



**College of Education
and Human Sciences**

**DOCTORAL STUDENT
HANDBOOK & DISSERTATION
PREPARATION
MANUAL**

Delta State University

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Introduction

The Doctor of Education Degree in Professional Studies is offered within the Division of Teacher Education, Leadership, and Research at Delta State University (DSU). This handbook has been prepared for use by all candidates and prospective candidates seeking the Ed.D. degree at DSU. It is designed to present the information necessary to assist students in the successful completion of the doctoral degree program. The purposes of this Doctoral Program Handbook are:

1. To provide information on policies and procedures governing the doctoral program so that students will be aware of their responsibilities;
2. To assist faculty in their advisory functions with students in the doctoral program;
3. To clarify those procedures that must be followed in order to satisfy the College of Education and Human Sciences (COEHS) requirements (Please refer to the DSU Graduate Catalog, Doctor of Education Degree).

The policies and programs of the COEHS and the University are intended to serve student needs within a framework designed to help develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for a student and developing educator. The student has the responsibility to read and become familiar with the contents of this handbook and the graduate catalog. The faculty strives to serve its students, and can best help when students are aware of their own responsibilities.

Students should work closely with the major advisor throughout their program to ensure that all program requirements, as well as COEHS and University requirements, are met.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The doctoral program is housed in the College of Education which is located in the Ewing building on the DSU campus. All questions regarding entrance requirements, timelines and due dates, university and program policies, and completion of program requirements should be directed to the Doctoral Program Coordinator. Additionally, the Doctoral Coordinator advises for three of the doctoral program tracks, which are: Educational Leadership, Teaching in Higher Education, and Curriculum & Instruction.

The Doctoral Program is governed by the Doctoral Admission and Curriculum Council (DACC) which is overseen by the Dean of the College of Education and chaired by the Doctoral Program Coordinator. DACC is also comprised of other graduate track coordinators, the Graduate Dean, and a DSU faculty member at-large. The Council develops policy and procedures that are aligned with University guidelines to maintain the organization and continuity of the doctoral program. DACC also considers and vote on matters relevant to the doctoral program such as student appeals.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM TRACKS

The doctoral program tracks are: Educational Leadership, Curriculum & Instruction, and Higher Education. The Educational Leadership track is designed to develop doctoral-level administrators in the P-12 context. The Higher Education track is designed to prepare educators who wish to teach at the college level. The Curriculum & Instruction track prepares educators to assume curriculum leadership responsibilities within a variety of educational settings.

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ADMISSION TO THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Admission to the Doctoral program begins with admission to the Graduate School. Materials required to complete an application can be emailed directly to grad-info@deltastate.edu.

1. Submit a formal application for admission by applying online here. Note that the graduate application fee of \$30 will be required at checkout. International students interested in studying on campus should visit our International Student Services webpage to get started.
2. Request an official transcript(s) from the college or university from which you received a bachelor's degree and from all colleges and universities from which graduate credit was received. We recommend sending official transcripts electronically via Parchment or National Student Clearinghouse by choosing Delta State University Graduate Admissions (grad-info@deltastate.edu) as the recipient. Hard copies may be mailed from an institution to:

Delta State University
Office of Graduate Studies
Kent Wyatt Hall 239

Cleveland, MS 38733** Non-U.S. transcripts are accepted through WES or ECE evaluation services (must be evaluated course-by-course).

3. Meet all admission requirements set by the doctoral program.

Students desiring to enter the doctoral program must meet and show acceptable evidence of the following requirements:

1. Master's or an Educational Specialist degree from an accredited college/university with at least an earned GPA of 3.25.
2. Official Graduate transcripts.
3. Minimum of two years of experience in teaching or an equivalent area: [Job Verification Form](#).
4. Resume/Vita highlighting the applicant's education, work history, evidence of leadership potential, additional certifications, membership in professional associations, scholarly activities, accomplishments, and awards.
5. Statement of Purpose writing sample that reveals the applicant's philosophy of education, ability to self-reflect, and ability to compose with clarity and proper grammar and mechanics.

All required documents must be submitted to the Graduate Office at grad-info@deltastate.edu.

Admission documents are reviewed by the doctoral program admissions committee. Admission points will be awarded in each of the following areas: 1) Grade Point Average (GPA) on prior graduate coursework; 2) Professional Vita /Resume; 3) Writing sample; and 4) Interview. Specific point values for each of these criteria are as follows:

Criterion 1 Grade Point Average on all graduate work completed. NOTE: No applicants with a graduate GPA less than 3.25 will be considered for admission.

GPA	Points
3.66 – 4.00	5
3.56 – 3.65	4
3.46 – 3.55	3
3.36 – 3.45	2
3.25 – 3.35	1

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Criterion 2 Professional Vita

Rating	Criteria
5 Exceeds Standards	Vita demonstrates 3 or more years of related experience in educational or business settings that align with a track in the doctoral program. Vita demonstrates professional growth over time as evidenced by increased and diverse professional responsibility. Vita demonstrates outstanding accomplishments, awards, and recognition. Demonstration of participation in leadership endeavors commensurate with current employment position and length of experience exceeds expectations.
3-4 Meets Standards	Vita demonstrates at least 2 yrs of related experience in educational or business settings that align with a track in the doctoral program. Vita demonstrates professional growth over time as evidenced by increased professional responsibility. Vita demonstrates expected accomplishments, awards, and recognition. Demonstration of participation in leadership endeavors commensurate with position and length of experience meets expectations.
1-2 Below Standards	Vita demonstrates less than 2 yrs of related experience in educational or business settings that align with a track in the doctoral program OR Vita fails to demonstrate expected professional growth over time as evidenced by increased responsibility. Demonstration of participation in leadership endeavors commensurate with position and length of experience does not meet expectations.
0 Inadequate	Vita demonstrates less than 2 yrs of related experience in educational or business settings that align with a track in the doctoral program. Vita fails to demonstrate expected professional growth over time as evidenced by increased responsibility. Vita demonstrates no participation in leadership endeavors commensurate with position and length of experience.

Criteria 3: Writing Sample

Rating	Criteria
5 Exceeds Standards	All responses are on topic, clear, and organized to show high degree of attention to logic and reasoning of points. Content indicates synthesis of ideas, in-depth analysis and evidences original thought and support for the topics. Main points are well developed with high quality and quantity of supporting details. Responses are free of distracting spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors; absent of fragments, comma splices, and run-ons.
3-4 Meets Standards	All responses are clear, coherent, and logically organized. Content indicates original thinking and develops ideas with sufficient and firm evidence. Main points are well developed with quality supporting details and adequate quantity. Responses have a few spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors that do not hinder understanding of ideas. Very few fragments or run-ons.

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1-2 Below Standards	A few points of the responses lack clarity and stray from the topic. Content indicates thinking and reasoning applied with original thought on a few of the ideas. Main points and supporting details are lacking. At least three of the five responses have spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors that hinder understanding of some of the ideas.
0 Inadequate	Many points of the responses lack clarity and logical organization. The responses have some coherence but ideas lack unity. The responses show some thinking and reasoning but most ideas are underdeveloped and unoriginal. Main points and details are not discernable. Ideas are vague. Writing errors are copious within each response. Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors hinder understanding of the ideas, making reading difficult; fragments, comma splices, run-ons evident within each response.

Criteria 4: Interview

NOTE: A student must accumulate a total of at least 16 points to earn admission to the doctoral program.

Deadlines for submitting all admission documents are listed below.

Admission Semester	Application Deadline
Spring	November 1st
Summer	April 1st
Fall	April 1st
	June 30th

The Coordinator of the Doctoral Program will inform the applicant regarding admission status after all materials have been reviewed by the admissions committee. Admissions decisions will be emailed to applicants on or before December 1 in fall semesters, May 1 in spring semesters, and July 7 in summer. Applicants who wish to gain full admission for summer terms should complete the application process in spring or fall according to the dates given.

COURSE LOAD LIMITATION

The maximum load for students devoting full-time to doctoral coursework is six semester hours during the fall or spring and six semester hours during each summer term. Graduate students who are employed full-time will be allowed to register for no more than six contact hours per semester during the regular

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term. Special permission from the program coordinator must be obtained in order to take 9 credit hours in a semester.

CANDIDACY LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

The Track Coordinator will periodically evaluate the student's progress in the program and will assume primary evaluation responsibilities when the candidate takes the comprehensive and final examinations. Students who earn three grades of C or one grade of D or F will be dismissed from the degree program. Graduate students must maintain a 3.25 average throughout their program. If a student's GPA drops below a 3.25, the student will be placed on academic probation (see the Graduate Bulletin). A course can be repeated only one time; the grades from both times the course was taken will be used in the calculation of the GPA. A minimum 3.25 GPA on all graduate work taken at Delta State University is a requirement for completion of the doctoral program.

