



## **School of Education**

### **Student/Faculty Handbook**

### **Ph.D. in Education Program**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Program Administration	5
Policy Board	5
Policy Changes	5
Exemptions from Policy	5
Appeals	6
Doctoral Students	7
Courses and Credits	7
Prerequisites	7
Program Time Limits	7
Continual Enrollment	8
Independent Study	8
Other Coursework Requirements	8
Dissertation Seminar	8
Prospectus Hearing	9
Advancement to Candidacy	9
Advisor	10
Role of Advisor	10
Request to Change Advisor	10
Advisor as Chair	10
Program Planning	10
Preliminary Program of Study	10
Final Program of Study	10
Request for Program of Study Change	10
Transfer Credits	11
Leave of Absence	12
Withdrawal from Courses & Program	12
Termination from Program	13
Reinstatement into Program	13
Readmission Policy	14
Track Transfer	14
Curriculum	15
Foundations Component	15
Research Component	15
Concentration Component: Program Tracks	15
Co-Curricular Activities	17
Externship	17
Dissertation	20
Student Assessment	22
Grades	22
Qualifying Exam	22
Grading of Qualifying Exam Response	26
Continual Doctoral Status	27
Comprehensive Exam	27

Dissertation Seminar and the Dissertation Committee	28
About Dissertation Seminar	28
Selecting a Committee	29
Responsibilities of the Candidate and Committee	30
Selecting a Dissertation Topic	34
Prospectus	34
Format	35
Hearing	36
Prospectus Approval Process	36
IRB	37
Doctoral Candidates	38
Dissertation	38
Format	38
Defense	39
Approval of the Dissertation	40
Submission of Final Dissertation	40
Graduation	40
Appendix A Track Coordinator Table	43
Appendix B Student Checklist	44
Appendix C Curriculum Overview for Ph.D. in Education	46
Appendix D Curriculum for Ph.D. in Education	47
Appendix E Preliminary Program of Study	49
Appendix F First Year Review Form	50
Appendix G First Year Meeting Summary Form	51
Appendix H Final Program of Study	52
Appendix I Request for Change in Final Program of Study	53
Appendix J Proposal for Independent Study	54
Appendix K Co-curricular Activity Form	55
Appendix L Externship Application	57
Appendix M Comprehensive Exam Policy Table	58
Appendix N Comprehensive Exam Report Form	60
Appendix O Concept Paper Guidelines	61
Appendix P Concept Paper Approval Form	63
Appendix Q Dissertation Committee Agreement Form	64
Appendix R Graduate Faculty Appointment Form	65
Appendix S Prospectus Report Form	68
Appendix T Degree Candidacy Form	69
Appendix U Sample Dissertation Table of Contents	70
Appendix V Dissertation Defense Report	72

## FOREWORD

Welcome to the VCU School of Education Ph.D. in Education program!

With 64 full-time instructional faculty, 100 research faculty, and \$25.6 million in funded research, the School of Education is recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the nation's top 30 graduate programs in education and the #2 education program in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This program enjoys a reputation for high standards and quality students, and with recent program revisions, we know you will find many opportunities to engage in scholarship and learning with an exceptionally talented group of faculty and students.

This handbook is designed to serve not only as a guide for doctoral students and advisors, but also as a policy manual. With these dual functions, it is important that students, instructors, and faculty advisors alike become familiar with its contents. Changes to policies and procedures, current deadlines and program dates, and announcements relevant to School of Education Ph.D. program will be communicated through Blackboard Organization of SOE doctoral studies and VCU e-mail. In addition, students and faculty will use the program forms that are on Blackboard, rather than the forms from this handbook. It is essential that students check the Blackboard and their VCU e-mail regularly.

As much as graduate students are ultimately responsible for meeting all requirements associated with the pursuit of their degree, they are expected to initiate most procedures as they work with their advisors throughout their tenure in the doctoral program. In addition to this handbook, students should become familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin. It articulates University policies and information related to graduate study.

If students, instructors, or advisors need help with the information regarding the Ph.D. in Education program they are encouraged to contact the Office of Graduate Studies at [soedocstudy@vcu.edu](mailto:soedocstudy@vcu.edu). Suggestions for any changes that will improve the usefulness of the handbook are welcome, and should be directed to the same office. Have a great year!

