC 8120 and 8122, students are to take one intermediate or advanced “Level B” course in quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research methods (3 credit hours). Some programs require more than one Level B course. If only one is required, the selected course should correspond with the methodology to be used in your dissertation research. See Appendix B for more details on research methods courses. The intermediate/advanced methodology course requirement may also be met with courses offered by other departments (such as anthropology, sociology, and statistics) at GW or consortium universities for Foggy Bottom campus students who are part of the Consortium agreement—with approval of the student’s advisor and the director of the research methods. **Note: Students enrolled in a Level B research methods course will be charged their home campus tuition rate regardless of where the course is offered.**
  - d. Entering students with considerable competence in the material covered by EDUC 8120 and/or EDUC 8122 may request an opportunity to “test out” of the course from the director of research methods. If successful, the student will not be required to take the corresponding course(s). If a student “tests out” of one or both of these courses, he or she will be required to take two advanced methods courses rather than the normally required one. Note that “testing out” of EDUC 8120 or 8122 does not earn credit for those courses.  
(See Appendix B)
2. Other courses (24 credit hours). These may include program requirements and courses approved by your advisor taken outside of your program, department, and GSEHD. These

courses can also include additional research methods courses, again with approval of your advisor. [If you test out of both EDUC 8120 and 8122, you must take 24 credits of these “other courses.”]

3. CNSL, EDUC, HOL, SPED, or CPED 8998, Pre-dissertation Seminar (3 credit hours). Some programs require students to complete two sections (6 credits) of 8998.
4. CNSL, EDUC, HOL, SPED, or CPED 8999, Dissertation Research (a minimum of 12 credit hours).

Individual doctoral programs usually have additional requirements. Consult your official Program Plan of Study and your advisor for information on those requirements.

Some advanced doctoral courses presume that you have completed EDUC 8120 and EDUC 8122. Consequently, you are strongly advised to complete the EDUC 8120 and 8122 requirements during your first year of doctoral studies. The required advanced research methods course preferably should not be taken until you have decided the research questions that will be addressed in your dissertation and the most appropriate methodology for them.

### *Residency Requirement*

GSEHD requires that all doctoral candidates complete a minimum of 36 credit hours of coursework (including internships and independent study but excluding dissertation research) at GW as an admitted doctoral student (often referred to as “in residency”). Individual doctoral programs may require more credits.

The term “in residence” is used in the [GW University Bulletin](#) to mean “courses that are registered for at GW and taken at GW or through the consortium of universities” after being admitted to a degree program.

### *Course Credits Applied to Doctoral Program Plan of Study*

Graduate credits earned in non-degree status at GW, in other degree programs at GW, or earned from other institutions can be applied to GSEHD doctoral programs only if all the following criteria are met:

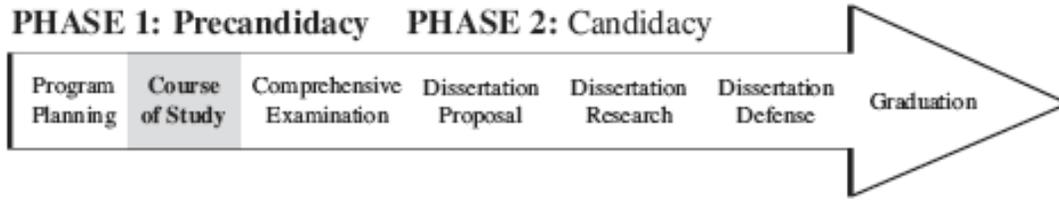
1. They were taken at an accredited college or university.
2. They were completed in the past five years.
3. They were passed with a grade of “B” or better.
4. They have not been used to fulfill requirements for another degree program, except an Ed.S. or second Master’s degree completed at GW.
5. They are not used to satisfy the 36 credit hour residency requirement.
6. They have been approved by the student’s advisors as applicable to the student’s degree program.

These are the minimum general requirements for credits to be applied to doctoral program plans. Individual doctoral programs may set additional requirements, and exceptions may require Dean’s review.

To seek approval for application of credits to your program, complete the [Program Plan of Study Change Request Form](#). That form must be signed by two program advisors (and the director of research methods, when applicable) and submitted to the Office of Student Services. If the credits were earned at an institution other than GW you are to submit an official transcript showing the completion of those courses.

While enrolled in a GW degree program, Foggy Bottom campus students may take courses through the [Consortium](#). Check the GW Graduate Bulletin carefully for policies and procedures guiding consortium registration. Note: Policies are set by the Presidents of the member institutions and not by GSEHD.

# COURSE OF STUDY



## *Monitoring Your Progress: DegreeMAP*

DegreeMAP allows you to see how many credits you have completed, your current GPA, and what courses you have remaining; providing a helpful "snapshot" of where you are in your program. GW now uses DegreeMAP to clear students for graduation, so you want to be sure that it is accurate. If you have any questions about your DegreeMAP please feel free to contact [docgsehd@gwu.edu](mailto:docgsehd@gwu.edu).

## **Accessing DegreeMAP**

- Log in to [GWeb](#) and click on the Student Records and Registration link.
- Select the Student Records Information Menu.
- Click on the DegreeMAP link.
- Click "Launch DegreeMAP" to view your degree requirements and review how your individual academic history has been applied to those requirements.

## *Academic Requirements*

Graduation requires a minimum cumulative grade-point average of B (3.0) in all coursework taken following admission to a graduate program in GSEHD. No more than two grades (6 credit hours) of C or a single grade of F is permitted throughout the doctoral program. If your grade-point average falls below 3.0, the Office of Student Life will notify you and your primary advisor, and appropriate action will be taken.

Per University policy, a grade of I will convert to F if outstanding work is not completed within the designated time, not to exceed one calendar year. Students who receive a grade of I must submit an [Incomplete Contract](#). If you receive a grade of F, the Office of the Dean will require a written statement from you justifying your continuance at GSEHD and outlining your plan for successful program completion. Continuation is contingent upon the Senior Associate Dean's approval. The Senior Associate Dean may seek the review and advice of the Post-Master's Appeals Committee to resolve the matter. If a grade of F is received, the grade is included in the grade-point average whether or not you repeat the course.

Unless the course description states that the course may be repeated for credit, you must have written permission from your program director to repeat a course in which you received a grade of C- or above. If a course is repeated, the first grade received remains on your record and is included in your grade-point average.

### *Maintaining Continuous Enrollment Status*

Students must maintain continuous enrollment status by registering every fall and spring semester. Enrollment during the summer semester is allowed, but not required, unless you are sitting for the comprehensive exam, proposal defense, or dissertation defense. Doctoral students are required to maintain continuous enrollment until successful defense of their dissertation. If you “break enrollment,” you will have to reapply for admission, submitting a new application and new statement of purpose. Readmission is not automatic but is at the discretion of the program faculty and school. Students who break enrollment and must reapply for admission are subject to the current criteria and regulations that have been established by the school, which may be different than those in place at the time of initial application.

Under very specific circumstances, continuous enrollment may be maintained by registering for less than three credits. The possibilities include Continuing Research (0940), Continuous Enrollment (CE), and a Leave of Absence (LOA). Each is briefly described below.

#### *Continuing Research (0940)*

Continuing research can be used in two very different circumstances. First, if you have completed all required coursework and will be taking your comprehensive examinations in the subsequent semester, including the summer semester, you are to enroll in one credit of Continuing Research (CNSL, EDUC, HOL, SPED, or CPED 0940) during that semester. Note: Students may not enroll in more than two semesters while preparing for the comprehensive examination.

Second, if you have completed 24 credits of Dissertation Research (8999) and have not yet successfully defended your dissertation, you will register for one credit of Continuing Research each fall and spring semester until you complete your degree requirements. Note: Summer registration is required for students defending their proposal or dissertation during that semester.

#### *Continuous Enrollment (CE)*

Doctoral candidates who are unable to defend in the semester in which the dissertation defense materials are filed—usually because they filed too late in the semester—may register for Continuous Enrollment for the following semester in order to defend. Students who want to enroll in Continuous Enrollment for this reason must have been enrolled in the correct number of dissertation credits the previous semester. Note: For students wanting to enroll in CE for the fall semester, this means that you will have to be registered for dissertation credits over the summer.

Continuous Enrollment may also be used during attendance at another institution (with prior approval by the Dean’s Office) or for completion of any outstanding assignments in GW courses in which a grade of incomplete was received. Continuous enrollment status is limited to two semesters. To request additional semesters, the student must seek approval from the Post-Master’s Appeals Committee. Note: Students registered in CE cannot be certified as half-time for the purposes of student loans. International students are not permitted to register for CE.

### *Leave of Absence (LOA)*

A student who, for compelling reasons, is temporarily unable to continue his or her program of studies may request a Leave of Absence using the [Leave of Absence Request Form](#). Leave of Absence status is limited to two semesters. Students who request a one-year leave of absence must submit a [Registration Transaction Form](#) for each of the two semesters. Students who wish to register for more than two leaves of absence over the course of doctoral study must seek approval from the Post-Master's Appeals Committee.