READMISSION

Graduate students who have withdrawn in good standing from the University, who have become inactive, or who have been suspended for academic deficiencies or for other reasons should submit their application for readmission to the Graduate and Continuing Studies Office to complete the admissions process in full. The College Dean must approve applications for readmission by students who have been suspended for academic deficiencies (see Graduate Bulletin).

CHEATING & PLAGIARISM POLICY

According to the third edition of the American Heritage Dictionary (1994), to plagiarize is "to use and pass off as one's own the ideas or writings of another" (p. 633). In other words, **plagiarism is literary theft**. The fifth edition of the APA manual warns that professionals "do not claim the words or ideas of another as their own; they give credit where credit is due. Quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another" (p. 349). Plagiarism is applicable to words, ideas, and/or writings. Using someone else's ideas or words, without giving credit to the author/source, makes a student guilty of intellectual theft and is not tolerated in the doctoral program.

Specific examples of cheating and plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Using statements in a paper taken directly from another source (e.g., article, book, internet, etc) without use of quotation marks and appropriate citations
- Using statements from another source with minimal modifications to the wording while the integrity of the content still remains the original author's phrasing or intent
- Cheating on an examination in any way (e.g., copying answers from someone else's test)
- Turning in a paper written by someone else (voluntarily, without his/her knowledge, or for money) with the intent to represent oneself as the author
- Submitting a paper for more than one course (even though the student originally wrote it) without express approval from both professors

According to the Delta State University Graduate Bulletin, "Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated." Program faculty have determined that violations of the plagiarism policy are as follows:

1. The first offense will result in at least an "F" for the assignment, an individual meeting between the faculty member and the student for discussion of the offense, and a letter of reprimand will be placed in the student's official file in the department. Documentation of the incident will also be sent to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

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2. A second offense will result in the student's expulsion from the Delta State University's degree program and he/she will not be allowed to enroll in any other degree programs at DSU.

DSU faculty strongly encourage students to understand program expectations regarding plagiarism, closely monitor their own writing, and seek assistance where needed.

STUDENT ACADEMIC & GRIEVANCE POLICY

As stated in the Delta State University Graduate Bulletin, students who feel they have been treated unfairly may appeal as follows:

1. Discuss the problem with the instructor and seek a solution. If the problem is not satisfactorily resolved in conference with instructor, the student is entitled to submit an appeal in writing (with documentation) to the department/division chair. Upon receiving a student appeal, the department/division chair submits a written request for a response in writing (with documentation) from the instructor. The department/division chair notifies the student and faculty member in writing of his/her decision, within fifteen working days from the date the appeal is received.
2. If the problem is not satisfactorily resolved, the student is entitled to resubmit the appeal in writing to the college/school dean with administrative responsibility for the department where the alleged infraction occurred. The college/school dean reviews the student appeal and the corresponding response from the faculty member. The college/school dean notifies the student and faculty member in writing of his/her decision with a copy to the division/department chair, within ten working days from the date the appeal is received.
3. If the problem is not satisfactorily resolved, the student is entitled to submit a request for a hearing with the Academic Appeals Committee. The Academic Appeals Committee chair schedules a hearing date, within fifteen working days from the date the appeal is received, and notifies the student and faculty member in writing of its decision with a copy to the appropriate dean, within five working days from the date of the hearing.
4. If the problem is not satisfactorily resolved, the student is entitled to resubmit the appeal in writing to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Vice President for Academic Affairs reviews the student appeal and the corresponding response from the faculty member. Vice President for Academic Affairs notifies the student and faculty member in writing of his/her decision, which is final, with a copy to the appropriate dean, within ten working days from the date the appeal is received.

Academic appeals by students must be filed no later than the end of the next regular term after the grievance occurred.

ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSFER CREDIT

Graduate courses may be transferred from another accredited college or university. Transfer credit will be granted only for those courses in which the student received a B or better and which are listed on a program of study approved by the graduate advisor and the college or school dean. Research courses must be less than 6 years old to transfer. Transfer courses may be substituted for non-required courses if the catalog description reflects similar course content and each course is recommended by the Track Coordinator to the Coordinator of the Doctoral Program. A maximum of 6 semester hours of the credit required for a doctoral degree may be accepted as transfer credit from another accredited graduate school. When circumstances merit it, a request for an exception to the policy allowing a maximum

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transfer of 6 semester hours may be submitted by the Track Coordinator. The request must be approved by the college or school dean. No graduate credit is accepted for courses completed by correspondence (see Graduate Bulletin).

TIME LIMITATION

For the doctoral degree, the dissertation must be completed within a five-year limit after the successful completion of Dissertation Seminar (ELR 888) (see Graduate Bulletin).

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Students expressing an interest in doctoral study are encouraged to communicate with the Coordinator of the specific track of interest to review their academic transcripts and develop a tentative program of study. Review of transcripts will be for the purpose of assessing equivalent courses taken and to inform students regarding the program.

After a student has been fully admitted into the doctoral program, s/he will be informed of a final program of study that will guide the sequence of coursework throughout the student's program. Students are responsible for contacting the Track Coordinator to obtain a Personal Identification Number (PIN) in order to register for classes each semester. PINs obtained in any other way may result in a delay in the student's program and/or other disciplinary action from the university. Changes in the program of study must be approved through the Track Coordinator.

Please see the DSU Graduate Catalog for current courses of study.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

PURPOSE

The comprehensive examination serves as an important indicator of the culmination of student learning for candidates working toward the Ed.D. degree. When a candidate for the degree has completed all required courses or is enrolled in the last course in the final program of study (i.e., ELR 888), the candidate is eligible to take the comprehensive examination. The Coordinator of the Doctoral Program must approve a student wishing to take this examination as having met all prerequisites.

FORMAT

The examination will be in a written format. The Coordinator of the Doctoral Program will coordinate the written portion with a Comprehensive Exam Committee comprised of Track and other related COE faculty. The Comprehensive Exam Committee will develop exam questions used for the Comprehensive Exam and will review and evaluate student responses. The examination will be comprehensive, consisting of questions from each of the areas of the track concentration (i.e., Leadership, Higher Education, or Curriculum & Instruction), Research and Statistics, and Curriculum. The Coordinator of the Doctoral Program will forward individualized results of the comprehensive examination to each doctoral student.

EVALUATION

The Comprehensive Exam Committee will determine if the student has passed the comprehensive examination. In cases where student performance on the examination is unsatisfactory, the committee will determine how and when the deficiencies will be eliminated and make a recommendation as to the continued status of the candidate in the program. Removal of deficiencies may require repeating courses,

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taking additional coursework, retaking the comprehensive examination, or any other prescriptive elements that the committee deems appropriate.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM FAILURE PROCESS

If all sections are not passed on the first sitting of the comprehensive exam, the following process will take place:

1. Failed first time: Remediation in the form of faculty suggested self-study or tutorials.
2. The student retakes the sections failed the next semester during the regularly scheduled administration (typically in November).
3. Failed a second time: The student retakes a course related to the area of failure and must make at least a B in the course. The student is required to engage in additional self-study in the area while completing the course.
4. The student retakes the exam during the regularly scheduled administration.
5. Failed third time: The student is dismissed from the program

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT IN ELR 890

Each degree candidate must successfully complete all portions of the comprehensive examination to earn the right to continue in the doctoral program. Candidates are required to enroll for a minimum of one hour of dissertation credit (ELR 890) for at least two semesters per academic year until the dissertation project is completed. A student may enroll in ELR 890 in increments of 1-3 hours in any semester. A student must be enrolled in ELR 890 during the semester in which he/she defends the dissertation and plans to graduate. It is not uncommon for students to enroll in more than the minimum 12 dissertation hours in order to complete the degree.

DISSERTATION

An acceptable dissertation is a requirement for the completion of the doctoral program. Prior to writing the dissertation, students must be familiar with the *Dissertation Preparation Manual* and follow the procedures precisely. The dissertation must embody the results of an extended research effort which is an original contribution to the field of education. It should reflect the candidate's ability to conduct independent research and interpret in a logical manner the facts and phenomena revealed by the research. Each candidate must defend the dissertation before an examining committee appointed by the Doctoral Program Coordinator and approved by the Dean of the College of Education.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Dissertation Committee is composed of three members as follows:

Member 1: Dissertation Committee Chair (typically within the student's track and discipline)

Member 2: Doctoral Faculty member from the College of Education (COEHS)

Member 3: Doctoral Faculty from DSU outside the COEHS or member at large (i.e., any in #1-3 or outside of DSU as approved by the Doctoral Program Coordinator).

Committee members are charged with reviewing versions of the written dissertation, providing consultation and feedback around proposal development, research methodology, data gathering, the dissertation manuscript and process, and meeting for a dissertation defense which is a culmination of the finished dissertation project (See the *DSU Dissertation Preparation Manual* for more information).

