



# TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY™

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, FAMILY STUDIES, & COUNSELING POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR DISSERTATION

The policies and guidelines presented here are to help students understand how to prepare, plan, and complete the dissertation proposal and defense. The student's major professor (hereafter referred to as "chair") may have additional requirements, ideas, or advice about how to best proceed with authorizing the student's dissertation proposal. Each student should work with his or her advisor closely in planning each step of the dissertation process.

### **ABOUT THE DISSERTATION**

The dissertation should reflect the highest standards of research and scholarship and should make a meaningful contribution to knowledge in the student's field of study. Consequently, the dissertation must conform to the most rigorous standards of content, style, and format. When students begin their doctoral program, they are assigned a temporary advisor. Students may work with their temporary advisor to select the most appropriate faculty member to chair the dissertation. The dissertation chair should be chosen based on research interests and faculty expertise. Throughout the dissertation writing process, the student will work under the supervision of his or her committee chair, who will help divide the dissertation tasks into manageable steps, and to plan a realistic timeline, requiring a *minimum* of two semesters.

### **THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

The dissertation committee consists of at least three graduate faculty, the chair and two committee members. The chair must be a full graduate faculty member and committee members may be either associate or full graduate faculty members. (Students may find a list of graduate faculty on the [graduate school website](#).) At least two of the three members must be within the student's major.

### **Selection of the Dissertation Committee**

It is highly recommended that students consult with their chair about who to choose to serve on the doctoral dissertation committee. To feel supported and successful in the dissertation process, ideal committee members would have overlapping expertise with the proposed dissertation (e.g., content, methodology, theory). When reaching out to faculty, students should schedule a face to face meeting with a faculty member to request serving on his or her dissertation committee. Once a dissertation committee is selected, the student must submit the Dissertation Committee Form.

*\*Faculty may be expected to limit their dissertation workload based on departmental or university needs. Students are expected to be flexible based on faculty availability and expertise.*

### **Roles of the Dissertation Committee**

The **dissertation chair** will serve as the major professor supervising the dissertation process. The chair has primary responsibility for the quality and rigor of the dissertation and to advise the student throughout the process. The dissertation chair may have further requirements or policies beyond those contained herein.

The **dissertation committee members** are primarily responsible for assessing the quality and rigor of the dissertation at the dissertation proposal and defense. Committee members provide specialized guidance and contribute in the approval of the student's proposal and completed dissertation. It is common for dissertation committee members to request further edits or analyses after the dissertation proposal and defense. Students may seek consultation from committee members as directed by the chair and as established by the committee. Each committee member serves as a full member of the dissertation committee. Successful defense of the proposal and dissertation requires approval from each committee member.

### **Changes to Dissertation Committee**

At times it may be necessary to change committee members, including the chair, such as when a committee member retires, relocates to another university, or leaves for medical or other reasons. In these circumstances, students may consult with their dissertation committee and the department chair to select a new committee member. Students must complete the "Change of Committee" form and submit it for approval to the department chair.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The student is the author of the dissertation. Under the supervision of the chair, it is the student's responsibility to craft and execute all phases of the research project, including writing, data collection, and analyses. More specifically, the student has the following responsibilities:

- Take personal initiative to move the dissertation project forward in a timely manner towards completion.
- Schedule meetings with the chair, and as directed with the committee members, for mentorship and advising.
- Be intimately familiar with the materials found in the student handbooks and graduate catalog.
- Be aware of and accountable for all deadlines set by the chair, committee, department, graduate school, and university.
- Follow all research ethical codes, policies, and guidelines of the federal government, Texas Woman's University, the Department of Human Development, Family Studies, & Counseling (HDFSC), and the student's major field of study.
- Complete his or her own, original work. Students should be familiar with policies on academic dishonesty, plagiarism, falsifying records, and cheating. Plagiarism occurs when a student obtains someone else's work and presents those ideas, words, or results as her or his own work. Misconduct in these areas can result in dismissal from the university.
- Discuss and notify the chair of any extenuating circumstances that may delay timely completion or progress.
- Recognize that the dissertation is an iterative process between the student, chair, and committee that requires many reviews and revisions. As such, it is important to be responsive to feedback and to respect that faculty will often require up to 10 business days to review and respond to manuscript drafts.

### **GRADING INFORMATION**

Students should enroll in HDFS 6983 during the dissertation proposal process and HDFS 6993 after successfully completing the dissertation proposal. Students will receive a grade of "PR" (in progress) in HDFS 6983 until the student has successfully completed the dissertation proposal and "PR" in

HDFS 6993 until the student has successfully completed the dissertation defense, upon which a grade of “CR” (credit received) will be given.

