FSU | ANNE SPENCER DAVES COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SCIENCES

# Foundations of Education International Multicultural Education

## Ph.D. Program

# Student Handbook

***A guide to doctoral requirements for students in Educational Leadership and Policy within the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Florida State University***

# 2026-27

**Approved July 2026**

The policies identified in this document are to be construed in light of existing University policies and with deference to the requirements imposed on graduate education by the University, the Board of Trustees of Florida State University, and the Governing Board of the State University System of Florida. The information outlined is subject to change and students should be alert to announced revisions required by the faculty of the program, the department, College and University.

# Doctoral Student Handbook
# Table of Contents


**Mission** ..... 1
**Doctoral Degree Program** ..... 1
**Application** ..... 1
**Admission** ..... 1
**Financial Assistance** ..... 2
**Academic Advisor** ..... 4
**Diagnostic Examination** ..... 4
**Course Requirements** ..... 7
**Directed Independent Study (DIS)** ..... 8
**Transfer of Courses** ..... 8
**Waiver of Courses** ..... 9
**Major Professor** ..... 9
**Supervisory Committee** ..... 9
**Program of Study** ..... 10
**Residency** ..... 10
**Academic Standing** ..... 10
**Scholarly Engagement** ..... 12
**Preliminary Examination** ..... 12
**Admission to Candidacy** ..... 20
**Dissertation Hour Requirement** ..... 20
**Prospectus** ..... 20
**Dissertation** ..... 21
**Time Limit for Completion of Degree** ..... 23
**Graduation** ..... 23
**Continuous Enrollment** ..... 23
**Readmission** ..... 23
**Leave of Absence** ..... 24
**Academic Honor System** ..... 26
**Grade Appeals System** ..... 26
APPENDIX A – Assistantship Evaluation Form ..... 29
APPENDIX B – Credit Waiver Form ..... 30
APPENDIX C – Scholarly Engagement Policy ..... 31
APPENDIX D – Annual Review Guidelines ..... 33
APPENDIX E – University Preliminary Exam Policy ..... 34
APPENDIX F – Preliminary Exam Research Proposal Guidelines ..... 36
APPENDIX G – Guidelines Three-Essay Dissertation ..... 38
APPENDIX H – Dissertation Defense Decision Definitions ..... 40

## ***Mission***

The Educational Leadership and Policy Program aspires to be a world leader in the promotion of social progress and educational advancement through cutting-edge research, both pure and applied, and challenging graduate-level instruction that addresses questions of educational policy as they affect our communities at the local, state, national and international levels. We value a culture of academic freedom, intellectual curiosity, open communication, and academic rigor as well as the institutional supports necessary to sustain such a culture.

## ***Doctoral Degree Program***

The Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy is designed for individuals who seek preparation for positions in research, policy development and analysis, university or college teaching, and/or administration. The degree program includes a broad curriculum, encompassing core courses, including interdisciplinary components, research core, research specialization and electives. Students have two nine-hour specialization options - Program Evaluation that will yield a graduate certificate and International Education. All new students are enrolled in the Educational Leadership and Policy (ELP) degree program with a major in Education Policy and Evaluation (EPE). Current students who previously matriculated into other majors, such as Educational Leadership and Administration (EDA) in the ELP degree or International Multicultural Education and History and Philosophy of Education in the Foundations of Education degree program will continue in those majors and degree programs through graduation.

## ***Application***

If a prospective student aspires to join our intellectual community, the following materials need to be submitted with the online application available through the Office of Graduate Admissions (https://admissions.fsu.edu/gradapp/):

- Letter of Intent
- Statement of Purpose
- GRE scores (verbal, quantitative, writing)
- If an international student, a TOEFL score
- Undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) transcripts.
- Three letters of recommendation, two of which must be from professors. We do not accept letters from co-workers, relatives or friends.

## ***Admission***

Admission is governed by requirements stated in the "Admissions" chapter of the *Graduate Bulletin,* and by standards adopted by the program. It is expected that successful applicants will possess a Master's degree from an accredited institution with a 3.5 GPA on a four-point scale (or equivalent). In exceptional circumstances, the requirement for a

Master's degree may be waived provided the applicant maintained a 3.0 in the last 60 hours of undergraduate work and can document relevant professional experience.

In addition to the grade point average requirement, successful applicants typically present competitive GRE scores. All GRE scores must be within a recent five-year period. For international students, a TOEFL score of 550 or better is required in addition to the GRE scores.

Please note that the doctoral program is highly selective and enrollment is limited on a yearly basis. Meeting minimum requirements is no guarantee of admission. Other factors that are central to the admissions decision include, but are not limited to, leadership, policy and/or international experience in education or related areas, high motivation to achieve personal and professional goals consistent with the program's mission, and outstanding written and oral communication skills. The admissions process is intended to establish a culturally diverse learning community that will promote a culture of critical inquiry and encourage educational transformation and change.

## ***Financial Assistance***

*Assistantships and Fellowships*

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available to qualified doctoral students who enroll full-time. Graduate assistants are expected to contribute their time and energy to research, teaching or service projects associated with the Department, affiliated centers, individual faculty grant projects, or external agencies.

Additionally, highly selective doctoral fellowships and scholarships are available within the Department, College of Education, Health & Human Sciences, and the University. Consult the *General Bulletin – Graduate Edition* for information on university scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships. Go to the following websites for additional information on fellowships and scholarships:

The Office of Graduate Studies Funding Awards

College of Education, Health & Human Sciences Scholarship

Office of National Fellowships Graduate Awards

*Examples:*
Fulbright English Teaching Assistantships
Teaching Assistantships in English are offered in many countries worldwide. Placements are in schools or universities outside of the capital cities. Assistants design various activities to improve their students' language abilities and knowledge of the United States, while increasing their own language skills and knowledge of the host country. Assistantships carry a monthly stipend of about $1000.

Fulbright Full Grants
The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and is the largest U.S. international exchange program offering opportunities for students to undertake graduate study and advanced research worldwide in over 140 countries. Over 1100 Fulbright awards are made annually.

List of Funding Sources

*Examples:*

- National Academy of Education
- United States Institute of Peace
- National Science Foundation
- American Educational Research Association
- Spencer Foundation
- Social Science Research Council
- Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation
- Ford Fellowship (The National Academies)
- Wenner-Gren Foundation
- Institute of Education Sciences

Florida State University requires graduate students to be enrolled full-time to qualify for assistantships or fellowships. A graduate assistant with a one quarter-time (ten hours or more) per week assistantship must carry a minimum of nine credit hours to qualify as full-time.

Graduate students financing their education through loan programs should note that most lenders require students to verify that they are carrying a full-time credit load.

Students receiving an assistantship as a graduate assistant, research assistant, teaching assistant, or course mentor are subject to annual review (see Appendix A).

*Tuition Waivers*

Full or partial tuition waivers are often available with qualifying graduate assistantships. These waivers are awarded on a semester-by-semester basis and may vary depending on the funding source of the assistantship. Tuition waiver coverage for any student shall be **limited to a five-year eligibility period**. This period will begin from the point of first appointment as a graduate assistant. Exceptions to this rule may be considered by the ELPS Department Advisory Committee by submission of a statement of appeal from the student and the student's major professor. The student's annual review may substitute for the major professor's statement.

**College of Education, Health & Human Sciences Doctoral Funding Policy**. For doctoral students, tuition waivers may be used for pre-dissertation coursework for three academic years. For doctoral candidates, tuition waivers may be used for a maximum of 54

dissertation credits, or 6 semesters, with a 2-semester warning at 36 credits. Both of these limits to doctoral tuition waiver funding apply regardless of funding source.

Questions about tuition waivers and deadlines for registration and waiver applications should be directed to Adam Ware, the Department's tuition waiver coordinator, in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies suite – Stone 1209 (850-644-6777).

*Establishing Florida Residency*

Students who relocate to Florida to conduct graduate studies at Florida State University may wish to declare Florida residency to qualify for much lower in-state tuition rates. One year after moving to Florida, new residents, including those participating in the Academic Common Market scheme (see below), must complete the Residency Classification Form and submit it to the Graduate Office of Admissions prior to the beginning of the semester for which in-state tuition rates are desired.

In order to establish evidence that the residency adjustment request is not being made for the sole purpose of obtaining in-state tuition rates, new Florida residents will need to provide evidence of non-scholastic ties to the state of Florida. Such evidence includes, but is not limited to, obtaining a Florida driver's license, obtaining Florida vehicle registration, becoming registered to vote in Florida, owning property in Florida, employment in Florida, and so forth.