### *Registration Procedures*

Students may register for classes using the online [G-Web Information System](#). Students who wish to be enrolled in Continuous Enrollment or Leave of Absence are to fill out the appropriate form and submit to the Office of Student Services requesting this status. This request should be accompanied by a [Registration Transaction Form](#) signed by the advisor.

### *Concurrent Enrollment*

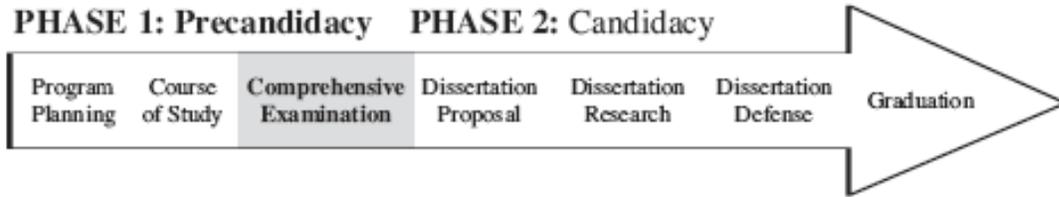
Students may not register concurrently at GW and another institution without prior permission of the faculty advisor and GSEHD Dean's Office. To request pre-approval please contact [docgsehd@gwu.edu](mailto:docgsehd@gwu.edu).

Registration through the [GW Consortium](#) system is permitted and is not considered concurrent enrollment.

### *Eight-Year Limit*

The doctoral dissertation must be written and defended within eight (8) years from the time of admission to the doctoral program. Any leaves of absence do not count against this time limit. Exceptions to the eight-year limit are rarely given and only with convincing evidence that the student has made all practical efforts to complete within eight years. Extensions require approval by the Post-Master's Appeals Committee.

# COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION



After completing doctoral-candidacy coursework, you must successfully complete the doctoral comprehensive examination. The examination must be passed within five years of beginning your doctoral program.

## *Eligibility*

To be eligible to sit for the comprehensive exam, students must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Currently registered
2. Good academic standing
3. Successfully completed all coursework or currently registered for the last semester of coursework. (In some programs, 8998 and one Level B Research Methods course may be taken after the comprehensive exam.)
4. Have no grades of I, Z, or IPG  
(Counseling PhD students may sit with IPGs in CNSL 8961, 8259, & 8260)

## *Registration Requirements*

Doctoral students must register for at least one credit to sit for the comprehensive exam.

If you have completed all required coursework you are to enroll in one credit of Continuing Research (0940) to maintain exam eligibility. Note: Students may not enroll in more than two semesters of 0940 while preparing for the comprehensive examination. Students requiring more than two semesters of 0940 prior to the comp exam must appeal to the Post-Master's Appeals Committee.

If you take the comprehensive exam before completing 8998 and/or one Level B research methods course, you **MUST TAKE** 8998 in the next regular semester (fall or spring) and you **MUST COMPLETE** the last Level-B course on your program plan no later than the second regular semester after your comprehensive exam. **Please be aware that enrolling in only 3 credits of 8998 or a Level B does not qualify for semester half-time or full-time certification with federal financial aid. Please plan accordingly.**

You cannot enroll in 8999 (Dissertation Research) until the semester after you have passed your comprehensive exam and completed ALL required coursework, including 8998 and your last Level-B Research Methods course. Students may enroll in Dissertation Research with a grade of "IPG" in 8998, Pre-Dissertation Seminar. An instructor may enter a grade of "CR" for the 8998 course after students successfully meet the course requirements (successfully defending their dissertation proposal). At the point of dissertation defense, if a student's 8998 course has not

been assigned a credit by the course instructor, credit will be arranged by the Office of Student Services.

Taking just an 8998 course during one regular semester (fall or spring) and taking just one Level-B research methods course in a subsequent regular semester could adversely affect the visa status of international students, the repayment schedule for student loans, and other matters. Check carefully with the appropriate University offices to see how this might affect you.

### *Scheduling Comprehensive Exams*

Comprehensive examinations are offered by the School once per semester, usually in December, April, and July. Students must submit an [online application](#) for the comprehensive examination by the published deadline (October 1st for the fall semester, February 1st for the spring semester, and June 1st for the summer semester). Note: Not all programs offer a summer comprehensive exam. Please check with your program about exam availability.

It is expected that students will take the comprehensive examination when it is scheduled in December, April, and July. For a compelling reason, it may be necessary to schedule a special sitting of the examination. If a special sitting is needed, the [Special Sitting form](#) must be signed by your advisor and submitted to the Office of Student Services at least 10 working days prior to the desired special sitting examination date.

By signing the [Special Sitting form](#), the faculty advisor is accepting responsibility for administering the examination. The advisor is to reserve a room, provide a copy of the examination to the student, and proctor the examination. The advisor may designate a qualified person to proctor the examination, but the advisor must be available during the session in case there are any questions regarding the contents of the examination.

### *Comprehensive Exam Structure*

All doctoral programs include a comprehensive examination. The format and questions may vary depending on department and program area. The program area faculty construct the questions and determine the criteria for satisfactory responses, therefore students should consult with them for guidance on how to prepare for the examination and how their responses will be evaluated.

If you intend to use prior course materials as a resource, please be advised that the Blackboard course support system automatically terminates student access to the posted course materials at the end of each semester. Students may ask faculty members to reactivate access for all students, and the faculty members may do so at their discretion. Note, however, that the “Electronic Reserves” section is automatically and permanently emptied at the end of the course and that reactivation of the rest of the course materials will last only 16 months after the original close of the course. The Blackboard system does not allow subsequent reactivation. To avoid this potential lack of access students should download the material while enrolled in the course.

### *Exam Day Guidelines*

1. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the exam start time and check in with the proctor. Please be prepared to show a photo ID. You may not bring in or use any outside materials, but will be provided with scratch paper. If you arrive late, the proctor will not be able to provide you with any additional time.
2. Exam proctors are available to provide administrative support only. They will designate seating, indicate the time an exam begins and ends, and address concerns about technology. Please understand proctors cannot answer questions about the content or organization of the exam.
3. If you have a question that exceeds a proctor's administrative role, a faculty member will be consulted.
4. If a proctor suspects any action inconsistent with the GW Code of Academic Integrity, the proctor will call a faculty member or the Office of the Dean to address the concern. Proctors will not engage in any conversation with students about academic integrity.
5. In the event that an exam is interrupted by an unexpected event (e.g., fire drill, sudden illness) the proctor will consult with the Office of the Dean and advise test takers on a course of action.

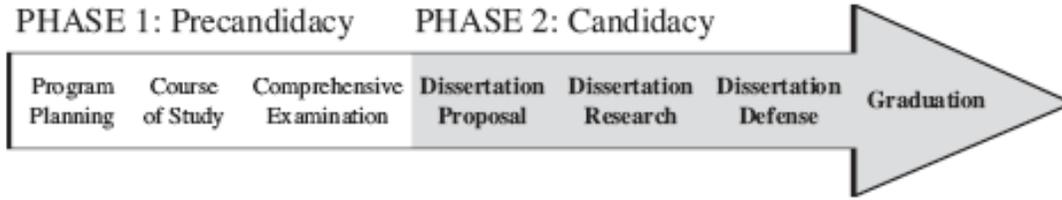
### *Comprehensive Exam Evaluation*

Each examination question is read by two or more faculty members, and this process normally takes several weeks to complete. You will receive a letter from the Office of Student Services notifying you of the outcome of your examination.

If you fail one or more parts of the examination, a retake is allowed. Following a failure, you should request a debriefing by your advisor or your program coordinator to learn the major weaknesses in your response. Then you should study diligently in preparation for retaking the exam. If you will not complete the retake during a special sitting before the next fall or spring semester, you should contact the Office of Student Services to determine your registration for the following semester.

If you fail part or all of the retaken examination, your only recourse is to petition the Post Master's Appeals Committee to request a second retake. Approval is not assured.

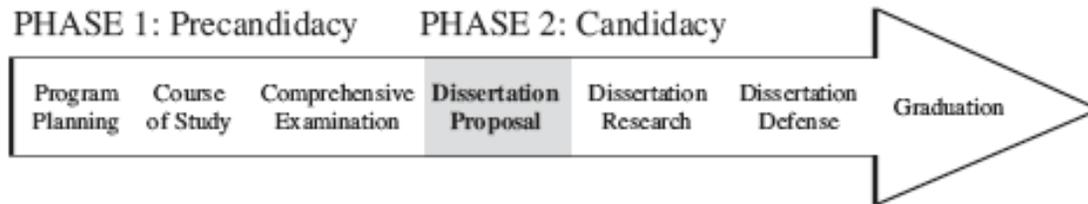
## PHASE 2: CANDIDACY



After completing all coursework and successfully passing the comprehensive examination, you become a doctoral candidate and are ready to begin work on the dissertation research.

