

# **Guidelines for the Preparation and Submission of Dissertations (Fifth Edition)**



## **Department of Educational Leadership**

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Fayetteville State University reserves the right to change, delete, or add to any part of this publication as it deems necessary for the good of the University. Every attempt will be made to keep changes to a minimum and to communicate changes to all students.

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## Introduction and Orientation

The purpose of a dissertation is to provide an experience in scholarship that will be of enduring value to the student in understanding information and in providing tangible evidence of the student's development as a scholar. The *Guidelines for the Preparation and Submission of Dissertations* is designed to assist graduate students, dissertation chairpersons, and other members of the dissertation advisory committees at Fayetteville State University in producing a quality product.

Neatness and correctness in the form of the dissertation are second in importance only to the accuracy and soundness of research. The *Guidelines for the Preparation and Submission of Dissertations* is to be used as a guide to assist the degree candidate in the preparation of an acceptable document.

### **NOTE:**

All information in this manual is subject to regular review and revision.

# SECTION ONE

## Policies and Procedures

Preparing and evaluating every dissertation is the joint responsibility of the graduate student, the dissertation chairperson, and the members of the dissertation advisory committee. Communication and interaction among all these participants are the keys to producing a dissertation of the highest possible quality. All dissertations are to be written in English unless the dissertation advisory committee obtains explicit permission from the Dean of the College of Education, certifies its competence to judge the quality of the dissertation, and demonstrates that a foreign language is more relevant than English.

### 1.1 Graduate Student Responsibilities

The graduate student is responsible for all aspects of the preparation of the dissertation and publications based on the dissertation research, including the following:

1. Subject matter and content,
2. Quality of data, evidence, and logical reasoning,
3. Organization and format,
4. Editorial, linguistic, and bibliographic quality,
5. Quality of word processing (typing), illustrations, and duplications.

Additionally, the student has the following responsibilities, to:

1. Establish an advisory committee that adheres to the Graduate Council's policies.
2. Understand and adhere to the Department of Educational Leadership's guidelines, policies, and procedures.
3. Understand and adhere to the University's policies regarding the use of humans and/or animals in research are adhered to.
4. Adhere to the highest ethical standards of research throughout the dissertation process.
5. Meet/communicate with the dissertation chair on a regular basis.
6. Consult with committee members and request feedback as needed.
7. Request committee meetings as needed.

8. Maintain continuous enrollment throughout the dissertation process.
9. Work with the dissertation chair to establish a timeframe and deadlines for completing each phase of the process.
10. Adhere to established deadlines.
11. Provide committee members with dissertation drafts, expecting feedback within approximately three (3) weeks.
12. Respond to the committee's feedback in a timely, appropriate, and constructive manner,
13. Establish dates for oral proposal and dissertation defense.
14. Produce a scholarly dissertation that is free of errors, and that adheres to the *Guidelines for the Preparation and Submission of Dissertations*.
15. Submit four (4) copies of the finalized dissertation to the Department of Educational Leadership.

## **1.2 Dissertation Chairperson Roles and Responsibility**

The dissertation chairperson has the overall responsibility for guiding the student through all phases of the dissertation process to the successful completion. The chairperson is responsible for monitoring the process to ensure that a scholarly dissertation is produced. Additionally, the chairperson has the following responsibilities, to:

1. Be able and willing to supervise the student throughout the process.
2. Be accessible to the student and provide adequate feedback to the student promptly.
3. Work with the student to establish a timeframe and deadlines for completing each phase of the process.
4. Ensure that all Department of Educational Leadership policies and procedures are followed.
5. Ensure that the University's policies regarding the use of humans and/or animals in research are followed.
6. Inform the student of University's regulation regarding maintaining continuous enrollment throughout the dissertation process.
7. Ensure that all procedures are carried out fairly and without bias.
8. Chair all committee meetings, including the oral defense.
9. Read drafts of the dissertation and provide adequate feedback in a timely manner,

typically within approximately three (3) weeks,

10. Ensure that the student produces a scholarly dissertation that is free of errors, and that adheres to the *FSU Guidelines for the Preparation and Submission of Dissertations*.

### 1.3 Dissertation Advisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The committee's responsibilities begin with the dissertation proposal and extend through the successful oral defense of the dissertation. Committee responsibilities include the following:

1. Be able and willing to work with the student throughout the process.
2. Be accessible to the student.
3. Meet and determine appropriateness and feasibility of the student's proposed topic and proposal.
4. Review and approve methodology and any instrumentation to be used in the study.
5. Determine if the proposed research involves human or animal subjects and advise the student of the process required to obtain approval if needed.
6. Read drafts of the dissertation and provide adequate feedback in a timely manner, typically within approximately three (3) weeks.
7. Ensure that the student produces a scholarly dissertation that is free of errors, and that adheres to the *Guidelines for the Preparation and Submission of Dissertations*.
8. Participate in and evaluate the student's performance in the oral dissertation defense.

### 1.4 Formation of Dissertation Advisory Committee

The student must choose a dissertation committee in consultation with the dissertation chair. When selecting committee members, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

1. The committee will consist of a minimum of three (3) graduate faculty, one of whom must be the chair of the Advisory Committee and one must be from outside the student's major department.
2. The committee chair must be a faculty member in the student's academic program.
3. All committee members must have current graduate faculty status and must be approved by the chair of the department/director, and the Dean of the College of Education. The *Dissertation Advisory Committee Membership Form* and supporting documents are **on the Ed. D. webpage**. This form must be returned to the Department of Educational Leadership



by the date posted in the **Schedule of Events**.

4. If the approved committee membership changes, a new form indicating the proposed new membership must be submitted for approval.

## 1.5 Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation processes begin with a proposal which must be approved by the advisory committee. The proposal specifies what the student expects to do and how it will be accomplished. The student should consult with the dissertation chair regarding the expected content and format of the proposal. Generally, a proposal consists of the following:

1. Introduction: Provides general background information that addresses the significance of the proposed study.
2. The objective of the study: A concise and specific statement of the purpose of the study.
3. Literature Review: Review of the theoretical literature and empirical literature.
4. Methodology: Includes design, procedures for collecting data, instrumentation, description of sample, validity, and reliability of instruments, and plan for IRB review and approval.
5. Timeline: A plan for the progress of the study through each phase.
6. References: Using the appropriate style guide, list all references cited in the proposed.