Students who have obtained a graduate assistantship are strongly encouraged to begin the process of establishing residency as soon as possible. After one year of retaining a graduate assistant position, only in-state tuition waivers can be issued to students hoping to continue working as graduate assistants. International students are exempt from this policy due to their ineligibility to obtain residency. For more information regarding how to begin the process of securing Florida residency, please visit the following link: http://admissions.fsu.edu/residency/

## ***Academic Advisor***

Upon admission, the student will be assigned an academic advisor to assist them in developing an initial program of study and counsel them on degree requirements. An advising guide to aid both students and advisors is available on the ELP Canvas Org site. The program of study form is available on the College of Education, Health & Human Science's Office of Academic Services & Intern Support – Graduate Support website: https://cehhs.fsu.edu/oasis/graduate-students

## ***Diagnostic Examination***

Every student who has been admitted to study toward a doctoral degree within the department must, during the sixth week of the second semester after admission (or, for part-time students, after the completion of three courses), complete a departmentally

administered diagnostic examination. This examination will be designed to appraise the student's ability to pursue the doctoral degree in the field.

It is the student's responsibility to register for the diagnostic exam for 0 credit hours during the semester for which they will take the test.

## A. Content & Format

This exam consists of reading an article selected by faculty in the major and responding to a series of questions in an eight-hour take-home exam accessed and managed through Canvas and submitted to *Turnitin* via Canvas.

The diagnostic exam is comprised of two parts. The first part focuses on article critique and the second part is an in-depth discussion of students' research interests. The students are required to address all the questions outlined under part 1 and part 2 below.

Students are required to attempt and complete part 1 of this exam during the 8 hours on the assigned date in the 6th week of the semester. Part 2 should be prepared in advance and submitted at the same time as Part 1.

This part of the exam is meant to evaluate students' ability to critically engage with published research.

Part 2 of the exam focuses on research interests of the students and is meant to facilitate students to develop a research-oriented approach to educational issues. Students are expected to develop this part of the exam in advance. They will, however, submit part 2 of the exam along with part 1.

**Part 1: Article Critique** (no more than 6 pages in total; double-spaced and 12 font)

1. Briefly summarize the main argument, methods of data gathering, data analysis, principal findings, and conclusions of the article (no more than 2 pages)
2. Provide an in-depth and critical discussion of the following (no more than 4 pages)
    a. Discuss overall contribution(s) of this study (1/2 page)
    b. Discuss the most salient limitations identified in this article. In addition, describe any limitations of the design of the study and/or any issues related to the validity or reliability of the study. (1 ½ pages)
    c. Discuss some possible alternative explanations or interpretations of the data or findings. (1 page)
    d. Discuss an alternative approach to studying the principal phenomenon under investigation in this study. (1 page)

**Part 2: Research Interests** (no more than 3 pages in total; double-spaced and 12 font)

1. Drawing on your courses and other literature, what problems in education are you interested in studying? (1/2 page)
2. What research questions can you come up with to examine that problem? (1/2 page)
3. What conceptual/theoretical frameworks would you like to draw on to conceptualize and respond to those research questions? (1 page)
4. What methods and data might be a good fit to answer these research questions? (1 page)

**B. Evaluation**

1. The diagnostic exam will be held in the 6th week of the semester.
2. Students will have eight hours to complete part 1 of the exam.
3. Students are expected to have completed part 2 of the exam in advance and submit it along with part 1.
4. The ELP exam committee will grade the diagnostic exam of all the ELP students. The exam committee will share student responses and exam results with the student's major advisor.
5. Students will either receive a *pass* (passing both parts of the exam) or *conditional continuance* (failing either or both parts of the exam) on their first attempt of the exam.
6. If students receive conditional continuance, they will have four weeks to rewrite their exam incorporating the feedback provided by the exam committee.
7. Students will receive a *pass* or *conditional continuance* on their second attempt.
8. Students who pass the exam are required to meet with their major advisor and an additional faculty member, who should be selected in collaboration with the major advisor, by the 12th week of the semester. The student will officially pass the diagnostic exam only after the major advisor and the faculty member have signed off on their program of study.
9. Students who receive conditional continuance on their second attempt are required to work with their major advisor to develop strategies to improve their research, conceptual, methodological skills, and/or linguistic capabilities to succeed in graduate school.
10. Students who receive conditional continuance on their second attempt will retake their diagnostic exam in full in the following spring (or a year from their first attempt).
11. The students will receive either a *pass* or *fail* on their third attempt. If students receive a failing grade, they will not be able to continue in the program.
12. Late submissions automatically constitute a failure, save for exceptional circumstances, and the late submission will result in a second attempt with a new research article.

**C. Process**

1. *Timing*: All students are required to take the diagnostic exams during the sixth week of classes in the second semester after admission or after the student has completed 3 courses for those who attend part-time. See #12 of Section B. Evaluation just above.
2. The ELP Exam committee will evaluate and grade the diagnostic exam.
3. Students who pass the exam are required to meet with their major advisor and an additional faculty member, who should be selected in collaboration with the major advisor, by the 12th week of the semester. The student will officially pass the diagnostic exam only after the major advisor and the faculty member have signed off on their program of study.

***Course Requirements***

The Educational Leadership and Policy program's major in Education Policy and Evaluation course of study leading to the Ph.D. degree consists of eighty-eight (88) credit hours, of which twenty-four (24) are required dissertation hours. Of the remaining sixty-four (64) credit hours, twenty-one (21) are Core requirements that also include a zero-credit hour proseminar. There are twenty-four credit hours of research coursework – fifteen (15) of which are Research Core and nine of which are Research Specialization. There are eighteen (18) credit hours of electives that may be used towards one or both of the Specialization Options – Program Evaluation that leads to a graduate certificate and/or International Education, each of which are nine-credit hours.

***CORE (21 credit hours)***

EDF 5641 Introduction to Policy Studies in Education

EDF 5652 Policy Development

EDF 6576 Policy to Practice

EDF 5887 Multicultural Education

EDF 5624 Economics of Education

EDF 5935 Sociology and Anthropology of Education

EDF 5935 History and Philosophy of Education

EDH 6059 Proseminar in HE and Ed Policy (0 Credit)

***RESEARCH CORE (15 credit hours)***

EDF 6486 Applied Research Methods in Ed Lead & Policy

EDF 5400 Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

EDF 5949C Applied Educational Policy Analysis

EDF 6475 Qualitative Methods in Educational Research

EDF 6476 Advanced Qualitative Methods

***RESEARCH SPECIALIZATION (9 credit hours)*** Selected by student with approval from advisor

***ELECTIVES (18 credit hours)***

***SPECIALIZATION OPTIONS***

**Program Evaluation (Graduate Certificate) (9 hours)**

EDF 5461 Introduction to Program Evaluation

EDF 5462 Evaluation of New Educational Programs

EDF 5449 Survey Research Methods

**International Education (9 hours)**

EDF 5850 International Development Education

EDF 5853 Comparative Education Policy

Selected by student with approval from advisor

## ***Directed Independent Study (DIS)***

A student with agreement from their faculty advisor may take a directed independent study (variable credit 1-3) with a faculty member who is willing to supervise the DIS. A maximum of six-credit hours may included on the student's program of study.

## ***Transfer of Courses***

A student may *transfer* up to six semester hours of relevant course credit into the doctoral program, provided the courses were earned with a grade of "B" or better, are approved by the student's advisor and were taken after the completion of the master's degree and within five years of admission to the doctoral program. These *transfer* hours may be counted toward the completion of the program of studies leading to the doctoral degree if approved by the student's academic advisor.

## ***Waiver of Courses***

Given evidence of relevant graduate coursework, a student may waive up to thirty (30) credit hours, inclusive of the six credit hours that one may transfer (see above). Students must provide syllabi or official course description to support their request. The request should be developed in consultation with the student's temporary advisor. Final authorization will be made by the ELP coordinator in consultation with the ELP program faculty. Requests must be submitted by April 1st in the first academic year. A waiver may not apply to the ELP core courses. See Appendix B for the Credit Waiver Form.

## ***Major Professor***

After the initial year of study, the student may consult with professors under whom the student may be interested in working, taking into consideration fit of research interests with faculty expertise, of methodological directions with faculty expertise, and of inter-personal styles. It is an accepted practice in the program for students to explore with whom they might work best and to make the choice to change advisors. The professor of choice must consent to serve as major professor and chair of the supervisory committee. If the professor consents, the departmental chair appoints the professor as chair. A faculty member who serves as chair of a student's supervisory committee must have Graduate Faculty Status and have competence in the student's major. This appointment must be mutually agreeable to the student, major professor, and departmental chair. If the current major professor assignment is satisfactory for the student, no action is necessary.

## ***Supervisory Committee***

Upon the request of the major professor, the departmental chair will appoint the supervisory committee that will be in charge of the student's work until the completion of all requirements for the degree. The appointment of the student's supervisory committee must be completed by the end of the first academic year. The membership of the supervisory committee will be reported to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The supervisory committee will consist of a minimum of four members of the graduate faculty, all of whom must have Graduate Faculty Status, one of whom is a University representative of the graduate faculty drawn from outside the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and who is tenured. The remaining members, including the major professor, must all be faculty members in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.