The dissertation research and defense is the culminating, integrative, scholarly experience of doctoral study. The purpose of the dissertation research is to (a) make an original contribution to knowledge, in the candidate's field of specialization; (b) demonstrate an advanced command of research skills; and (c) demonstrate an advanced ability to communicate findings so that others in the field can understand and use them.

## DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL



Successfully defending your dissertation proposal provides evidence that you and the committee have arrived at a sound methodology that will address a worthwhile research question(s). The proposal forms a working plan that can be used by you and the committee to guide the research, to evaluate progress, and to provide ongoing feedback.

To move successfully through the dissertation process, you must take responsibility to meet deadlines agreed upon with your committee and deadlines set by the School for defense of the dissertation and graduation. Your dissertation chair and the Dean's Office will make efforts to assist you in the process, but the responsibility to meet deadlines is yours.

### *Dissertation Committee*

You are expected to have informal conversations with your primary advisor about possible dissertation topics throughout the years of your coursework. As you near the end of the coursework, there should also be discussions of who will chair your dissertation committee and perhaps who will be the other committee members. Your primary advisor might serve as chair of the committee, or another faculty member may assume that position. The dissertation committee guides the candidate in development of the dissertation research proposal, makes final judgments

about the adequacy of the proposal, is available for consultation during the research work, guides the candidate in preparation of the dissertation document, and decides when the dissertation is ready for defense.

A dissertation committee is established when the chair and student, in consultation, secure agreement of two qualified persons to serve on the committee and to begin assisting the student with the development of his/her proposal. The committee is *formally* constituted when all three members have signed the [Dissertation Committee Membership Form](#) and it is submitted to the Office of Student Services. All three signatures can appear on the same form or the form can be signed and submitted separately as each member is identified and agrees to serve.

#### *Chair of the Dissertation Committee*

The role of the dissertation committee chair is to:

1. Guide the candidate in the preparation of the dissertation proposal, including specification of the research problem, the literature review that helps point the way toward the research, the questions or hypotheses for investigation, and the methodology.
2. Guide the candidate in selection of two additional committee members.
3. Provide guidance on the research proposal structure and content and set clear expectations for the timely completion of the proposal.
4. Provide guidance on the dissertation structure and content and set clear expectations for high-quality writing.
5. Set clear expectations for timely completion, and guide the candidate toward achieving a high level of quality (technical and ethical) in the dissertation research and document.
6. In consultation with the candidate, select examiners for the oral defense of the dissertation.
7. Prepare the candidate for the oral defense process.
8. Encourage the candidate to publish his or her dissertation after successful completion.

The dissertation committee chair must have the following qualifications:

1. Hold an earned academic doctorate.
2. Hold a GSEHD regular status (non-visiting) faculty appointment, either full- or part-time. Selection of dissertation chairs outside the program area requires the concurrence of the candidate's primary advisor. In this case, a member of the candidate's program faculty should participate as either a member of the research committee or the examining committee at the point of defense.
3. Have expertise that well matches the candidate's topic area.
4. Either (a) have experience serving as a member in no less than two dissertation committees, including the defense of the dissertation, or (b) in the absence of such experience, be mentored by an experienced GSEHD chair selected by the faculty member's department chair.
5. Have an active research agenda as characterized by the departmental personnel guidelines.

Emeritus and departing faculty may continue to serve as the dissertation chair for a period not to exceed two years, assuming the student has an approved proposal. After two years the student must reconstitute the dissertation committee by selecting a new chair (See Appendix C for a summary of committee structure).

*Dissertation Committee Members (Other than the Chair)*

The role of the two other dissertation committee members is to guide the candidate, in conjunction with the chair, through development of his or her independent research and the achievement of a high-quality product and oral defense, as specified above for the chair of the dissertation committee.

These committee members must have the following qualifications:

1. Hold an earned academic doctorate or an earned terminal degree for a period of one year prior to joining the committee.
2. Have expertise that well matches the candidate's topic area.
3. Among the chair and the two other committee members, at least one is to be knowledgeable about the methodology to be used in the dissertation research and designated as taking responsibility for guiding the research methodology.
4. It is strongly recommended that one committee member come from outside the candidate's home program; he or she may come from outside of GSEHD and even outside of GW.
5. Committee members must not have a relationship with the candidate that poses a potential conflict of interest (for example, serving as the candidate's job supervisor, friend, or colleague).
6. If not a current or former GW regular-status member, a copy of the prospective committee member's curriculum vitae must be submitted to the Office of Student Services.

When a change in an established dissertation committee is proposed, a memorandum requesting the change and the reasons for it should be sent to the Office of Student Services. The chair, the candidate, and the committee members being dropped and added should sign a memorandum indicating their concurrence with the requested change.

GSEHD sets certain requirements for the dissertation proposal and dissertation defense that will be indicated below. In addition, the dissertation chair establishes procedures regarding proposal development and dissertation draft review. In some cases, the dissertation committee may be established as you begin work on the proposal; in other cases, it may not be established until the chair thinks a draft proposal is nearly ready for review.

You should have a discussion with your dissertation committee about their expectations for submitting drafts of your dissertation and the amount of time they will need to review the document and provide feedback. Faculty members generally require a minimum of 10 to 20 business days to review documents. More time may be needed if they receive a draft just as the semester begins, as it is ending, during winter break, or throughout the summer. It is advisable to notify committee members in advance when drafts will be submitted for review and feedback.

### *Dissertation Proposal*

The dissertation proposal should include those elements normally found in Chapters 1 to 3 and the References of the dissertation, as indicated by the dissertation guidelines in the [GSEHD Dissertation Content and Style Guide](#). Under certain circumstances, the time needed to provide this breadth and depth of information may preclude taking advantage of a fleeting research opportunity, may be inappropriate for the type of research being proposed, or have other negative trade-offs. In such situations, at the request of the full committee, the Senior Associate Dean may allow approval of a proposal with less information.

The proposal should be prepared according to a recognized scholarly format, usually the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Sixth Edition) and the [GSEHD Dissertation Formatting Guide](#). The guidelines in the GSEHD Dissertation Content and Style Guide introduce you to the organization and elements of GSEHD dissertations. The chair of your dissertation committee and the instructor of your Pre-Dissertation Seminar will usually provide additional guidelines for the proposal.

It should be noted that approval of a proposal does not ensure approval of Chapters 1-3 when defending your dissertation. Some revisions are likely to be needed to those chapters when preparing the dissertation. For instance, new literature that helps in the interpretation of your results may have appeared, a few additional research questions may have been added as the research progressed, there may have been some changes in the methods that were actually used, and other limitations or delimitations may have become apparent. In addition, the dissertation oral examination committee is composed of more than the dissertation committee, and the additional members may identify some shortcoming in the first three chapters of the dissertation.

### *Pre-Dissertation Seminar (8998)*

Each program or department offers its own section of the Pre-Dissertation Seminar — CNSL, EDUC, HOL, SPED, or CPED 8998. All students must take the appropriate offering. Some programs require two semesters of 8998.

The Pre-Dissertation Seminar (8998) may be taken any time before starting Dissertation Research (8999). Consult with your advisor about when you should do so. 8998 is normally taken toward the end of one's coursework so that it can be informed broadly by the previous courses. Students do not receive credit for 8998 until they successfully defend their proposal. At the point of the final dissertation defense, if a student's 8998 course has not been assigned a credit by the course instructor, credit will be arranged by the Office of Student Services. **Please be aware that enrolling in only 3 credits of 8998 does not qualify for semester half-time or full-time certification with federal financial aid (unless you are taking a comprehensive exam in the same semester that you are enrolled in 8998). Please plan accordingly.**

### *Proposal Approval Process*

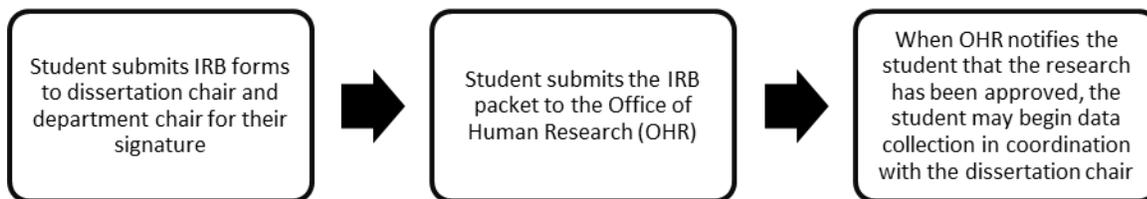
Before conducting dissertation research, your research proposal must be reviewed in an open forum and approved by the following:

1. Your dissertation committee
2. Your department chair

### 3. The GW Office of Human Research

You are NOT to begin actual data collection until you have all the necessary written approvals, as this violates the GW Office of Human Research and GSEHD policies. Noncompliance may result in a prohibition against the use of the data in your dissertation and possibly misconduct charges.