FINAL SEMESTER AND GRADUATION: IMPORTANT DATES

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Having completed all coursework, passed the comprehensive examination, had a dissertation proposal approved, and while finishing work on the dissertation, the candidate must begin planning for graduation. Students are strongly encouraged to develop their own personal timeline for applying for graduation and completing the dissertation process in order to ensure that all requirements are met before the due dates. Students planning to graduate must meet all requirements and due dates set forth in the *DSU Dissertation Manual*.

The Doctoral Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation has traditionally been the written record of the candidate's individual, original research and scholarship that successfully advances the limits of human knowledge. The study must be appropriate to and significant in the academic field, requires a mastery and exhaustive exercise of research techniques, and should illustrate the researcher's critical thought and facility of expression.

According to the professional expertise and opinions of the graduate faculty, the dissertation must make an original contribution and it must demonstrate the candidate's fitness to continue the advancement of knowledge in the field of education. To assist in upholding these standards, the dissertation manual serves as the central source of information for completing the dissertation.

The Dissertation Manual

This manual represents the official guidelines for dissertation completion through the College of Education and Human Sciences at Delta State University. All DSU doctoral are expected to follow the requirements detailed in this manual, along with all other stated DSU policies and procedures, for the duration of candidacy. When questions or concerns about any aspect of the DSU doctoral program arise, candidates are advised to contact the doctoral program coordinator, Dr. Corlis Snow (csnow@deltastate.edu) in writing.

There are five primary sections in this manual. *Section I* addresses the process of dissertation completion while *Section II* addresses the components of the dissertation manuscript. *Section III* contains information on special considerations, *Section IV* offers samples of specific pages in the dissertation, and *Section V* includes important documents that candidates and committee members will need to use.

Note that other documents not included here may be required during the process, such as IRB forms or the application for graduation; however, the documents referenced in this manual are available at <http://www.deltastate.edu/>.

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.

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

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understand the nature of educational research studies and how this may affect the length of his/her personal degree program.

All candidates and committee members should follow the:

- 1) *Code of Ethics* set forth by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) ([http://www.aera.net/Portals/38/docs/About_AERA/CodeOfEthics\(1\).pdf](http://www.aera.net/Portals/38/docs/About_AERA/CodeOfEthics(1).pdf)), the
- 2) *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
- 3) American Psychological Association's (APA) reporting standards (<http://www.apa.org/pubs/authors/jars.pdf>) to the extent that it is applicable to the research design.

Additionally, all candidates who have completed coursework since 2012 should closely follow the outline for a research proposal, which is employed in upper-level ELR courses and based upon the aforementioned guidelines, and ensures the careful attention to detail required in empirical research.

The Candidate's Role. 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.

The Dissertation Chair's Role. While doctoral candidates must assume the largest role for completing the dissertation, the primary objective for dissertation Chairs and all committee members should 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 features 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.

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The Methodologist's Role. The dissertation committee methodologist serves as a reference for research design and implementation of the study. Methodologists read and provide written feedback in the form of email correspondence and progress forms, in addition to attending all committee meetings as called by the dissertation chair or candidate. Methodologists serve in an advisory role and do not engage in data collection or analysis, but do provide sound guidance to candidates throughout the duration of the study. Methodologists examine and evaluate chapters 1, 3-5 for research content, clarity, consistency, and APA formatting each semester until the student graduates.

The Reader's Role. The dissertation committee reader serves as a reference for the written product describing the study from beginning to end. Readers carefully read and provide written feedback in the form of email correspondence and progress forms, in addition to attending all committee meetings as called by the dissertation chair or candidate. Readers serve in an advisory role and do not engage in conducting the literature review or synthesis, data collection, analysis, or interpretation but do provide sound guidance to candidates throughout the duration of the study. Readers examine and evaluate chapters 1-5 as well as references and appendices for research content, clarity, consistency, and APA formatting each semester until the student graduates.

Student & Committee Expectations

Students	Committee
Follow ethical standards set forth by AERA	Ensure that the candidate follows ethical standards set forth by AERA
Follow research guidelines set forth by NSF	Ensure that the candidate follows research guidelines set forth by NSF
Follow APA & DSU reporting guidelines	Ensure that the candidate follows APA & DSU reporting guidelines
Follow DSU policies set forth in this manual	Ensure that the candidate follows DSU policies set forth in this manual
Submit drafts with complete revisions on at least two (2) occasions each semester	Provide feedback on all submitted revisions
Submit all required components of ELR 890 into Canvas portal	Complete progress form upon the student's request
Maintain frequent communication with the dissertation chair and members for the duration of dissertation completion	Provide guidance for navigating the dissertation process when necessary
Visit each committee member and chair at least 1 time per semester	Meet upon the student's request

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Student & Committee Expectations

Determine in advance each committee member & chair's preference for receiving updated draft revisions (i.e., electronically or paper copy)	Respond to all questions posed by the student
Provide all required forms at all committee meetings, including the dissertation proposal & defense	Assist with completing the forms provided
Follow the required submission dates for the dissertation defense as outlined in this manual	Ensure that the candidate follows all required submission dates accordingly

Overview: Calendar* of the DSU Doctoral Program & Dissertation

The following is a guideline of the semester progression for the core doctoral courses. Ideally, students should complete all track requirements before taking core courses.

Year One - Students begin formulating ideas for the dissertation in ELR 605 & 701 while taking track courses required for the degree.

Year Two - Students complete ELR 702 & 804, which focus on drafting chapters one and three of the dissertation, respectively. Student also takes required core courses to foster further understanding of curriculum and supervision in leadership.

Year Three - Students complete ELR 805 & 888, thereby establishing an outline draft of chapter two of the dissertation. In ELR 888, chapters one through three are revised into one coherent narrative. Student takes final track and core courses to enhance conceptual knowledge and skills in research to support critical analysis of educational theory.

Year Four and beyond - Students begin to form dissertation committee and is paired with a dissertation chair. Student completes the comprehensive examination successfully to continue into dissertation hours. Additionally, students maintain continuous enrollment until graduation. Each candidate must have a minimum of 12 dissertation hours in ELR 890 to complete the doctoral core requirement.

**Variations may occur based on many factors such as data collection and personal work habits or motivation.*

Requirements for Enrollment in ELR 890

Each degree candidate must enroll in a minimum of one hour of dissertation credit (ELR 890) for at least two semesters per academic year until the dissertation is completed. A student may enroll in ELR 890 in increments of 1-3 hours (1, 3, 6, or 9 hours) in any one semester. A student must be enrolled in ELR 890 during the semester in which he/she defends the dissertation and plans to graduate. It is not uncommon

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for students to enroll in more than the minimum 12 dissertation hours in order to complete the process. DSU doctoral candidates have five years, which begin in the semester after coursework is complete, to finish the dissertation.

Dissertation Completion Checklist (complete in order):

Below is a brief overview of required components in the DSU Doctor of Education degree. This list does not include information on track courses, but only contains details on doctoral core courses & other necessary steps in completing the program. In projecting an outline for completion, please allow at least three weeks to obtain feedback from the appropriate DSU faculty members on each iteration of the draft; also allow yourself a reasonable amount of time to make suggested changes on each iteration. If at any point you need additional clarification on your next steps to degree completion, please contact your dissertation committee chair or the DSU Doctoral Coordinator (csnow@deltastate.edu).

- ___ Establish a research topic in ELR 702
- ___ Conduct basic research on the topic in CUR 812
- ___ Review literature on educational theory in CUR 834
- ___ Complete a beginning literature review on chosen topic in AED 830
- ___ Continue research in ELR 804, focusing on ch. 3 (i.e., research methods)
- ___ Continue research in ELR 805, focusing on ch. 2 (i.e., literature review)
- ___ Continue research in ELR 888, focusing on ch. 1-3 (i.e., full research proposal)
- ___ Complete all courses successfully
- ___ Complete comprehensive exams successfully
- ___ Obtain Dissertation chair approval from Doctoral Coordinator
- ___ Work with Dissertation chair to form committee; submit completed **Dissertation Committee Form to Doctoral Coordinator and Karey Westfall** kwestfall@deltastate.edu
- ___ Continue research in ELR 890 with dissertation chair & committee (12-hr. minimum)
- ___ Coordinate efforts to obtain & incorporate committee chair's feedback on each new draft
- ___ Upon the dissertation Chair's request, send draft proposal to committee members
- ___ Obtain written feedback from all committee members
- ___ Working with the dissertation Chair, incorporate committee member feedback into the draft
- ___ With dissertation Chair approval, send revised draft to committee members
- ___ With all committee members' approval, send draft to the Doctoral Coordinator for final review
- ___ With feedback from Doctoral Coordinator, schedule date for dissertation proposal in accordance with the dissertation committee; to do this, contact the COEHS Dean's Administrative Assistant for room availability
- ___ **Notify Doctoral Coordinator, Division Chair, COEHS dean, Graduate School Dean, & Karey Westfall** kwestfall@deltastate.edu **of proposal meeting date, time, & location**
- ___ Ensure all suggested changes to draft have been incorporated with dissertation Chair's approval
- ___ Present the dissertation proposal (i.e., chapters 1-3); **utilize & submit a copy of the following forms** to the Doctoral Coordinator & Karey Westfall kwestfall@deltastate.edu:
 - 1. Completed Dissertation Proposal Form, and**
 - 2. DSU Dissertation Proposal/Defense Notes (see Section V. Important Forms)**
- ___ Make all changes suggested at dissertation proposal meeting
- ___ With approval signatures from all committee members, seek IRB approval
- ___ With IRB approval, seek approval from other location(s)/individuals as appropriate; if none exist, conduct study
- ___ Maintain contact with dissertation chair throughout the duration of data collection and analysis, providing frequent updates on the study