The University representative is responsible for ensuring that University policies are followed and that decisions made by the supervisory committee reflect the collective judgment of the committee. Therefore, the graduate faculty representative must be someone who is free of conflicts of interest with other members of the committee. If questions arise they should be referred to the Dean of Graduate Studies for resolution.

## ***Program of Study***

The student should prepare a complete plan of courses to be taken under the supervision of the major professor. This program of study must be signed by each member of the committee and the department chair. A signed program of study must be submitted to the Office of Academic Services and Intern Support (OASIS) by the end of the first academic year. It is necessary to list the semesters' and years' courses in chronological order (past to present) to determine that university, department, and college requirements will be met. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that they have met all degree requirements.

Upon receipt of a program of study approved at the departmental level, the Office of Student Services will review the proposed program to ensure that the make-up of the supervisory committee and requirements for inquiry skills, residency, and transfer of course work are in compliance with college and university policy. Forms for the doctoral program of study are available at https://cehhs.fsu.edu/oasis/graduate-students

## ***Residency***

After having finished thirty (30) semester hours of graduate work or being awarded the master's degree, the student must be continuously enrolled in the Educational Leadership and Policy Ph.D. program on The Florida State University Tallahassee campus for a minimum of twenty-four (24) graduate semester hours of credit in any period of 12 consecutive months to satisfy the residency requirement. Dissertation hours may be used to satisfy residency requirements.

## ***Academic Standing***

*Academic Progress Expectations*

All doctoral students are expected to enroll in courses as indicated on the approved Program of Study (POS), maintain a minimum of 3.0 GPA, and actively engage in dissertation research through frequent individual consultations with their major professors. In an annual review conducted during late spring/early summer, a student's major professor will assess the progress of the student in writing and will make available copies of the annual review to the student, the departmental chair, and the academic dean.

Progress towards degree is evaluated based the following evidence:

- **Students' academic record** (courses, grades, diagnostic exam, prelim exam),
- **Progress towards dissertation** (topic development, prospectus development, dissertation research and manuscript development) based on advisor's assessment of student's and candidate's engagement.
- **Scholarly engagement** as defined in the PhD handbook and can be found in Appendix C.

Students are expected to discuss with their major professors to fully understand the major professors' academic expectations and feedback given to them for improvement before signing the annual review form. When a student is not making a satisfactory progress, a revised POS and/or an improvement plan (or a remediation plan) may be required at the time of annual evaluation. Appendix D provides guidelines for the annual review.

*Dismissal*

As stated in the University's graduate bulletin https://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/graduate-bulletin. The University reserves the right to dismiss graduate students and terminate their enrollment in an academic program based on a number of different criteria, beyond that of GPA alone. Oversight is provided by The Graduate School, Office of Faculty Development and Advancement, and Office of the Registrar. Additional details on the steps involved in the process are available for faculty and administrators from the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement and for graduate students at the Graduate School.

Dismissed students will not be permitted to register for further graduate study, including registering as non-degree students, in the degree program or college from which they had enrollment terminated.

Graduate students who have been dismissed from one degree program may seek admission to another degree program but will not be readmitted or allowed to add the dismissed degree program back as a second major or degree. This includes seeking admission into a different degree program that shared a joint pathway with the dismissed degree program.

Program terminations (dismissal for a reason other than GPA) are generally identified by the faculty with support from the Department Chair (or unit head) in the department/unit or single-unit college level and may occur for a number of different reasons.

As specified by university policy, Graduate policy, or within the unit's Graduate Student handbook, reasons may include but are not limited to,

- Inability to conduct independent research in a fashion appropriate with the accepted norms of a discipline.
- Inability to function within a team environment to the extent that it negatively affects the learning, practice and/or research of fellow graduate students.
- Behavior that does not meet the professional standards of a discipline (typically clinical, social work or school settings, but also including Motion Picture Arts, internship work, etc.).
- Failure to meet artistic or creative performance standards.
- Failure to be approved for an Extension of Time (EOT).
- Failure to complete important degree milestone requirements within a reasonable period of time.

- Inability to pass the doctoral diagnostic exam, preliminary exam for admission to candidacy in, etc.
- Failure to complete the doctoral degree or make timely progress towards the research or writing of their treatise or dissertation.
- Failure to complete the master's degree or make timely progress towards the research or writing of their thesis, or the production of their thesis-equivalent creative project.
- Failure to reasonably follow the approved program of study (POS).

In addition, please note that suspension or expulsion from the university may result if a student is found responsible in a formal Academic Honor Policy (AHP) hearing for an egregious AHP violation, or as an outcome from a Student Conduct Code charge for which a student is found responsible.

Students who are dismissed for reasons other than grades may follow the General Academic Appeals process if they have evidence that academic regulations and procedures have been improperly applied.

***Scholarly Engagement***

As noted in the FSU Graduate Bulletin, "[T]he purpose of the Scholarly Engagement requirement is to ensure that doctoral students are active participants in the scholarly community. To meet the Scholarly Engagement requirement, doctoral students should interact with faculty and peers in ways that may include enrolling in courses; attending seminars, symposia, and conferences; engaging in collaborative study and research beyond the university campus; and utilizing the library, laboratories, and other facilities provided by the university. The goal is to prepare students to be scholars who can independently acquire, evaluate, and extend knowledge, as well as develop themselves as effective communicators and disseminators of knowledge." *(FSU Graduate Bulletin 2016-2017)*

Appropriate Scholarly Engagement activities will be determined by the student and his or her advisor according to the student's scholarly interests and chosen career path. Students will document their activities throughout the year on the ELPS Scholarly Engagement Activities Canvas site. Appendix C shows an illustrative list of Scholarly Engagement activities.

***Preliminary Examination***

Satisfactory completion of a preliminary examination is required for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. No student may register for dissertation hours prior to the point in the semester in which the preliminary examination was passed. An admission to candidacy form must be completed and filed in the Office of the University Registrar prior to registration for or conversion to dissertation/treatise hours.

The preliminary examination is designed to test scholarly competence and knowledge and to afford the examiners the basis for constructive recommendations concerning the student's subsequent formal or informal study. Prior to the examination, the student's major professor will determine whether the student 1) has a 3.0 average, 2) no outstanding incompletes and 3) has progressed sufficiently in the study of the discipline and its research tools to begin independent research in the area of the proposed dissertation.

The results of each examination attempt will be reported to the Office of the University Registrar and the Office of Academic Services and Intern Support (OASIS) for inclusion in the student's permanent record. For more details about University policy regarding the preliminary examination, see the FSU Graduate Bulletin https://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/graduate/. A copy of the current policy also appears in Appendix E.

*Clearance and Registration*

Clearance for the preliminary examination is completed by the Graduate Coordinator for the College of Education, Health & Human Sciences. Clearance is given only if the student has met the following requirements: registered for the preliminary examination; an overall GPA of 3.0 or better for all graduate work completed with no incomplete grade; an approved supervisory committee; an approved program of study on file in the graduate office, and completion of the diagnostic examination, residency, and research tool requirements. Students who register for the preliminary examination must be in their last semester of coursework for the doctorate or have no more than six hours of coursework remaining on the approved program of study.

*Content, Format, Evaluation, and Recommendations*

The overall objective of the preliminary exam is to assess the student's preparedness to engage in independent dissertation research. Preliminary exams are offered in fall and spring terms, but are not offered during the summer term.

**A. Content**

The preliminary exam consists of four parts (described below).

Part 1, Core Knowledge: Students will be asked to explore an issue in education based on the knowledge gained from the Core Courses. Students are expected to be able to demonstrate knowledge of key theoretical and conceptual frameworks and apply those frameworks to problems of education and education research. Moreover, students must be knowledgeable about core debates in policy and related disciplines.

Part 2, Research Methodologies: Students will be asked to demonstrate an understanding of a broad array of research methodologies and the types of questions the methodological approaches are best suited to answer. Students will

be required to respond to one foundational level question (qualitative or quantitative) and one advanced level question (qualitative or quantitative).

Part 3, Research Proposal: Students will develop a research proposal following established guidelines (see Appendix F) that demonstrates their ability to design independent research. The purpose of the research proposal is to ascertain whether the student has the conceptual and writing skills to design a coherent independent research proposal. While a student may consult with their major professor to discuss potential research topics, questions, and relevant literature, students are to write the research proposal independently. The research proposal will be submitted in advance of the commencement of Parts 1 and 2 and uploaded to Canvas through *TurnItIn*. For students who plan to pursue a three-essay dissertation, see further guidance in X section of this handbook.

Part 4, Oral Defense: Students orally defend their research proposal to the three departmental members of their respective Supervisory Committees.