### **FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION**

If the student is accepting Federal Financial Aid, the student must complete additional paperwork beyond the second semester of continual enrollment in either HDFS 6983 or HDFS 6993. When repeating either HDFS 6983 or HDFS 6993 the third or more times, the student must submit verification to the Financial Aid Office that the student is making progress towards completion. The verification form is available under [forms on the graduate school homepage](#), and must be signed by the student’s academic advisor and the department chair.

### **STUDENT RESOURCE INFORMATION**

The following resources are available to all students during the dissertation process:

- The [Write Site](#) is TWU’s comprehensive writing center. Students may make appointments for individual writing assistance, attend workshops and seminars related to writing, and access the Online Writing Lab (OWL).
- The [Pioneer Center for Student Excellence](#) holds Dissertation Boot Camps every May and December from 9:00AM to 5:00PM Monday through Thursday (4 full days) the week after finals. The Dissertation Boot Camps are designed for students actively writing any part of the dissertation. During these events students can expect to have dedicated time and space for writing, scheduled programming with resource personnel, workshops, and individual consultations with tutors and coaches.
- The [Center for Research Design and Analysis](#) (CRDA) assists students with proposal development, data collection, pre-analysis, analysis, results and discussion, and presentation of findings. The CRDA is staffed by statisticians, graduate research assistants, and analysts. They require at least the first meeting be held with the chair present, and may require the chair at subsequent meetings.
- The Senior Graduate Services Analyst in the graduate school is available to assist students with formatting the dissertation document.
- The Graduate Reader has a Blackboard page available to students that outlines common grammatical, spelling, citation, and other writing errors. Students may access this Blackboard page by logging into their Blackboard account, clicking on “Organizations,” and then searching “[Dissertation Support and Resources](#).”
- Students who are Texas residents and enrolled in their **final** semester of dissertation may apply for a reduced tuition rate through the graduate school. Students must complete the [Request for Reduced Tuition- Code 3](#) document and submit it to the graduate school prior to enrollment in the final semester.

### **GIFTS AND REMUNERATION**

While students may feel a need to thank their dissertation chair and committees members, students are discouraged from giving gifts. Faculty must follow the highest ethical codes of their field of study and those required by law and university policy. Faculty may not receive gifts from students that could potentially affect the faculty-student relationship or give the perception of undue influence. Therefore, if the student chooses to give a gift to his or her chair or committee member(s) the following policies must be followed:

- No gifts may be given prior to graduation.
- The value of the gift may not be more than \$50.

- The chair or committee member may decline or return the gift if the faculty member determines that it has substantial personal value to the student.

# THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

## PREREQUISITES FOR DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Prior to enrolling in HDF5 6983 Dissertation Proposal, the student must first complete all other coursework on the student's degree plan. Prior to scheduling the dissertation proposal, the student must successfully complete and pass the comprehensive examination, and be admitted to candidacy by the Graduate School.

## ABOUT THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

The dissertation proposal details the nature of the student's research and the methods the student will employ. It also makes a case for the importance of the dissertation topic. The suggested dissertation proposal typically consists of the first four chapters of the dissertation, where chapter 1 is the introduction, chapter 2 outlines the conceptual framework and provides a review of the literature, chapter 3 is the method section, and chapter 4 is the analysis plans. The focus of the dissertation proposal is most often on the conceptual framework, methodology (e.g., research questions, hypotheses, sampling, data collection procedures, measures or interview guidelines), and analysis plans. The student will work closely with his or her chair to prepare the dissertation proposal.

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The student should meet and consult with committee members throughout the preparation of the proposal for feedback and comments. This is an opportunity to utilize committee member expertise to enhance the quality and rigor of the dissertation proposal. Regular communication with committee members can help build confidence in preparing students for successful defense.

## PREPARING FOR THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Preparing for the dissertation proposal can feel overwhelming. The following has been found to help students prepare for the dissertation proposal:

- Identify areas of interest early in your studies and use coursework and assignments to explore interest areas, deepen understanding, and identify gaps in current literature.
- Attend dissertation proposals of other students.
- Begin very early to coordinate and schedule the date and time for the proposal. Faculty and chairs can often have very busy schedules. The earlier this is done, the easier scheduling can be accomplished.
- Make sure that the document has been reviewed for format and grammar that adheres to both graduate school and APA standards.
- Maximize the opportunity to identify committee member concerns by meeting with committee members throughout the preparation process.
- Meet with the dissertation chair to identify and prepare for questions or issues that might be raised by committee members during the defense.
- Organize the presentation in a manner that clearly and succinctly explains the proposed research study, the methodology being proposed, the analysis plan, and how it fits with other scholarship within the student's field of study.