Once the student has defended his or her proposal and has received committee approval, the *Dissertation Proposal Approval Form* should be submitted to the department. **This form is on the Ed. D. webpage.** A copy of the proposal must be attached to the approval form. The department will return a copy of the *Dissertation Proposal Approval Form* to the candidate and dissertation chair.

## 1.6 Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

**All** research involving human or animal participants or subjects conducted by students, faculty, and staff at Fayetteville State University must be approved by the FSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) **before** the study is conducted. If the proposed study involves subjects from an external agency (e.g., public school, another university), approval must be obtained from the external agency before requesting IRB approval from FSU. Documentation of the approval from the external agency must be attached to the FSU IRB application packet. **No surveys, tests administration, or data collection of any type is to be conducted before FSU IRB approval has**

**been granted.** Persons involved in research are expected to be committed to the highest standards of integrity and ethical behaviors. Persons involved in any phase of research are expected to be knowledgeable of and abide by the University's Human Subjects Policy. Failure to comply with the policy will be considered a violation and will be dealt with accordingly. **For forms and more information on the IRB process, see the following link: <https://www.uncfsu.edu/research/for-researchers>**

The request for IRB approval must be submitted with either **the prospectus or full proposal.** It is recommended that the request be submitted after the theoretical framework of the study has been agreed on by the full committee. Persons conducting research are required to complete the computer-based training located at <https://about.citiprogram.org/en/homepage/> **before** submitting requests to OSRP. A copy of the Certificate of Completion received after completing the training must be submitted with the IRB application. Make and retain a copy of your completed application packet with signatures for your records.

The appropriate completed and signed forms are to be submitted to the department for approval before being submitted to the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs (OSRP) for review by the IRB. The department will return the approved forms to the dissertation chair for submission to the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs. **Students must submit a copy of the IRB approval letter to the dissertation chair and to the department before they begin conducting the study. Therefore, students should plan to submit the application for IRB approval as soon as their proposal is approved.**

## **1.7 Dissertation Oral Defense**

The oral defense is an academic evaluation. The oral defense is open only to committee members, university teaching faculty, and special approved guests. The *Department of Educational Leadership must receive the Dissertation Oral Defense Scheduling Form* by the deadline posted in the **Schedule of Events. This form is on the Ed. D. webpage.** The Dean of the College of Education will announce the time and place of the defense to the university faculty. The results of the oral defense can be an unqualified pass, a modified pass depending on recommendations for changes, or a failure. If the candidate fails the first defense, he/she will be allowed a second opportunity at a later date. The committee chair submits *Dissertation Oral Defense Results Form* to the Department of Educational Leadership within three (3) days of the defense. **This form is on the Ed. D. webpage.**

## **1.8 Degree Time Limit**

Doctoral degree requirements, including the dissertation and transfer credits, must be completed within eight (8) calendar years from the date of enrollment in the first course(s) carrying graduate degree credits applicable to the student's program. No courses, including transferred or substituted courses, can be older than eight (8) calendar years at the time a student graduates.

## **1.9 Dissertation Binding – Personal Copies**

Binding of copies of dissertations, beyond the required copies submitted to the Department of Educational Leadership, is the responsibility of the candidate. Additional copies can be ordered when submitting the required four (4) copies by completing the optional form provided by University Microfilms, Inc. (UMI) and submitting it in addition to the paperwork required for processing dissertation documents. The total amount of the order should be included in the form of a money order. Assistance in locating other bindery vendors for personal copies can be obtained by contacting the Charles W. Chesnutt Library.

## **1.10 Copyrights**

Candidates have the option to register their dissertations for copyright and should consult with their advisory committee chair and the Reference Librarian of the Charles W. Chesnutt Library concerning the desirability and the usefulness of copyrighting. The copyright form can be completed and submitted when submitting the required four (4) copies. UMI will act as the agent with the Library of Congress Copyright. If candidates wish to handle the copyright registration directly themselves, they may write the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559 or telephone (202) 707-9100

## **1.11 Ethical Considerations for Writing and Publication**

Adherence to ethical principles helps to support the integrity, originality, validity, and reliability of empirical and creative academic work. Each phase of preparation and presentation requires scrupulous attention to the details of ethical conduct. Ethical writing incorporates the following:

1. Authenticity characterized by facts, honesty, accuracy, and the avoidance of false or exaggerated claims or implications.

2. Transparency or clarity of source, purpose, procedures, and findings.
3. Thoroughness or the inclusion and objective critique of contrasting and dissenting arguments and literature and the identification of limitations of studies.
4. Proper and accurate referencing of all sources and information used in the dissertation.
5. Disclosure or the explicit declaration of funding, employment, relationships, or sources of personal gain that might present or imply a conflict of interest.

For more complete guidelines related to academic honesty, research, confidentiality, storage of data, and work with live participants, the student must consult with the advisory committee and review university policies and discipline-specific ethical principles. The student should note that a lack of knowledge cannot be considered a reasonable defense to the violation of ethical standards and that violations can result in rather weighty penalties to include dismissal or the rescinding of a conferred degree.

### **1.12 Copyright or Trademark Protected, Licensed, and Limited Use Materials**

It is the student's responsibility to comply with any legal obligations for any information employed in the development and conduct of research and the writing and publishing of a dissertation. Some materials, instruments, and images have legally protected restrictions on their use, duplication, quotation, modification, or distribution. For example, tests, scales, and survey instruments and their instructions or protocols may require the advance and specific written permission of the author or publisher. Product or corporate names may require the inclusion of a symbol (™ © ®) designating ownership or registry of the brand or intellectual property. The student may not assume that any material, no matter how familiar, is in the public domain for unrestricted use. The student must fully understand any contractual stipulations or agreement in that some may require specified acknowledgments or sharing of data with the original author or publisher.

### **1.13 Cultural and Gender Competence**

Fayetteville State University has established high standards for cultural and gender competence and fairness. These values must be reflected in the documents produced at this institution. Use of disparaging, biased language and assumptions are unacceptable.