## B. Format & Timeline

Parts 1 and 2: In a time delimited "take-home" exam, students will respond to a total of four questions. Each response should be between 8 to 12 pages excluding the cover page and references, following the latest APA format. More specifically, in Part 1, students will respond to two questions among four posed based on Core Knowledge.

In Part 2, students will respond to **one foundational** level question (qualitative or quantitative) and **one advanced** level question (qualitative or quantitative).

a. Students will declare ahead of the exam if their dissertation/preparation is qualitative or quantitative in nature.
b. Their major advisors will confirm this information.
c. Students with a **quantitative focus** will have...
    1. Foundational qualitative question
    2. Advanced quantitative question (choose one among two posed)
d. Students with a **qualitative focus** will respond to...
    1. Foundational quantitative question
    2. Advanced qualitative question (choose one among two posed)
e. Students with mixed methods focus will select one foundational and one advanced question of their choice. In other words, they cannot choose both foundational or both advanced level questions.
    1. One foundational (quantitative or qualitative)
    2. One advanced (quantitative or qualitative)

The exam will be accessed, managed, and submitted through Canvas (a site devoted to diagnostic and preliminary exams). In downloading and accessing the exam, students will be required to agree to the FSU Academic Honor code and submit their responses through *TurnItIn*. Students will have from Friday at 5 pm at the end of the first week of the semester to Tuesday at 10 am at the beginning of the third week of the semester to complete the exam.

Part 3: Students must follow the research proposal guidelines (see F) and submit their research proposal of no more than 20 pages to *TurnItIn* via Canvas. Tables, figures, and reference lists are not counted towards the page limit. The research proposal is due by the start of the first day of the preliminary exam session (i.e., Friday at 5:00 pm).

Part 4**:**
Students should schedule a defense of the research proposal during the sixth or seventh week. However, they may proceed with the scheduled defense only after receiving the results of Parts 1 and 2, passing all four questions.

Timeline:

- Week 01: Friday at 5pm.
    - Submit research proposal.
    - Parts 1 and 2 begin.
- Week 02: Parts 1 and 2 are in session.
- Week 03: Tues at 10am
    - Parts 1 and 2 due.
- Week 04: Prelim committee reviews.
- Week 05: Prelim results given to students.
    - If passed, confirm date for oral defense of proposal before end of Week 7.
    - If failed only one question, rewrite begins and is due in 7 days.
- Week 06:
    - Rewrite due
    - Proposal defenses
- Week 07:
    - Proposal defenses
    - Prelim passes finalized and DIS hours converted to dissertation hours by end of week.

## C. Evaluation

Parts 1 and 2: The Exam Committee consists of three members of the faculty who serve for two years on a rotating basis. The committee receives and reads each exam without knowledge of the identity of the author of the exam. A student's major professor must recuse him or herself from the advisee's exam review if serving on the committee during that year and will be replaced by another faculty member.

The Exam Committee will evaluate the students' responses on based on the rubric below (end of this evaluation section). The results will be announced to the student no later than the end of the fifth week of classes. Information to the students will include the committee's numerical assessment and additional qualitative feedback on each of the four questions. This will be the case for a student's initial attempt for the exam as well as for any subsequent rewrite or second attempt of the exam.

There are three possible outcomes for the first attempt of the preliminary exam:

1. If a student passes all four questions, the student may proceed with the oral defense of the research proposal (Part 4). This oral defense must occur by the end of the seventh week to convert any Directed Independent Study (DIS) hours to dissertation (DISS) hours. All students are required to successfully defend the research proposal submitted during the first week by the end of the semester to receive a passing grade.

2. If a student fails one question, the student will be given seven days to re-write and re-submit that question based on the committee feedback. If the student then passes the question, the student may proceed with the oral defense. If the student does not pass that question, the student will fail the first attempt of the preliminary exam and may attempt the full preliminary exam in the subsequent offering of the exam.

3. If the student fails two or more questions, the student will fail the first attempt of the preliminary exam and may attempt the full preliminary exam in a subsequent offering of the exam.

In the case of a second attempt of the exam, there are three possible outcomes:

1. If the student passes all four questions, the student can proceed with the oral defense of the proposal.

2. If a student fails only one question, the student will be given seven days to re-write and re-submit that question. If the student then passes the question, the student may proceed with the oral defense of the proposal. If the student fails the question again, the student will fail the second attempt of the preliminary exam

3. A student who fails more than one question will be assigned a failing grade on the second attempt of the preliminary exam.

In any resubmission or second attempt of the exam, following the FSU Academic Honor Policy on multiple submissions, students are not allowed to submit the same response multiple times.

Parts 3 and 4: The student's supervisory committee, excluding the University representative, will evaluate Parts 3 and 4 of the exam - the research proposal and the oral defense. If the committee finds that the research proposal does not meet the appropriate standard, students will have one additional opportunity to successfully revise and re-defend no later than the 7th week of the following semester. If the student does not produce a research proposal that meets the appropriate standard, the student will fail the first attempt of the preliminary exam. Students who fail parts 3 and 4 (the research proposal and defense), but pass parts 1 and 2 (the take-home essay portion) do not need to attempt the full preliminary exam in a future administration of the exam. Instead, a student who fails the first attempt of the preliminary exam as a result of only failing parts 3 and 4 need only attempt parts 3 and 4 in a second administration of the exam.

Failing Grade

A student who is assigned a failing grade on the second attempt of the exam is no longer eligible to continue in the program. However, the student may apply for admission to another terminal degree program (e.g., Specialist) in the department. Application to the program and approval for completion of the new program will be reviewed by the program faculty case-by-case.

**ELP Preliminary Examination Assessment Rubric**

**1. Rating**

| | **Dimension** | **Content** | **Poor** | **Fair** | **Good** | **Very Good** | **Excellent** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Knowledge | Demonstration of foundational knowledge of disciplinary content or research methods. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | Application | Effective application of key disciplinary or methodological concepts to a specific topic or context through critical interpretation and analysis. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | Writing | Analytical academic writing and organization in building a focused, logical and coherent argument with appropriate citations of relevant publications. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | Professional Expectation | Follows the latest APA format and ELP prelim policy by responding to all questions within a specified length. | Unsatisfactory | | | | Satisfactory |
| 5 | Academic Honor | Follows the FSU Academic Honor Policy. | Unsatisfactory | | | | Satisfactory |
| FINAL DECISION | | To pass, students must receive 3 or above in the first three dimensions and satisfactory in the last two dimensions. | PASS | | | | FAIL |

**2. Narrative Feedback**

| | **Dimension** | **Comments** |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Knowledge | |
| 2 | Application | |
| 3 | Writing | |
| 4 | Professional Expectation | |
| 5 | Academic Honor | |

## D. Recommendations for Studying for Preliminary Exams

In the preliminary exams, the student is expected to show that they have mastered the body of knowledge of both the core of ELP as well as his or her specialization. As the exam is open-book, ELP faculty expects students to not only have a solid foundation of the material, but also that the student will demonstrate knowledge of the appropriate sources and references for answers during the exam. ELP faculty expect that the student will answer all the exam questions directly, draw on

appropriate and sufficient content and research, and answer each question in a high-quality manner.

Whereas students are required to provide references from published research to support their arguments, the responses must constitute critical engagement with the published research instead of merely summarizing or reiterating what such research has already stated. In other words, the responses should highlight students' familiarity with the related discipline and the main themes in that discipline. In addition, the responses must reflect students' ability to thoughtfully and critically engage with related research to make and support their arguments. The purpose of a doctorate program is to prepare students to plan, develop, and conduct independent research. Preliminary exam evaluates if students are ready to conduct independent dissertation research under the supervision of their advisor and the dissertation committee.

It is further suggested that the student answer each exam question as the question is organized (e.g., If the question has three subsections, the student should answer each subsection in the order in which they were presented in the question.). It is expected that the student will use the most recent APA format.

Faculty make the following suggestions for preparing for the Preliminary Exams:

1. Organize your materials from the research, policy, and major courses you have taken. Review materials related to the major outcomes and objectives from the courses as these reflect the emphases of the courses. Reread the readings and related materials. Review major theoretical frameworks, theorists, and concepts. It is crucial to engage with this material in an in-depth and critical manner so that you understand the main focus of these frameworks and concepts as well as the similarities and differences between these frameworks and concepts. In addition, it is important to ensure that you are able to apply this knowledge to your different questions and issues within the field of education.
2. Review different disciplinary perspectives for understanding major phenomena in the field. It is important to examine how these different disciplinary perspectives may provide us similar and/or different understandings about the same phenomenon.
3. Cite sufficient supporting evidence from the relevant research. As stated earlier, instead of merely summarizing this research, you are expected to be able to use this evidence to support the arguments/discussions in your responses.
4. Review the most recent APA format for citations and reference lists.
5. In your answers, demonstrate an ability to synthesize and relate what you have learned to specific cases or contexts.
6. Clear your calendar so that you will not have distractions or other commitments during the exam weekend.
7. You are strongly encouraged to attend the preliminary information sessions organized by the ELP exam committee during the fall and the spring semesters. It is advisable to start attending these sessions before you plan to attempt the

exam, and attend as many sessions as you can to learn about the format, structure, and process of the preliminary exam. ELP exam committee also answers students' questions about the preliminary exam during these sessions.