## SCHEDULING THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

When the chair approves the dissertation proposal, the student will schedule a dissertation proposal. It is the student's responsibility to find a date and time that all committee members can attend. The

dissertation proposal requires the presence of all three committee members. When setting a date for the dissertation proposal, the following policies must be followed:

- All dissertation committee members must have **at least 10 working days** to review the final proposal approved by the chair. Therefore, the dissertation proposal cannot be set less than 10 working days prior to the final dissertation proposal being sent out to committee members. Some committee members require a hard copy and others an electronic copy of the final proposal. It is the student's responsibility to give the final proposal in the form (electronic or paper) preferred by the committee member.
- No dissertation proposal may be scheduled during finals week, university or student holidays, or between regular semesters.
- Dissertation proposals can only be scheduled during Summer semesters if all dissertation committee members have a university appointment during the regular Summer semester.

Once a dissertation proposal meeting date is selected, the student will work with the chair to reserve a room with any audio-visual equipment required for the dissertation proposal. The student is responsible to send a reminder email to all committee members 24 hours prior to the meeting time.

### **THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL PRESENTATION AND DEFENSE MEETING**

Students are encouraged to dress professionally for this event. Business attire is appropriate. Jeans, open shirts, sport shoes, shorts, etc. are not appropriate. The student is also responsible to test all audio-visual equipment prior to the meeting. The student should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time to test all equipment. The public is welcome to attend the dissertation proposal, including friends, family, and colleagues. As a reminder, the dissertation proposal is a professional presentation and oral examination of the student's dissertation document. All those in attendance are expected to maintain professional academic decorum.

The dissertation proposal typically lasts about 2 hours and involves the following:

1. **Proposal Presentation** (15-30 minutes; open to public)
  - Using presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, Sway), the student will provide an overview of the dissertation proposal. The purpose of the presentation is to demonstrate that the student can clearly and succinctly represent the proposal to other professionals. The presentation should provide a succinct, yet thorough, overview of the relevant literature, theoretical underpinnings, proposed methodology, and analysis plan. It should also demonstrate how the proposed study fits with other scholarship within the student's field of study.
  - Following the proposal demonstration, the chair will invite those in attendance to ask questions to the student.
2. **Public Defense** (5-15 minutes; open to the public)
  - The chair will ask the audience for any questions or comments related to the presentation and dissertation document. At the conclusion of this section, the chair will ask that attendees leave the room.
3. **Proposal Defense** (45-60 minutes; open to current students, faculty, and administrators)
  - The proposal defense is an opportunity for students to defend their science. This is achieved through committee members asking questions pertaining to current literature on the topic, methodological decisions, and implications of the work for the field.

- Students are expected to present with advanced knowledge in their area of the dissertation (literature, methodology, implications) and be prepared to defend this area and to support research decisions using scholarly resources. Students should be prepared to justify decisions, synthesize information, and explain the research content, methodology, and analysis.
  - Students should be able to independently respond to the questions posed by committee members in a professional, academic manner. At times committee members may give differing or even opposing suggestions and critiques. It is students' responsibility to consider these suggestions and justify or explain their decisions to incorporate or not incorporate feedback from committee members.
4. **Dissertation Committee Evaluation** (15-30 minutes; closed to public)
- The dissertation committee dismisses the student from the room to discuss the merits of the dissertation proposal and the student's responses to concerns raised by the dissertation committee. The committee will decide whether the student's dissertation proposal is: (a) Accepted, (b) **Revise with Minor Revisions**, or (c) **Revise and Re-Defend**.
    - **Accepted** signifies no revisions or edits are required. The student may proceed to finalize the dissertation proposal (outlined below).
    - **Revise with Minor Revisions** signifies that the requested edits are minor in nature. There may be a small or large number of minor revisions requested. The changes will be reviewed by the chair and may also be required to be reviewed by committee members. Once the chair has approved the requested revisions, the student may proceed to finalize the dissertation proposal (outlined below).
    - **Revise and Re-Defend** signifies that there are substantial revisions that must be completed. The changes must be reviewed by the chair and the dissertation committee member(s) who requested the changes. The student must then re-define his or her dissertation proposal in a subsequent dissertation proposal meeting.
5. **Dissertation Committee Decision** (10-20 minutes; closed to public)
- The chair will invite the student back into the room to inform the student of the dissertation committee's decision and to clarify any revisions that are expected.

