

## Delta State University

### Dissertation Committee Roles and Expectations

It is imperative to clarify the roles and expectations at DSU for both candidates and dissertation committee Chairs/members. Of utmost importance is the doctoral candidate's role in completing the degree program. Not only is he/she responsible for successfully completing coursework according to DSU policies and procedures, but doctoral candidates must also successfully complete the dissertation within five years of course completion to obtain the Doctor of Education degree. This process has no definitive timeline or rigid parameters, as original research studies in educational contexts vary with regard to size, time, and complexity. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the candidate to understand the nature of educational research studies and how this may affect the length of his/her personal degree program.

Beyond this, it is critical for candidates to comprehend their responsibilities for completing requirements during dissertation hours. To maintain sufficient progress toward degree completion, doctoral candidates are responsible for initiating all processes involved therein. Candidates should be familiar with all requirements for completing the dissertation, should complete and submit drafts and revisions in a timely fashion, and should remain in contact with the dissertation chair at all times. At minimum, students enrolled in dissertation hours should submit two substantial drafts per semester. Further, candidates are responsible for coordinating efforts to ensure that all work is in compliance with DSU guidelines.

While doctoral candidates must assume the largest role for completing the dissertation, the primary objective for dissertation Chairs/members is to provide scholarly feedback on dissertation drafts within a three-week timeframe. *Scholarly feedback* includes comments on the topic, research design, structure of the document, procedures, unique features, APA formatting, and grammatical aspects of each submitted draft. Committee Chairs/members should provide specific and detailed comments on these and other applicable aspects of student work. As research professionals and mentors, committee Chairs/members should understand this as an inherent requirement for fostering strong dissertation research studies.

Additionally, all feedback should be provided in written form as often as possible to ensure accurate representations of the intended effect. While committee Chairs/members should always communicate with candidates in a timely fashion, they are not responsible for initiating work on behalf of the student. Rather, the dissertation Chair will maintain the most frequent contact with the candidate for the duration of dissertation completion. In all instances, dissertation Chairs fulfill four important needs: a) they serve as the initial professor of contact, b) they assist the candidate with forming and working with a strong dissertation committee, c) they work with the student in following a timeline for conducting dissertation research, and d) they support the candidate with adhering to sound research practices and methodology.

Finally, both candidates and committee members should follow the *Common Guidelines for Education Research and Development* as reported by the Institute of Education Sciences, the U. S. Department of Education (U.S.D.E.), and the National Science Foundation (NSF) (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2013/nsf13126/nsf13126.pdf>) as well as the American Psychological Association's (APA) reporting standards <https://www.apa.org/pubs/authors/jars.pdf> to the extent that it is applicable to the research design. Also, candidates that have completed coursework since 2012 are accustomed to utilizing the outline for a research proposal, which is based upon these guidelines, and ensures the careful attention to detail required in empirical research.