8. You are strongly encouraged to start discussing your research interests, plans to attempt the preliminary exam, possible dissertation topics, and research plan with your advisor at the early stages of the program instead of waiting until the preliminary exam. You are expected to take the initiative to schedule time to regularly meet with your advisor to initiate these discussions. These discussions will help you develop a quality research proposal.

**E. Recommendations for Completing the Preliminary Exam**

1. Read the question options and select which ones you are going to answer.
2. Create an outline or concept map of your response.
3. Organize your materials for citation and reference.
4. Use spell and grammar checks
5. Take periodic short breaks

***Admission to Candidacy***

Upon passage of all parts of the preliminary doctoral examination, the student is admitted to candidacy for the doctorate. A student must be admitted to candidacy for at least six months prior to the granting of the doctoral degree. All requirements for the doctoral degree, including a successful dissertation defense, must be completed within five calendar years from the time the student has been admitted to candidacy. After that time, the student's continued enrollment will be suspended and a new preliminary examination must be passed. (See *Time Limit for Completion of Degree* for further information.)

***Dissertation Hour Requirement***

A student who has completed the required coursework, passed the Preliminary Examination and submitted an Admission to Candidacy form to the Office of the Registrar, and continues to use campus facilities and/or receives faculty supervision, but has not been cleared by the Manuscript Clearance office shall include in the required full-time load a minimum of two credit hours of dissertation per semester, including Summer term, until completion of the degree. Doctoral students, after completion of the preliminary exam and twenty-four credit hours of dissertation, must be enrolled for a minimum of three credit hours per semester (of which at least two must be dissertation hours) until completion of the degree.

***Prospectus***

After passing the preliminary examination, the student will be required by the department to submit to the major professor, supervisory committee, and departmental chair a prospectus on a research project suitable for a doctoral dissertation. The prospectus must be prepared according to the style and form prescribed by the department and Anne's

College of Education, Health & Human Sciences and must be submitted through *TurnItIn*. Typically, the prospectus is a full draft of the first three chapters of a five-chapter dissertation – Chapter 1 Introduction, Chapter 2 Literature Review and Chapter 3 Methods, with the final two chapters included for the dissertation defense – Chapter 4 Findings, Chapter 5 Conclusions. If a student is going to pursue a three-essay dissertation, they must follow the Guidelines for both the prospectus and dissertation (see Appendix G)

It is expected that the candidate will successfully defend their prospectus within three semesters of entering candidacy. If this does not happen, the candidate will work with their advisor to develop a plan to move forward.

If the candidate's defense of their prospectus is unsuccessful, they will have one additional opportunity to successfully defend that must take place within the next two semesters. If the second defense is not successful or did not take place within that time frame, the candidate will be exited from the program.

All members of the candidate's supervisory committee must be synchronously present for the defense. Upon prospectus approval, the student must submit a Prospectus Clearance Form, prospectus title page, prospectus signature page, and copy of the prospectus on cd to OASIS. The forms can be found at https://cehhs.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu3146/files/Dissertation-Prospectus-Clearance-Form-rev.8.16.2018_0.pdf

Within 60 days of the successful defense of the prospectus, the student must submit the Institutional Review Board Human Subjects Committee Approval Verification Form to OASIS. As an appendix to the form, the student will submit their official notice from FSU IRB Human Subjects on the study's status as approved human subjects or not human subjects research.

A student cannot defend the dissertation earlier than 4 months from the date of the departmental chair's signature on the Prospectus Clearance Form.

***Dissertation***

A doctoral dissertation must be completed on a topic relevant to the area of major. To be acceptable it must be an achievement in original research constituting a significant contribution to knowledge and represent a substantial scholarly effort on the part of the student. For students who are doing a three-essay dissertation, see Guidelines in Appendix G.

The manuscript must be prepared according to the style and form prescribed by the department and must be submitted through *TurnItIn*. Formatting and clearance guidelines for the final electronic submission copy may be accessed from the Office of Graduate Studies website,http://www.gradstudies.fsu.edu/Academics-Research/Thesis-Treatise-Dissertation or by contacting the manuscript clearance advisor.

Before registering for dissertation hours, the student should consult the major professor as to the proportion of time to be devoted to dissertation work. The student must register for a minimum of 2 dissertation hours each semester of enrollment. The minimum number of dissertation hours for completion of a doctoral degree is 24 semester hours.

Final approval of the dissertation by the entire supervisory committee is a prerequisite to the awarding of the degree. This is true no matter how many hours a student has completed in dissertation or what grades have been recorded for the dissertation hours.

*Dissertation Defense*

The defense of dissertation will be oral. Responsibility for suggesting the time, designating the place, and presiding at the examination rests with the major professor. It is recommended that students defend no later two weeks before the semester's manuscript clearance deadlines. Students must meet all manuscript and online forms deadlines set by the Graduate School in the semester of graduation.

As an academic courtesy, the dissertation must be submitted to each member of the supervisory committee at least four weeks before the date of the oral examination. The supervisory committee, the chair of the major department, and such other members of the faculty appointed by the academic dean will conduct the examination. All members of the graduate faculty are invited to attend. At least two weeks prior to the date of the examination, the student or major professor will present an announcement of the dissertation title and the date and place of the examination to the Office of Academic Services and Intern Support (OASIS). Consult the *Registration Guide* for the deadline dates.

Dissertation defense results signed by all committee members and the department chair. All committee members and the student must attend the entire defense in real time, either by being physically present or participating via distance technology. If exceptional emergency circumstances, e.g. medical or other emergency situations, prevent the participation of a committee member then it may be necessary to arrange for an additional appropriately qualified colleague to attend the defense. A minimum of four members with Graduate Faculty Status must participate (FSU Graduate Bulletin, College of Education, Health & Human Sciences).

The supervisory committee will certify in writing to the academic dean of the major department the results of the examination: Pass, Pass with Major Revisions, Re-Defense, or Fail. Definitions for each of these defense decisions are provided in Appendix H. The report of results following a reexamination must indicate the student either passed or failed.

A written critique of the conduct of the examination in defense of dissertation should be submitted by the University representative from the graduate faculty to the appropriate academic dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies within one week after the date of defense.

The final manuscript approved by the supervisory committee must be submitted electronically to the manuscript clearance advisor in the Graduate School by or before

Manuscript Clearance deadlines in order to graduate. A manuscript processing fee is charged.

***Time Limit for Completion of Degree***

All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within five calendar years from the time the student passes the preliminary examination and is admitted to candidacy. If the student's major professor and/or Departmental Chair does not choose to either approve an Extension of Time (EOT) or require the student to attempt the preliminary exam and/or coursework again for readmission to candidacy, then the student may no longer be enrolled in that program or at Florida State University.

***Graduation***

The student must apply for graduation at http://registrar.fsu.edu/graduation/ during the first two weeks of the semester in which graduation is planned. If the student decided not to graduate during the semester after submitting an application, the student must notify the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences Graduate Director.

Students must be registered for a minimum of two hours of dissertation credit in the semester in which they apply for graduation.

***Continuous Enrollment***

Continuous enrollment at Florida State University is defined as enrollment without an interruption of two or more consecutive semesters (including Summer term). Credits earned at other institutions during any semester while not registered at Florida State University will not constitute continuous enrollment at the University. Students who are not enrolled at the University for two or more consecutive semesters (or consecutive semester and Summer term), and who are not on approved leave of absence, must apply for readmission before resuming their studies.

***Readmission***

When a student fails to register for minimum hours for two consecutive semesters, the Office of the University Registrar regards the student as inactive and the student will no longer be able to register for courses. It is the policy of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies that doctoral students who become inactive must seek readmission in order to continue their degree program. Readmission is an option for students who have been inactive for two years or less. Students who were inactive for more than two years without a leave of absence must go through the regular admissions process.

To regain an "active" student status, the student needs to formally apply to the program for the following semester. In addition to submitting the same materials required for the regular admission, the student is required to: 1) explain in the letter of intent the reason for the inactivity and the plan for continuous enrollment and degree completion in a timely

manner indicated in the revised POS, and 2) obtain a letter of recommendation from the current academic advisor who evaluates the current progress and the future prospect in the academic work of the student toward degree completion. The program will make a readmission decision in consultation with the student's academic advisor at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters.

