

# **Educational Administration Doctoral Program Handbook**

(For cohorts beginning Fall 2017)

Department of Educational Leadership  
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Texas A&M University-Commerce  
P.O. Box 3011  
Commerce, Texas 75428  
903-886-5520

Note: This handbook is subject to change. Updates will be available on the Educational Leadership Department website: [www.tamuc.edu/edl](http://www.tamuc.edu/edl)

This is not a catalog and does **not** have catalog privileges.

Department of Educational Leadership  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
P.O. Box 3011  
Commerce, Texas 75428  
903-886-5520

**Welcome** to the doctoral program in Educational Administration at Texas A&M University-Commerce. The Department of Educational Leadership prepares graduates for leadership positions in schools, districts, and state agencies including colleges and universities.

The Doctor of Education degree in Educational Administration is designed for with a *K-12 public school administration* emphasis. Our program is one of the oldest and most prestigious in the state. As one of the only online Doctoral Programs in the state, we are proud to also be one of the best values in higher education. Our program is designed with the school practitioner in mind. Program admission is competitive in nature. The department gives priority to practicing administrators. Applicants must have a Master's degree in Educational Administration. We do not accept any outside hours toward our Doctoral Degree. We accept two cohorts each year into the Program.

The department encourages applications from candidates with *strong* academic achievement and scholarship ability, leadership abilities, and commitment to education. The information in this handbook is designed to answer some typical questions about the program's admissions process, give details about the program for students seeking admission, as well as provide information for use once a student has been admitted. The handbook is written so that each section stands on its own, and thus repetition will be seen. This material is to augment program information contained in the official graduate catalog. The handbook is written and is under the jurisdiction of the Doctoral Faculty Committee. If you need further information, please contact our office via telephone (903-886-5520) or via email (Jane.Clark@tamuc.edu).

## OUR MISSION

*The Department of Educational Leadership at Texas A&M University-Commerce prepares graduates for teaching, service, and leadership roles in a variety of educational, business, government, and industrial contexts.*

## OUR VISION

*The Department of Educational Leadership at Texas A&M University-Commerce envisions exemplary programs that challenge highly-qualified students to excel in their respective disciplines and careers through engagement in a rigorous and transformative learning environment linking theory to practice while expanding the knowledge base of the learner, the profession and the respective academic discipline.*

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**ADMISSIONS**

*Admission to the doctoral program in Educational Administration is a competitive process. In any given year, the department receives more applications from qualified students than can be accepted. Consequently, application materials should be carefully prepared so as to present the student in the most positive light.*

**Process**

First, you must apply to and be accepted by the A&M-Commerce Graduate School. The general requirements for admission to the Graduate School are found in the graduate catalog and on the Graduate School's website. To be accepted into the Graduate School, *you must submit to the Graduate School* evidence that you have satisfactorily completed admission requirements. Please see doctoral admission packet linked below for details:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/documents/doctoraladmissionpacket.pdf>

The Graduate School will forward your application materials to the department only after the above requirements have been met. Moreover, admission to the Graduate School (in non-degree status) *does NOT constitute admission to the department's doctoral program.*

The Program Admissions Committee is composed of department members who are committed to the principle of equal educational opportunities consistent with the mission and policies of the Texas A&M University System, state, and federal law. At the conclusion of the process, a cohort of students will be selected.

**The Graduate School**

For information and forms for the Graduate School, please go to the following web address.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateSchool/graduateForms.aspx>

You may apply online through “ApplyTexas” at the link below:

[https://www.applytexas.org/adappc/gen/c\\_start.WBX/](https://www.applytexas.org/adappc/gen/c_start.WBX/)

These forms are used throughout the graduate study period to schedule exams, defenses, and complete the dissertation. There is also a University Doctoral Student Handbook on the Graduate School's web page that contains detailed and important information for use by doctoral students in all departments. We suggest you refer to the website regularly while in the program.

**General Information**

Students admitted to the doctoral program will begin classes as a cohort group and are required to

progress with the cohort through a sequence of doctoral only core courses and research tools courses. The cohort program is designed to provide students with an opportunity to progress through the program in a logical and sequential manner with a group of colleagues pursuing similar professional goals. The course sequencing and cohort structure of the program are designed to maximize the student's learning potential and professional growth. The degree plan is 60 credit hours. Additional hours are available during the program to complete a Texas Superintendent Certification.