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- ___ When appropriate, notify all individuals involved that data collection is complete; express appreciation to everyone that assisted
- ___ Analyze data according to the approved proposal
- ___ Compile chapters 4 & 5 according to current APA format
- ___ Dissertation committee chair reads draft of ch. 1-5 along with all front matter and appendices, then requests revisions
- ___ Dissertation committee chair determines when to seek input from committee members: this is **Submission 1 (see below for submission date)**
- ___ Upon doing so, obtain written feedback & incorporate all suggestions from committee members
- ___ **With committee approval, send final draft to the Graduate Dean, The COEHS Dean, Doctoral Coordinator, and the Division Chair. This is Submission 2 (see below for submission date)**
- ___ Make recommended changes based upon feedback from all individuals participating
- ___ Schedule date for dissertation defense; contact the COEHS Dean's Administrative Assistant
- ___ Send final draft to chair, committee members, Deans, Division Chair, and Coordinator
- ___ Present final dissertation defense; **utilize & submit a copy of the following form to the Doctoral Coordinator & Karey Westfall kwestfall@deltastate.edu: DSU Dissertation Proposal/Defense Notes**
- ___ Make all revisions and send back to committee members until a consensus is reached that the document is complete & formatted correctly.
- ___ **Send finalized hard copy to Doctoral Coordinator, Division Chair, & Deans; this is the final submission (see below for submission date).**
Note: The manuscript should be without flaws/errors to achieve graduation during that semester. Otherwise, the candidate will receive a list of revisions and may attempt to graduate the following semester.
- ___ Use the link below and follow the virtual process on ProQuest to submit your final copy.
Contact the DSU Library for assistance.
<https://www.etdadmin.com/main/home?siteId=912>
 1. Create an account with the link "Sign up and get started today."
 2. In addition to the requirements on the welcome page, you will need a credit card to pay ProQuest for:
 - a. Two library copies (8 ½ X 11 hardcover) = \$62.00 X 2 = \$124.00
 - b. Personal copies (optional)
 - c. Other optional fees such as Open Access and Copyright (your choice)
 3. Follow the submission steps. See [FAQs](#) if you have questions.
 4. Upon submission, Dr. Snow will review your dissertation before it is delivered to ProQuest.
- ___ Dissertation committee Chair and members complete the *Invoice for Services* form
- ___ Graduate

Submission Dates for Graduation:

DSU doctoral candidates may graduate during the fall, spring, and summer semesters while formal graduation/hooding ceremonies are held in December and May of each year. Candidates are responsible for submitting completed drafts of chapters 1-5 along with accompanying appendices and front/back matter in a timely manner each semester to the individuals denoted above in the *Dissertation Completion Checklist*. For eligibility to graduate, candidates must adhere to the following submission dates during the semester they hope to finish.

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Fall semester

Submission 1 - During the first full week in September

Submission 2 - During the first full week in October

Dissertation defense - During the month of October

Final Submission - During the first full week in November

Spring semester

Submission 1 - During the first full week in February

Submission 2 - During the first full week in March

Dissertation defense - During the month of March

Final Submission - During the first full week in April

Summer semester

Submission 1 - Before the first full week in June

Submission 2 - During the last full week in June

Dissertation defense - During the month of July

Final Submission - During the last full week in July

I. Process

A. COMMITTEE

When the student is assigned a chair by the Doctoral Program Coordinator (typically soon after the completion of ELR 888, Dissertation Seminar), the student should contact the chair to schedule a meeting to discuss the topic and possible committee members. When a tentative committee has been formed, the Chair notifies the Doctoral Program Coordinator (in writing) of the three requested names of the committee members. Upon the Doctoral Program Coordinator's approval, the Chair notifies the student that he/she may ask the three committee members to serve. The student notifies the Chair when they have accepted and the Chair notifies (see *Dissertation Committee Form* in section V) the Doctoral Program Coordinator of the official, approved committee.

Committee membership must include the following (there are a total of three members, including the chair, methodologist, and reader):

Member # 1: from the student's track (Chair)

Member # 2: from the College of Education and Human Sciences

Member # 3: at large (*at large* means any of the categories above or outside of DSU if approved by the Doctoral Program Coordinator)

B. PROPOSAL

When the Chair believes the student is ready for the formal proposal, he/she will notify the student that it is time for the student to send the latest draft of Chapters I-III to the committee members.

At this time, the student should:

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- Include the *References* and any *Appendices* that are available (copy of instruments, etc.).
- Deliver this draft to all committee members (only upon the Chair's approval) in the format each committee member prefers (i.e., electronic or hard copy).
- Allow no less than three weeks for committee members to thoroughly review and provide written feedback on the draft.

Within two weeks of this submission, the committee members should notify the Chair if there are any significant problems in the document that may cause the proposal to be postponed. Committee members should always provide written feedback to the candidate within the three-week timeframe; the candidate should then discuss all feedback with the committee chair. The chair should direct the student in incorporating all feedback into the proposal draft.

When all recommendations have been addressed in the paper and the chair approves, the candidate reserves a date and time that accommodates committee members' schedules for presenting the research proposal of chapters I-III.

At this time, the candidate should send the revised proposal along with the proposal meeting time to:

- All committee members
- The Dean of the DSU College of Education and Human Sciences
- The Dean of DSU Graduate Studies
- The DSU Division Chair of Teacher Education, Leadership, and Research
- The DSU Doctoral Program Coordinator

At the proposal meeting, the student makes a formal presentation (approximately 20 minutes) of Chapters I-III to all committee members. The committee makes further comments and recommendations concerning the dissertation and the student submits a copy of the committee's notes into Canvas.

Upon a successful proposal, committee members sign the *Completed Proposal Form* (see section V) and the Chair submits it to the Doctoral Program Coordinator. The candidate completes the Institutional Review Board forms (IRB)* ** and with written approval, may then collect data.

If the proposal is not successful, the candidate makes necessary adjustments and submits the revised document to the committee chair. The chair then provides feedback on revisions and whether further changes are necessary. This process continues between the candidate and the chair until the new draft is ready to be sent to the committee in preparation for a new proposal meeting. At this time, candidates should follow the procedures outlined previously for completing the proposal process.

**Note that official IRB approval is required before candidates may access or collect data. During data collection, students are expected to maintain frequent communication with the dissertation chair and members with updates and details about data collection.*

***Note that all committee members, Chairs, and students must hold certification through the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research to conduct research with human participants. IRB approval will not be awarded if all participating parties have not been certified within two years prior to submitting an IRB request for approval. Certification is free and may be completed here <https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>.*

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C. FINAL DEFENSE AND FILING THE MANUSCRIPT

The Application for Graduation and the Final Defense

Two semesters prior to graduation, the student should apply to graduate through the Registrar's Office. Directions for this procedure are located on the DSU website:

http://www.deltastate.edu/PDFFiles/univ_relations_PDF/Registrar/ApplyToGraduate.pdf

In accordance with the dates denoted above for submitting final dissertation drafts, students must submit the final copy of the manuscript to the dissertation committee members (only if Chair has given approval to do so). The student is required to make and deliver electronic or hard copies according to each member's preference.

Within two weeks of this submission, the committee members will notify the Chair if there are any difficulties serious enough that the defense should be postponed. As with the proposal or any other draft submission, committee members should always provide written feedback to the candidate within the three-week timeframe; the candidate should then discuss all feedback with the committee chair. The chair should direct the student in incorporating all feedback into the manuscript.

When all recommendations have been addressed in the paper and the chair approves, the candidate reserves a date and time that accommodates committee members' schedules for presenting the research proposal of chapters I-V.

Note: After following the procedures above, the final defense must be scheduled **according to the dates denoted above**. *In the event that the manuscript is incomplete or needs further revisions after the final submission, the candidate should plan to graduate during the following semester.* See each semester's final submission dates above and on the DSU Ed. D. website.