## SECTION TWO

### Organization Guidelines

#### General Structure of a Dissertation

Title Page

Abstract

Acknowledgement (Optional)

Dedication (Optional)

Table of Contents

List of Tables (If applicable)

List of Figures (If applicable)

List of Abbreviations (If applicable)

Chapter One (Introduction, Statement of Problem, Hypo, Key Variables,  
Population of Interest, Study Samples, Terms and Definitions, Limitations)

Chapter Two (Literature Review)

Chapter Three (Method)

Chapter Four (Results)

Chapter Five (Discussion, Conclusions)

References (Based on style manual, labeled: References, Works Cited, or Bibliography)

Appendix/ Appendices (Must include evidence of IRB approval, if applicable)

#### **NOTE:**

All elements listed above are required unless otherwise stipulated or as the committee makes exceptions.

## 2.1 Sample Dissertation Template

TITLE IN ALL CAPS (No more than 12 words)

by

STUDENT NAME

A Dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

Fayetteville State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Doctor of Education

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA, USA

Month/Year of Expected Graduation

APPROVED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Dissertation Advisory Committee

\_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Committee Member

**ABSTRACT**

Name, Title, (under the direction of [dissertation chair's name])

Text goes here. This is usually not completed until the dissertation is completed. Key search terms are placed at the end.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Text goes here.



**DEDICATION**

Text goes here.

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## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Broadly describes your research focus and explains why the focus is worthy of study. This section identifies the problem and then discusses your proposed solution (i.e., the title/focus of your study). Then, it should explicitly discuss the gap in the literature (a need or opportunity that has been identified by other scholars and researchers in the literature – not your opinion) and states how your study (your proposed solution) will further existing research. All statements of fact and statistics should be attributed to the appropriate source and be the most current (i.e., National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Education Progress, relevant state regulatory agencies, federal agencies such as the United States Census Bureau). The overwhelming majority of citations should be **from within the last five years**.

The minimum length is anywhere from 1 ½ page to four pages. Make sure each paragraph contains at least three sentences (topic sentence, supporting details, and conclusion) and make sure each paragraph properly transitions to the next. Also, remember that there is only one space after every period. Make sure educational jargon is defined at the time it is introduced and that it is in the Definition of Terms (i.e., achievement gap, students of color). Make sure all racial terms are capitalized (i.e., Black, White, African American).

*A note about citations, single source citations can indicate a lack of rigor. Make sure you have at least two to three citations for your statements of fact. Make sure you have at least three or four for major points or to indicate an issue is a long-standing concern. Moreover, do not reference “recent studies” with citations that are more than three years old.*

### **Statement of the Problem**

Using declarative statements, explain the problem and how and why it has developed over time. It should include the significance, magnitude, and importance of the problem to educational leadership, social justice, and transformative leadership (these are the tenets of FSU's doctoral program). Previous studies in this area that indicate the gap, identify the gap and justify your study should be included. Remember, the problem is not your opinion. The problem is identified and supported by other researchers and scholars. This means this section must contain citations. The recommended length can be anywhere from three paragraphs to three to four pages.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This section discusses the purpose of your study and who the purpose will benefit (i.e., practitioners, policymakers, administrators, educator preparation programs, etc.). If this is a qualitative study, you should have language that is consistent with this: "*The purpose/intent/objective of this qualitative [narrative, ethnography, case study, phenomenological] study is to (describe, understand, explore, deepen, develop) \_\_\_\_\_ (the phenomena you are studying).*" If this is a quantitative study, language is consistent with *investigate* and *relationship between*. Each purpose should be stated in well-developed paragraphs that at a minimum contain three to five sentences.

### **Importance of the Study**

Identifies and describes why the study is important to the field of educational leadership/social justice/transformative leadership and states the practical implications of the potential results. It also discusses how the research may extend or contribute to existing



research, models or theories. Again, this section is not an opinion. It should align with existing research, models, or theories or explain unexplored research. Recommended minimum length is one page.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Frameworks are required components of dissertations at Fayetteville State University. The framework (theoretical = theory or conceptual = model) is the lens through which your study is viewed. It lays the foundation for your research questions and is reflected in your research questions. You cannot develop your research questions without your framework. Before you select it, make sure you discuss with your chair to ensure what you are using provides the best lens for your research aims.

State clearly and forthrightly which framework you are using. Provide history and background that includes the leading scholars and researchers associated with the framework. Explain its tenets, assumptions, and where relevant, its evolution. Most importantly, explain why it is best for your topic and why it is central to understanding the phenomenon under study. Minimum length should be at least two pages.

### **Research Questions**

Research questions are **not** the same as interview questions that you will ask or survey your study participants. Research questions are developed from your framework and are greatly influenced by your Statement of the Problem. For example, if your framework is Bandura's self-efficacy, then your research questions will center around the elements of Self-Efficacy Theory. If your framework is Critical Race Theory, your research questions will reflect the elements of CRT. For qualitative studies, there is generally a guiding question with related questions. While there is no set number of questions, four to five are

relatively standard for qualitative studies. Note: **research questions must not be formulated as yes or no questions.**

For quantitative studies, the number of research questions should depend upon the number of variables you are investigating. If your research focus involves connections among multiple variables, be sure to include words such as *relate* or *compare*. Quantitative questions are sometimes formulated as yes or no questions because they deal in hypotheses.

### **Researcher's Perspective**

This section is included if this is a qualitative study. It explains your interest in the topic and any bias you bring to the study. Including it is also an accepted strategy for validation of your research. Although it is a highly personal part of your research, any facts should be backed up with citations. Suggested minimum length is 1 to 1 ½ pages.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Limitations refer to factors that can impact a study that are beyond the control of the researcher, and they exist in all research endeavors (Simon, 2011). In some instances, this section may not be completed until after you have collected and analyzed data. In any event, only discuss aspects of the study that you, as the researcher, did not direct or control.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

Unlike limitations, delimitations result from specific choices made by the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2013). Delimitations are those that the researcher imposes on the study thereby narrowing the focus of the studied phenomenon or topic (Irby, Lunenburg, Lara-Alecio, & Tong, 2015). For instance, the researcher decides if participants will be one gender or another or both, whether the participants if they are teachers, have three years' experience or ten years' experience. A plethora of decisions are determined solely by the researcher. Explain those here.