Obtaining Permission to Collect Data after the Proposal Defense:



***Dissertation Committee Approval of Proposal:*** The dissertation committee approves the proposal after a dissertation proposal defense, which is sometimes referred to as an “oral defense of the proposal.” The committee has a responsibility to review the proposal and ensure that it will produce worthwhile and high-quality research. During the defense, you may be asked about your rationale for certain aspects of the proposal, asked for more details about the literature or the proposed methods, or challenged about the appropriateness of proposed procedures. Your competency with the research methods is to be ascertained. The “defense” is also a consultation in which the committee members suggest, and sometimes require, changes to improve the research. The proposal defense is an informal proceeding at the discretion of the dissertation chair. You should ask your chair for a briefing on the format. Note: Students must be enrolled in the semester in which they defend their proposal.

Usually some refinements are expected following the proposal defense. Those changes may be reviewed by the full committee or just by the chair. Formal approval is indicated by committee members’ signatures on the [Dissertation Proposal Approval form](#). This form, along with the CV of any Committee member who is not on the GSEHD faculty, should be submitted to the Office of Student Life ([docgsehd@gwu.edu](mailto:docgsehd@gwu.edu)) to become an official part of your academic record.

#### **Proposal Approval/IRB documents:**

- Clean copy of the final Dissertation Proposal approved by the committee (free from editorial comments and including an accurate table of contents)

- Any supplementary proposal documents
- Student Investigator IRB Responsibilities agreement--HRP 290 signed by both the student and your P.I.(dissertation chair)
- IRB application--HRP 200, signed by both your PI and department chair *\*if your PI is also the department chair, the Senior Associate Dean will need to sign as department chair*

All IRB documents can be accessed at <http://humanresearch.gwu.edu/IRBforms>. For additional information, you can also contact the IRB office directly at [202-994-2715](tel:202-994-2715) or [ohrirb@gwu.edu](mailto:ohrirb@gwu.edu).

If your dissertation involves “excluded research”: that is, it does not (a) meet the regulatory definition of research; (b) involve identifiable individuals or data that identifies individuals; or (c) involve humans as subjects, then it is excluded from IRB review. If the proposed research is excluded, students should submit [HRP-207](#).

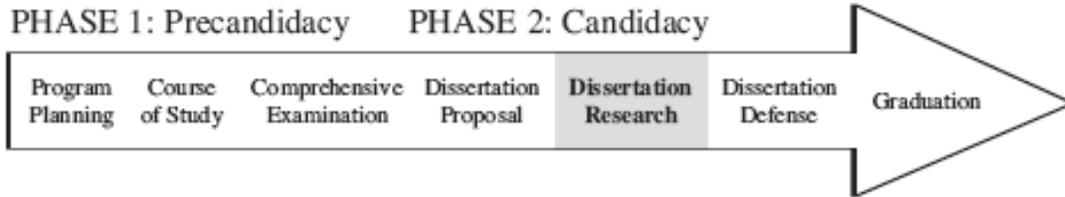
***Office of Human Research Approval of Proposal:*** The Office of Human Research assesses whether (a) the proposed research will expose human subjects to risks, (b) practical precautions have been taken to minimize those risks and inform the subjects of the risks, and (c) the remaining risks are justified by the potential benefits of the research.

The Office of Human Research may communicate directly with the candidate to ask for further clarifications or additional protections for human subjects. The review process could take as little as 10 days or as much as six weeks. If the protection of human subjects is judged inadequate, you should consult with your dissertation committee chair about how to proceed.

It is important to note at this point, that unless you successfully defend your dissertation within one year of the proposal approval, students who have an IRB designation of “expedited” or “full review” must submit a Continuing Review form to the [Office of Human Research](#) every 12 months.

**You are NOT authorized to collect data for your dissertation until you have received written approval of the proposal from your department chair and the IRB!**

# DISSERTATION RESEARCH



Dissertation research involves data collection, analysis, interpretation, and writing of the dissertation. Data collection can begin only after approval of the proposal by your dissertation committee, department chair, and the GW Office of Human Research.

### *Dissertation Research Registration: 8999 and 0940*

1. Candidates are to enroll in CNSL, EDUC, HOL, SPED, or CPED 8999 while involved in dissertation research. Candidates are to begin enrollment in 8999 the first fall or spring semester after having completed all coursework, passed the comprehensive examination, and taken the pre-dissertation seminar (8998).
2. Dissertation Research 8999 is to be taken at a rate of three to six credit hours each fall and spring semester, for a minimum of 12 credits and until you successfully defend your dissertation or until you have enrolled for a total of 24 credits. If you need substantial advising or feedback on drafts of your dissertation during the summer, you are also to register for 8999 during the summer. (Note that for most financial assistance, three credits of 8999 can constitute “at least half-time” enrollment once you begin your dissertation research, but this requires making good progress, certification by your advisor and the GSEHD Office of Student Services, and approval by the source of the financial assistance.)
3. If you have not defended your dissertation after 24 credit hours of 8999, you are to register for one credit hour of Continuing Research (CNSL, EDUC, HOL, SPED, or CPED 0940) each fall and spring semester until you defend your dissertation.
4. To defend your dissertation, you must have registered for a minimum of 12 credit hours of 8999 by the semester of the defense (oral examination). You also must be registered for at least three credits of 8999 in the semester of the defense, including the summer semester (these three credits can be part of the 12 credits), unless you meet one of the following two exceptions:
  - a. You have already completed 24 credit hours of 8999, in which case you only have to register for one credit of Continuing Research (CNSL, EDUC, HOL, SPED, or CPED 0940) in the semester of the defense.
  - b. You are unable to defend in the semester in which the dissertation defense materials are filed, usually because they were filed too late in the semester. You must have been enrolled in the correct number of dissertation credits the previous semester. Note: For students wanting to enroll in CE for the fall semester, this means that you will have to be registered for dissertation credits over the summer. Students registered in CE cannot be

certified as half-time for the purposes of student loans. International students are not permitted to register for CE.

**Warning:** If you have to stop work on your dissertation for a while, you can request a leave of absence for a period not to exceed two semesters. During a leave of absence, faculty members are not to help you with the dissertation and students will not have access to many of the university resources including the library. If you fail to meet requirements 2 or 3 above and have not been granted a leave of absence, you will “break enrollment” and then have to reapply to your program if you want to resume work on your dissertation and defend it.

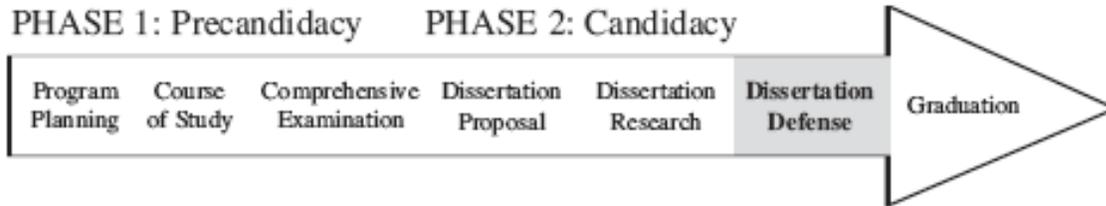
### *Guidelines for the Dissertation*

Dissertation guidelines are provided in the [GSEHD Dissertation Content and Style Guide](#). They are designed to assist you with the development of your dissertation. The dissertation is to be written in good formal English. Many international students and some domestic students might need the assistance of a professional editor.

In addition, you are required to use a recognized scholarly format for the dissertation. The style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (Sixth Edition)* is preferred because it is the dominant style for educational research journals, though it may be less applicable for some other programs and fields of study. Students should also consult the [GW Dissertation Formatting Regulations](#) and the [GSEHD Dissertation Formatting Guide](#), especially when formatting the preliminary pages of the dissertation.

It is the student’s responsibility to maintain regular contact with their dissertation chair. Please be aware that faculty members have many responsibilities and deadlines to meet. If you are not actively engaged for nine months and then, without advance notice, express-mail your draft, it may take a month or more for your chair be able to provide feedback.

# THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE



The purpose of the dissertation defense (dissertation oral examination) is to determine whether the dissertation is acceptable and whether you satisfactorily defend it. These decisions will be made at the conclusion of the examination by the dissertation oral examination committee.

The dissertation oral examination is in an open meeting that is publicly announced. The candidate may bring colleagues, family members, or friends. Other doctoral students may choose to attend. You may want to attend another defense before your own to become familiar with the process. If you would like to attend another student's defense, out of courtesy, please request his/her permission to attend.