### **COMPLETING THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

The dissertation proposal meeting is just one part of the dissertation proposal process. Data collection cannot begin until the following tasks are completed and the dissertation proposal process is complete. The student will not be permitted to graduate without completion of these tasks.

#### **1. Dissertation Proposal Edits**

Working with the dissertation chair, the student must respond to edits or changes requested by committee members at the dissertation proposal meeting. All edits and changes must be approved by the committee members.

## 2. **Human Subjects Training**

Once the dissertation committee has approved all edits to the dissertation proposal, both the chair and the student must complete two online trainings, [Responsible Conduct in Research](#) (RCR) and the IRB's required [Human Subjects](#) training.

## 3. **Institutional Review Board**

The student is responsible for following the guidelines to obtain approval from the [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) of the university. Students must determine the level of review necessary for the dissertation study (exempt, expedited, or full) and complete the appropriate application form on the IRB's [website](#). Once completed, the IRB application must be approved by the dissertation chair and the department chair prior to submission to the IRB. The student's and dissertation chair's NIH training certificates must be submitted with the IRB application.

If at any time the student, in consultation with the chair, decides to make any modification to the study (e.g., changes to data collection sites, consent forms, questionnaires, or interviews), the student must submit a [Modification of an Approved Study](#) to the IRB and receive approval from the IRB *before* any changes are implemented.

## 4. **Department Chair Approval**

The prospectus must be approved by the department chair before it is submitted to the graduate school. The department chair requires at least 10 work days to review the prospectus, and may require further edits before approving the prospectus. Any edits requested by the department chair must be approved by the dissertation chair before resubmitting the document to the department chair.

## 5. **Graduate School Approval**

The final step of the dissertation proposal is to receive approval from the graduate school.

\*Data collection cannot begin until the graduate school approves the dissertation proposal.

In order to receive approval, the student must submit the following to the graduate school:

- Prospectus Cover Sheet (see [graduate school forms](#) for a copy)
- Prospectus (A **10- page maximum** condensed version of the dissertation proposal)
- Copy of the IRB Approval Letter
- RCR Training Certificate (student and chair)
- External Agency Approval Letter (if applicable)

*\*Failure to receive approval from the graduate school prior to data collection may result in the student's graduation being delayed, including rejection of the completed dissertation requiring recollection of all data.*

Once graduate school approval is received, students may begin enrolling in HDFS 6993 Dissertation and begin data collection, analysis, and writing the final chapters of the dissertation document. Students must be enrolled in HDFS 6993 while collecting data and working on the dissertation document. If they are not enrolled in HDFS 6993, the student may not receive guidance from the chair.



## THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE

### PREPARING THE DISSERTATION DOCUMENT

The dissertation document should reflect the highest standards of research and scholarship. In preparing the dissertation document, students will follow the directions from the “Formatting Navigator” and “Guide to Thesis and Dissertation Preparation” found on the [graduate school forms website](#). All headers, tables, figures, and writing style should be consistent with APA standards and those consistent with the student’s major field of study.

Most commonly, the dissertation document is divided into 5 chapters that correspond to the major sections of an empirical article, namely: introduction, literature review and conceptual framework, method, results, and discussion. However, not all dissertation studies may fit that organization structure. The student should work closely with the chair to organize the dissertation chapters. The dissertation should also have a table of contents and appendices for tables, figures, and the study’s documents (e.g., consent forms, questionnaires, etc.). The length of the dissertation will depend on the direction of the chair, the nature of the study, and the experience of the student.

### COMMUNICATING WITH THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The student should meet and consult with committee members throughout the completion of the dissertation for assistance with struggles and obstacles in data collection, analysis, and reporting. This is an opportunity to utilize committee member expertise to enhance the quality and rigor of the dissertation document. Regular communication with committee members can help build confidence in preparing students for successful defense.