At this time, the candidate should send the revised manuscript along with the defense meeting time to:

- All committee members
- The Dean of the DSU College of Education and Human Sciences
- The Dean of DSU Graduate Studies
- The DSU Division Chair of Teacher Education, Leadership, and Research
- The DSU Doctoral Program Coordinator

The final dissertation defense will involve the major committee and is open to all members of the faculty, administration, and guests of the student. Typically, the student makes a formal presentation that is approximately 20 minutes in length for summarizing the study, and questions are addressed from the entire group. Immediately following, guests are invited to leave so the committee and the student may discuss any additional concerns. Next, the student is excused as the committee makes the decision as to whether the student's defense is successful.

The dissertation and its defense must reflect a satisfactory level of professional competence in research methodology and writing, complement the research function of the University, and contribute to the development of new knowledge. The defense provides an opportunity to ascertain that the student:

- Authored the document
- Possesses the knowledge of the areas of research related to the study
- Can justify the research design and analysis used in the study

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- Demonstrates conceptual skills in ordering and interpreting data
- Can present the study in a coherent, understandable, and scholarly manner

All committee members should be present at the dissertation defense (conference calls may be acceptable for members who live a distance from campus).

Should the defense be unsuccessful, the Chair will prepare and submit a statement detailing the inadequacies to the Doctoral Program Coordinator, who will then submit to the Deans. The Committee will detail what steps must be taken for the student to re-submit for a defense during the following semester.

On or before the final submission date (see above), the student must have completed all corrections suggested at the defense. A final, hard copy of the finished manuscript should be given to the Doctoral Program Coordinator, the Dean of the College of Education, and the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval. ***In the event that final manuscripts are incomplete or need further revisions at this point, the candidate should plan to graduate during the following semester.***

Filing the manuscript is the last step in the process. At this point, candidates have collected and analyzed data; candidates have compiled written results and resulting discussion/conclusions in chapters IV-V; and candidates have otherwise completed the final document, including all appendices, tables, figures, along with front and back matter. All committee members, deans, and Doctoral Coordinator indicate express approval of the final submission with signatures on the required pages provided at the dissertation defense. **Students may file the manuscript when they receive permission from the Dissertation chair, committee, and Doctoral Coordinator in the form of completed signature sheets.**

On or before four weeks before graduation, the student must ensure that an electronic copy of the Title, Abstract, and PowerPoint presentation from the defense are submitted electronically to the Doctoral Program Coordinator. At this time, students should also pay all fees associated with graduation. These fees cover costs for the diploma, cap, and gown; all are paid to the registrar's office.

Most Common Manuscript Mistakes

Inappropriate Font

Margin Problems

Incorrect Page Numbering

Improper Formatting of Appendices

Payment Not Made to Student Business Services as directed by the Library staff or Receipt Not Saved
Forms/vita Missing

Most Common APA Mistakes

- Not following the current APA manual
- Disagreement with verb tense
- Using contractions
- Using rhetorical questions
- Missing references/citations
- Using underlining
- Incorrect heading format

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- Direct quotes used flippantly or without page or paragraph numbers
- Punctuation – not reading Chapter 4 of the APA manual
- Incorrect margins, incorrect paper, or missing sections that are required in the dissertation

Tips for Writing the Dissertation

Unlike other graduate requirements, the dissertation does not have clearly defined limits. Its scope and focus are defined by the researcher. Each candidate is responsible for completing the dissertation according to the guidelines and time parameters stated in this manual.

Dissertation committee chairs and members are responsible only for providing written feedback on each submission within a timely manner. At no point should candidate and committee roles be confused. It is the candidate's responsibility to see that s/he makes sufficient progress each semester until graduation. Typically, this means submitting **two revised drafts** and **at least one in-person meeting** with the dissertation chair **each semester**. The in-person meeting can occur virtually.

Tips for Managing your Time in ELR 890

All students have up to five years after completing ELR 888 or the comprehensive exam. The five years begin immediately after the latter of these. As dissertation chairs, committee members, and the doctoral coordinator are available to students continually during each semester, it is the student's responsibility to manage the five years wisely to reach dissertation completion.

Note: Students must complete the dissertation proposal successfully on or before year 4. As it is impossible to complete an entire dissertation in only two semesters, year 4 is the latest a dissertation proposal will be accepted.

- *Take initiative:* Ask questions, utilize resources, communicate frequently with committee Chair and members
- *Establish* a schedule with your chair and follow it; be accountable to your chair, your timeline, and yourself
- *Read* dissertations; look at format
- *Develop* a support network
 - Faculty, family, and other graduate students
 - Find a writing partner
 - Locate other sources of psychological support (i.e., books, workshops, etc.)
- *Maintain* proper structure
 - Follow the research proposal outline & other criteria in this manual
 - Use plenty of APA headings that are specific to the content they precede
- *Work* consistently
 - Ensure sufficient progress with daily contributions
 - Schedule time to write
 - Submit **at least 2 complete revisions & meet at least once with your chair each semester**
- *Have* realistic expectations
 - Make your schedule manageable for yourself and committee members by following the three-week guideline for obtaining feedback

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- Remember the committee members' schedules and submit work only during the normal semester and summer sessions (i.e., not during holidays or other semester breaks)
- All drafts must be submitted to the dissertation chair for approval prior to being submitted to committee members, deans, and doctoral program coordinator.
- Follow DSU policy as outlined above to ensure quality work for the dissertation
- Persist to graduation
 - You chose this path; earning the right to become a doctor of education is no simple task.

II. FORMAT

Manuscript Requirements

The College of Education at Delta State University requires the document to follow the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) for all dissertation formatting. Where the APA manual does not offer sufficient detail for formatting, refer to this manual. *The final draft of the Dissertation must comply with all the requirements described in this formatting guide.*

A. Components*

The manuscript must be arranged in the following sequence:

Cover Pages

- Signature Page
- Title Page

Preliminary Pages

- Copyright page (optional)
- Dedication page (optional)
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Abstract (350 word maximum)
- Preface (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if 5 or more)
- List of Figures (if 5 or more)
- List of Plates (if any)
- List of Symbols and Abbreviations (if needed; may be included as an appendix)

Body

- Introduction
- Review of Literature
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion

Concluding Pages

- References
- Separation Sheet

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- Appendix
- Vita

** See section K for a description of each component.*

B. Final Manuscript Submission

The final manuscript will be uploaded to ProQuest according to the guidance provided by the Library staff.

C. Font

Times New Roman, 12-point non-italicized font is the only acceptable for text and 10-point font for footnotes and subscripts. Fonts less than 10-point are not recommended even for superscripts and subscripts.

D. Non-typed Material

Signatures and other non-typed matter, such as handwritten symbols, line drawings, formulae, and diacritical marks should be in black ink for clear reproduction.

E. Spacing

All standard manuscript copy must be double-spaced. Use a standard indentation for the first line of all paragraphs (5 – 8 spaces, ½ inch) and ensure consistency throughout. Text within a chapter must be continuous with no extra space between paragraphs.

Tables and figures should be formatted according to the current edition of the APA manual.

Single spacing may be used for long tables, block quotations, subheadings and chapter titles, figure legends, footnotes or notes, and appendix material.

F. Headings

For the dissertation, all headings should follow the current edition of the APA manual.

G. Margins

Top, right, and bottom margins must be 1 inch. The left margin must be 1.5 inches. APA requires that all margins be the same size. However, the left margin difference is necessary for binding and must be observed consistently throughout the manuscript.

H. Page Numbers

Page numbers must be placed .50" from the top of the page and flushed to the right. In this position, the page number will be halfway between the top of the paper and the first line of type. Page numbers must be flushed right. The default page numbering system of most word processing programs is unreliable.

Often these programs place the page number in a position other than the one required. A more reliable choice is the Header option of the word processing program. This option allows the student to choose the exact position of the page number. In Microsoft Word, the Header option can be found under the "View" or "Insert" menu on the toolbar (depending upon the version of Word you are using).

Information about this option in other word processing programs can be found in the Help menu.

I. Consistency

The formatting requirements detailed in this manual must be met throughout the entire manuscript. All material included in the dissertation must fit within the required margins, pagination scheme, font size and style, etc. The dissertation must be a document of professional quality, one that is consistent in style and format.

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J. Pagination

Every page in the manuscript must be numbered except for two: the Signature Page and the Title Page. The Signature Page is neither counted nor numbered. The Title Page is counted but not numbered. In other words, the title page is considered the first page of the preliminary pages and is therefore assigned the lower case Roman numeral ‘i.’ However, for reasons of appearance, the Title Page must not be numbered. Due to this consideration, the first page number to appear on the manuscript will be the lower case Roman numeral ‘ii’ on the first preliminary page that follows the title page. The table below provides a visual explanation of this policy.

LOWER CASE ROMAN NUMERALS (ii, iii, iv, v) must be used to number the preliminary pages.