Sincerely,  
Guofang Wan, Ph.D.  
Director and Professor  
The Office of Graduate Studies

Virginia Commonwealth University  
School of Education  
Office of Graduate Studies  
2087 Oliver Hall  
1015 W. Main Street, Box 842020  
Richmond, VA 23284-2020  
(804)827-2657  
[soedocstudy@vcu.edu](mailto:soedocstudy@vcu.edu)

## **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

The responsibility for program administration is housed and managed by the Office of Graduate Studies along with track coordinators and supervised by the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (See Appendix A).

### **A. Ph.D. in Education Policy Board**

The Ph.D. in Education Program Policy Board (Policy Board) will provide direction and determine policy for the Ph.D. in Education program. The Policy Board is configured with one coordinator from each track, two student members, one member at large and one member from faculty who teach the core courses. These members all have voting rights. The Director of Graduate Studies shall chair the meetings (at least 3 meetings per semester) of the Policy Board, and the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will serve as an ex officio member of the board.

### **B. Policy Changes to the Ph.D. in Education Program**

A two-step process is recommended for any policy changes.

- a) For track-specific issues, recommendations are made by the track coordinator and faculty who advise students in that concentration. Their recommendation is forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies who brings that recommendation forward to the Policy Board. At the discretion of the board, an open forum may be held on track-specific issues during a policy board meeting.
- b) For changes that impact all tracks, the Director of Graduate Studies will appoint an ad hoc committee to investigate the issue and make a recommendation for changes to be adopted program-wide which is brought to the Policy Board for discussion and a vote.
- c) Any changes to the policies and procedures of the Ph.D. in Education program will be shared with faculty of the School of Education and current students through multiple means including email, blackboard, advising sessions, and/or updates/alerts on the SOE website.

### **C. Exemptions from Policy**

Students may request exemptions from the general policies and procedures of the program, including an extension to the program time limit. Students may not request to be exempt from program requirements. To initiate a request for an exemption, a student first meets with his or her advisor to discuss the requested exemption. Following the meeting with the advisor, the student submits a signed written request for the exemption to the track coordinator including a written statement from the advisor indicating the advisor's degree of support for the exemption.

The track coordinator will act on the request within two weeks of receiving it. The track

coordinator will consult with the Director of Graduate Studies regarding exemptions that could have implications for other tracks or the program as a whole prior to making a decision. Such requests may need to be addressed by the Policy Board.

If there is no anticipated program-wide impact of the request, the track coordinator will consult directly with the track faculty. The track faculty will consider the request, make a recommendation to the track coordinator, and the track coordinator will forward the track's decision to the student and the Director of Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies will forward the decision to the Office of Graduate Studies to be added to the student's record.

If necessary, the student will have two weeks to appeal the decision to the Policy Board. If there is no appeal, the track faculty's decision stands. For certain types of requests, a special action form indicating the decision will be filed with the Graduate School.

#### **D. Appeals**

Students may appeal a denial of a request for exemption to general policies and procedures, a recommendation to be terminated from the program, or the two-attempt policy for the comprehensive exam. A subset of the Policy Board will form an appeals committee which will meet to act on any student appeals. At a minimum, this appeals committee will consist of one student member and three other members of the Policy Board.

To initiate an appeal, a student first meets with his or her advisor to discuss the matter. Following the meeting with the advisor, the student submits a signed written statement of appeal to the track coordinator. If the student is appealing a denial to be exempt from policy previously heard by the track faculty, the student must lodge the appeal within two weeks of the decision on the exemption. The student must also request and obtain a written statement from the advisor indicating the degree of support for the appeal and forward it to the track coordinator. Within two weeks of receiving the student's appeal statement, the track coordinator informs the Director of Graduate Studies of the appeal in order to arrange the Appeals Committee and meeting. The Appeals Committee reviews the student's appeal statement and supporting documents and makes a decision. The student and advisor will be notified by e-mail or letter of the decision of the Appeals Committee within one week of the meeting. For matters of general policy and procedure, the Appeals Committee's decision will stand.

If the Appeals Committee does overturn a decision to terminate a student from the program, the Office of Graduate Studies will forward a special action form and all supporting documentation regarding the decision to the graduate school dean.

The student has the right to appeal decisions on termination to the Graduate School after receiving official notification of termination from the graduate school dean.