### PREPARING FOR THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Preparing for the dissertation proposal can feel overwhelming. The following has been found to help students prepare for the dissertation proposal:

- Attend dissertation defenses of other students.
- Begin very early to coordinate and schedule the date and time for the proposal. Faculty and chairs can often have very busy schedules. The earlier this is done, the easier scheduling can be accomplished.
- Make sure that the document has been reviewed for format and grammar that adheres to both graduate school and APA standards.
- Maximize the opportunity to identify committee member concerns by meeting with committee members throughout the preparation process.
- Meet with the dissertation chair to identify and prepare for questions or issues that might be raised by committee members during the defense.
- Organize the presentation in a manner that clearly and succinctly explains the completed research study, including: the theoretical underpinnings, the methodology that was implemented, any changes made after the dissertation proposal, analysis results, and how the findings fit with other scholarship within the student’s field of study.

### SCHEDULING THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Once the student’s chair has approved the dissertation document, the student will schedule the dissertation defense. It is the student’s responsibility to find a date and time that all committee members can attend. The dissertation defense requires the presence of all three committee members. When setting a date for the dissertation defense, the following policies must be followed:

- All dissertation committee members must have **at least 10 working days** to review the final proposal approved by the chair. Therefore, the dissertation proposal cannot be set less than 10 working days prior to the final dissertation proposal being approved by the chair and sent out to committee members. Some committee members require a hard copy and others an electronic copy of the final proposal. It is the student's responsibility to give the final proposal in the form (electronic or paper) preferred by the committee member.
- No dissertation defense may be scheduled during finals week, university or student holidays, or between regular semesters.
- The dissertation defense can only be scheduled during Summer semesters if all dissertation committee members have a university appointment during the regular Summer semester.
- The student will contact the HDFSC office to schedule a room with a capacity of at least 15 people.
- The student will contact the HDFSC office *at least 2 weeks* prior to the defense date to post public announcements of the dissertation defense.
- The student will send a reminder to all committee members one to two days prior to the meeting time.

### **Reminder of Graduation Deadlines**

When scheduling the dissertation defense, students must be mindful of the [graduation deadlines](#). Oftentimes, in order to graduate in the same semester as the defense, a student must schedule the dissertation defense prior to mid-semester. The student should work very carefully with the chair in determining the most appropriate time for the dissertation defense. As is outlined below, the dissertation defense meeting is just one step of finalizing the dissertation document. Therefore, **the dissertation defense must be scheduled at least 5 weeks prior to the due date for the certificate of final examination**. It is the student's responsibility to be sure all forms and deadlines are met. If appropriate dissertation deadlines and approval forms are not met, graduation may be delayed.

### **THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE**

Students are encouraged to dress professionally for this event. Business attire is appropriate. Jeans, open shirts, sport shoes, shorts, etc. are not appropriate. The student is also responsible to test all audio-visual equipment prior to the meeting. The student should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled time to test all equipment and bring a copy of the [Certificate of Final Examination](#). The public is welcome to attend the dissertation defense, including friends, family, and colleagues. As a reminder, the dissertation defense is a professional presentation and oral examination of the student's dissertation document. All those in attendance are expected to maintain professional academic decorum. **Celebrations are to be delayed until after the Graduate School has accepted the document.**

The dissertation defense typically lasts about 2 hours and involves the following:

1. **Introductions** (5-10 minutes; open to public)
  - The chair will introduce the student and dissertation committee members to those in attendance.
2. **Dissertation Presentation** (20-30 minutes; open to public)
  - Using presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, Sway), the student will provide an overview of the dissertation. The purpose of the presentation is to demonstrate that the student can clearly and succinctly represent the completed dissertation to

other professionals. The presentation should provide an overview of the conceptual framework, methodology, analysis, implications, and how the findings fit with other scholarship within the student's field of study.