ARABIC NUMBERS (1,2,3,4,5) must be used to number the text through the Vita (the final element of the manuscript). The first page of text must be numbered “1.” The remaining pages should be numbered sequentially using Arabic numbers.

Sequence	Pagination
Initial Page	
Signature Page	Do not count/ Do Not number
Preliminary Pages	Lower Case Roman Numerals
Title Page	Count/ Do Not Number
Copyright Page (optional)	Count/ Number
Dedication Page (optional)	Count/ Number
Acknowledgements (optional)	Count/ Number
Abstract	Count/ Number
Preface (optional)	Count/ Number
Table of Contents	Count/ Number
List of Tables (if 5 or more)	Count/ Number
List of Figures (if 5 or more)	Count/ Number
List of Symbols and/or Abbreviations	Count/ Number
Text	Arabic Numbers
Body of Dissertation	Count/ Number
Separation Sheet	Count/ Number
Bibliography (References)	Count/ Number
Separation Sheet (if an appendix follows)	Count/ Number
Appendix	Count/ Number
Vita	Count/ Number

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K. Description of the Manuscript Components

Initial Pages

Signature Page - Each of the copies of the dissertation submitted to the College of Education must have a Signature Page using the exact wording and format shown in the appendix of this manual. Like all other pages, this sheet must be on the same brand and weight of cotton paper and be in the same font as the remainder of the manuscript. The name used on the Signature Page and Title Page must be that under which the student is registered at the institution. The major and degree to be awarded must match those to which the student was officially admitted into the College of Education and Human Sciences.

Although the original Signature Pages may be copies, *the committee signatures must be original*. Black ink is recommended for the original signatures. The number of signature lines must equal the number of committee members; the names of the committee members and administrators should be typed under the lines. As part of the cover pages, the Signature Page is neither counted nor numbered. To save time, students may print the Signature Page on cotton paper to be signed at the defense meeting.

Title Page - This page is assigned roman numeral 'i,' although the number does not appear on the page. Word substitutes should be used for Greek letters and symbols that appear in the title. Abbreviated terms should be spelled out. Phrases such as "An Examination of" or "A Study of" should be more clearly specified regarding research methodology. The department or major should not be added to the title of the degree.

The name on the Title Page must match exactly the name under which the student is registered at Delta State University. The official designation of the degree (i.e. Doctor of Education) must be used on the Title Page. The date used on the Title Page must be the month and year of the commencement at which the degree will be awarded.

Preliminary Pages

Preliminary pages of every manuscript must include a Title Page, Abstract, and a Table of Contents. The Copyright Page, Dedication Page, Acknowledgements, and Preface are optional. If five or more tables appear in the manuscript, a list of tables should be included in the preliminary pages. If five or more figures appear, a list of figures should be included. If plates are used, a list of plates should be included. If necessary, a list of symbols and/or abbreviations may be included in the preliminary pages or as an appendix, consult the appropriate style guide for directions.

Examples of properly formatted preliminary pages are in this manual.

Copyright Page - This page is included only if the manuscript is being formally copyrighted, either through University Microfilms or with the U.S. Government Copyright. A fee is required for the registration of a copyright.

Dedication Page - If included, the dedication page should be brief and should be formatted like all other dissertation pages.

Acknowledgements - This page is optional. Acknowledgements, if included, must be written in complete sentences. Avoid direct address (Thanks, Professor!). On this page a student might thank those who have

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helped in the process of obtaining the graduate degree. Permissions to quote copyrighted material should also be listed here, as well as any acknowledgements for grants or special funding.

Abstract - Every dissertation must include an abstract. A typical abstract includes a short statement of the project (350 word maximum), a brief exposition of the methods and procedures used in gathering data, a condensed summary of the findings, and conclusions reached in the study.

Preface - This page is optional. A typical preface includes a personal statement about the project. Although personal in nature, the preface must preserve the academic tone appropriate to a scholarly work.

Table of Contents - The Table of Contents may vary in style and amount of information included. Cover pages and preliminary pages (any assigned Roman numerals) are not included in the Table of Contents. The first entry in the Table of Contents should be the section of the manuscript assigned the Arabic number "1." List chapter or section titles in the Table of Contents exactly as they appear in the text. Include a page number for each item listed. Page numbers given for the Bibliography and Appendix should be those assigned to the separation sheet preceding each of those items.

The Table of Contents must include chapter or section titles, the Bibliography or List of References, any appendices, and the Vita. Subheadings in the Table of Contents should be listed using a logical system of indentation. It is imperative to maintain consistency. If a particular level is included at any point in the Table of Contents, all headings of that level must be included.

List of Tables - Unless there are five or more tables within the manuscript, this list should not be included. Any tables appearing in the appendix must be included in this list. The title of each table should be unique, and all titles must be entered in the list exactly as they appear in the manuscript. Include a page number for each table listed.

List of Figures - Unless there are five or more figures within the manuscript, this list should not be included. Any figures appearing in the appendix must be included in this list. The title of each figure should be unique, and all titles must be entered in the list exactly as they appear in the manuscript. Include a page number for each figure listed.

List of Plates - If plates are included in a dissertation, a List of Plates must be present.

List of Symbols & Abbreviations - If necessary, these lists may be included to define specialized terms or symbols. This information may also be placed in an appendix. The format of these lists should conform to the appropriate documentation style.

The Body of the Document

This section of the manuscript includes the main body of the thesis or dissertation, the bibliography, the appendix or appendices (optional), and the Vita. These pages are assigned Arabic numbers. The first page of this section (the first of the main body) is assigned and numbered "1." The remaining pages are numbered in sequence (2, 3, 4, 5, etc.). All pages in this section are to be counted and numbered. The Table on page 7 outlines this policy. A short Vita will be the final page of the section and of the manuscript.

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The body of the paper must be divided into a logical scheme that is followed consistently throughout the work. Chapters are the major division and must be numbered consecutively. Each chapter must begin on a new page. An “Introduction” is the first numbered chapter. Within chapters, a logical system of subdivision is used (see APA manual for proper header formats). However, the scheme must be consistent throughout the entire manuscript. The appearance of the heading must vary for each level of subdivision unless a numbering system is used to indicate level. Subdivisions should not begin on a new page unless there is insufficient space on the preceding page for the complete heading and at least two lines of text.

Introduction

This is the first chapter in the body of the document. It is used to provide context for the dissertation study and provide necessary facts about the research design. After a thorough Introduction is provided, typical sub-components of the chapter includes:

- Statement of the Problem (general paragraph narrowing to a 1-sentence problem)
- Purpose of the Study (1 sentence accompanied by a few supporting statements; includes the Independent Variables, Dependent Variables, Participants, and the Site)
- Research Questions/Hypotheses
- Research Design and Analysis
- Limitations/Delimitations (limits on what you can do/things you are not going to do)
- Assumptions
- Definition of terms (include citations)
- Professional Significance (contribution to the field) (justification of why the study needs to be done)
- Summary

Review of Literature

This is the second chapter in the body of the document. It provides an exhaustive review of all related literature to the topic. The review typically utilizes a deductive approach as it starts on a broad spectrum and narrows to the specific problem. The review is divided into many organized sub-sections. It is helpful to have your chair and possibly committee review an annotated outline of the chapter prior to writing. The majority of references and citations are used in this chapter.

Methods & Procedures

This is the third chapter in the body of the document. It is used to discuss the procedures used in the study. The procedures must be detailed specifically enough for a reader to take the information and produce the study alone. An introductory section repeating the Purpose of the Study leads into the following typical sub-chapters:

- Research Questions/Hypotheses
- Design/Method (include all independent and dependent variables)
- Sampling & Participants
- Instruments (include Validity/Reliability estimates for each instrument)
- Procedures (steps the researcher will take, beginning with obtaining IRB approval)
- Qualitative studies should include contextual descriptions of the researcher as well as the setting in which the study will take place
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis

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Summary

Results

This is the fourth chapter of the body of the document. It is used to report the results from the study and provide analysis of the data. These are usually addressed by research question or hypothesis.

Tables

A table is an arrangement of facts, numbers, or values in an orderly sequence of rows or columns.

- Tables must be numbered consecutively. There are two acceptable methods of numbering tables in a thesis or dissertation. 1) Tables may be numbered consecutively throughout the entire manuscript (a complete sequence that includes all tables, those in the text and in the appendices). Or 2) Tables may be numbered consecutively within each chapter or appendix. If this method is used, each table is coded with a chapter number or appendix letter, followed by a table number. For instance, the tables in chapter 2 would be designated 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, etc. The tables in the appendix would be designated A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, etc. This coded system is particularly helpful if a large number of tables are used in a thesis or dissertation. Whether the first or second method is employed, consistency and accuracy are vital. Tables must not be subdivided. Each table must have a separate numeric designation.
- Tables should be inserted near their first mention in the text or as a logical group within the chapter (see Placement of Tables and Figures later in this manual).
- All table titles must be typed single-spaced above the table using consistent capitalization.
- Tables must be flawless and fully legible. They must be of professional quality and amenable to printing without loss of information.
- All tables must meet margin and font requirements.
- Large tables must be reduced to standard 8.5" x 11" paper, if possible. If not, the table should be placed on oversize, 11" x 17" paper and inserted in the manuscript as a fold-out (see Instructions for Oversize Figures and Tables later in this manual).
- See also Spacing section (p. 5) of this document.