Upon admission to the program, students will be assigned a curriculum advisor. This assignment is designed to assist students to the candidacy stage. A dissertation chair will guide the student throughout the dissertation. Normally, students are assigned a dissertation advisor based upon availability, research interest and other factors.

### **Admissions Review Committee Procedures**

#### *Departmental Receipt of Applications*

Applications of students, who have met the requirements of the Graduate School, as outlined in the graduate catalog, are forwarded to the Educational Administration Question this division of the Department of Educational Leadership where the department head forwards the materials to the EDAD Doctoral Program Coordinator.

#### *The Committee's Recommendation*

A department-approved rubric is used to assign standard points to the departmental entrance criteria. If the sum of these points falls within the accepted entrance requirement range, the committee suggests to the department head that the applicant be recommended to the Dean of the College of Education and Human Resources and the Graduate Office for admission.

#### *The Admission Decision*

The EDL Department Head and the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services must approve the committee's recommendation. If these approvals are given, the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research makes a decision regarding admission to the degree program and a written notice of admission status will be sent to the applicant. If admitted, the student will be notified. If admission is denied, the applicant will also be notified in writing.

Texas A&M University-Commerce  
 Department of Educational Leadership  
 Doctor of Education in Educational Administration Course List

**\*Seven Core Courses:** Content included in Comprehensive Exam

Course	SCH	Grade	Completed	Course	SCH	Grade	Completed
EDAD 601*	3			EDAD 641*	3		
EDAD 634*	3			EDAD 647*	3		
EDAD 637*	3			EDAD 671*	3		
EDAD 639*	3						

**Five Required Courses:** Content not included in Comprehensive Exam.

Course	SCH	Grade	Completed	Course	SCH	Grade	Completed
EDAD 654	3			EDAD 664	3		
EDAD 655	3			EDAD 699	3		
EDAD 658	3						

**Four Research Tools:** Not included in Comp Exam, but must be completed prior to Comp Exam

EDAD 695	3			EDAD 604	3		
EDAD 603	3			EDAD 698	3		

**Dissertation Writing:** 12 semester hours minimum

EDAD 718	3			EDAD 718	3		
EDAD 718	3			EDAD 718	3		

NOTES: No course beyond the master's program that is over ten years old at the time the doctoral degree is conferred can be used toward the doctoral degree. Degree requirements beyond the master's must be completed within ten calendar years from the date of admission to the doctoral program.

No course in which a grade lower than a B was earned can be credited on the degree plan.

**Superintendent Certification Program** - Students must apply to and be accepted into the Superintendent Certification Program through both the department and the Certification Office. These courses cannot be substituted for 'Core Courses' but might be usable as EDAD Required courses (with approval of Advisor and Doctoral Coordinator) if admitted to the Superintendent Certification Program prior to taking first superintendent course (EDAD 620).

Course	SCH	Grade	Completed	Course	SCH	Grade	Completed
EDAD 620	3		Fall	<b>After three Prerequisite Courses are satisfactorily completed</b>			
EDAD 651	3		Spring	EDAD 611	3		Fall-Spring
EDAD 627	3		Summer	EDAD 628	3		Fall-Spring

