Dissertation Proposal and Advancement to Candidacy Process

Upon successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination, the student shall submit a dissertation proposal for the Dissertation Committee's approval (before the end of the next long semester). EPP students should submit copies of their polished proposals at least six weeks prior to the proposal meeting—giving four weeks lead-time for the Dissertation Committee and two weeks lead time for submission to the GSC. This early submission requirement is to ensure that the student has made appropriate allowances for all suggestions and revisions made by the Committee. The student’s Dissertation Committee must approve the final written dissertation proposal. Such approval will be indicated by submitting to the GSC a copy of a proposal, including an abstract and a tentative timeline for completion that has been approved by every member of the Dissertation Committee. (It is the student’s responsibility to advise all Dissertation Committee members about any changes in the proposal.) This final approved dissertation proposal must be submitted two weeks prior to the closest scheduled GSC meeting (making a total of six weeks lead time required for a proposal presentation). Upon successful completion of the dissertation proposal, the student may be advanced to Doctoral Candidacy by the GSC. Upon candidacy approval by the GSC, a student must submit an online application to the Graduate School. In addition, submission of an online application is required to the Office of Research Support and Compliance (Human Subjects/IRB).

The Dissertation

The Ph.D. dissertation is designed to demonstrate the student’s knowledge and skills and is expected to make a significant contribution to knowledge in one of the traditions of thought related to educational policy and administration. This synthesis may be demonstrated by the rigorous study of some educational policy problem such as accountability, high stakes testing, charter schools, school choice, federal policy, state policy, and district level policy, among others. This work should be framed within the scholarship available in the area of study. A strong theoretical background is necessary, along with a methodology. Throughout the dissertation period, a student is advised to maintain close contact with the Dissertation Chairperson and other Dissertation Committee members. It is the student’s responsibility to see that the dissertation meets current Graduate School requirements.

Final Examination

Scheduling of the Final Oral Examination (Defense of Dissertation) will be predicated upon the quality of the execution, analysis, and writing of the dissertation and will be conducted only with Dissertation Committee approval. The Examination will cover the dissertation and related topics. While the Dissertation Committee alone votes on the acceptability of the student’s Final Orals, any member of the Graduate Faculty may participate during the Examination. Oral Exams are to be scheduled by the student and the Office of Graduate Studies. The Request for Final Oral Examination must be formally submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies at least two weeks prior to the Examination. Normally, students must submit to members of the Dissertation Committee a final draft of the dissertation at least four weeks prior to the Examination. However, EPP students should submit a final draft to members of the Dissertation Committee at least four weeks prior to the submission of the Request for Final Oral Examination (making a total of six weeks lead time).