## *Dissertation Oral Examination Committee*

The dissertation oral examination committee is to include five members:

1. The dissertation committee chair (non-voting)
2. The two other committee members
3. Two additional examiners (three for Counseling PhD students)

At least one of the five is to be from outside the candidate's home program and at least one other is to be from outside GSEHD. (Both can be from outside GSEHD.) One of the committee, other than the chair, will also serve as the presider. The presider must be a regular GSEHD faculty member (tenure, tenure track, contract, or visiting). See Appendix C for a summary of the committee structure.

## *Additional Examiners*

The additional examiners are selected on the basis of their interest and expertise in the area of the candidate's research and their ability to contribute to a fair and high-quality examination process.

The dissertation chair, usually in consultation with the candidate, is to contact and secure the additional examiners. All committee members and examiners must agree about the date and time of the defense. Please note that the Senior Associate Dean has final approval of the membership of all dissertation oral examination committees.

Qualifications: The additional examiners must also meet the following criteria:

1. Must have held an earned doctorate for at least one year prior to the defense.
2. Must have professional background and experience that is relevant to the candidate's topic and research.
3. Must be free of relationships with the candidate that poses a potential conflict of interest (such as being the candidate's job supervisor, friend, or colleague).

4. If not a current or former GW faculty member, a copy of the person's curriculum vitae must be submitted to the Office of Student Services.

It is expected that the candidate and members of the examining committee will be present for the oral examination at one of GW's official campuses or centers. In the event that a member of the examining committee is unable to be at the site of the examination, this should be indicated on the [Request for Dissertation Oral Examination](#) form. No more than one committee member may be off-site. The candidate and the chair must be present at the site of the examination. The Office of Student Life has a conference phone and video conference software that can be used for such distance participation.

### *Dissertation Defense Planning and Procedures*

The dissertation defense requires several preparatory steps, and the time required for some steps will vary depending on the condition of the dissertation draft and the schedules of the dissertation committee chair and members. Generally, you will need to have a draft that your committee considers nearly ready to defend by the start of the semester in which you plan to defend. Before having such a draft, there may be several months of redrafting in response to the chair's or committee's feedback on successive drafts.

Be sure to check the [GSEHD Critical Dates](#) for each semester's deadlines for submitting materials and scheduling defenses. Defenses generally must be scheduled four weeks before the [ProQuest deadline](#) with the appropriate materials submitted 30 calendar days prior to the scheduled defense. Dissertation defenses are not held in the last three weeks of December, from mid-March until the end of May, and August. If you wish to participate in May commencement ceremonies and you will graduate in the spring semester, you must submit the completed and polished dissertation and necessary forms to the Office of Student Services in early or mid-February.

The following actions are required prior to the defense:

#### **Chair responsibilities:**

1. Assist candidate in completing and submitting the following forms to the Office of Student Services no less than 30 calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the exam.
  - a. [Request for Dissertation Oral Examination Form](#)
  - b. [Dissertation Approval Form](#)

Before signing the Dissertation Approval Form, committee members should be satisfied that the document is ready to defend. Once the dissertation is submitted to the Office of Student Services, no changes can be made to the document before the oral examination.

2. The chair, usually in collaboration with the candidate, is to arrange for additional examiners to join with the dissertation committee and is to arrange a date and time for the dissertation oral examination. These steps are indicated on the [Request for Dissertation Oral Examination form](#).

### **Doctoral Candidate Responsibilities:**

1. Complete and deliver the following items to [docgsehd@gwu.edu](mailto:docgsehd@gwu.edu). These must be prepared in complete and polished form and delivered **no less than 30 calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the oral examination**.
  - a. One electronic copy of the dissertation, the [Dissertation Approval Form](#), and the [Request for Dissertation Oral Examination](#) form.
  - b. The Abstract of the Dissertation emailed as a Word document. This must be no more than 350 words in length typed, double spaced.
  - c. Curriculum vitae of the additional examiners who are not current or former GW faculty members.

Note: Once this submission is made, no changes can be made to the dissertation before the oral examination.

2. Distribute copies of the final dissertation to the members of the examining committee. Consult with the examiners to determine whether they prefer electronic or print copies of your documents. **This must be done no less than 20 working days prior to the scheduled date of the oral examination.**

### **Office of Student Services Responsibilities:**

As part of the preparation for the dissertation defense, the Office of Student Services will review the student's academic history and report any discrepancies to the student. Any remaining grades of "IPG" in 8998, 8999, or 0940 will be converted to grades of "credit" as part of the review process.

An Office of Student Services representative will review the membership of the proposed dissertation oral examination committee for compliance with GSEHD regulations. The office will send emails to the external examiners formally notifying them of their status and the examination. It will also arrange the room for the examination and coordinate any distance participation.

### **Presider Responsibilities:**

The dissertation defense (oral examination) is a formal proceeding conducted according to set rules. One of the committee members, other than the chair, will also serve as the presider. The presider must be a GSEHD faculty member (tenure, tenure track, contract, or visiting). The presider is to direct the defense according to the Instructions for the Presider in the Appendix D. The committee member serving as presider shall also be an active examiner, participating in the questioning of the candidate and the votes. The chair, other committee members, or the candidate may request in confidence that the Senior Associate Dean appoint an independent presider for that defense, and in such a case, the Senior Associate Dean will do so. If the presider is not a member of the examining committee, they are present solely to moderate, and do not have a voting role.

Defenses are open to the public but seating for observers is usually limited to four to six people. Family members may attend, but candidates should realize that the shortcomings and limitations of their work will be discussed.

### *Dissertation Defense Outcomes*

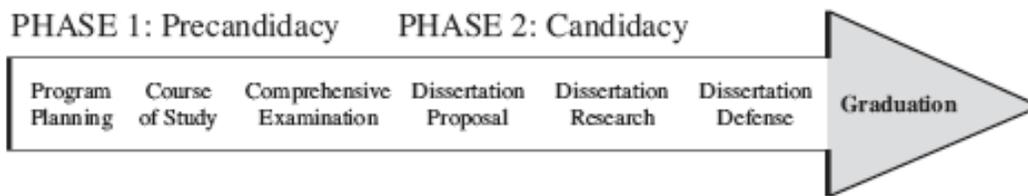
At the conclusion of the examination phase of the defense, the candidate and all observers are asked to leave the room while the committee considers the acceptability of the dissertation defense and the dissertation document. The examining committee makes two decisions: the acceptability of the document and the acceptability of the oral defense.

Even if the dissertation defense is successful, the work is not finished. The oral examination committee usually requests several refinements to the document. Then several auxiliary materials have to be prepared and copies of the final dissertation distributed. These requirements are discussed in the graduation section below.

A student whose dissertation document is accepted conditionally but is unable to make the revisions to the document required by the dissertation committee in time to meet the deadlines for degree clearance may enroll in Continuous Enrollment (CE) in the subsequent semester. CE status is limited to two semesters. A student who does not have final committee approval for the dissertation within two semesters will be terminated from the doctoral program.

Students are allowed a maximum of two dissertation oral defenses, in which they have an opportunity to successfully defend their dissertation. If the student fails both oral defenses, the student is automatically removed from the doctoral program. On the second attempt, a student must pass both the oral defense and have the dissertation voted acceptable by the committee.

## GRADUATION



The University confers doctoral degrees three times a year, in August, January, and May. The Commencement Ceremony and the University Hooding Ceremony are only held in the spring semester. Students must submit an online [Application for Graduation](#) in the semester in which they plan to graduate by the appropriate deadline (Fall semester: October 1<sup>st</sup>, Spring: February 1<sup>st</sup>, Summer: July 1<sup>st</sup>).

### *Final Tasks Related to the Dissertation*

1. Retrieve all paper copies of your dissertation from your committee, the examiners, and the president.
2. Make any edits and revisions required by the committee in the course of the examination. Confer with the chair of the committee to make sure you have a clear understanding of what is expected.
3. After all the revisions have been made to the document, submit one final copy to the chair of your committee. After the chair determines that all revisions required by the committee have been made and obtains any outstanding signatures, he/she approves the final copy. You are ready to submit the dissertation electronically.
4. **Obtain final signoffs:** Once you have signed approval from your dissertation chair, both you and your chair should sign the [ETD Approval Form](#) downloadable from the left-hand navigation column of the [ETD website](#) or under the list of forms for doctoral students through the [Student Services website](#). This is to be submitted to the GSEHD Office of Student Services.
5. GW requires all dissertations to be submitted electronically. Be sure to allow two weeks to navigate this process. The GW [ETD website](#) will guide you through the process of uploading your document into a PDF file and electronically submitting it to ProQuest, who will archive your dissertation and provide open access publishing, and to Gelman Library.

**Note:** It is very important to carefully review your document before submitting it electronically. Do not forget to use the [GW Directory](#) to find the correct titles of your GW faculty committee members. Once your dissertation has been electronically submitted to ProQuest, you may make no further revisions.