If the student seeking re-admission had already passed the preliminary examination and been admitted to candidacy before becoming inactive, the student must also submit a prospectus and proposed timeline for completion that the major professor considers defensible and reasonable, respectively. Upon readmission, the student's supervisory committee shall require that the student set a date for the defense of the prospectus, in accordance with the Time Limit for Completion of Degree policy. The student must then remain continuously enrolled (see section on *Continuous Enrollment)* by completing a minimum of two dissertation hours per semester (or three hours after completing 24 DISS hours) while completing all requirements for the doctoral degree within five years from the date of admission to candidacy.

If the student seeking re-admission had already passed the prospectus before becoming inactive, the student must also submit a specific timeline for graduation with submission due dates of dissertation chapters, in addition to the documents listed above for readmission. If the student passed five years since the preliminary exam, the student must follow the policy on time limit for completion degree above.

***Leave of Absence***

Under special circumstances, graduate students may apply for a leave of absence from the University for a specific period of up to three consecutive semesters (includes Summer term). The circumstances justifying a leave include, but are not limited to: personal or family medical conditions, call to active military duty, parental leave, death in immediate family, or completion of an off-campus internship. The student must provide appropriate documentation and a rationale for the leave request.

To apply for a leave of absence, a student must complete the Request for Leave of Absence Form at https://gradschool.fsu.edu/forms and submit it together with appropriate documentation to the major professor/advisor/Program Director. If the major professor/advisor/Program Director approves the application it should then be forwarded to the department head and subsequently to the college dean for consideration. If approved at all of these levels, the college dean should notify the Registrar and the Dean of the Graduate School of the decision. The college dean should also notify the student of the decision (approved or denied). The Registrar will place a notation on the student's record. A student who is denied a request for leave at any step may appeal the decision to the Dean of The Graduate School. Retroactive Leave of Absence Requests are not permissible.

An approved leave of absence preserves the student's academic status in their degree program, and the time off will not be counted against the time limits for awarding degrees. Consequently, registration is not required during the leave period and the student need not

re-apply to the program to return to active status at the end of the approved leave period. A leave may be extended for additional consecutive semesters (includes Summer term). A student should apply for the leave extension no later than four weeks prior to the end of the final semester/term of the initial leave to allow time to consider and process the request. Extension of a leave is subject to approval of the program, college, and the Graduate School. The cumulative number of consecutive leave semesters (including summer term) shall not exceed six. The total consecutive or non-consecutive leave time a student is not registered in the program shall not exceed twenty-four months. At the conclusion of the approved leave, a student must enroll at Florida State University and return to active status no later than the start of the next academic semester. Students cannot be on leave during their semester of graduation and must be registered for a minimum of two hours that semester.

A student on a leave of absence may terminate the leave at any time prior to the approved ending date. In such cases the student would be immediately subject to the continuous enrollment and registration policies. Students returning from a leave of absence of more than one year will be required to disclose any legal or campus disciplinary charges that arose during the leave and provide updated contact and mailing address, residency documentation, and other biographical information as required by the University for reporting and processing purposes.

While on leave a student will not have access to campus facilities and personnel. This means a student will not have access to labs, libraries, and online resources that require an FSUID. Students on leave cannot remain in student housing. There is no guarantee that financial aid will be continued. Students with financial aid or student loans should confer with the Financial Aid Office and review their loan agreements prior to requesting a leave of absence to ascertain the consequences a leave will have on their loan status. University assistantship and fellowship support will be discontinued for the duration of the leave. Programs are not obligated to reinstate funding support that was provided prior to the leave though they are encouraged to do so if funds are available. Students receiving external support, e.g., an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, should check the terms of the award to determine the impact of being on leave. In-state residency status may be impacted if the student moves out of the State of Florida, and then returns to resume the degree program. Students should seek guidance from the Registrar on the potential impact on in-state residency. International students should check with the Center for Global Engagement to determine if a leave would adversely affect their visa status. Students should also consider other factors that might impact their circumstances upon their return to active status. For example, a major professor might depart the University, or under extreme circumstances a degree program might be suspended or terminated. The University has an obligation to provide a path to completion for enrolled students as well as students on a formally approved leave of absence.

## ***Academic Honor System***

A major concern of any educational institution, ranking with its concern for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, is the maintenance of high standards of integrity and responsibility in the academic community. The program, Department and University recognize the responsibility of both faculty and students in developing and maintaining these standards.

The legal foundation for the coordinated efforts of faculty and students to uphold academic integrity and combat academic dishonesty is provided in the Student Conduct Code (FAC C22-3.04), which can be found in the *Florida State University Student Handbook.*

*Academic Honor Code*

The academic honor system of the Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility to:

1) Uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the students own work,
2) Refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community, and
3) Foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the University community.

*Violations of the Code*

Information on violations of the code can be found online: https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy

*Responsibility*

Each student shall be responsible for abiding by the Academic Honor Code at all times. The instructor may further define in writing in the syllabus or other documents, the instructor's specification of the acts which shall constitute a violation of the Academic Honor Code. As required by the instructor, at the conclusion of each examination or submission of an assignment, each student shall sign a pledge that the student has neither given nor received aid from any unauthorized source during the examination or the assignment. Any student who observes cheating or violates the Academic Honor Code is expected to report the violation to the instructor and/or the University judicial officer.

## ***Grade Appeals System***

The purpose of the grade appeals system is to afford an opportunity for an undergraduate or graduate student to appeal a final course grade under certain circumstances. Faculty judgment of students' academic performance is inherent in the grading process and hence should not be overturned except when the student can show that the grade awarded represents a gross violation of the instructor's own specified evaluation (grading) statement and therefore was awarded in an arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory

manner. The evaluation (grading) statement utilized during the grade appeals process is the one contained in the instructor's syllabus at the beginning of the semester. This system does not apply to preliminary or comprehensive exams or to thesis or dissertation defenses; these issues are reviewed by the Student Academic Relations Committee via the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement.

**Step 1.** Within fifteen class days (defined throughout the Grade Appeals System as Mondays through Fridays during regular fall, spring, and summer semesters, as noted in the FSU Academic Calendar maintained by the University Registrar. Class days are not dependent on whether an individual student has class on a particular day) following the date that final grades are made available to students, the student must contact the instructor in question to discuss the grade and attempt to resolve any differences. The student should document any attempts to contact the instructor in order to establish that the appeal was begun within this fifteen-class-day period. In the event that the instructor is not available, the student should provide that documentation to the instructor's program or department chair. It is expected that the student will first attempt to resolve the grade dispute with the instructor; however, either the student or the instructor may consult with the appropriate department chair, school director, or designee during this process.

**Step 2.** If no resolution is reached within this fifteen-class-day period, after the student's documented attempt, the student has an additional ten class days to submit a written statement to the department chair, school director, or designee. This statement must include an account of attempts to resolve the issue, as well as the evidence that forms the basis for the appeal.

Within twenty class days thereafter, the department chair, school director, or designee will set a date for a meeting of a grade appeals screening committee composed of three students enrolled in the academic unit offering the course to review the appeal. These students should be either undergraduate or graduate students, depending on the enrollment status of the student challenging the grade. The meeting should occur within that twenty-class-day period, if practicable. Appropriate students who have no conflict of interest will be chosen to serve on this screening committee by a student organization associated with the program or department, if such an organization exists. If none exists or if members of such an organization are not available, the department chair, school director, or designee will select appropriate students who have no conflict of interest. Both the student and the instructor may attend the meeting, as may the department chair, school director, or designee.

The role of the screening committee is solely to determine whether the student has presented sufficient evidence to warrant further review. Within five calendar days after this meeting, the screening committee will render its decision in writing (recommend/do not recommend further review) to the department chair, school director, or designee, the student, and the instructor. A negative decision will end the appeal. A positive decision will trigger the next step in the process.

**Step 3.** Within fifteen class days of a positive decision from the grade appeals screening committee, the department chair, school director, or designee will appoint and arrange for a meeting of a grade appeals board. The meeting should occur within that fifteen-class-day period, if practicable. The board is composed of three faculty members and two students other than those who served on the screening committee. These students should be either undergraduate or graduate students, depending on the enrollment of the status of the student challenging the grade.

The purpose of this board is to determine whether or not to uphold the final grade assigned by the instructor. The board will consider only the evidence provided by the student and the instructor in making the determination. The student, the instructor, and the department chair, school director, or designee may attend the meeting.

The grade will be upheld unless the evidence shows that the grade was awarded in an arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory manner, as a result of a gross violation of the instructor's own evaluation (grading) statement. If the original grade is not upheld, the board will recommend that an alternative grade be assigned by the department chair, school director, or designee.

If the student has evidence that this grade appeals process has deviated substantially from these established procedures, resulting in a biased decision, the student may consult with the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement regarding referral to the Faculty Senate Student Academic Relations Committee.