## CHECKLIST AND RECOMMENDED TIME FRAME

Many of the events experienced by doctoral students are listed below. The order of the events is generally what is expected. The time frame is simply a helpful guide and it is the **student's responsibility** to know and follow university policy regarding the completion of doctoral studies. Check each item as it is completed:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Review Initial Degree Plan** in Degree Works to understand course requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Residency.** See residency statement and complete residency plan with advisor and file (as soon as possible for completion during your first year of study. It must be completed before admission to comprehensive examinations). Completion is verified on the comprehensive exam report.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Curriculum Advisor.** A curriculum advisor will be assigned to you soon after entering the program. This advisor can assist you with your degree plan, completing residency and taking your comprehensive exams (comps). Depending on research interests, another Educational Administration faculty member may be assigned as chair of the dissertation committee. The department will provide a process for matching students with an appropriate dissertation chair at the appropriate time.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Meet Research Tools Requirements.** Four tools classes are scheduled in the cohort sequence and required before student is eligible for comprehensive examinations.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Complete Residency Requirements.** Develop and file your Residency Plan early in the program. Guidance for completion of the Residency Requirements is available in your handbook and from your advisor.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Prepare for Comprehensive Written and Oral Examinations** after gaining approval of your curriculum advisor. Plan for comps after research tools; residency and the majority of course work are completed. The comps coordinator will contact each cohort at the proper time with information about the comprehensive examination.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Take Comprehensive Examinations** (after research tools and majority of course work). Pass written and oral comprehensive examinations in major areas.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Obtain Admission to Candidacy Status.** After residency requirements are complete; written and oral comprehensive exams are passed; and all research tools courses are completed; the Graduate Office will send a Notification of Admission to Candidacy form. It is at this time the **Degree Works Final Plan is verified.** This must occur 8 months prior to graduation. Students may not graduate from the TAMUC Educational Administration Doctoral program before a minimum of 8 months after admission to Doctoral Candidacy!

\_\_\_\_\_ **Selection of Dissertation Chair.** The department provides a matching process based upon research topic and methodology to select your dissertation chair. More information is provided at the appropriate time.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Establish Doctoral Advisory Committee** Your dissertation chair will assist you with creating your dissertation committee. This committee has 3 or more members—at least one outside the Department of Educational Leadership.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Enroll in EDAD 718** (dissertation). Department faculty will help determine your assignment. Continuous enrollment from completion of the comprehensive exam until graduation is required except for summers. If the student is consulting with advisor during summer, he or she must register for EDAD 718 at least one summer session.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Develop Dissertation Proposal and successfully defend.** Select research topic and develop dissertation proposal in collaboration with dissertation chair and committee. See IRB requirements for your research. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Complete your research project** with guidance from your chair.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Prepare and successfully defend your dissertation.** Your chair will advise you through this process. The Graduate School provides a more completed dissertation timeline including all required activities on its webpage.



## RESIDENCY

The doctoral residency requirement is in addition to the University residency requirement.

### **Doctoral Residency Requirement**

#### *Residency Statement*

The doctoral residency requirement is designed to promote meaningful and continuous study in the field of scholarship, to provide for a diversity of experiences supporting intellectual growth and professional development, and to promote regular interaction between the student and faculty members.

1. Students in the doctoral program in Educational Administration at A&M-Commerce are expected to complete three consecutive semesters of continuous enrollment of at least six semester hours in doctoral level coursework (including research tools) as part of the residency requirement. This residency requirement will begin with the session in which the student enters the doctoral program. Any three consecutive semesters of continuous enrollment of at least six semester hours will be considered for fulfillment of this requirement.
2. Students will develop a personal residency plan, which identifies activities to be completed during the course of the program in both of the following strands: research and professional development. Faculty interaction will be woven within these strands. The student will confer with his/her curriculum advisor in developing and for approval of this portion of the residency plan.

The Residency Plan is comprised of two sections or strands of activity: the Research strand and the Professional development strand. Each plan must include activities in both strands. These activities should provide the student with academic experiences outside the daily work environment and add to the knowledge base for the student's research interest.

Although not limited to the following examples, below are types of ideas that can be included in each of the strands for the proposed residency activities. It should be noted that the student should be working closely with the curriculum advisor in order to fulfill the following residency requirements. Framed with the below requirements, students working with faculty on a project of assistance to school districts, professional organization, or state or regional agencies, participating with faculty in a conference presentation, writing project or some other professional endeavor, and/or attending professional events with university faculty members, would all be considered faculty interaction activities.

### *Research Strand*

This strand should consist of one research activity, project or presentation in conjunction with the advisor or other faculty. Research activities such as literature searches and reviews could be considered a portion of this strand if these activities resulted in the submission of journal articles. It may also consist of submitted written articles or any combination of the aforementioned as approved by the student's curriculum advisor. It could include a presentation at a local, state, national, or international organization. Examples such as presentations at SERA (spring), the TAMU Pathways Symposium (fall), the TCPEA Graduate Research Exchange (GRE)(fall) or the TAMUC Graduate Symposium (spring) will all satisfy the Research Strand requirement. All presentations must be approved by the curriculum advisor in advance to be considered for residency.

