

DISSERTATION PROCESS: 3 STEPS

During the 3rd summer of the program, students complete the required courses, and at the same time continue work on the dissertation proposal + IRB.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW + CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A preliminary literature review is required of each doctoral student during the 2nd summer of the doctoral program. The faculty member teaching the 2nd Proseminar (EDD 591B) will require the literature review as part of the course requirements. The literature review milestone is defined as an integrative review of literature that cuts across individual courses and is based on a student's particular area of interest and research. It is expected that the literature review will include a 25-30 page review of relevant literature, followed by 3-5 page description of the research methods anticipated for answering the proposed questions. The student's advisor will also review student performance on the literature review, which is graded on a pass/fail basis. Successful completion of the literature review is required for the student to continue courses and to move to the next phase of the program, the dissertation proposal.

2. DISSERTATION PROPOSAL & IRB

Following the literature review milestone and the required coursework, each student is expected to complete a dissertation proposal and formally present the proposal to his/her doctoral committee, including the chair, another member of the SJSU faculty, and third member of the committee selected from the field in which the student works. It is expected that all committee members will have a terminal degree.

The traditional dissertation proposal consists of a draft of the introduction, preliminary literature review, and methodology and references. The proposal informs committee members of tentative research plans. The student is also required to submit a separate application based on the research proposal to the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) based on the actual research proposed in the study and proposed data collection activities. The data collection phase cannot be formally started until IRB application is approved.

Approval of the dissertation proposal requires a formal meeting of the candidate and dissertation committee, in which the student presents his/her proposal and receives feedback. In order to move forward, the Dissertation Committee must formally (in writing) approve for the dissertation proposal and its willingness to support student's movement to accomplish the research proposed. While suggestions for improving the proposal are typical, the committee must ultimately decide if the proposal is sufficiently developed as a roadmap of what is to be accomplished in the dissertation research. At this stage, the Committee has three options: 1) to approve the student moving forward to the dissertation; 2) to approve the student moving forward with revisions as stated in the approval; and 3) to require that the student submit a revised dissertation proposal at a separate meeting of the dissertation committee. All students will have two chances to successfully defend the dissertation proposal. Successful completion of the dissertation proposal is required for a student to move to the next phase of the program, the dissertation.

Oral Defense of Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation

The Dissertation Committee provides guidance to the candidate, is responsible for approving the final written dissertation and oral defense, and for assuring dissertation conformance with program requirements and rigorous research expectations as established by the College Doctoral Faculty, the University Graduate Council, and Graduate School.

Both the preliminary defense of the proposal and final defense of the dissertation provide a mechanism for the faculty to assess oral expression, mastery of advanced disciplinary knowledge,

research methodology, theoretical constructs, and critical and creative thinking. As deemed appropriate by the program faculty, a rubric may be used to judge proficiency of these defenses.

3. DISSERTATION

After the dissertation proposal and IRB are approved, the doctoral student is permitted to begin collecting data proposed in the dissertation proposal. All students must enroll in a total of 12 units of dissertation credit during the final year of the program — 6 credits in fall semester and 6 credits in the spring semester of year 3 of the program. Once the candidate has enrolled in 12 dissertation units, the maximum allowable, continuous enrollment must be maintained until the dissertation is approved and filed.

Description of the Dissertation

The traditional dissertation consists of five chapters or sections: 1) introduction, 2) literature review, 3) methodology, 4) results/analysis, and 5) conclusions/recommendations. This is typically followed by a references section and relevant appendices. The Lurie College of Education uses APA style for research and the SJSU Graduate Studies division provides additional formatting/style guidelines for theses and dissertations.

There are currently many initiatives across the country which reference new strategies and approaches for the doctoral dissertation in the Ed.D. program. At the time of this writing, alternative formats for the dissertation, or what some are calling a dissertation-in-practice (DiP) are being considered at San José State University. These alternatives model thematic dissertations, problem solving dissertations, narrative inquiries, as well as the traditional dissertation formats. Regardless of approach or format, the dissertation is expected to contribute to an improvement to education practice and/or education policy in the context of a particular education institution. It is expected that the dissertation show evidence of originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale for the examined research problem.

Students interested in pursuing non-traditional models of dissertation research including dissertations-in-practice (DiP), action research, creative projects, joint or group research projects, and other research formats are encouraged to talk their ideas through with their chair/committee. It is incumbent on the student (with input from the doctoral committee chair) to make explicit the road map which the project will follow and to outline the evaluative criteria to be used at the project's completion.

The Dissertation Committee consists of three members, one whom serves as the committee chair. Two members of the dissertation committee are expected to be tenured or tenure-track members of the San José State University Faculty (chair + one other). The chair is expected to be a core or an affiliated faculty member of the Ed.D. program at SJSU. The third member of the committee is expected to be employed or previously employed at a local school or school district or at an institution of higher education, having achieved the terminal degree (e.g., Ed.D., Ph.D.). The student and chair typically consult with each other on appropriate committee members and invite the other two committee members to participate. The dissertation chair may call meetings at any time to check the candidate's progress. The most important meetings are the proposal defense, where the proposal is presented to the committee for approval, and the final oral defense where the completed dissertation is presented to the committee and other interested faculty and/or students. Committee membership is confirmed by form and submitted to the Ed.D. Program Director.

