

Directions for Assessing the Dissertation Proposal Defense

The examining committee members need to perform the following tasks:

1. Review the “Dissertation Proposal Defense” section listed below prior to the defense.
2. Participate in the student’s dissertation proposal defense.
3. Assess the quality of the student’s dissertation proposal defense by completing the score sheet attached.
4. Tally up the points awarded and enter the students total score for the five (5) dimensions.
5. Sign the score sheet.
6. **Give the completed score sheet to the committee chair to fulfill NCATE and SACS data collection requirements.**
7. Committee members must sign the student’s Graduate School’s Petition for Topic Approval form.

Dissertation Proposal Defense

Candidates for a doctoral degree must prepare and present a dissertation proposal that reveals independent investigation and is acceptable in content and form to the dissertation committee. The dissertation proposal must demonstrate the student’s ability to conceive, design, conduct, and interpret research, and must contribute to the knowledge base in one’s field. Dissertation work is directly supervised by the chair of the dissertation committee; however, students are encouraged to consult fully with all members of their committee during the planning, conducting, and writing of their dissertations. Students need to also consult the Graduate School’s *Manual of Basic Requirements for Thesis and Dissertations*.

Appointment and Responsibilities of a Dissertation Committee

Although students are encouraged to work with faculty on dissertation ideas well before the formal appointment of a committee, the Graduate School will formally appoint a dissertation committee after the student is admitted to candidacy. The committee will be comprised of at least four qualified faculty members. Typically, three members are Department of Educational Leadership faculty members and one is appointed by the Graduate School from the University at large. Although students may request a specific at-large University representative, the Graduate School will make the final decision. The Doctoral Program Coordinator will approve the composition of the dissertation committee. Committee members will have the privilege of voice and vote on all relevant matters that come before the committee pertaining to a student’s progress toward the degree. All four dissertation committee members should be present for the oral defense of the dissertation and must attest to the successful completion of the dissertation.

Dissertation Committee Chair

Students must identify a dissertation committee chair by the date on which they complete the Comprehensive Examinations and prior to enrolling in ADMN 8699 (Dissertation Research). The dissertation committee chair will provide program advisement through the remainder of the student’s program and will see that students have the opportunity to progress expeditiously toward degree completion. Chairs will assist students in organizing committee meetings, obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board, presenting the proposal, conducting original research, and organizing the dissertation defense.

Dissertation Proposal

The development and defense of a dissertation proposal is an important aspect of dissertation research. The proposal is a draft of the first three chapters of one’s dissertation. When considering the proposal, the dissertation committee may approve (exceeding expectations), approve with stipulations (meets expectations), or disapprove (not meet expectations). Once a proposal has been approved without stipulations by the dissertation committee, committee members must sign the Graduate School’s Petition for Topic Approval form (available in Handbook appendix). Students must ensure that this form has been completed and signed properly. Before collecting any data for a dissertation, students must take and pass the on-line Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative on human subjects found at <https://www.citiprogram.org/>

Score Sheet
Dissertation Proposal Defense Scoring Rubrics

Scoring Dimension - Dissertation Proposal Reflects:	Not Met (0 points)	Meeting Expectations (1 point)	Exceeding Expectations (2 points)
1. A research problem which is clear, articulated and significant.	<i>Serious weaknesses in selection and articulation of significance of research problem. Research is not justified.</i> Score []	<i>Competent analysis of complex ideas; errors in expression affect clarity.</i> Score []	<i>Asks new questions or addresses an important question or problem; clearly states the problem and why it is important.</i> Score []
2. Research methods which provide detailed description of (if applicable): subjects, design/approach, methods/procedures and analyses.	<i>Unclear how the research study will be conducted; has not identified the population of interest or provided a sampling plan.</i> Score []	<i>Demonstrates technical competence; shows the ability to do research.</i> Score []	<i>Research is described in enough detail to be replicated by others.</i> Score []
3. Research methods and analyses that are appropriate to the research questions.	<i>Research method and analyses are not aligned to the research questions.</i> Score []	<i>Has an unsophisticated analysis—does not explore all possibilities and misses connections.</i> Score []	<i>Analysis plan is comprehensive, complete, sophisticated, and convincing.</i> Score []
4. A relationship between the research problem and the student's role as an educational leader.	<i>Does not understand basic concepts, processes, or conventions of the discipline; lacks careful thought; looks at a question or problem that is trivial, weak, unoriginal, or already solved.</i> Score []	<i>Has a comprehensive, and coherent argument; can sustain an argument, but the argument is not imaginative, complex, or convincing.</i> Score []	<i>Displays a deep understanding of a massive amount of complicated literature; exhibits command and authority over the material; argument is focused, logical, rigorous, and sustained.</i> Score []
5. A preliminary literature review that describes prior conceptual and research investigations of the research problem.	<i>Does not handle theory well, or theory is missing or applied incorrectly.</i> Score []	<i>Reviews the literature adequately—knows the literature but is not critical of it or does not discuss what is important.</i> Score []	<i>Is theoretically sophisticated and shows a deep understanding of theory.</i> Score []

Name of Candidate _____

Number of 1-point scores _____ X 1 = _____

Number of 2-point scores _____ X 2 = _____

TOTAL NUMBER of POINTS _____

Name of Committee Member _____

Signature of Committee Member _____