### *Professional Development Strand*

This strand will consist of attendance by the student at three conferences within the course of the residency and doctoral coursework. **At least one of the conferences must be a state or national conference for Professors of Educational Administration (ICPEL [formerly NCPEA] or TCPEA).** The other conferences might be combinations of Educational state and national conferences. The final residency plan must contain one national conference.

Some common considerations are attendance and participation at a conference of students and professors focused on research ideas and reports such as International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership, American Educational Research Association, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, American Association of School Administrators, Texas Professors of Educational Administration, or University Council for Educational Administration. Work with an educational organization or institution on a research or program evaluation project is also a possibility if approved by the curriculum advisor. The department maintains a list of suggested conferences to be considered for residency on its resource webpage. Public school presentations or in-service meetings do not meet the definition of residency activities.

### *Certification of Completion*

After completion of the residency proposal, each advisor will certify its completion noting any changes in the plan and file this certification in the department (and/or Graduate School) records. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain all records of presentations, attendance at conferences or any other collaborative work with faculty.

## Residency Plan Form

**Residency Statement:** The doctoral residency requirement is designed to promote meaningful and continuous study in the field of scholarship, to provide for a diversity of experiences supporting intellectual growth and professional development, and to promote regular interaction between the student and faculty members. This residency plan consists of two parts.

1. Students in the doctoral program in Educational Administration at Texas A&M-Commerce are expected to complete three consecutive semesters of continuous enrollment of at least six semester hours in doctoral level coursework (including research tools) as part of the residency requirement. This residency requirement will begin with the session in which the student enters the doctoral program. Any three consecutive semesters of continuous enrollment of at least six semester hours will be considered for fulfillment of this requirement.
2. Students will develop a personal residency plan that identifies activities to be completed during the course of the program in both of the following strands: research and professional development. Faculty interaction will be woven within these strands. The student will confer with his/her curriculum advisor in developing and for approval of this portion of the residency plan.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ CWID# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Employment \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Completion Date of Residency Plan \_\_\_\_\_

### Research Activity Proposed

This strand may consist of a research activity or project in conjunction with the advisor or other faculty. It may include a presentation at a local, state, national, or international organization. It may also consist of submitted written articles or any combination of the aforementioned.

## Professional Development Activities

This strand will consist of attendance at three conferences within the course of the residency and doctoral coursework. **At least one of the conferences must be a state or national conference for Professors of Educational Administration.** At least one of the conferences must be a national conference.

**Both student and faculty advisor have agreed that the above activities, when completed, will fulfill the residency requirement.**

**The faculty advisor and student have worked closely during the above activities.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doctoral Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Any revisions must be noted and approved by faculty advisor. Revised plan is noted below.**

**Revised Research:**

**Revised Professional Development:**

**Date of Revision:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**The named student has completed the residency course requirement and activities.** (This form is filed in the department's records and certified on the comprehensive exam report.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doctoral Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **CURRICULUM ADVISOR**

### **Assignment**

Upon admission to the department's EDAD doctoral program, the department head assigns a faculty member to serve as the student's curriculum advisor.

### **Curriculum Advisor's Role**

The curriculum advisor:

- Provides general information regarding the department and the doctoral program to the student as needed.
- Advises and approves residency requirements.
- Administers Oral Comprehensive Exam

The curriculum advisor and the student's doctoral committee chair do not serve the same purpose and are likely not the same faculty member. Once the student completes residency and passes comprehensive exams, the student's doctoral advisory committee is established. The chair of this committee assumes the major advisory responsibility of the student's curriculum advisor and the initial advisor is no longer responsible for advising duties. Students will be guided in establishing a dissertation chair and committee.

### **Dissertation Committee Chair**

Upon completion of residency and passing comprehensive exams, the department will provide a procedure for matching a dissertation chair from the EDAD faculty with each student. This process helps match faculty with student research interests and methods. The chair will help guide the student secure a committee and guide him/her through the dissertation process.

## DEGREE PLAN

### General Guidelines

All doctoral degree plans must include the coursework equivalent of a master's degree program.