6. ProQuest will assess the following fees: \$95 for open access publishing and \$55 for copyright. GW discourages students from copyrighting their dissertation unless the research has some commercial value. Please see the “Best Practices Section” on the GW [ETD website](#) for more information regarding open access and copyright.
7. Students graduating in the fall semester must complete any remaining degree requirements, submit their dissertation to the GW ProQuest ETD website, and have the document reviewed and approved for submission to ProQuest by the Gelman Library Editor and the GSEHD Office of Student Services by January 15th. To graduate in the spring, the submission deadline is April 1st. To graduate in summer, the submission deadline is August 15.

**Note:** Normally students have 30 calendar days to submit their dissertations and supporting documents after the defense. In the spring semester, if you defend your dissertation after March 1<sup>st</sup>, you will have less than 30 days to make revisions and upload your dissertation. There are no exceptions to these deadlines.

8. The University requires students to submit the [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) before clearing you for graduation. Please complete the questionnaire online and you can then either print a certificate or request an email confirming the survey has been submitted. Confirmation of completion must be submitted to the GSEHD Office of Student Services.
9. Notify GSEHD Office of Student Services (docgsehd@gwu.edu) if the title of your dissertation changed after submitting a copy of the dissertation for the defense.
10. Go to <http://humanresearch.gwu.edu/closing-studies>, fill out the Study Closure Form to terminate your research and submit to the Principal Investigator (PI) for signature.  
**\*Exempt studies do not require a study closure form.** It is your responsibility to submit the form directly to the IRB Office.

Please contact the GSEHD Office of Student Services at 202-994-7630 if you have any questions.

### *Application for Graduation*

You are to complete the online [Application for Graduation](#) for the semester in which you plan to graduate. The deadlines to submit the application to the Office of Student Services are February 1 for spring, July 1 for summer, and October 1 for fall. If a candidate does not complete the program in the semester anticipated in the initial [Application for Graduation](#), he/she should apply again for graduation in a later semester.

The Office of Student Services will contact you regarding all commencement matters (tickets, parking, obtaining a cap and gown, and other information) if you indicated on the Application for Graduation that you planned to attend Commencement. Information pertaining to graduation can also be found on the [GW Commencement](#) and [GSEHD Graduation](#) websites. Please note that although free, tickets are required for some events and information will be provided as to how to obtain them.

Official Graduation Dates:                      Spring Defenses = date of Commencement Ceremony  
   Summer Defenses = August 31  
   Fall Defenses = January 31

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### *Financing Your Graduate Education*

GSEHD admission decisions are made without regard to financial need. Descriptions of available financial assistance are provided in [GSEHD's Funding Opportunities](#) and the [GW Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships website](#). The first three of the below listed forms of aid are available only to students enrolled at the Foggy Bottom campus. Students enrolled at other campuses or centers should contact their program faculty to determine if there is tuition support available.

### *Graduate Assistantships*

GSEHD has graduate assistantships available for full-time doctoral candidates. Each assistantship includes a stipend, salary, and tuition support. Graduate Assistants are expected to work 15 to 20 hours per week during the academic year. Contact GSEHD Admissions at [gsehdadm@gwu.edu](mailto:gsehdadm@gwu.edu) for more information. Tuition benefits cannot be applied to courses taken off campus or through the consortium.

### *Tuition Awards*

GSEHD has a limited number of tuition awards available for both part time (six credits) and full-time (nine credits) on-campus doctoral students. Tuition awards may not be used for coursework taken off-campus or through the consortium.

Several programs in GSEHD also have tuition awards available through research or training grant funds. Contact GSEHD Tuition Support at [gsehdtts@gwu.edu](mailto:gsehdtts@gwu.edu) for information regarding available tuition support.

### *Endowment Awards*

GSEHD offers support from privately endowed funds. Please contact Admissions for specific information. You must submit the [GSEHD Application for Tuition Support](#), as well as a separate statement of interest.

### *Student Loans and Work Study Opportunities*

If you indicated on your application for admission that you plan to apply for a loan or for a work/study program at GW, a packet containing loan questionnaire and application information will be forwarded to you by the Office of Student Financial Assistance. If you have not received this packet, contact [Colonial Central](#). Colonial Central is located in the lower level of the Marvin Center (800 21<sup>st</sup> Street, NW). Students applying for federal financial aid must re-apply every year. Please see the [GW Financial Aid](#) website for directions.

### *Maintaining Federal Student Loan Eligibility*

Federal regulations require students to maintain good academic standing and make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to remain eligible to receive federal student loans. The federal standard for *making satisfactory progress* is measured three ways: cumulative GPA, Percentage of Credits Earned (PACE), and by maximum time frame. For more information on SAP please

refer to the [GWU Office of Student Financial Assistance](#) website. The website also includes information on Evaluation of SAP and the appeals process.

### *Half-Time/Full-Time Certification*

To be eligible to receive federal financial aid, students must be enrolled at least half-time. GW considers 9 credits per semester to be full-time study and 4.5 credits per semester in the fall and spring as half-time study. In the summer, full-time status requires 6 credits and half-time status requires 3 credits.

Students in the following situations are eligible to complete the [Half-Time/Full-Time Certification form](#) which will allow certification of full- or half-time study with a registration of fewer credits than officially required:

- Students enrolled in an internship
- Students enrolled in dissertation research (8999 or, in certain cases, 0940)
- Students taking the comprehensive exam (limited to 2 semesters)

Please note that this form must be completed each semester as registration is required before this can be recommended for approval. The student is responsible for completing the form, obtaining advisor/chair signature, and then submitting the form to [docgsehd@gwu.edu](mailto:docgsehd@gwu.edu) for dean-level signature.

### *GW Equal Opportunity Policy*

The George Washington University does not unlawfully discriminate against any person on any basis prohibited by federal law, the District of Columbia Human Rights Act, or other applicable law, including without limitation, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. This policy covers all programs, services, policies, and procedures of the university, including admission to education programs and employment.

# THE STUDENT APPEALS PROCESS

GSEHD students in doctoral programs have the right to appeal a decision.

## *Informal Attempts at Resolution*

Prior to appealing a decision through the Post-Master's Student Appeals Committee (PMAC), the student first should attempt to resolve the matter with the faculty member(s) most directly responsible. If no resolution results, the student should then consult with the individual at the next administrative level, for example, the director of the program or the chair of the relevant department. If there continues to be no resolution, the program director, chair or student may contact the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies and solicit assistance to ensure that adequate steps are made to resolve the issues at an informal level without the complaint escalating to the status of a formal appeal. If no resolution is achieved as a result of these informal attempts, the student may appeal to the Senior Associate Dean. If no resolution is achieved at this level, the student may appeal to the Post-Master's Student Appeals Committee. Any such informal attempts will not delay the six-month time frame for filing the appeal.

## *Post Masters Student Appeals Committee: Policies and Procedures*

### **1. The Committee**

One representative from each doctoral program and one representative from the research methods faculty comprise the PMAC. Committee members serve staggered two-year terms and may be re-elected. The Senior Associate Dean, Associate Dean of Doctoral Studies, and the Executive Director of the Office of Student Life (OSL) serve as nonvoting members.

### **2. Charge of the PMAC**

The PMAC has responsibility for acting on appeals from applicants to or students in Doctoral degree programs. Review by the committee is considered a formal appeal and follows informal efforts to resolve the matter as noted above. In addition, the PMAC may make recommendations to the Office of the Dean and/or the Doctoral Studies Committee, as appropriate, regarding policies of an academic nature related to post-masters students.

### **3. Justification**

For matters not resolved informally, students may appeal the following:

- A. An admissions or academic matter on the basis of a violation of GSEHD policies or procedures. The student must submit clear evidence of divergence from prescribed procedures to the PMAC.
- B. An academic matter on the basis of extenuating circumstances that would render the application of established policies and procedures unfair. Extenuating circumstances are generally an event or series of events that are beyond the

student's control that prevented the student from fulfilling degree requirements consistent with GSEHD policies and procedures. To prevail on an appeal, a student must submit clear evidence of extenuating circumstances.

#### 4. Student Procedures

For an appeal to be considered by the Post-Masters Student Appeals Committee, students must adhere to the following process:

- A. Students must present their case within six months of the date of the decision being appealed. All documents must be submitted to the OSL Executive Director two weeks prior to the meeting of the PMAC. Students should expect to provide the following information:
  - Student Statement of Appeal: An explanation of the policy, procedure or decision being appealed, the circumstances leading to the appeal, the progress made and factors which will lead to successful completion. .
  - Student Timeline: An outline of the exact steps which will be taken to complete any pending degree requirements successfully.
  - Two letters of support from program faculty. Students are responsible for securing and submitting letters of support from program faculty, preferably including one from their dissertation chair. *The Ed Admin program submits one program letter instead of two faculty letters.*

The Office of Student Services will provide additional guidance should other materials be required.