Figures

Figures provide illustrative information in a nonverbal form. Commonly used figures include charts, graphs, maps, drawings, diagrams, etc.

- Like tables, figures must be numbered consecutively. There are two acceptable methods of numbering figures in a dissertation. 1) Figures may be numbered consecutively throughout the entire manuscript (a complete sequence that includes all figures, those in the text and in the appendices). Or 2) Figures may be numbered consecutively within each chapter or appendix. If this method is used, each figure is coded with a chapter number or appendix letter, followed by a figure number. For instance, the figures in chapter 2 would be designated 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, etc. The figures in the appendix would be designated A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, etc. This coded system is particularly helpful if a large number of figures are used in a thesis or dissertation. Whether the first or second method is employed, consistency and accuracy are vital. Figures must not be subdivided. Each figure must have a separate numeric designation.
- Figures should be inserted near their first mention in the text or as a logical group within the chapter (see Placement of Tables and Figures later in this manual).

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- Unlike table titles, all figure titles and captions must be typed single-spaced below the figure.
- Figures must be flawless and of professional quality.
- Because figures are considered illustrations, any print that is part of the figure can be in any type face, provided it is neat and legible. The figure title and caption and the page number, however, must be in the same base font and size as the rest of the manuscript. The figure must meet margin requirements.
- Large figures must be reduced to standard 8.5" x 11" paper, if possible. If not, the figure should be placed on oversize, 11" x 17" paper and inserted in the manuscript as a fold-out (see Instructions for Oversize Tables and Figures later in this manual).
- Explanatory material for figures may be placed within the figure, either above or below the title, or continued after the period following the title. If this material is too long to be placed on the same page as a figure, it may be placed on another page. This page must be placed immediately before the figure. If this is necessary, the figure title must appear on the on this page, together with the explanatory material. The page number assigned to this page is considered to be the first page of the figure.
- If this is necessary, the figure title must appear on this page, together with the explanatory material.

Placement of Tables and Figures

- Large tables and figures should be assigned a page separate from the text.
- Because tables and figures are secondary to the text, the text dictates where the tables or figures should be placed. If assigned a separate page, a table or figure should immediately follow the page on which it is first mentioned. When more than one table or figure is introduced on a page of text, each follows in the order mentioned.
- A table or figure less than one-half page in length (about 4 inches) may be incorporated within the text, provided the following criteria are met:
 - ✓ Must be in numerical order.
 - ✓ Must be separated from the text by extra space (1/2 inch).
 - ✓ Must not continue onto the following page.
 - ✓ Must follow its specific mention in the text.
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- All pages must be filled with text and in no case should a page be left significantly short because of the mention of a table or figure. The table or figure should only occupy an amount of space necessary for the table or figure and the extra 1/2 inch of space. The rest of the page should be occupied by text.
- If a table or figure is presented horizontally on a page (landscape orientation), the margin at the binding edge must still be 1.5" and the all other margins 1". The placement of the page number should be consistent with the rest of the manuscript. In this case, the title and caption should be presented horizontally with the table or figure.
- When all tables and/or figures are presented in an appendix, this fact is stated in a footnote in the body of the text at the first mention of a table or figure. It is not necessary to repeat this footnote thereafter. When only some of the tables and figures are presented in an appendix, their location must be clearly indicated whenever the items are mentioned in the

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text (Table 1, Appendix A), unless the numbering scheme makes the location obvious (Table A-1).

Oversized Table and Figures

- Large tables and figures should be reduced to fit an 8.5" x 11" page, if possible. If not, material on larger approved paper may be included, provided the page itself is 11" vertically and folded properly.
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If it is necessary to include a large map, drawing, floppy disk, videotape, or any other material which cannot be bound, these materials should be itemized in a List of Plates and indicated as being "In Pocket." A label giving the plate number, title, student's name and year of graduation is affixed to the folded plate. A pocket for the plate will be attached to the inside back cover of the hard-bound copies at the bindery.

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- Printed as full-page 8.5" x 11" photographs on double-weight glossy paper (maximum image area 6" x 9") preceded by a legend page (see Figures).
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Discussion

This is the fifth and final chapter of the body of the document. It is used to interpret results and make recommendations for future research (or for further study) on the topic. This chapter should explain the study's results by utilizing the studies reviewed in chapter two; chapter five may also include references to studies that are pertinent to dissertation results. This is the student's chance to make supported explanations for the results. Typical subchapters include:

- Research Questions/hypotheses listed individually and followed by results/hypothesis decisions
- Discussion of results by question/hypothesis decision
- Conclusions of the study's results
- Recommendations for future topics, samples, and methodology related to the study

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- Recommendations for future practice
- Summary

Concluding Pages

References - References must follow APA guidelines and usage must be consistent for all entries. The style used for notes, references, and bibliography should follow APA guidelines exclusively. The bibliography or list of references is a vital part of every dissertation. Care should be taken to properly document every source. Failure to document references in a consistent and acceptable style necessitates that the manuscript is returned without review.

Appendix - The appendices include material inappropriate to the body of the main text. Original data and supplementary materials are usually placed in the appendix. In some cases, all tables, figures, and/ or plates are moved to the appendix to avoid interrupting the main text.

- An appendix is preceded by a numbered page with the designation
- Appendix or List of Appendices - centered vertically and horizontally between the margins.
- All appendix material must conform to the margin and font requirements observed in the rest of the manuscript.
- Be sure to provide a copy of all approval forms (IRB, etc.), consent forms, and instruments used.

Vita - The Vita is a required part of all dissertations. It is the last item in the manuscript and appears with no preceding separation page. The heading, VITA, should be centered, typed in full capitals, and should not be underlined. All vita entries should be listed chronologically. The vita includes the date (may be omitted) and place of the student's birth, dates of degrees and names of colleges or universities (exclude the degree for which the dissertation is written), academic or relevant professional employment, and may, at the student's discretion, include military service, honors, awards and distinctions. It is normally limited to one page.

III. Special Considerations

Research Involving Animal or Human Subjects (IRB)

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A dissertation may include articles submitted to a professional journal. Some guidelines apply, however.

- Individual papers must be integrated into a unified presentation. The dissertation must be a logical whole (i.e., not simply a compilation of individual papers), and should follow formatting requirements outlined in this manual.
- A uniform style of headings, reference citations, and bibliographical format – in compliance with this guide – must be adopted for the entire manuscript. In other words, all parts of the manuscript must be formatted consistently, even if one part of the manuscript was originally submitted to a professional journal in another format. Consistency and uniformity throughout the manuscript are required.
- Because individual papers may be incorporated into the manuscript, a single bibliography should serve the entire thesis or dissertation.
- Of course, pages must be numbered consecutively throughout the manuscript. Individual papers may be used as individual chapters within the manuscript as long as the above requirements are met.

The above requirements stress the importance of creating a unified document. The College of Education encourages students to pursue publication of articles in professional journals. However, if those articles are used in a dissertation, they must be seamlessly integrated into the manuscript. The dissertation is the student's first objective and publication is secondary.

Multi-Part Dissertations

With approval from the committee members, a dissertation may be divided into parts, rather than chapters or sections. This option should only be considered when research has been performed in two or more areas that cannot be practically combined into a single presentation. In this case, each part of the dissertation should be treated as a separate unit, with its own chapters, figures, tables, Bibliography or List of References, and Appendices. The entire manuscript (all parts) is then unified through the use of:

- A single introduction which provides an overview and summary of the entire project.
- A single Table of Contents
- A single List of Tables
- A single List of Figures
- Consecutive pagination across all parts, including numbered separation sheets between parts that list number and title of each part.

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If a manuscript is more than 2.5 inches thick, it must be divided as equally as possible into two volumes not exceeding 2.5 inches in thickness each.