### Time Limitation for Degree

All degree requirements beyond the master's must be completed **within ten calendar** years from **the date of admission** to the doctoral program. No coursework beyond the master's degree that is over ten years old at the time the doctoral degree is conferred can be used toward the doctoral degree. When this occurs the student must replace old coursework with additional courses.

### Transfer Credit

The program accepts no outside hours toward the degree.

### Research Tools

#### Completion Schedule

The student must demonstrate proficiency in the use of research tools prior to taking the doctoral comprehensive examination. Research tool requirements can be met by successfully completing each of the four courses with a grade of B or better. (Note: All courses that count toward the degree plan must be completed with a final course grade of B or better). All research tool courses must be taken in sequence and PRIOR to taking the comprehensive examinations.

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS)

The Doctor of Educational Administration Comprehensive Examination is a milestone event in the academic program study leading to candidacy. Specifically, the comprehensive examination provides the doctoral student an opportunity to 1) demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the knowledge base; 2) provide an opportunity to chronicle the student's foundations as an academic as well as an educational leader; 3) demonstrate and characterize a grounded vision of leadership in the educational administration context for the future; and 4) provide candidates an opportunity to provide academic insights and thought that reflects the work completed with their curriculum advisor through the residency and other professional activities during the doctoral study.

The comprehensive examination is not intended to be an exercise in regurgitating all that a student has gained and learned throughout the program, but rather to ground the student in the academic discipline so that the student may *construct new knowledge* that will establish the

student as a thoughtful yet inquisitive thinker and therefore be applied to productive practice for the future.

Each student will first take a written Comprehensive Examination scheduled and administered simultaneously to a cohort of students followed by an oral examination that will be scheduled by each student in conjunction with their curriculum advisor.

### **Prerequisites**

Research tools. The student must have met the proficiency standards for level I-IV of the research tools by successful completion of the research tools courses: EDAD 603, EDAD 604, EDAD 695 and EDAD 698.

Courses. The student must have taken or be in his or her last semester of the core cohort EDAD courses, and completed approximately two full years of study in the major area, as approved by the student's doctoral advisory committee. This includes: EDAD 601, 671, 637, 641, 647, 639, and 634. Students may be in their last semester of doctorate only cohort classes.

The EDAD departmental doctoral committee chooses the time. The examination must be taken and passed a minimum of eight months before the degree is conferred.

Approval of the curriculum advisor. Students will discuss the appropriate semester in which to sit for the comprehensive examination with their curriculum advisor, with final approval resting with curriculum advisor.

### **Registration for the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination**

When? Specific dates for the doctoral comprehensive examination are announced by the department approximately two months in advance. Eligible students in each cohort are notified by email of their eligibility. Students no longer aligned with their original cohort must contact the department to inquire or register for comps.

### **Schedule of Examinations and Content Areas Tested**

The Comprehensive Examination for the Doctorate of Education in Educational Administration will be administered during the time assigned by the departmental doctoral committee. The expectations of each content area examination will extend the course material expectations by requiring students to synthesize, connect, and construct knowledge across other content areas and to their own professional practice as a result of the entire program of study. Faculty from each content area, in consultation with the major advisor, will determine pass/fail performance. Students must pass the majority of content areas in order to be eligible to be admitted to candidacy.

## **Evaluation of Examination**

Each written response is rated as either a pass or fail. Students must pass the majority of content areas of the Comprehensive Examination. Individual faculty will determine the rating for each content area. The curriculum advisor will report the results of the examination to the student.

An applicant who does not pass the qualifying examinations may be suspended from the doctoral program, or upon the recommendation of the advisory committee and approval of the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, may be permitted to repeat the examination (from Graduate Handbook).

## **Oral Comprehension Exam**

Permission to proceed with orals. If the student passes the written comprehensive examination, the student will be assigned a date and time for the oral examination during the semester when the written portion was completed. The oral exam is scheduled with the major advisor and another EDL faculty member.

Content of the oral examination. The student should defend or expand on what he or she has written on the comprehensive examination and is expected to provide appropriate bibliographical information to support references to research. **However, questions are not limited to what the student has written.**

Evaluation. At the end of the oral examination, the major advisor and any member of the faculty participating in the oral examination deliberate on the outcome of the examination. If the outcome is unfavorable, faculty participants decide what options, if any, the student may pursue.