**Note:** For additional information regarding general grading practices and approvals, please refer to the 'Grading Practices' section in the "Academic Regulations" chapter of the *General Bulletin.*

## *APPENDIX A – Assistantship Evaluation Form*

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
*Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies*

**Evaluation form for Graduate Assistants, Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and Course Mentors**

Name: _____ Position:_____

| Evaluation areas | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Needs improvement | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Followed instructions | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Met deadlines | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Completed tasks according to position description | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Reliability and attendance | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Quality of work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Organization | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Worked well with faculty, staff, and students | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Oral and written communication skills | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Receptive to feedback | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Supervisor comments (please use this space to provide additional detail about the graduate student's work responsibilities and performance)

1209 Stone Building, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida 32306-4452
Telephone 850.644.6777, Fax 850.644.1258 • http://www.fsu.edu/~elps

These signatures indicate that the GA/RA/TA/CM has read the assessment and discussed it with their supervisor. The signatures do not imply agreement with the content.

Supervisor:_____Date: _____

Student: _____Date: _____

*APPENDIX B – Credit Waiver Form*

**Educational Leadership & Policy**
**Ph.D. Program**

# Credit Waiver Form

**Internal Addendum to Program of Studies**

| Equivalent Graduate Coursework | Course Waived | Credit Hours |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | **Total Credit Hours Waived (Max 30)** | |

**APPROVALS:**

_____ _____

Advisor, Date (Printed Name)

_____ _____

ELP Coordinator, Date (Printed Name)

*APPENDIX C – Scholarly Engagement Policy*

**Scholarly Engagement Policy**
**ELP Program**

**Purpose:** The goal of the Scholarly Engagement requirement is to prepare doctoral graduates to become lifelong participants and contributors to the scholarly community and to become active scholars, who acquire, critically evaluate, and create new knowledge and disseminate their work. Students should consult with their major professor at the start of the academic year to develop a plan for scholarly engagement for that year.

**Confirmation of Scholarly Engagement:** Each year, as part of the annual review process, doctoral students must demonstrate their scholarly engagement activity to their faculty advisor. **Students will submit their Annual Review Statement and CV through the ELP Org Canvas site.**

**ILLUSTRATIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENT:**

**PhD students and candidates:**

**Pre-Diagnostic/Diagnostic Exam**

- Join and attend LEARN events and activities
- Establish a POS approved by the advisor and two other ELP faculty members
- Attend the Marvalene Hughes Conference hosted by the College of Education, Health & Human Sciences
- Attend R3 Relevant Research Roundtable hosted by the department
- Develop a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Engage your major professor as well as other faculty members on topics, ideas of interest, etc.
- Attend the Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) Teaching Conference, mandatory for all Teaching Assistants (by end of first year) https://teaching.fsu.edu/required-training/

**Pre-Prospectus/Proposal Defense**

- Continue the above activities
- Update CV
- Attend at least one prospectus defense as an observer
- Attend at least one of the following:
    - a national conference/professional or research association
    - a methodological workshop (IES sponsored workshops; professional associations such as AERA)
    - a FSU professional development seminar/workshop

**Pre-Dissertation Defense**

- Continue the above activities

- Update CV
- Attend at least one dissertation defense as an observer
- Present at R3
- Present as first or second author/presenter at a national conference
- Present as the first or second author/presenter at a state or regional conference
- Publish an article as the first/second author in a peer-review journal (article accepted or “in press” by the time of graduation)

## *APPENDIX D – Annual Review Guidelines*

### Purpose

Each year, PhD students and candidates are reviewed by their major advisor/professor, assessing their progress towards degree. Progress towards degree is evaluated based on the following evidence:

- **Students' academic record** (courses, grades, diagnostic exam, prelim exam),
- **Progress towards dissertation** (topic development, prospectus development, dissertation research and manuscript development) based on advisor's assessment of student's and candidate's engagement.
- **Scholarly engagement** as defined in the PhD handbook and that is copied as an appendix to this document

### Meeting with Advisor/Major Professor

Students will meet with their advisor/major professor during the month of April to have an informal discussion about how the student and advisor/major professor feel they are progressing, their activities and accomplishments (that will be detailed on Annual Review Statement) of the past year and what their academic and professional goals are for the coming year as well as what scholarly engagement activities would be most useful to help them meet those goals.

### Annual Review Statement (ARS)

As part of the review process, students will submit an ARS by the above deadline. The ARS will consist of the following:

- **Narrative Summary** that is a short statement that highlights your scholarly engagement over the past year that ***includes a description of your progress towards dissertation and specific information on how you met the Scholarly Engagement requirement*** (SEE Appendix C in this Handbook). In this narrative, be sure to highlight the relevant additions to your CV in the past year.
- **Curriculum Vitae** that is up to date.

**Submission** of the ARS (a single word or pdf document) is made through the ELP Org site on Canvas.

## *APPENDIX E – University Preliminary Exam Policy*

"Satisfactory completion of a preliminary examination shall be required for admission to candidacy for the PhD degree. No student may register for dissertation hours prior to the point in the semester in which the preliminary examination was passed. An admission to candidacy form must be completed and filed in the Office of the University Registrar prior to registration for dissertation hours. After completion of the admission to candidacy process, the student may retroactively add dissertation hours for that semester in which the preliminary examination was completed. Retroactive changes are only permitted if the preliminary examination is passed by the end of the seventh week of the semester. For term specific deadline dates, please refer to the "Academic Calendar" in the Registration Guide.

The preliminary examination is designed to test scholarly competence and knowledge and to afford the examiners the basis for constructive recommendations concerning the student's subsequent formal or informal study. The form and content of this examination will be determined by the department, college, school, or examining committee (typically, but not necessarily the same composition as the supervisory committee) administering the degree program. Prior to the examination, the student's examining committee will determine whether the student 1) has a 3.0 average, and 2) has progressed sufficiently in the study of the discipline and its research tools to begin independent research in the area of the proposed dissertation.

The chair of the major department, the academic dean, and the Dean of The Graduate School may attend any session of the supervisory or examining committee as nonvoting members. A member may be appointed to the examining committee at the discretion of the academic dean or Dean of The Graduate School or on recommendation of the major professor. Normally, the examining committee will be identical with the supervisory committee.

The examining committee will report the outcome of the examination to the academic dean: passed, failed, additional work to be completed, or to be re-examined; the report following the reexamination must indicate the student either passed or failed. The results of the examination will be reported to the Office of the University Registrar for inclusion in the student's permanent record.

If a student fails the preliminary examination before being admitted to candidacy, then the student is ineligible to continue in the degree program unless a re-examination of the preliminary examination is offered by the student's supervisory committee or other relevant decision-making body within each department or unit, per that department or unit's doctoral student handbook. The Academic Dean's office should be notified of the outcome of any preliminary exam attempt.

Students can take the preliminary examination for admission to candidacy a maximum of only two times. A second failure on the preliminary exam makes the student ineligible to continue in the degree program. The second attempt at the preliminary exam shall occur no

sooner than six full class weeks after the results of the first attempt are shared with the student. For the purpose of this policy, a "full class week" is defined as a week with five days during which classes are held at FSU. Students must be registered separately for their first and second attempt, if necessary, within the same semester, and must receive either a "pass" or a "fail" grade for each attempt.

An exception request regarding the timing of the re-examination can be submitted for consideration to the Academic Dean's Office by either the student or the supervisory committee. Students who allege that academic regulations and/or procedures were improperly applied for the re-examination of their preliminary exam may have their grievances addressed through the general academic appeals process. The full preliminary exam policy as listed here must be added to all doctoral student handbooks."

For more information, see the Graduate Bulletin at https://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/graduate/.

# ELP Ph.D. Preliminary Examination
# Part 3: Research Proposal
# Guidelines

**Write a research proposal of no more than 20 pages[1] that includes the following sections:**

I. Introduction

II. Literature Review

III. Research Design / Methodology

IV. Summary / Statement of Significance

## I. Introduction

The introduction should include an explicit research question(s). In addition, you should state the significance of this question for educational research, policy, and practice. Provide a relevant context for the study. You should also summarize briefly your research design and how your design is different from those used in past studies of similar topics, if any.

## II. Literature Review

The review of the literature need not be comprehensive, given the short length of the proposal, but it should identify relevant bodies of literature and include key studies on the subject, as well as your assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. Given your assessment of these strengths and weaknesses, what conclusions may be drawn regarding the topic both in terms of what is known and not known?

## III. Research Design / Methodology

The research design/methodology should discuss how you are going to go about answering your research question(s) by explicating the following:

- **Conceptual framework**: develop or draw from an analytic model that is rooted in theory and prior empirical research. For quantitative research, provide a diagram that illustrates the logic model and discuss the major constructs of the model as well as the likely relationship one might expect to see among the constructs (i.e., theory of action). For qualitative research, identify and describe a theory and discuss how you will use it in your study (i.e. theory of action, institutional theory).
- **Methods**: discuss how you will carry out your study. Be as specific as possible. For example, if you choose a regression analysis, then write out the equation(s) you plan to estimate and clearly identify the coefficients of interest. Or, if you choose a qualitative approach, explain your choice for the particular methodology– i.e., ethnography, case study.