- B. The appeal will be placed on the PMAC agenda for the next meeting during the academic year only when the student has submitted all case materials.
- C. Procedures outlined in Section V. below govern the conduct of the hearing and the notification of the Committee's decision.
- D. The student may appeal the decision of the PMAC by submitting a written appeal to the Dean within 30 calendar days after the written date of the PMAC decision. A delay in filing an appeal may constitute grounds for rejection of the appeal. The Dean's decision is final.

#### 5. Committee Procedures

- A. The Executive Director of OSL provides copies of all documents related to the appeals case to each Committee member including a summary of the appeal, the student's submitted statement, student timeline, and faculty letters of support.
- B. The Executive Director of OSL coordinates communication between the student, the faculty advisor(s), the Office of the Dean, the PMAC Chair, and when necessary, other parties associated with the appeal. The Executive Director of OSL is

- responsible for notifying in writing the student, faculty associated with the appeal of the day, date, and time of the hearing. The student, and faculty have the option of attending the meeting to explain the appeal if they notify the Executive Director at least one week prior to the hearing. The student may have another individual present for support but the person will not be permitted to speak or participate in the hearing. If the individual is an attorney, the student must inform the PMAC chair no later than one week prior to the hearing. Faculty opposing the appeal may also be invited to attend at a separate time from the student's appearance.
- C. The Chair is responsible for the conduct of the hearing including allotting time should a student or faculty member appear in person.
  - D. The Executive Director of the Office of Student Life, the Associate Dean of Doctoral Studies, and the Senior Associate Dean, sitting as ex-officio members of the Committee, may supply relevant information, either orally or in writing, to the Committee at any time during their deliberations. The Committee may request input from any person and use all information pertaining to the student's case, including information contained in department or school files in deliberating.
  - E. The Committee will conduct a confidential discussion to reach a decision attained by majority vote. Any Committee member involved in supporting the appeal must recuse himself/herself from the Committee's proceedings, deliberations, and decision. The Committee has the prerogative to include in their decision conditions or terms required of student's to remain in the program.
  - F. Each Committee member, the Senior Associate Dean, the appellant, and program faculty are informed in writing by the OSL Executive Director of the decision no later than 10 business days after the meeting date.
  - G. Should the student appeal the PMAC decision, the OSL Executive Director will inform the Dean of the Committee's deliberations.
  - H. The Executive Director of the Office of Student Life shall keep a copy of all written records along with the committee's rulings, recommendations and justifications for the decisions. All copies of case material documents are returned by Committee members to the OSL Executive Director and disposed of appropriately. Records will be retained for a minimum of 3 years after the date of the decision.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: DOCTORAL STUDENT CHECKLIST

### PHASE 1: Pre-Candidacy

- Connect with Doctoral Study Advising Team (listed on your admission letter).
- Complete any prerequisite work (or other conditions of admission) as listed on your admission decision letter.
- Ensure that you are enrolled (or registered for a leave of absence) each fall and spring semester. Summer enrollment is not required.
- Complete all course requirements on your Program Plan of Study, with the possible exception of the Pre-Dissertation Seminar (CNSL, CPED, EDUC, HOL or SPED 8998), and/or your level B research methods course. You may not enroll in Dissertation Research (CNSL, CPED, EDUC, HOL or SPED 8999) until AFTER all other coursework is completed.
- Complete the [Comprehensive Examination Application](#) by the appropriate deadline (Fall semester: October 1st, Spring semester: February 1st, Summer semester: June 1<sup>st</sup>).
- Be actively enrolled in at least one credit hour during the semester in which you intend to sit for the comprehensive examination. **Consult with your academic advisor and student services representative to determine the best course of enrollment for the semester in which you take the comprehensive exam.**
- Successfully complete the comprehensive examination.
- Successfully complete the Pre-Dissertation Seminar (CNSL, CPED, EDUC, HOL or SPED 8998) and your Level B research methods course, if not previously completed. **Please be aware that enrolling in only 3 credits of 8998 or level B do not qualify for semester half-time or full-time certification with federal financial aid.** Please plan accordingly.

### PHASE 2: Candidacy

- Begin registering for dissertation research (CNSL, CPED, EDUC, HOL or SPED 8999) at a rate of 3 or 6 credits each semester.
- If you have not already done so, establish a doctoral dissertation committee and file the [Dissertation Committee Membership form](#). Review the criteria for establishing a committee as listed on the back of the form.

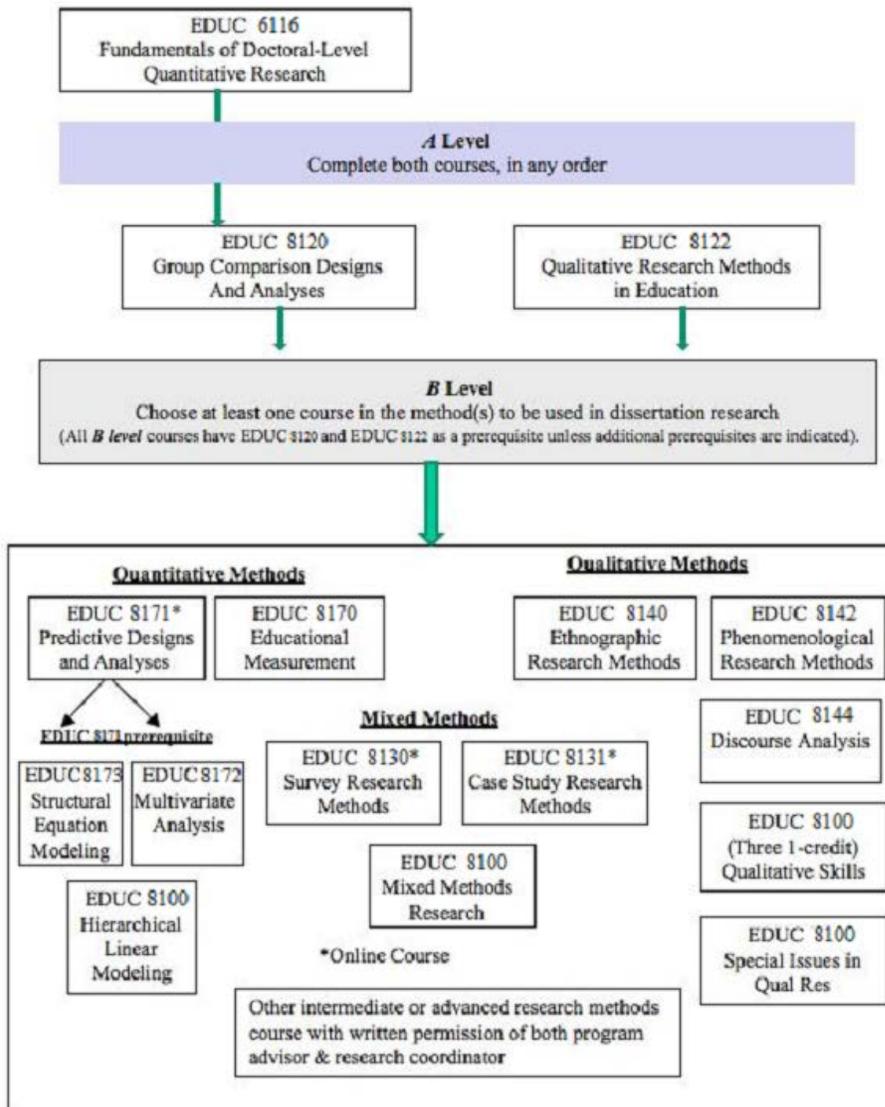
- Submit the CV for any committee members outside of GW to docgsehd@gwu.edu
- Obtain your dissertation committee's approval of your proposal. Complete the [Dissertation Proposal Approval](#) form. Submit completed form to the Office of Student Services.
- Obtain IRB and Proposal Approval:

**Proposal Approval/IRB documents:**

- Clean copy of the final Dissertation Proposal approved by the committee (free from editorial comments and including an accurate table of contents)
- Any supplementary proposal documents
- Student Investigator IRB Responsibilities agreement--HRP 290 signed by both the student and your P.I.(dissertation chair)
- IRB application--HRP 200, signed by both your PI and Department Chair *\*if your PI is also the department chair, Senior Associate Dean will need to sign as department chair*
  
- Submit drafts of your dissertation to your dissertation chair and committee members for review and feedback, as requested by the chair. Work with your chair to establish a timeline for degree completion.
  
- Enroll in a minimum of 12 credit hours of Dissertation Research (CNSL, CPED, EDUC, HOL or SPED 8999). If you have not completed all degree requirements and graduated by the time you reach 12 credit hours of Dissertation Research, you must continue to register for Dissertation Research at a rate of 3-6 credits until you either successfully complete all degree requirements or reach 24 credits. If you reach 24 credits of Dissertation Research, you will become eligible to register 1 credit a semester of Continuing Research (CNSL, CPED, EDUC, HOL or SPED 0940).
  