**Definition of Terms (in alphabetical order)**

All terms specifically relevant to the topic under study should be defined in the text as they are used and in this section. Note that generally understood terms do not meet this threshold. Terms are defined according to how they are used in the literature, not how they are defined in dictionaries. For example, secondary education can mean 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade or 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the literature. You, as the research, get to decide but you must define it according to its specific use for your study.

**Word:** definition with a citation at the end.

**Word:** definition with a citation at the end.

**Word:** definition with a citation at the end.

**Word:** definition with a citation at the end.

**Word:** definition with a citation at the end.

**Word:** definition with a citation at the end.

**Organization of the Study**

Explain how the dissertation is organized in this section. Stay consistent with Roman Numerals for chapter headings (i.e., do not use Chapter One since our chapters are written as “Chapter I”). Remember to have at least three sentences per paragraph. Minimum length is one paragraph.

## CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

The introductory paragraph to the literature review restates the purpose of your study. Next, it explains what you are reviewing and its significance to your topic. The literature review should cover some or all of the following (again, check with your chair first): (1) overview or historical background of your problem, (2) analyzes and synthesizes literature (this must include research studies with findings – not just journal articles) related to your problem and purpose, (3) analyzes and synthesizes the literature related to the justification of your study.

Before you begin your literature review, develop your list of headings and sub-headings and get them approved. For suggestions, look at other dissertations on your topic to see what areas they covered. Getting approval up front will ensure you are moving in the right direction. You should be reviewing the most recent literature available and that must include other dissertations. You can group the literature according to theoretical perspectives, time periods, reform efforts, or methodology (quantitative or qualitative). Unless specifically requested by your chair, your literature review does not have to include your theoretical or conceptual framework. Your literature review should be between 25 and 50 pages. Literature reviews that are less than 20 pages can signal that you do not have a complete grasp of your topic and the related literature. Be careful that your review does not read like a book report.

### **Topic One**

**Sub-topic.** This is level three heading

### **Topic Two**

**Sub-topic.** This is level three

***Sub-topic of Sub-topic.*** This is level four heading

**Summary**

Use one or two paragraphs to summarize the findings from the literature review.

## CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

The introductory paragraph can briefly restate the purpose of the study in narrative form with your research questions. Then, explain what the chapter will cover. This includes the research design, the study participants, sampling method used, an explanation of data collection and analysis, measures to ensure validity (or credibility and trustworthiness if this is a qualitative study), and ethics and risks.

### **Research Design**

The research design is one of the most important decisions you make. Your research questions directly influence it. If this is a quantitative study, you should discuss why it is most appropriate for your study. This can be achieved by selecting specific features of quantitative studies that align with your purpose. It also can include the kind of statistical analysis you will employ.

The same applies to qualitative studies. Discuss specific features that illustrate its suitability. These should include philosophical assumptions such as epistemology, ontology, and axiology. Make sure to address at least three features and make sure you are citing at least five different researchers. The recommended minimum length for this section is 1 ½ to 2 ½ pages.

### **(Narrative/Phenomenological/Case Study/Grounded Theory) Inquiry**

For any study, it is highly recommended that you purchase a book on the specific research design you are conducting in order to discuss the features of your research approach easily. This is especially relevant for qualitative studies. You want to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the features of your approach. For example, there are two kinds of phenomenological studies that are commonly used in qualitative research, descriptive and

interpretative. If you are conducting a phenomenological study, you need to know the differences between them and discuss which one you are using and why.

Also, make sure you are familiar with the researchers who are identified with each approach. You should pull at least five or six sources that are different from the ones you used in the previous section. Here again, familiarize yourself with the epistemology, ontology, and axiology perspectives. This will give your methodology depth. You should have at minimum three pages. Creswell (2013) explicates the characteristics of the five most common qualitative approaches on pages 104-105. See sample language below.

*Samples (1) If I could discover the meaning of one person's or a group of person's lived experiences, I would ask him/her about xxx = narrative; (2) If I could discover the shared lived experiences of one quality or phenomenon in others, I would want to know xxx = phenomenology; (3) If I could discover what actually occurred and was experienced in a single lived event, that event would be xxx = case study.*

### **Study Participants/Population**

Describe the criteria you established for your participants and justify with citations from the literature. If you used pseudonyms, state that here. You also need to discuss your sampling procedures. Make sure you use quantitative terms (i.e., surveys, instrument) for quantitative studies and qualitative terms (i.e., interviews, recruitment strategies) for qualitative studies. Do not forget to state that before your study commences, you will secure the proper approvals from the relevant entities (e.g., Institutional Review Board, school district, etc.). For your dissertation, demographic data is best illustrated in a table. Minimum length is one page.

### **Data Collection Procedures and Management**

Describe step by step how you intend to collect your data (for quantitative studies this includes where and how you will collect your data). If data is collected in parallel, be sure to state and explain. Keep in mind that you want to be specific in case other researchers want to replicate the steps. Again, use quantitative terms for quantitative studies and qualitative terms for qualitative studies. For example, typical collection procedures for qualitative studies are observations, field notes, interviews, and review of documents. However, there are different types of observations and different types of interviews. Know the terms/differences and state specifically which ones you will employ. For data management, state how data will be kept, where it will be kept, and how long it will be stored.

For quantitative studies, this section can be titled “Instrumentation,” or Instrumentation can be a sub-heading. You must discuss the characteristics of the instrument in detail. For example, how the instrument was developed, the number of items or questions included in the survey, the calculation of the scores, and the scale of measurement of data obtained from the instrument. You must also indicate that you have obtained the appropriate permissions to use the instrument. You must also make sure to distinguish between the validated instrument and any questions you added as the researcher. Justifications for the latter include: (1) data for one or more variables you are testing, data needed for the sample profile, if applicable, or (2) a combination of both. Figures are excellent means of supplementing the text for this section. Minimum length is five to six good paragraphs.

### **Data Interpretation and Analysis**

Describe step by step how you intend to analyze your data. Remember, you will begin with raw data. Some researchers have established credible data analysis steps for



different qualitative approaches. For instance, there is an extensive body of literature on analyzing data for phenomenological studies and case studies. You can identify such methods by Guba and Lincoln or Creswell, or Yin, or another scholar. Just make sure you cite them correctly.