3. **Public Defense** (5-15 minutes; open to the public)
  - The chair will ask the audience for any questions or comments related to the presentation and dissertation document. At the conclusion of this section, the chair will ask that the audience leave the room.
4. **Dissertation Defense** (45-60 minutes; open to current students, faculty, and administrators)
  - The dissertation defense is an opportunity for students to defend their science. This is achieved through committee members asking questions pertaining to any part of the dissertation, such as: current literature on the topic, methodological decisions, analyses, representations of findings, study limitations, and implications of the work for the field.
  - Students are expected to present with advanced knowledge in their area of the dissertation (literature, methodology, analysis, implications) and be prepared to defend this area and to support research decisions using scholarly resources. Students should be prepared to justify decisions, synthesize information, and explain any part of the dissertation document.
  - Students should be able to independently respond to the questions posed by committee members in a professional, academic manner. At times committee members may give differing or even opposing suggestions and critiques. It is students' responsibility to consider these suggestions and justify or explain their decisions to incorporate or not incorporate feedback from committee members.
5. **Dissertation Committee Evaluation** (15-30 minutes; closed to public)
  - The dissertation committee dismisses the student from the room to discuss the dissertation document and student's responses to concerns and questions from the dissertation committee. At this time the dissertation committee will discuss the merits of the completed work, including the student's presentation, and decide whether the student's dissertation defense is: (a) **Accepted**, (b) **Revise with Minor Revisions**, or (c) **Revise and Re-Defend**.
    - **Accepted** signifies no revisions or edits are required. The Certificate of Final Examination and Signature Page may be signed at the time of the dissertation defense.
    - **Revise with Minor Revisions** signifies that the requested edits are minor in nature. There may be a small or large number of minor revisions requested. The changes will be reviewed by the chair and may also be required to be reviewed by committee members. The Certificate of Final Examination and Signature Page may be signed at the time of the dissertation defense.
    - **Revise and Re-Defend** signifies that there are substantial revisions that must be completed. The changes must be reviewed by the chair and the dissertation committee member(s) who requested the changes. The student must then re-defend his or her dissertation document in a subsequent dissertation defense. The Certificate of Final Examination and The Signature Page will be signed by all committee members after the student has received **Accepted** or **Revise with Minor Revisions** at a subsequent dissertation defense.
6. **Dissertation Committee Decision** (10-20 minutes; closed to public)

- The chair will invite the student back into the room to inform the student of the dissertation committee's decision and to clarify the revisions that are expected.

## **FINALIZING AND SUBMITTING THE DISSERTATION DOCUMENT**

The dissertation defense meeting is just one part of completing the dissertation. After the student has satisfactorily passed the dissertation defense, the student must complete the tasks below. The student will not be permitted to graduate without completion of these tasks.

### **1. Dissertation Proposal Edits**

Working with the dissertation chair, the student must respond to edits or changes requested by committee members at the dissertation defense meeting. All edits and changes must be approved by the committee members.

### **2. Certificate of Final Examination**

Once the dissertation committee approves the dissertation as "Accepted," the student will prepare the [Certificate of Final Examination](#) and obtain signatures from all committee members and the HDFSC Department Chair. The student will then forward the document to the graduate school.

### **3. Signature Page**

After all revisions have been completed and approved by the dissertation committee, the student will prepare the [Signature Page](#) (located in the Formatting Navigator on the graduate school forms website) and obtain signatures from all committee members and the HDFSC Department Chair. The student will then forward the document to the graduate school.

### **4. Department Chair Approval**

The completed dissertation document must be approved by the department chair before it is submitted to the graduate reader. The department chair requires at least 10 work days to review the document, and may require further edits before approving the dissertation document. Therefore, the student must submit the completed dissertation document to the department chair *in accordance with the academic calendar and in the format (hard copy or electronic) preferred by the department chair*. Any edits requested by the department chair must be approved by the dissertation chair before resubmitting the document to the department chair.

### **5. Graduate School Approval**

The graduate school requires that all dissertations are reviewed by professional editors for grammar, structure, and formatting. The graduate school readers may require substantial edits before the graduate school will accept the final dissertation. It is the student's responsibility to complete any requested edits in the timeframe required by the graduate school.

6. **Filing the Dissertation with the Graduate School**

The Graduate School requires electronic filing of the dissertation document. Directions for submitting the dissertation document to the graduate school are found on the [graduate school website](#).

7. **Graduation Checklist**

The graduate school has several final requirements that all doctoral students must complete before they will be permitted to graduate, many of which have deadlines. All students must submit the [Dissertation Fee Form](#), [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#), and 2 copies of their professional vita in addition to filing the dissertation with the department and graduate school. Students are encouraged review the [Graduation Checklist](#) for any additional graduation requirements not included in this document and review the [graduation deadlines](#).

**FINALIZING AND SUBMITTING THE DISSERTATION DOCUMENT**

Students are encouraged to publish their dissertation in a peer-reviewed journal after the graduate school has accepted the final dissertation document. Depending on the extent and length of the dissertation document, the student may even be able to divide the dissertation into more than one publishable paper. The student, as the chief author of the dissertation document, has the right for primary authorship on any publications. Students are encouraged to discuss publication credit with their chair and committee members as early as possible. Merely holding an academic position, such as chair or committee member, does not justify authorship credit. Authorship must accurately reflect the relative scientific or professional contributions of the individual to the manuscript.