- Submit an online [Application for Graduation](#) in the semester in which you plan to graduate by the appropriate deadline (Fall semester: October 1<sup>st</sup>, Spring: February 1<sup>st</sup>, Summer: July 1<sup>st</sup>).
  
- Establish a dissertation oral examination committee with the assistance of your dissertation chairperson. See the regulations in the Doctoral Student Handbook.
  
- Submit the [Dissertation Approval Form](#), the [Request for Dissertation Oral Examination Form](#), one electronic copy of your completed dissertation and one electronic copy of the abstract (Word format, 350 words) to the Office of Student Services. **This must be done at least 30 calendar days before the scheduled defense.**

- Distribute copies of the final dissertation to the members of the examining committee. Consult with the examiners to determine whether they prefer electronic or print copies of your document. **This must be done no less than 20 working days prior to the scheduled date of the oral examination.**
- Successfully defend your dissertation in the oral examination.
- Make any revisions requested by the oral examination committee, submit final documents to the Office of Student Services, and have your document uploaded and accepted by both the Gelman Library and the Office of Student Services **within 30 calendar days from the date of your final oral examination or by the ProQuest submission deadline for the semester in which you defend (whichever comes first)**. Deadlines can be found on the Office of Student Services [Critical Dates webpage](#).
- Submit [ETD Approval Form](#) signed by you and your dissertation chair (student services will sign as the school official) as evidence you have completed the [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) to the Office of Student Services.
- Close the IRB study by submitting the Study Closure Form directly to the [Office of Human Research](#). *Exempt studies do not require a study closure form.*
- Walk across the stage at graduation!!!

## APPENDIX B: GSEHD DOCTORAL RESEARCH METHODS SEQUENCE



Detailed course descriptions can be found on the GW Bulletin at:  
<http://bulletin.gwu.edu/courses/educ/>

## APPENDIX C: DISSERTATION COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The three-member dissertation committee includes a dissertation chair and two additional committee members. Prior to the dissertation defense, two additional examiners join the committee.

- Out of the five members, one must be outside the candidate's home program and one must be outside GSEHD.
- One of the committee members, other than the chair, will also serve as the president. The committee member serving as president shall also be an active examiner, participating in the questioning of the candidate and the votes. In special circumstances, the Senior Associate Dean may approve an independent president. If the president is not a member of the examining committee, they are present solely to moderate, and do not have a voting role. The president must be a GSEHD faculty member (tenure track, contract, or visiting).

### Three-Member Dissertation Committee

#### DISSERTATION CHAIR (NONVOTING AT THE TIME OF DEFENSE)

- Hold an earned doctorate.
  - Hold a full-time or part-time GSEHD faculty appointment (regular status, non-visiting). Appointment outside program area requires approval of candidate's primary advisor.
  - Have expertise in candidate's topic area.
  - Have an active research agenda as characterized by the departmental personnel guidelines.
  - Either (a) have experience serving as a member on no less than two dissertation committees, including the defense of the dissertation, or (b) in the absence of such experience, be mentored by an experienced GSEHD dissertation chair selected by the faculty member's department chair.
- Emeritus and departing faculty may continue to serve as the dissertation chair for a period not to exceed two years, if the student has an approved proposal. After two years the student must reconstitute the dissertation committee by selecting a new chair.

#### TWO ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS (VOTING)

- Hold an earned doctorate, or a terminal degree and a faculty appointment, for at least one year.
- Have expertise that matches the candidate's topic area and research.
- Among the chair and the two other committee members, at least one will be knowledgeable about the methodology to be used in the dissertation research and designated as taking responsibility for guiding the research methodology.
- It is strongly recommended that one member come from outside the candidate's home program (Counseling, C & I, Ed Admin & Policy Studies, HEA, HOL, and SPED).
- Committee member cannot have a relationship with the candidate that might pose a conflict of interest.
- If a member does not hold a GW faculty appointment, he/she must submit a copy of his/her curriculum vitae to the Office of Student Services.

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### Two Additional Examiners for the Defense of Dissertation

#### TWO ADDITIONAL EXAMINERS FOR THE DEFENSE OF DISSERTATION (VOTING)

- Two additional examiners are selected on the basis of their expertise and interest in the candidate's topic area**
- Hold an earned doctorate for at least one year prior to the defense.
  - Have a professional background and experience that is relevant to the candidate's topic area.
  - Committee members must not have a relationship with the candidate that might pose a conflict of interest.
  - If not a current or former GW faculty member, a copy of their curriculum vitae must be submitted to the Office of Student Services.

## APPENDIX D: INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRESIDER

TO: Presider  
FROM: GSEHD Office of Student Life  
DATE:  
RE: Presiding at Doctoral Oral Examination

FOR:  
DATE:  
TIME:  
PLACE:

### *Routine for Presiding at Doctoral Oral Examination:*

Thank you for agreeing to preside at the upcoming oral examination. I hope the following will be helpful. I have bracketed instructions. Other statements may be used verbatim.

#### A. Prior to Examination

1. Check set-up of room
  - a. Candidate and chairperson at one end of table, presider at other end, examiners along sides, any observers along walls.
  - b. Put an announcement at each place.

#### B. Opening of Examination Session

1. Open the examination by including:
  - a. This is the final examination for the degree of Doctor of Education for (name of the student).
  - b. The purpose of the examination is to determine:
    - i. Whether the dissertation is acceptable, and
    - ii. Whether the candidate satisfactorily defends it. That decision will be made at the conclusion of the examination by the four examiners. (The chair is present but does not participate in the examination or the decision.)
  - c. A decision to accept the dissertation stipulates that all errors of an editorial or typographical nature will be corrected before the final copies of the dissertation are submitted, therefore it is not necessary to question the candidate concerning matters of this sort. The candidate and chairperson will appreciate receiving notes on these errors, either in the text, or separately. Therefore the examiners can address their questions to matters of substance.
  - d. Each examiner will be given an opportunity to introduce questions. Once a question has been introduced, any other examiner who is interested in the

same general area may feel free to enter the questioning at that point. It is hoped that the initial questioning will proceed expeditiously enough that there will be an opportunity for a second round, in which examiners may introduce questions they have been reserving or which may have occurred to them in the course of the examination.

2. Ask the chairperson to present the candidate to the examiners: "Dr. (**Chair's name**) could you present the candidate to the examiner please?"
3. Permit the candidate to make a brief introductory statement: (Student's name) you now have the opportunity to make a brief introductory statement. I would suggest that it is not necessary to summarize the content of the dissertation. Rather you may tell the examiners anything that may be helpful to them in understanding the research, the candidate's background, or the relationship between the two. Keep statement to about five minutes (optional).

C. Question Period

1. [Call on examiners, in turn.] As is our custom, I usually begin with a faculty member and then alternate between faculty examiners and outside examiners for purposes of examining the candidate. The questioning will begin with (see insert) examining the candidate.

Examiner	1	2
1		
2		
3		
4		

2. [If time, call on examiners again. It is good if questions are completed within 1½ hours from the start, but 1¾ is acceptable.]
3. [Ask if anyone has any final questions.]
4. [Ask if any observers want to ask questions.]

D. Decision Period

1. [Have candidate and all observers leave.]
2. [Consider the acceptability of the dissertation.]
  - i. Possible decisions:

- a. Accept: All errors are corrected, and recommendations which had consensus in the course of the examination are incorporated. The examiners delegate to the chairperson the responsibility for seeing that this is done.
  - b. Accept conditionally: Any examiner who cares to do so may withhold his or her signature until the revised document has been submitted to him or her and is approved.
  - c. Reject conditionally: The examiners establish conditions under which the dissertation may be reconsidered and accepted. This may or may not include another oral.
  - d. Reject: The dissertation is judged totally unacceptable. The candidate has no alternative except to produce a new study, if permitted to continue.
- ii. [Get a motion and second. Discuss. Vote.] Two negative votes defeat a motion
3. [Consider the acceptability of the defense.]
    - i. Possible decisions: Accept or not accept. If not accepted, a second oral is called for.
  4. If a dissertation has been accepted, have all examination personnel sign the acceptance form (some perhaps withholding signature if acceptance is conditional). Student services will scan the acceptance form to anyone participating virtually\* **THE CHAIR SHOULD NOT SIGN THE DOCUMENT UNTIL CORRECTIONS/MODIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN REVIEWED BY THEM.**
- E. After Decision is Made
1. While this is going on, bring the candidate in and announce results.
  2. Give candidate copies of final instructions and necessary forms.
  3. Please return presider folder with signature memos to GSEHD Doctoral Student Services ([docgsehd@gwu.edu](mailto:docgsehd@gwu.edu) or 2136 G Street.) Thank you.