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PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF ALTERNATIVELY AND TRADITIONALLY
CERTIFIED TEACHERS' EFFICACY IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Education

Degree

Delta State University

Lorenda R. Checks

December 2016

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Heavenly Father who promised not to put more on me than I can bear and whose word gave me the strength to endure to the end. It is with gratitude to my earthly father Lorenzo and mother Deborah Cheeks that I dedicate this work as a milestone of greatness for our family.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Words of gratitude are extended to members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Clifton Addison, Dr. Timothy Watkins, and Dr. Jacqueline Craven. Your encouragement, expertise, and guidance were essential in my success. In addition, I would like to express sincere thanks to Dr. Joyce Harris whose expertise in dissertation organization was vital and Ms. Erykuah McNeal for her assistance in locating research articles. Lastly, I would be thoughtless, if I failed to show my appreciation to Shatterria Warren, Jeffery Posey, and Mrs. Stephanie Booker whom all served as support as we traveled from Jackson, Mississippi to Delta State University. Because of each of you and your varied degrees of support and words of encouragements, or just simply being an understanding friend, I thank you for ensuring that I remain steadfast with my goal of making this dissertation come to fruition.

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, states have required individuals to complete a program of study in a university or college-based teacher preparation program in order to receive certification or license to teach. In 1983, however, various "alternative certification" programs emerged and the number of teachers obtaining teaching certificates through routes other than a traditional teacher preparation program began to plummet. In this quantitative research study, an examination of perceived teaching efficacy was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in traditionally and alternatively certified teachers. A total of 73 school-level principals provided perceptions of teacher efficacy in both certification routes across 5 domains for evaluating teacher effectiveness. Results illustrated that principals believed teachers who were traditionally certified were more effective than teachers who received certification through the alternative route. Significant differences in the principals' perceptions of teacher efficacy based on the two types of certifications emphasized the belief that traditionally certified teachers were more efficient in managing the five teaching domains under investigation: *content knowledge, classroom management, instructional planning, human relation skills, and professionalism.*

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The lack of teacher quantity and teacher quality is so significant that it directly affects schools and student performance, especially in public schools. School reform efforts as early as the 1960s concentrated on resolving both teacher quantity and teacher quality issues (Goldhaber & Walch, 2014). Today these issues, particularly the critical shortage of qualified teachers, continue to rise as a common trend across the nation. Teacher attrition has become a prevalent problem in low-performing urban schools to a greater extent than in suburban school districts (O'Connor, Malow, & Bisland, 2011).

This challenge is so prevalent that it encompasses many states across America. Critical shortages are more significant in urban and rural areas due to the haunting effects in key subject matters such as math and science. The impact of teacher attrition and the inability to retain quality teachers is not only a national issue but is also noticeable in the state of Mississippi, where 152 districts are established and 48 districts are adjudged as critical shortage areas (Heiss, 2014). According to Robertson and Singleton (2010), teacher shortage is not only significant in general education but remains profound in special education.

In comparison to the 1960s, teacher quantity and quality are still considered the leading variables to both school and student success. Research findings predict that student achievement continues to be impacted and influenced by high-quality teachers (Goldhaber & Walch, 2014). More specifically, teacher quality continues to be noted and acknowledged as the most significant indicator of student success and school effectiveness. Teacher efficiency also continues to be essential and serves as the measure for defining influences of sustained student success (Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011). As

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Teacher quality and quantity have been prevailing concerns in the United States and are now accentuated by movements for higher standards. Teacher certification or establishing criteria for teaching licensure has become an increasingly widespread focus as states raise the standards for entrance to the teaching profession (Mehta & Doctor, 2013). Generally defined as having the credibility or license approved by a state to teach in a public school system (Norman, 2014), teacher certification began in the early 19th century and is presently being studied as the nation seeks to refine the educational system.

This chapter contains a synthesis of the literature related to the types of teacher certification included in this study, events that have precipitated the practice of alternative certification, and teacher quality. The review begins with discussions as they apply to the profession in general and then are targeted specifically to Mississippi, the site of the study. Topics presented include a review of teacher education programs, mandates for teacher quality, types of certification programs with a focus on their origins, and features of alternative certification in Mississippi. Attention is then turned to teacher effectiveness.

Teacher Education Programs Through the Years

Teacher education programs are a prevalent component of strengthening teacher quality and have been the realm for preparing teachers effectively for the classroom. During the 1940s, teacher preparation demanded a year post-eighth grade education (Feistritzer, 2008). As students were promoted from grade to grade, thus completing the elementary school, the demands for secondary public education became widespread in

understood the domains and indicators describing each teacher quality included on the Nusbaum's *Teacher Effectiveness Survey* (2002).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the literature supporting teaching effectiveness as described in five teaching domains. *Effectiveness* is an indescribable concept that can be determined by student achievement or by teacher performance based on evaluation as perceived by school-level administrators (Stronge, 2007). Common qualities of an effective teacher encompass the teacher as being able to manage and impact student achievement while in the presence of students. The work of Nusbaum (2002) aided in comparing the effectiveness of alternatively licensed teachers with traditionally licensed teachers as perceived by their school-level administrator. Nusbaum's *Teacher Effectiveness Survey* (2002) also provided essential characteristics of effective teachers in five domains comprised of 40 qualities that directly relate to the areas of *content knowledge*, *classroom management*, *instructional planning*, *human relation skills*, and *professionalism*.

Content Knowledge. The teacher's command of content knowledge is an essential skill for impacting student achievement. Content knowledge refers to concepts that inquire about the teacher's professional knowledge of the subject matter in which he or she is hired to teach (Fernandez, 2014). Although an essential skill set to possess, Fernandez (2014) asserted that there is no consensus on the body of knowledge necessary to be a teacher. In parallel, Hanuscin (2013) declared the pedagogical content knowledge required by teachers is developed in practice.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used for conducting the research study. The quantitative approach utilized survey data to compare urban Mississippi school-level administrators' perceptions of teachers' effectiveness according to the type of certification they received, including alternative and traditional route teacher licensure. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), survey research uses questionnaires or interviews to collect data on the characteristics, experiences, knowledge, or opinions of a sample or population that represents others to which the finding can be generalized. Results gleaned are generalized with caution to the selected population. The practice of survey research provides information on attitudes, beliefs, values, demographics, behavior, opinion, desires, and habits of the subject being studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2000).

Research Question and Hypotheses

The essential question addressed in this study is "What are these principals' perceptions of alternatively and traditionally certified teachers' efficacy based on five teaching domains?" The Nusbaum Teacher Effectiveness Survey was developed by Charles M. Nusbaum (2002) and captured perceptions of pre-kindergarten through grade twelve school-level administrators on efficacy in the areas of content knowledge, classroom management and instruction, instructional planning, human relation skills, and professionalism. Five research questions were developed to address the problem of this study. The following are research questions:

Research Questions. To adequately examine administrators' perceptual differences among all content domains, five research questions were examined in

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

Chapter four is a presentation of the findings derived from data analyses. The purpose of this study was to obtain insight on principals' perceptions of the efficacy (dependent variable) of teachers who receive teacher licensure through alternative certification (independent variable) in comparison to teachers who receive licensure through traditional certification (independent variable). The main focus of the study was to determine if urban Mississippi administrators perceive a difference in alternative and traditionally certified teachers' levels of efficacy across five domains.

Five research questions were developed for this study. They are as follows:

1. Is there a difference between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers' efficacy in content knowledge according to the principals' perceptions?
2. Is there a difference between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers' efficacy in classroom management and instruction according to the principals' perceptions?
3. Is there a difference between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers' efficacy in instructional planning according to the principals' perceptions?
4. Is there a difference between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers' efficacy in human relation skills according to the principals' perceptions?
5. Is there a difference between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers' efficacy in professionalism according to the principals' perceptions?

Five research hypotheses were generated to respond to the problem statement.

The five hypotheses are the following:

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine urban Mississippi principals' perceptions of teacher efficacy teachers according to the type teacher licensure they possess. Administrators thus compared alternatively certified teacher efficacy to teachers who received licensure through traditional certification. This study was also designed to determine which qualities are more prevalent among teachers with alternative and traditional certified teachers. Because of the continual demands and strenuous policy developments holding educators accountable for student achievement, I hoped to clarify some of the differences in alternative and traditional teacher efficacy according to Nusbaum's (2002) five teaching domains of content knowledge, classroom management and instruction, instructional planning, human relation skills, and professionalism.

Summary

Hypothesis one predicted there would be no significant difference between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers' efficacy according to Nusbaum's TES (2002) domain 1, content knowledge, as rated by participating principals'. Results indicated traditionally certified teachers had a higher mean score than alternatively certified teachers and thereby yielded a significant difference for content knowledge, $t(72) = 2.92, p = .00$. Thus, principals believed the traditionally certified teachers maintained and displayed superior content knowledge to alternatively certified teachers.

Numerous implications exist for this discovery, including how to manage current teachers' content knowledge during their tenure in the profession. Additionally, as principals contemplate hiring new staff, consideration should be given to the components of the certification processes while implementing training and professional development

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APPENDICES

Appendix C

Permission to Use Nusbaum's Teacher Effectiveness Survey

Appendix D
DSU IRB Approval

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Appendix E

Letter to Urban District

Appendix H

VITA

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V. Important Documents

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