You want to make sure you address the transcription process in detail for interviews, focus groups, and even observations and field notes. It is not enough to state the data will be coded for emergent themes. Specifically, address whether you are using content analysis, thematic analysis, narrative analysis, constant comparative analysis, inductive/deductive reasoning (or some variation thereof), and the various coding procedures. Read as much as you can about qualitative data analysis to ensure this section communicates rigor. If you are describing this section after you have collected your data, make sure you explain how your techniques aligned with your research questions and your research design. Finally, if you are using a qualitative (i.e. NVivo) or quantitative (SPSS) software management program, explain it and cite it.

For quantitative studies, descriptions should include scales and subscales of the instrument(s) you are using. For dissertations, here is where you address missing values, scoring, all calculations, and power analysis. Each statistical analysis (test) you will conduct or have conducted is discussed in detail. Visuals such as tables are an excellent means to supplement the text in this section. The recommended minimum length for this section is five to six paragraphs for qualitative studies. There is no recommended minimum length for quantitative studies. You should include as much relevant detail as possible.

### **Validation and Evaluation/Credibility and Trustworthiness**

This section is one of the more important ones in this chapter. For quantitative studies, the terms used are validity and reliability in relation to the study and in relation to

the instrument you are using. For qualitative studies, the more common terms are credibility and trustworthiness. In either event, this section needs to detail the measures employed. Here as well, you need to make sure you are citing more than one source. Recommended minimum length is 1 to 1 ½ pages.

### **Risks**

First, define risks for the type of study you are conducting. Second, address how risks are inherent in all research endeavors. Next, discuss any risks or potential harm your participants will face and how you will mitigate them. Recommended minimum length is one page.

### **Ethics**

Explain why principles and ethics are essential to research. Then discuss how your study will meet or met an acceptable standard of ethics regarding protecting the privacy and confidentiality of your participants. Here is where you address the informed consent process, strategies to prevent coercion, and any potential conflicts of interest. Make sure you know the document retention policy of FSU. The recommended minimum length is 1 to 1½ pages. Reference your IRB approval letter and Informed Consent in Appendices.

### **Summary**

Use at least one paragraph to summarize this chapter.

## CHAPTER IV - FINDINGS

Restate purpose of your study here with your research questions. In your second paragraph, introduce your findings. Note that findings are determined from your research questions, not your interview questions if this is a qualitative study.

### **Description of Study Participants**

If this is a qualitative study, give a brief one to two sentence description of your participants. Two examples in Level 3 headings are listed below. Note: Pseudonyms are used.

**Example 1 - Participant One.** Mary is a White second-semester freshman enrolled at a public university in the southeastern region of the United States. She was involved with the xxxxxx program while in high school.

**Example 2 - Participant Two.** Kayla is an African American first semester freshman enrolled at a public university in the southeastern region of the United States. She was involved with xxxxx while in high school. Kayla is a first-generation college student.

Next, discuss themes. Themes are derived from your research questions, not your interview questions. They should be represented by the majority of your participants to meet the threshold of a theme. If you interviewed ten persons, then you should be able to cite from at least six of their interviews to support your themes. Minor themes or sub-themes are also typically generated from the data. You can organize the themes according to your research questions. Here again, you can get an idea of how to organize them from looking at similar dissertations. If your themes particularly resonate with your framework, you can note so here although further explication will occur in the next chapter.

Themes should be treated as proper nouns and written as such. Themes should also be discussed within the context of the literature although again, deeper explication occurs in

the next chapter. When using quotes from participants to explain and justify themes, make sure they are cited according to APA guidelines (personal communication, date of interview). Sample headings are below.

**Theme 1: XXXXXXXX**

**Subtheme:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

**Subtheme:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

**Theme 2: XXXXXXXX**

**Subtheme:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

For quantitative studies, review of findings covers the presentation of the statistical analysis for the research questions. Make sure all tables are formatted according to APA guidelines. Also, make sure any references or relationships to existing literature are included.

**Summary**

Summarize chapter findings here. This can be accomplished in one to two paragraphs at a minimum. There is no recommended minimum length for this chapter.

## **CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### **Overview of Study**

Restate the purpose of your study with your research questions. Next, restate the findings of your study with the themes (if qualitative). Finally, explain what will follow next.

### **Discussion**

This is where you tie your problem, purpose, importance, and findings together. You essentially answer, “What does this mean and how does it extend existing research? What implications does your findings portend for social justice and transformative leadership? Be expansive as possible and discuss consistency or non-consistency with current literature. You should have a good three to four pages in this section.

### **Discussion of Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

This section addresses explicitly your findings in relation to your framework.

### **Implications for Teachers, Educational Leaders, and Policymakers**

This section addresses the implications for practitioners and decision-makers. Be as specific as possible and when appropriate, make connections to the existing literature. Try to have at least three substantive recommendations.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This section is for additional research. You may suggest different research designs such as longitudinal studies. You may suggest focus on different gender or racial/ethnic perspectives. Again, you have at least three to four substantive recommendations.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This can also serve as your summary. Permit yourself to be more reflective here on your research, what it means to you and what you hope it means for educational leaders and educational leadership. The recommended minimum is one paragraph.

**APPENDICES**

## REFERENCES

- Irby, B., Lunenburg, F., Lara-Alecio, R., & Tong, F. (2015). Qualitative Critizue: A Heuristic Tool for Doctoral Students to Use in Improving their Research Skills. *Journal of Education and Literature*, 147-158.
- Simon, M., & Goes, J. (2013). Scope, limitations, and delimitations. *Dissertation and scholarly research: Recipes for success*. Seattle, WA: Dissertation Success LLC.



## SECTION THREE

### Dissertation Submission and Editing Procedures

Using this guide and the *Dissertation Checklist*, the student, in consultation with the committee chair, will edit the dissertation. The *Dissertation Checklist* is on page 27.

Following the oral defense and after the student has incorporated the required changes from the oral defense, the student must submit four (4) paper copies of the dissertation to the Department of Educational Leadership by the date listed in the **Schedule of Events**. The *Dissertation Approval Form*, with all required signatures, should be submitted to the department along with the dissertation. **This form is on the Ed. D. webpage.**

### Summary of Standards

#### 3.1 Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation, and Word Usage

The overall quality and credibility of a dissertation may rest with the fundamentals of composition and grammar. A dissertation must reflect the work of an academic expert and thus must be free of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word usage errors. Writing errors can create skepticism about the rigors and worth of the entire work. Before submission to the Department of Educational Leadership, a dissertation should be physically and electronically proofread by the student and reviewed and cleared by the advisory committee. In the oral defense and editing process, it is quite likely that errors will be identified. The successful student will be objective and diligent when considering and implementing recommended revisions.