## **Final Report of Doctoral Comprehensive Examination**

Prior to the oral portion of the comprehensive exam, the student should provide his or her major advisor with a copy of the Graduate School Doctoral Comprehensive Examination form. This form is available from the Texas A&M-Commerce Graduate School web page and from the department office. The student should complete the top portion. The major advisor verifies the written and oral examination results on this form and the student returns the signed form to the Graduate School. Any performance disputes will be settled by a committee consisting of all members of the doctoral faculty in Educational Administration.



## **ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY**

### **Prerequisites**

Successful Completion of the Doctoral Comprehensive Examinations. The Graduate School must verify that all portions of the qualifying examinations have been successfully completed.

Research tools. The Graduate School must verify that research tools proficiency has been achieved.

Residency. The Graduate School must verify that doctoral residency has been completed.

### **Notification**

Notification of admission to candidacy will be made by the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research. This must occur 8 months prior to graduation.

## **DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

### **Selection of Doctoral Advisory Committee Members**

The department and your dissertation chair will guide you in selecting a dissertation committee at an appropriate time. Committee members should be selected to assist the student in the dissertation area of study.

How many? The committee is composed of three to five faculty members, one of whom is an EDAD faculty member who will serve as chair. The remaining member(s) will be from the Department of Educational Leadership and a member from outside the department. Members and associate members of the Graduate Faculty may serve.

Who may chair? Members of the Graduate Faculty are eligible to serve as chair as established by the Graduate Council.

### **Function of Doctoral Advisory Committee Members**

#### *Proposal*

The committee works closely with the student in preparation of the proposal for dissertation. In this stage of the student's program, it is important that the chair of the doctoral advisory committee be appropriately matched to the student's research area.

#### *Dissertation*

The committee monitors the student's progress in writing the dissertation, advises accordingly, and conducts the oral defense of the dissertation.

## **EDAD 718 Requirement**

After doctoral candidates are admitted to candidacy, they are required to enroll in a minimum of three semester hours of dissertation, EDAD 718, each fall and spring semester until the dissertation is completed and approved by the doctoral advisory committee and the Graduate School. Students who fail to enroll for dissertation during any fall or spring semester after admission to candidacy will be prohibited from enrolling until the tuition has been collected for each semester.

NOTE: Doctoral candidates will not be required to enroll during the summer term, unless using the counsel and advice of the major advisor or University facilities, such as the Library. A student cannot propose or defend during the summer if not enrolled in EDAD 718. Also note that students may be required to pay out of state tuition after they have completed 99 hours of work.

## **Minimum Time Limit**

The degree can be conferred *no sooner than eight months after admission to candidacy and not sooner than the semester following proposal defense.*

## **DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

**(See Other Deadlines in this document that pertain to the proposal)**

### **Preparation of the Proposal**

Step 1. Enroll in EDAD 718 and Contact Advisor. The student should begin talking with his or her advisor regarding dissertation topics and research plans.

Step 2. Select topic and dissertation guide. Work closely with the chair and other committee members in the selection of an adequate topic or area for research in the educational administration field. All students are to use The American Psychological Association, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, as a guide for writing the proposal and dissertation.

Step 3. Schedule proposal meeting. Reserve a time and place for the proposal in consultation with your chair and committee members. **Your dissertation proposal must be submitted to each member of your committee a minimum of 2 weeks prior to scheduling your proposal defense date. This normally means each member of your committee must have your complete proposal no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month PRIOR to the month you wish to propose.**

Step 4. File with Graduate School. Once approval to present the written proposal has been received from all members of the student's doctoral advisory committee, the student obtains all committee member's signatures on the Schedule for the Presentation of the Dissertation Proposal (obtained from The Graduate School web page) and submitted to the Graduate School by the **20<sup>th</sup> of the month** preceding the month of presentation of proposal.

## **Defense of the Proposal**

Who is present? All departmental faculty and the Graduate Faculty representative are invited to the presentation of the proposal for research in addition to the student's dissertation committee. The proposal presentation is also open to all university faculty members and interested students.