**Please see the Graduate School policy for more information about the appeals process:**  
<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/appeal-process-students-dismissed-vcu-graduate-program/>

## DOCTORAL STUDENTS

(Students who have not completed prospectus stage)

The following information is designed for pre-candidate students in the Ph.D. in Education program. It includes information on the following:

- I. Courses and Credits
- II. Advisor
- III. Program Planning
- IV. Track Transfer
- V. Curriculum
- VI. Student Assessment
- VII. Dissertation Seminar and the Dissertation Committee
- VIII. Prospectus

**I. Courses and Credits.** A minimum of 48 credits will be required to earn the Ph.D. in Education from the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. These courses include program requirements as well as track requirements and electives chosen within the School of Education or throughout the university. In addition to the 48 credit hours, students are required to engage in co-curricular activities with one or more faculty mentors to increase skills and gain experience related to their long range career goals and scholarly interests. The Ph.D. in Education Curriculum Overview provides an outline of program requirements and track-specific requirements (See Appendix D).

**A. Prerequisite Courses.** Track coordinators and relevant faculty members review the student's transcripts from graduate and undergraduate coursework at time of application to determine whether the student had completed general research methods and statistics classes (for all tracks). At VCU, these courses include EDUS 660 (Research Methods in Education) and STAT 508 (Statistics for the Social Sciences). The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) will notify the student and student's advisor about any missing prerequisites in the acceptance letter. These prerequisites must have been met prior to the first semester of enrollment in the program.

**B. Program Time Limits.** The time limit for completing all degree requirements, including the successful defense of the dissertation, is **eight years** (as noted in the Graduate\_Bulletin). The eight-year time frame begins with the first semester in which the student enrolls for course work after being admitted into the program. The eight years allows for the completion of the degree including any leave of absence time granted to a student. Students are responsible for keeping track of their timeline and progress in the program. A student who is granted a deferment after acceptance into the program has eight years to complete the program beginning from the semester in which he or she enrolls.

To read about time limit completion info. in the Graduate Bulletin, go to:  
<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/time-limit-completion-requirements-eligibility-courses/>

**C. Continual Enrollment.** The School of Education requires that students admitted into the program must complete at least 12 credit hours per each 12-month period, commencing with the first semester in which the student enrolls for course work, following admission into the program. Continual enrollment after advancement to candidacy requires enrollment in three credits of dissertation research per semester during the fall and spring semesters. This is until the student reaches the six credit minimum for dissertation credits. After the six credit minimum, students can enroll in 1 credit hour of EDUS 899 per semester. Students are expected to enroll themselves in the appropriate number of credits after consultation with their advisor/dissertation chair. It is important to note that if during any particular semester, including summer, a student plans to defend his/her dissertation, graduate, or otherwise access university resources, the student must enroll in EDUS 899. Continual enrollment is both a School of Education and Graduate School policy.

**See the graduate school policy on attendance and enrollment at:**  
<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/attendance-enrollment-policies/>

**D. Independent Study.** Only six credit hours of independent study can be applied towards the minimum 48 credits required for the doctoral program. However, students may find in consultation with their advisor that they need to take additional independent study courses above the six credit limit. Students and their advisors must fill out an independent study agreement form no later than the first week of the semester in which they are enrolled. The independent study form (See Appendix J) is available on the SOE Doctoral Programs Blackboard organization. Students must obtain track coordinator's signature prior to submitting the form to the Office of Graduate Studies.

**E. Other Program Coursework Requirements.** All program coursework (excluding the dissertation) must total a minimum of 39 credit hours. Of those credits, no more than 12 credit hours can be at the 500 level. Lastly, a minimum of three credits must be taken outside of the School of Education (this can be a course that meets other program requirements such as the research elective or a concentration class) or it may be a requirement over and above the 48 credit minimum.

**F. EDUS 890: Dissertation Seminar.** This course is designed to help students develop a dissertation research concept into the components of a dissertation prospectus. Students who have not had the opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities, coursework, or research projects under the direction of a faculty mentor resulting in a critical review of the literature in the area of their dissertation should plan to take this course. In order to be eligible for 890, students must write a Concept Paper that is approved by the student's advisor or chair. See Appendix O for the Concept Paper guidelines. Students who take



EDUS 890 must pass this seminar with a grade of "C" or better in order to enroll in EDUS 899: Dissertation Research. Students who wish to opt out of taking EDUS 890 must have permission from their dissertation chair and submit a Change of Program Form, a Dissertation Committee Form, and a one-page abstract describing the context for and purpose of the dissertation study. For additional information about EDUS 890 see the dissertation section of this handbook.

