**Dissertation Prospectus**

Students in the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) doctoral program are required to write a Dissertation Prospectus (DP) prior to selecting a dissertation committee, developing a full dissertation proposal, and registering for EEX 7980 Dissertation. The DP is intended to help the student develop a clear, succinct summary of the intended study. Additionally, the DP will help potential committee members determine their willingness to serve on the committee. The DP is an ESE Department requirement for students prior to registering for EEX 7980 Dissertation.

The prospectus has three related functions:

* To bring together a student’s ideas regarding the need for the specific study;
* To establish the first approximation of an action plan for conducting the study; and
* To communicate the research idea to potential dissertation committee members.

Students will learn about the purpose and requirements for the DP in EEX 7938 *Seminar in Exceptional Student Education Leadership: Orientation to Research*. Students will also explore the requirements for the DP as part of EEX 7341 *Doctoral Seminar: Exceptional Student Education.* The *Guidelines for Developing the Dissertation Prospectus* are found in Appendix G of the Doctoral Handbook.

The procedures for implementation are as follows:

1. Students meet the academic advisor the semester before taking comprehensive exams. During this meeting, comprehensive exams will be discussed as well as requirements for candidacy (see p. xx of the Doctoral Handbook for a full listing of requirements for admission to candidacy). At this time, a plan and timeline for development of the Prospectus, and subsequent enrollment in EEX 7980 Dissertation should be established.
2. If the intended faculty member to serve as dissertation chair is not the current academic advisor, then students should contact the intended dissertation chair to secure his or her willingness and to develop a plan of action and timeline for completing the DP.
3. Once the DP is complete, the student and chair will discuss the possible make-up of the dissertation committee. The DP will then be distributed to potential dissertation committee members. The chair will communicate with those individuals and request that they read the DP and consider participating as members of the dissertation committee.
4. By the end of the semester in which students pass their comprehensive exams and achieve their Doctoral Candidacy (submitting Form 8 - Admission to Candidacy), the DP should be shared with potential committee members and a dissertation committee should be formed.
5. Achieving candidacy and completing the DP will enable students to register for EEX 7980 Dissertation. Under no circumstances will students register for Dissertation unless the Prospectus has been completed and distributed to potential committee members.

In the event that a student has achieved candidacy but has not completed a DP at the beginning of a new semester, there is an alternative for working with a faculty member to develop the DP. Students may enroll for EEX 7906 Directed Independent Study (one credit) and complete the DP as the requirement for that course. A faculty member must be selected to supervise the development of the DP. In most cases, this should be the faculty member who will also serve as dissertation chair. This alternative will allow students time to complete the DP, select a dissertation committee, and begin the serious work of developing a full dissertation proposal.

The Dissertation Prospectus does not take the place of the full proposal or eliminate the need for a formal proposal defense. Dissertation Chairs must still decide the process for the development of the full proposal and the process by which the student will conduct the research. The DP is intended to help facilitate the development of a viable topic and the selection of a willing and able dissertation committee.