How is the presentation conducted? The procedure may vary by advisor, but a standard format includes introductions, introductory remarks by the student regarding his or her interest areas, and an explanation of the proposed study by the student. During the session any committee member present may ask for clarifications and/or offer suggestions regarding the proposed study. Near the end of the proposal meeting, the student and any observers leave the room and the committee chair allows committee members a time for additional comments. The student returns to the session, at which time the student is informed of the dissertation committee's recommendations regarding the proposed study.

Outcome. The student's dissertation committee has final recommending authority, subject to review by the Dean of the College of Education and the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research. The outcome may be to (a) accept the proposal, (b) modify and accept the proposal, or (c) reject the proposal. If the proposal is accepted or modified and accepted, the student completes the Advisor's Approval form obtained from the Graduate School, and presents this to the Graduate School, signed by all dissertation committee members, the department head, and the Dean of the College of Education (COEHS).

## **Human Subjects Protection**

Human Subjects Protection forms. Following the successful proposal defense the student must submit an application to the the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval to conduct the research. The student must clear this application with his or her Committee Chair before sending it to the IRB committee. This process must be completed for all university research activities even when human subjects are not involved in the research activity.

In general, a research proposal should provide that risks are minimized to those participating in the research study (any risks beyond those incurred in daily life must be outweighed by benefits to the subjects). Reduction of risks can be accomplished through providing procedures consistent with sound research design, equitable selection of subjects and appropriate setting, confirming that informed consent is adequate and documented, checking that continued monitoring takes place to ensure the safety of the subjects, and making sure that privacy and confidentiality are noted to the participant and maintained throughout the project.

Participation of a human subject in any study must be voluntary, and the information provided to gain subject consent must be adequate and appropriate. The IRB or University Human Subjects Protection Committee may choose to waive the requirement for informed consent in some cases; however, such action must be based on clearly defensible grounds. The ultimate and final decision belongs to the University Human Subjects Protection Committee.

## FINAL DISSERTATION

**The final dissertation is published in the academic community and is a reflection of the University and its faculty. Hence, the student is expected to design and write a dissertation of high scholarly and academic quality. It is the responsibility of the dissertation committee and Graduate School to ensure the highest quality of research delivered through the dissertation.**

### **Time Limit**

All degree requirements, including the dissertation, beyond the master's degree must be completed within ten calendar years from the date of admission to the doctoral program. No coursework beyond the master's degree that is over ten years old at the time of the doctoral degree is conferred can be used toward the doctoral degree. Timely completion of the dissertation is advised as the topic may become outdated if extended for a long period of time. **There is no waiver for this policy.**

### **Special Assistance**

Writing. Doctoral students may receive assistance from the University Writing Writing Center if needed. Materials are available to assist with these skills.

Editing and statistics review. The student is encouraged to work with an editor and/or statistician in the preparation of the proposal and the dissertation. The editor and/or statistician should be familiar with the dissertation guide being used by the student. Faculty members, graduate assistants, and department staff members are not editors and drafts submitted in need of editing will be returned to the student. The student is solely responsible for completing and defending the dissertation.

Accommodations. Each division within the University is aware of the needs of the disabled student and is ready and willing to work with each student to solve problems as they arise. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**  
**Texas A&M University-Commerce / Gee Library Room 162**  
**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148**  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

### **Enrollment in Dissertation (EDAD 718)**

Continuous enrollment. After the student is admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree, the student must continuously enroll in EDAD 718 until the dissertation is complete. University policy states that the student must be enrolled in 718 while receiving advice or assistance from

a member of the faculty or while utilizing university facilities, and therefore the student must be registered in 718 during the semester the dissertation is submitted.

Minimum and maximum 718 credit. Regardless of the number of semester hours of EDAD 718 in which a student enrolls, no more than 12 hours, as designated on the degree plan, will be counted for credit. A reduced fee may be approved by the Registrar's Office and Graduate School after admission to candidacy and completion of all coursework other than 718. The student is reminded that the University will charge out-of-state tuition for credits earned above 99 hours.

Grade in EDAD 718. A grade of "in progress" (I) or "unsatisfactory progress" (U) is recorded each semester until the dissertation is successfully complete and the student graduates. The registrar's office will change all I grades to and S for the final transcript.