After completing the dissertation proposal defense and IRB approval, the student carries out the research plan described in the approved proposal, collects and analyzes data, and continues writing the dissertation. The student's Chair and Dissertation Committee guide the student to ensure the dissertation is a scholarly work resulting from research study and that contributes to the improvement of educational practice.

The student works with the committee chair to develop a system for reviewing drafts and for sharing drafts with other committee members at appropriate times. The student is expected to submit drafts of the dissertation to committee members in appropriately word-processed form. The completed final draft also includes the abstract, copyright page, title page, acknowledgments, table of contents, list of tables and figures, references, and appendices. The student submits the final draft manuscript to committee members for a final reading and approval. The final dissertation may take a variety of

forms depending upon the type of research undertaken. The conventional five-chapter dissertation, consisting of an introduction, literature review, methodology, results/analysis, and conclusions/recommendations may be revised to reflect a specific design and purpose.

Final Examination: Oral Defense of Dissertation

At the final oral defense, the student will make a public presentation of the dissertation research. The final oral defense is conducted as an open forum guided by the candidate's Chair and Dissertation Committee. The purpose of this formal meeting is: (1) to examine and assess the quality of the dissertation, (2) to evaluate the ability of the student to present research, and (3) to provide an opportunity to share the research with the campus community.

Unanimous agreement of the Dissertation Committee is required for approval of the dissertation and recommendation that the Ed.D. degree be conferred. There are three possible outcomes of the final defense:

1. The oral defense is satisfactory and the manuscript is accepted by the Dissertation Committee as submitted, or with only minor copy edition revisions.
2. The oral defense is satisfactory but there is a need for substantive revisions of the manuscript.
3. The oral defense is judged to be unsatisfactory. The decision may be reached because the dissertation is judged to be unacceptable or that the student fails to present it satisfactorily. A second oral defense may be scheduled when the chair determines that the student is prepared and the committee members agree that the required remediation has been accomplished. The following table summarizes the milestones throughout doctoral program and through the research process culminating with completion of the dissertation.

Tentative Milestones for Students in the SJSU Ed.D. Program in Educational Leadership

Step	Task	Semester
Topic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student becomes familiar with the literature in the area of proposed or potential topic interest - Student becomes familiar with theoretical framework and conceptual models that have guided the research in the selected topic of interest - Student becomes familiar with previous research conducted in topic area - Student becomes familiar with the methodologies used in research in the selected topic of interest 	Years 1 and 2
Dissertation Research Topic Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student should seek advice to ensure that their topic of research will be manageable in scope and possible to complete within the time frame of the program 	Spring, Year 1
Literature Review with Reference to Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student will complete literature review/ pre-proposal as part of EDD 591B; Successful completion is required to move forward 	Summer, Year 2

Dissertation Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dissertation Chair is identified - Two Dissertation Committee Members selected from SJSU faculty and third member from P-12 educational system or workplace - Student meets with Dissertation Chair to review research topic, and develop a timeline for the completion of the dissertation 	<p>Spring, Year 2</p> <p>Spring & Summer, Year 2</p> <p>Spring, Year 2 & Summer, Year 3</p>
Dissertation Research Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student successfully defends research proposal before Dissertation Committee Members - Dissertation Chair and committee members complete documentation for the successful defense of the dissertation proposal and submits to the EdD Director 	Spring, Year 2 & Summer Year 3
Institution Review Board (IRB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student completes SJSU IRB application with Dissertation Chair (and possibly with committee members) - Student submits completed IRB application and all supporting documents to IRB Program Coordinator for approval 	<p>Summer & Fall, Year 3</p> <p>As Dissertation proposal is approved</p>
Dissertation Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student completes chapters 1-5 of the dissertation with feedback from Chair and committee members 	Ongoing, Year 3
Oral Defense of Dissertation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With completed draft of dissertation, student completes dissertation defense scheduling form and submits to EdD Program to schedule defense; Copy of completed draft of entire dissertation must be sent to all committee members at least <u>two weeks prior</u> to holding defense - Student defends dissertation and makes all changes required by the Committee; All committee member signatures required on the Dissertation Approval Form 	Year 3
Submit Final Copy and Signed Paperwork to Graduate Studies for Dissertation Format Review and Publication	<p>After successful defense and all required signatures and changes in place, dissertation and paperwork is submitted to Graduate Studies for final format review (See Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation Guidelines at: https://www.sjsu.edu/cgs/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation-information). At this point, Graduate Studies makes the decision to approve or reject the dissertation formatting. When the dissertation is approved, the corrected final copy of the dissertation is uploaded to ProQuest. If rejected, the student must wait until the next submission dates and update graduation application (small fee involved).</p>	ProQuest submission deadline listed on Graduate Studies website. This deadline is revised every year.