

Dissertation Proposal and Advancement to Candidacy Process

Upon successful completion of the Specialization Qualifying Examination, the student shall submit a dissertation proposal for the Dissertation Committee's approval. The student's Dissertation Committee must approve the final written dissertation proposal. 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 leadership. 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 two weeks prior to the Examination.