### **Dissertation Defense**

Scheduling Defense. Your final dissertation draft must be submitted to each member of your committee a minimum of 2 weeks prior to scheduling your final defense date. This normally means each member of your committee must have your complete proposal no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month PRIOR to the month you wish to conduct your final defense.

Forms. A Schedule for the Presentation of the Final Dissertation Defense, available from the Graduate School, must be filed in the Graduate School by the **20<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the month** the defense is held. A Final Examination Report will then be forwarded by the Graduate School to the department for recording the results of the defense.

*The dissertation defense is a public event and open to all interested graduate faculty and students. Voting persons include the major professor and committee members only.*

### **After the Defense**

The candidate will distribute and obtain relevant signatures on Signature Pages and the Graduate School Advisor's Approval form. Additionally, the candidate and the major professor will prepare a list of agreed upon changes or modifications to be made to the defended manuscript prior to its submission to the Graduate School.

Following approval by the COEHS Dean, the candidate will submit the completed Graduate School Approval Form, Signature Pages, and a copy of the completed manuscript to the Graduate School. Candidates are cautioned to be aware of required deadlines for final submission of all dissertation or thesis manuscripts, necessary forms, copyright agreements, UMI materials, fee payments, and applications for graduation etc.

If the dissertation defense is successful, the doctoral advisory committee chair completes the Final Examination Report, which is signed by committee members and the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services.

## University Guidelines

It is the student's responsibility to carefully follow the policy stated in the Graduate Catalog regarding the final dissertation, number of copies, deadlines, etc.

## GRADUATION

### Filing for Graduation

As specified in the Graduate Catalog, the student must file for graduation in the Registrar's Office by the deadline indicated in the schedule of classes or the Graduate Catalog for that particular semester, typically during the first two weeks of the semester. A student is entitled to graduate under the degree provisions of the catalog in effect at the time of admission into the doctoral program or a subsequent year, provided that in all cases the student fulfills the requirements of a catalog within ten years of currency.

### Commencement

The degree is conferred at the commencement following the fulfillment of all requirements. The candidate is expected to be present at the ceremony, and permission of the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research must be obtained if circumstances prevent a candidate from attending commencement.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Other information can be found in the Texas A&M-Commerce Graduate Catalog, via the website. Please contact the Department of Educational Leadership at 903-886-5520 if you need further information.

**Note: This handbook is subject to change. Updates will be available in the Educational Leadership Department website <http://www.tamuc.edu/edl>. This is not a catalog and does not have catalog privileges.**

## REFERENCES

The following list of references is provided for help in designing and completing dissertations.

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, DC: APA.

Lunenburg, F. C., & Irby, B. J. (2007). *Writing a successful thesis or dissertation: Tips and strategies for students in the social and behavioral sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

When you reach this page and have completed all the processes successfully, you have reached a milestone and you are deserving of many accolades from your family and friends. They, too, have been watching and supporting your progress and wishing you well.

There are two postscripts which must be added to this academic process, both of which you may be aware. The first is that the doctoral degree is a distinction that you carry with you for the rest of your life and indicates your scholarly achievement. It has been a long, hard road of knowledge and scholarship and was achieved at a particular point in time. This should not preclude the notion that currency in matters concerning education must still be maintained through continued study and research. Just like a computer program and hardware that are three years old and have limited use, the knowledge and skill level achieved in earning a doctorate must be renewed or else they become archaic and obsolete.

To avoid this, it is important that you attend professional conferences, seminars, and staff renewal sessions, interact with professional colleagues, and conduct and report on research. The degree that you now hold must be maintained to continue to be useful and productive. Your clients, your employer, and your university are depending on you to do this.

The second postscript is that the use of the title *doctor* is one that is accorded by your colleagues, students, and friends because of their respect for you and your scholarly achievement. This is a professional title and should be used in a professional manner, and not as a barrier in building relationships with others.

With those words from experience, we, all the faculty members of the Educational Leadership Department, wish you the best in all future endeavors. We rely heavily upon you to carry forward this knowledge and experience, and practice the skills we have so happily and readily conveyed to you.

Best of luck,

The Educational Administration Doctoral Faculty