#### 3.2 Paper Quality

The final document must be printed on 8½ x 11-inch white bond paper. The paper must contain no less than 25% rag content and be of no less than 20-pound weight. All elements of the document, including graphics and appendices, must be placed on the same quality of paper as the text. Submission(s) for review by the dissertation editor should be on regular paper.

#### 3.3 Duplication

The document must be printed on one side of the paper only. Print and images must be legible, permanent, sharp, and of high contrast. Black ink is required (except as permitted by the advisory

committee or style guide for items such as specified graphics, images, or default Internet addresses). Color and B&W photographs, drawings, diagrams, or maps must be clear, sharp, and reflect high-quality duplication. Such images must be appropriately referenced and must comply with copyright laws.

### **3.4 Photographs and Prints**

Direct reproduction or reprinting is preferred. Attached materials must be mounted firmly, flat, and dry with good quality rubber cement, casein glue, or dry mounting tissue. Photo mounting corners, transparent tape, or staples are not acceptable.

### **3.5 Spacing**

Each section within the document should be double-spaced unless otherwise specified in the style guide that governs the standards for the document. Some variance in spacing may be permitted such as in the placement of tables, figures, or reprints or with some lengthy quotations, tables, footnotes, multi-line captions, and bibliography entries may be single spaced.

### **3.6 Typeface/ Font**

The consistent use of standard typeface or font such as 12-pt Times New Roman is required unless otherwise permitted by the advisory chair and committee or style guide. Please refer to the applicable style manual for guidelines on the proper use of boldface, italics, and underlining.

### **3.7 Margins**

For each page, one-inch (1-inch) margins are required for the top, right, and bottom margins and to facilitate binding, and one and one-half-inch (1 ½ - inch) and margins are required for the left margin.

### **3.8 Page Numbering**

Page numbers should be typed at the top or bottom right margin of the page, one-inch (1- inch) from the edge of the paper OR page numbers should be centered at the top or bottom of the page one inch (1-inch) from the edge of the paper.

Use lower case Roman numerals (iii, iv, v...) for pages before the first page of Chapter 1 and use Arabic numbers (1,2,3,4...) starting on the first page of Chapter one through to the final page of the document. All numbers must be in sequence. The Title Page and the Abstract are generally not numbered, but their numbering is assumed. Therefore, the Acknowledgment and Dedication usually are found on pages iii and iv, and the Table of Contents usually begins on page v.

No punctuation is used with page numbers. There should be no blank pages within the document. Decisions about numbering the Abstract and inclusion of headers or footers must be made in consultation with the advisory committee and the style manual.

### **3.9 Abbreviations and Symbols**

The use and format of any abbreviation or symbol must be uniform throughout the document and must conform to the style manual used to prepare the document. A full name or brief explanation should accompany the initial use of any abbreviation or symbol. Some abbreviations have multiple references. For example, APA can refer to the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Pediatric Association and so forth. Writers must allow for a readership that expands beyond their region. For example, NC may not readily mean North Carolina to an international reader, and the name Georgia may identify more than one place. When several abbreviations and symbols are used, a separate list with appropriate definitions must be included.

### **3.10 Format and Placement of Tables, Figures, and Reprints**

Tables, figures, and reprints are designed to present in a condensed or graphic format data, graphs, models, and other complex information. A table contains tabulated data and may include computer printouts. Figures and reprints can consist of photographs, charts, graphs, plates, drawings, and diagrams. To avoid disruption of writing, lengthy or expansive tables, figures, or reprints should be placed as an appendix rather than in the text of the paper.

The format and placement of tables, figures, and reprints must conform to the style manual used to prepare the document. General standards for a table, figure, or reprint include the following:

- Within the text directly following the first reference to it, insert the table, figure or reprint
- Tables, figures, or reprints that are half a page or less may appear on the same page as text separated above and below by triple spacing
- Each must have an identifying number and must be numbered in a separate series.
- Each must have a concise and accurate title or caption
- The number and title, or caption for each table must be placed two lines below the top line of the table
- The number and title or caption of each figure or reprint must be placed two lines below the last line or bottom of the figure or reprint

### **3.11 Correction of Errors**

Corrections using white-coated paper, correction fluids, or erasures are not permitted. Since it is the student's responsibility to save copies of documents, the use of hard drive and backup portable memory devices is strongly advised.

### **3.12 Common Errors and Frequently Misused Terms**

Excellence in writing is demanding, and even professional writers make mistakes. The following list has been derived from observations based on the review and editing of several and dissertations. It is suggested that during all phases of the student consult (a) the style manual used to prepare the document, (b) an excellent collegiate dictionary, (c) a graduate level manual or textbook on grammar and composition and/or (if applicable) (d) a graduate level manual or textbook on terms related to statistics and data analysis.

- Affect (vs. effect, effects)
- Abbreviations (i.e., e.g., etc.)
- Criteria vs. criterion
- Data vs. datum
- Dependent Variable(s) and Independent(s)
- Etc.—avoid due to lack of specificity
- Impact (variations used as a verb)
- Noun-pronoun agreement (number, gender)

- Participants (vs. subjects)
  - Principle (vs. principal) Sample
  - Subject-verb agreement
  - That (vs. which)
  - That (vs. who) Who, whom, whose
- Verb tense

## **Acknowledgment of Sources and References**

As a revision, this document contains significant portions of prior versions. It is acknowledged that information and formats contained in former versions and carried forth to this current version have been obtained or adapted from other institutions of higher learning and more specifically from the *Fayetteville State University, Department of Educational Leadership Dissertation Writing Manual*, the *North Carolina State University Preparation of Theses* and the *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, A Guide to the Preparation and Submission of Theses and Dissertations*.

## REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Cone, J. D., & Foster, S. L. (2006). *Dissertations and theses from start to finish: Psychology and related fields* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Galvan, J. L. (2004). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyczak Publishers.
- Gibaldi, J. (2009). *MLA handbook for writers of research papers* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Modern Language Association of America.
- Strunk, W., Jr., & White, E.B. (2000). *The elements of style* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Pearson.
- Turabian, K.L. (2007). *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations: Chicago style for students and researchers* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). (W.C. Booth, G.G. Colomb, & J. M. Williams, Eds.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Zinsser, W. K. (2006). *On writing well: The classic guide to writing nonfiction* (30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ed.). New York, NY: HarperCollins.

## Appendix A Dissertation Checklist

### Dissertation Submission

- The student, in consultation with the dissertation chair, will make the necessary revisions.
- **Following the oral defense and after the student has made required changes,** the student should submit four (4) copies of the dissertation to the Department of Educational Leadership. The ***Dissertation Approval Form*** must be attached.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Dissertation: \_\_\_\_\_

	Status	Descriptions/Guidelines	Comments
Paper and Duplication	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 ½ x 11-inch white bond paper.</li> <li>• No less than 25% rag content and no less than 20-pound weight.</li> <li>• All duplication must produce permanent, sharp, high-contrast, black image.</li> <li>• Color photographs, maps, and charts should be of high contrast. Avoid blue colors. Print on one side of the paper only.</li> </ul>	
Spacing	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double-spaced.</li> <li>• Long quotations, table footnotes, multi-line captions, and bibliographical entries may be single-spaced.</li> </ul>	
Type Face	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The appropriate typeface such as Times New Roman must be used consistently throughout.</li> </ul>	
Title Page	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Original</b> signatures of <b>all</b> committee members on <b>all</b> copies.</li> <li>• The title must be identical to that on the abstract.</li> <li>• Is not numbered but is considered to be first page (i) of preliminary pages.</li> <li>• The date is the date Committee accepts thesis/dissertation.</li> </ul>	
Margins & Page Numbering	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page numbers: Typed one inch from the top/bottom and one inch from the right side of the paper OR centered on the top/bottom of page one inch from the top/bottom.</li> <li>• Margins: Top, bottom, and right should be one-inch wide. Left should be 1 ½ inch wide.</li> <li>• All tables, figures, reprints, etc. must adhere to these requirements.</li> <li>• Lowercase Roman numerals used to number preliminary pages beginning with the title</li> </ul>	



		<p>page.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arabic numerals used to number text beginning with the first page.</li> <li>• No punctuation is used with numbers.</li> <li>• Every page, except abstract, should be numbered.</li> </ul>	
Table of Contents	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List all sections following it.</li> <li>• List all headings and subheadings as they appear in the body of the document.</li> <li>• No material preceding T of C is listed.</li> <li>• Spacing and indentation of T of C should indicate unity and coherence of study.</li> </ul>	
Abstract	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should state the research problem, the most significant findings, and methods used in the study.</li> <li>• The maximum length for a thesis: 150 words.</li> <li>• The maximum length for a dissertation: 350 words</li> <li>• Is preceded by the name of the student, the title of the study, the name of the committee advisor/chair.</li> <li>• Double spaced.</li> <li>• Page is unnumbered.</li> <li>• Precedes title page.</li> </ul>	
Dedication, Biography, Acknowledgements	Optional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal to the student and may contain any appropriate information.</li> </ul>	
List of Tables, Symbols, Figures, and Abbreviations	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be included if any tables or figures appear in the document.</li> <li>• Descriptive titles in the lists must be identical to those in the text.</li> <li>• Each list appears on a separate page.</li> </ul>	
Reference Documentation	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate documentation or references for original literature presented in the document.</li> <li>• Use one citation format consistently throughout the document according to the style manual used.</li> </ul>	
Appendices	Optional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used for the material used but not appropriate for inclusion in the text of the document.</li> </ul>	
Abbreviations and Symbols	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any abbreviations and symbols used must be uniform throughout the document and must be consistent with the style manual used to prepare the document.</li> <li>• When many abbreviations and symbols are used, a separate list with appropriated definitions must be included.</li> </ul>	
Spelling, Grammar,	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entire document must be free of spelling,</li> </ul>	

Punctuation		grammatical, and punctuation errors.	
Correction of Errors	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corrections using white-coated paper, correction fluids, or erasures are not permitted.</li> </ul>	
Photographs and Prints	Optional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be placed on same quality paper as the text.</li> <li>• Must be mounted firmly with good quality rubber cement, casein glue, or dry-mounting tissue.</li> <li>• Photo mounting corners, transparent tape, or staples are not acceptable.</li> </ul>	
Placement of Tables, Figures, and Reprints	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table: Tabulated data including computer printout sheets.</li> <li>• Figure: Photographs, halftone prints, charts, maps, graphs, plates, drawings, diagrams.</li> <li>• Consult style manual for design and organization of tables and figures.</li> <li>• Insert in the text directly after the first reference to the table/figure.</li> <li>• Tables/figures on a half-page or less may appear on the same page as text, separated from the text below and above by triple spacing.</li> <li>• Each table/figure must have an identifying number and must be numbered in separate series.</li> <li>• Each table/figure must have a caption.</li> <li>• Number and caption for each <u>table</u> must be placed two lines below the top line of the table.</li> <li>• Number and caption for each <u>figure</u> must be placed two lines below last line or bottom of the figure.</li> </ul>	

Signature of Dissertation Editor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### 2019 Schedule of Events

Please note that workshops and special events will be posted on the Ed. D. Webpage

#### **Spring 2019**

**Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>- Friday, February 15<sup>th</sup>**

Meet with Academic Advisor to review preparation for graduation (**Spring 2019 graduates**).

**Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup>-Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>**

Dissertation Oral Defense (**Spring 2019 graduates**).

**Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>- Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Students make final revisions to dissertations.

**Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>**

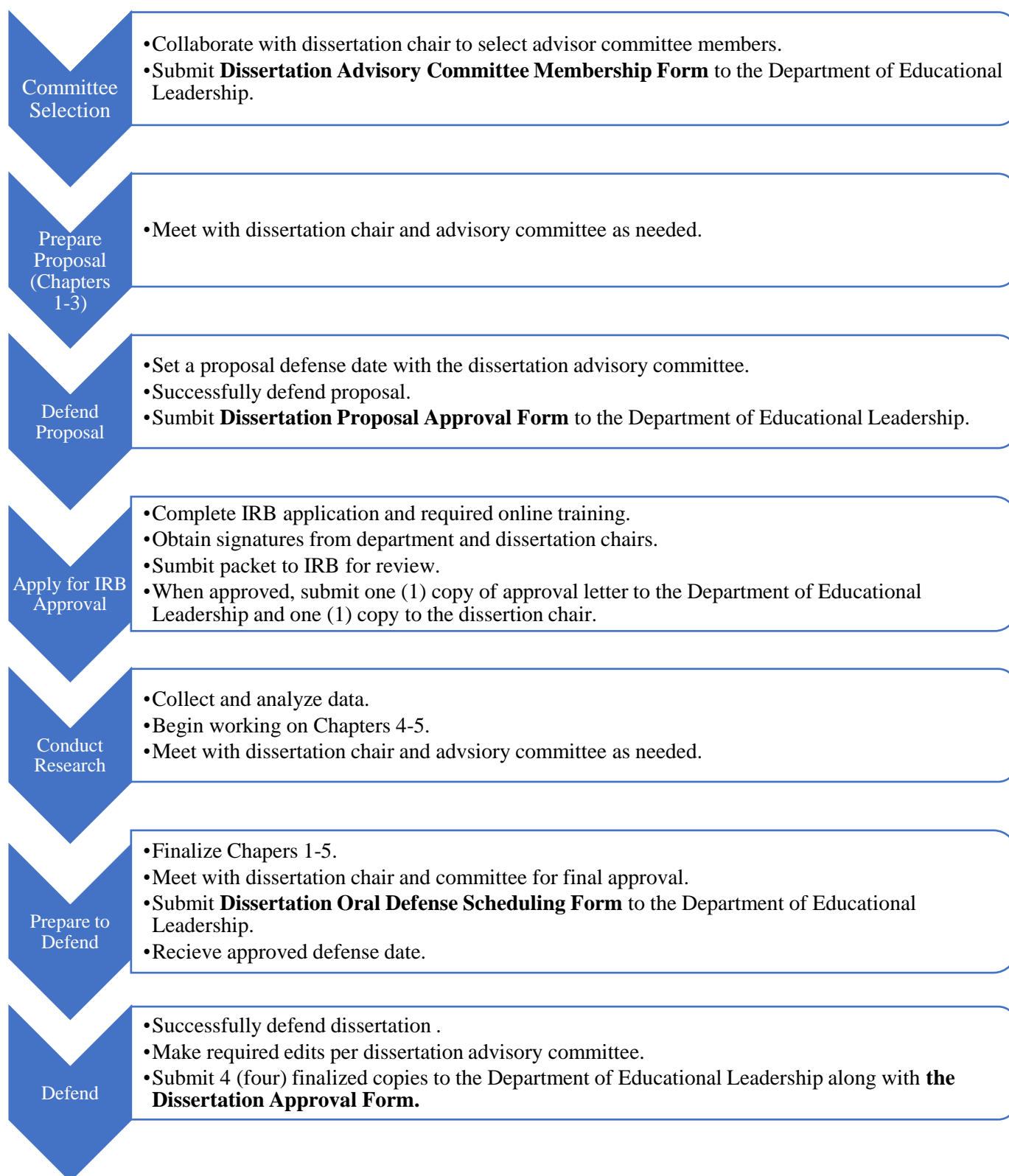
Last day to submit four (4) paper copies of the dissertation to the Department of Educational Leadership. The dissertation must be submitted with the *Dissertation Approval Form*. **Students are encouraged to submit a copy before the deadline.**

**Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**

Spring Commencement.

## Appendix C

### Dissertation Flow Chart



## Appendix D Dissertation Progress Log

The doctoral candidate maintains this log. The log contains important tasks that are essential to the successful completion of a scholarly dissertation in a timely manner. The candidate should sign and ask the committee chair or appropriate committee member to sign upon the completion of the task. A signature below confirms that the task has been completed. Note: Several tasks listed may need to be repeated numerous times. Additionally, the committee chair may request that other tasks be added to the log.

Task	Forms	Date Completed	Candidate's Signature	Chair/ Committee Member Signature
Decide the K-12 or HE issue you are considering researching and develop a conceptual framework paper.				
Discuss the conceptual framework with dissertation chair. A copy of the paper must be provided.				
Select the dissertation advisory committee. All committee members must have current graduate faculty status.	<i>Dissertation Advisory Committee Members</i>  <i>Criteria for Selecting and Evaluating Grad. Faculty Catalog</i>  <i>Graduate Faculty Application</i>			
Meet with the full advisory committee for orientation to dissertation committee processes and preliminary discussion of your research proposal.				

Review research design with research expert (Research Center is available).				
Discuss the proposal draft with the advisory committee chair.				
Present proposal to full advisory committee.				
Receive proposal approval by the full advisory committee.	<i>Dissertation Proposal Approval</i>			
Submit signed <i>Dissertation Proposal Approval Form</i> with a copy of the proposal to the department.				
Receive proposal approval the department chair.				
Obtain committee chair's signature on IRB application to use human subjects, if applicable.	All forms are available on the OSRP webpage			
Request approval from an external agency to use human subjects, if applicable.				
Receive written documentation of approval from an external agency to use human subjects, if applicable.				
Submit IRB application for approval to use human subjects FSU Office of Sponsored Research and Programs with written approval documentation from an external agency, if applicable.				
Receive FSU IRB				

Approval to use human subjects, if applicable.				
Submit a copy of IRB approval to the department and dissertation chair.				
Mail or distribute data collection instrument.				
Meet with the advisory committee chair to finalize chapters 1-3.				
Meet with full advisory committee concerning chapters 1-3.				
Meet with advisory committee chair concerning chapters 4-5.				
Meet with the full advisory committee on a completed draft of chapters 4-5.				
Analyze and interpret data.				
Obtain feedback on the interpretation of data from research expert.				
A complete full draft of chapters 4-5.				
Present final revised draft to full advisory committee.				
Submit <i>Dissertation Oral Defense Scheduling Form</i> to the department to request an oral defense.	<i>Dissertation Oral Defense Scheduling Form</i>			
Defend dissertation at the oral defense.				
Submit four (4) copies of the dissertation and <i>Dissertation Approval Form</i> to the department.	<i>Dissertation Approval Form</i>			