[1] **Proposal should be double-spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins. The twenty-page limit can exclude title page and reference list.**

- **Sources of Data**: discuss the data you will use. If you are doing a quantitative study, include a description of your constructs or variables that are essentially operationalizing elements of your conceptual framework. If you are collecting your own data, describe how you will go about doing so and provide a short list of key survey/protocol items. If qualitative, describe the data you will collect and why. If pertinent, provide a sample protocol.
- **Sample**: identify your sample of interest. Discuss how you will select the sample and what size it will be. If you are using the entire population, state it. If not, explain the rationale behind your sample.

**Regardless of which approach you choose, be clear about its strengths and weaknesses for the given research question.**

**IV. Summary/Statement of Significance**

The summary/statement of significance should provide a summary of the research proposal and discuss in specific terms the implications of the research for policy and practice.

**V. Reference List (not included or counted in the 20-page limit)**

***All sources used must be parenthetically referenced in the text of the proposal and fully cited in a reference list.*** The reference list must follow a single professional format, for example APA, Chicago Manual of Style, Turabian, etc., You need not format the body of your proposal other than as indicated in footnote[1].

Some of the questions[2] that your committee will be asked to use to **evaluate** your research proposal include:

- Does the proposal show an in-depth knowledge of relevant educational research in the field? Does it review and critique relevant and important previous studies in the area of the proposal's research?

- Does the proposal specify an appropriate research design and method to collect the data? Is the design and are the methods appropriate to the research question? Will that design allow the researcher to find the answers to the research questions posed?

- Does the proposal specify how the project will contribute to and extend educational knowledge? What relevance does the project have to education? Does the project address an important educational issue? Will the project enhance educational knowledge in a critical way? Does it explain why this knowledge is worth pursuing or how will it benefit education?

Is this a well-written proposal? Is the organization and structure of the proposal clear? Does it define terms and procedures, etc.?

[2] Adapted from NAE/Spencer guidelines for reviewers.

**ELP Three-Essay Dissertation Guidelines**
**Approved April, 2025**

## Description/Purpose

A three-essay dissertation consists of three distinct, stand-alone papers/manuscripts that connect – by topic, method and/or data sources. This approach to a dissertation affords you a clear opportunity to demonstrate who you are as a scholar, setting up a research agenda for your development as a scholar post doctorate and the contribution that you aim to make.

## Preliminary Exam Proposal

Students interested in pursuing a three-essay dissertation must include a one-to-two-page statement of research vision for the dissertation as an appendix to their preliminary exam proposal.

## Prospectus

The prospectus for a three-essay dissertation will consist of a proposal that is in effect a linking document that includes the following:

- Description of the research problem(s), its importance to policy and practice.
- Discussion of the connections across the essays and the potential significance of the research.
- A plan or draft of each essay (noting that at least one essay must be in draft form) that minimally includes the:
    - Introduction
    - Research Questions
    - Relevant Literature
    - Methodological Approach
- A list and brief discussion of journals that will be targeted for each essay.

## Dissertation

The actual structure of the dissertation is a decision to be made by the major professor, but at minimum the dissertation will include four chapters and at maximum five chapters:

- Chapter 1: Overview. This chapter may look like the prospectus document – revised based on the studies done with a preview of findings. This chapter may also include an overview or detailed review of relevant literature. It should also discuss the connections across the three essays and preview the significance of the body of research.
- Chapters 2, 3, and 4: The three essays
- Chapter 5 (optional, depending on major advisor's approval): This chapter will serve as a conclusion for the studies - situating the findings in relevant research, discussing implications for future research, policy and practice, and reaffirming the significance of the work, tying findings across the studies. If the major advisor agrees that Chapter 5 is not needed, then the overarching narrative on conclusions, situating findings, implications of findings and significance of the work must be included in Chapter 1.

## Additional Guidance

- The three essays must adhere to the respective field's standards in terms of type of paper (e.g., an integrated literature review, conceptual piece, meta-analysis, a qualitative study, a quantitative research paper, and a concluding chapter)
- Up to one article may be used as published or accepted for publication *prior to the prospectus defense*. This is not an expectation and is a decision that is under the purview of your supervisory committee.
- Up to one article may be co-authored with the student as first author. This is not an expectation and is a decision that is under the purview of your supervisory committee.
- Doctoral students are required to consult with their committee before completing the full first paper, if it is developed before the Prospectus Defense.

## *APPENDIX H – Dissertation Defense Decision Definitions*

"Each member must sign the online Defense Decision Form to substantiate the results of the defense. The oral examining committee will certify the results of the defense. The oral examining committee will certify the results of the examination as one of the following: Pass, Pass with Major Revisions, Re-Defense, or Fail.

**Pass**. To receive a Pass, the dissertation must be in its final form or require only minor revisions (e.g., grammar, typographical, clarifications, minor changes not requiring review by full committee) at the time of the defense, AND the student passed their oral defense. A decision of Pass for the defense of dissertation requires at least a majority approval of the committee. Students who defend successfully with a "Pass" but miss the defense semester's Manuscript Clearance submission deadlines will need to register for an additional semester and meet the Manuscript Clearance deadlines of the semester following the original defense semester. Students who fail to graduate in their original defense semester and the semester after their original defense semester are required to re-defend their thesis, treatise, or dissertation and meet Manuscript Clearance deadlines during the second semester since their original defense semester (e.g., original defense F24, required re-defense Su25). Students who re-defend and do not earn a "Pass," should be given a "Fail." The transcript will reflect a "Pass" once the student submits their successfully defended document. Exception requests for extenuating circumstances can be submitted by the unit's academic dean to the Dean of The Graduate School (or designee) for consideration. Individual departments/units may impose stricter requirements for what constitutes a Pass or the timing of a re-defense. Departments and other degree-granting programs must publicize their policy on these issues in their Graduate student Handbook and in the relevant section of the Graduate Bulletin.

**Pass with Major revisions**. This defense decision category is a sub-category of the "Pass" category. This decision indicates that the thesis, treatise, or dissertation requires major revisions (e.g., additional chapters, major restructuring, significant changes needing approval by either the major professor/chair or the full committee), and the student passed their oral defense. Students who defend successfully with a "Pass with Major revisions" but miss the defense semester's Manuscript Clearance submission deadlines will need to register for an additional semester and meet the Manuscript Clearance deadlines of the semester following the original defense semester. Students who fail to graduate in their original defense semester and the semester after their original defense semester are required to re-defend their thesis, treatise, or dissertation and meet Manuscript Clearance deadlines during the second semester since their original defense semester (e.g., original defense F24, required re-defense Su25). Students who re-defend and do not earn a "Pass," should be given a "Fail." The transcript will reflect a "Pass" once the student submits their successfully defended document. Exception requests for extenuating circumstances can be submitted by the unit's academic dean to the Dean of The Graduate School (or designee) for consideration.

**Re-Defense**. The committee may determine that a re-examination in defense of thesis, treatise, or dissertation is necessary if the thesis, treatise, or dissertation has significant

flaws and major revisions that are needed and/or the student's oral defense is unsatisfactory. This decision can only be given once. If the student re-defends and the manuscript requires more than only minor revisions to pass, they should be given a Fail. It is the committee's goal to prevent students from defending if their work is substantially flawed when they are reviewing it prior to defense.

**Fail**. The committee may determine that a re-examination in defense of thesis, treatise, or dissertation is necessary if the thesis, treatise, or dissertation has significant flaws and major revisions that are needed and/or the student's oral defense is unsatisfactory. This decision can only be given once. If the student re-defends and the manuscript requires more than only minor revisions to pass, they should be given a Fail. It is the committee's goal to prevent students from defending if their work is substantially flawed when they are reviewing it prior to defense.

After approval by the oral examining committee (which includes or may be the same as the supervisory committee) and completion of the Final Content Approval Form in the Manuscript Clearance Portal, the student should electronically submit the post-defense, final content-approved version of the thesis, treatise, or dissertation to the Manuscript Clearance Advisor. This submission must occur by the semester deadlines for manuscript clearance. The degree cannot be awarded until the required forms have been completed on The Graduate School's Manuscript Clearance Portal and the final version of the manuscript has been submitted to and approved by the Manuscript Clearance Advisor. If a semester deadline is missed, the student's semester of graduation may be delayed and a re-defense may be required. Electronic manuscript/forms submission instructions and deadlines can be found on The Graduate School's website under Thesis, Treatise, and Dissertation."

For more information, see the Graduate Bulletin at https://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/graduate/.