**G. Prospectus Hearing.** Students may schedule a prospectus hearing after satisfactory completion of EDUS 890: Dissertation Seminar (or the optional paperwork described above), all required coursework, and the comprehensive exam.

To schedule a prospectus hearing, a student must:

1. Get approval from dissertation chair (with grades and program requirements checked)
2. Contact Office of Graduate Studies to reserve doctoral hearing room for date agreed upon by dissertation committee. Please have at least **two alternative dates** available. Schedule no later than 3 weeks prior to desired date.
3. Submit copy of prospectus to Office of Graduate Studies and committee **3 weeks** prior to hearing via hard copy or electronically to [soedocstudy@vcu.edu](mailto:soedocstudy@vcu.edu)
4. E-mail Office of Graduate Studies at [soedocstudy@vcu.edu](mailto:soedocstudy@vcu.edu) with name, title of prospectus and list of committee chair and members.

The student should contact his or her committee chair to determine the method of submission (paper or electronic) for the committee's copy of the prospectus.

E-mailing the Office of Graduate Studies is essential for making sure you have a room in which to make your presentation and efficient posting of the hearing announcement. The hearing is a public meeting and is announced to the School of Education only after the Director of Graduate Studies has reviewed and approved the student's prospectus and notifies the Office of Graduate Studies.

**H. Advancement to Candidacy.** A student becomes a Ph.D. candidate after having completed all coursework required for the degree, including EDUS 890 unless the student has opted out, passed the comprehensive exam, and successfully presented the prospectus. Students who have fulfilled all of these requirements must submit the Advancement to Candidacy form (See Appendix T) in order to advance to candidacy. The student and all committee members sign this form at the conclusion of a successful prospectus hearing. The student then submits the form to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies submits the form to the Graduate School where candidacy is ultimately approved or denied based on the student's completion of all required courses and receipt of acceptable grades in those courses.

**Please see the Graduate Bulletin for more information about degree candidacy:**

<http://www.pubapps.vcu.edu/bulletins/graduate/?uid=10045&iid=30652>

## **II. Advisor**

### **A. Role of the Advisor**

The advisor:

1. Meets periodically with the advisee;
2. Provides appropriate advice, support and counseling;
3. Monitors advisee's progress in the program;
4. Identifies and evaluates appropriate co-curricular experiences; and
5. Assist the student in completing required paperwork.

### **B. Request to Change Advisor**

The student may maintain the original advisor for the duration of the program or may change his or her advisor through mutual agreement with and consent of his or her current advisor, the requested advisor, and the track coordinator. If a student requests an advisor outside of his or her track, the track coordinator for the chosen advisor must review the request and agree to the change.

### **C. Advisor as Chair**

The advisor may become the chair of the student's dissertation research committee or the student and the advisor may, upon mutual agreement, opt to invite another faculty member to be the chair.

## **III. Program Planning**

### **A. Preliminary Program of Study.**

Student and advisor develop a preliminary program of study (See Appendix E) and submit it to the Office of Graduate Studies during the student's first semester in the program or no later than the semester in which nine credits are earned. The preliminary program of study is for initial planning purposes only and is expected to change. Completing it assures that students meet with advisors and take the most important courses required for the qualifying exam. In addition, it assures that students and advisors have time to explore possibilities for co-curricular activities and mentors. Once the preliminary program of study is completed, both the student and advisor sign it, then the student submits it to the track coordinator for signature and forwarding to the Office of Graduate Studies.

### **B. Final Program of Study.**

The student's Final Program of Study (See Appendix H) is completed after the first year of coursework during a meeting with the advisor that examines student performance on the qualifying exam. This meeting is part of the review for Continuing Doctoral Status. The student and advisor sign and submit a completed Final Program of Study form to the track coordinator for approval and signature. It is then forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies for filing. This program plan of study is used as part of the final review of coursework and requirements for advancement to candidacy, so it is imperative that the form be on file and that any changes to it are documented as explained below.

### **C. Request for Change in Final Program of Study**

Once the Final Program of Study is approved, further changes are not expected. If revision is necessary, a Request for Program Change form (See Appendix I) must be completed and approved by the advisor and track coordinator. The student, advisor, and track coordinator must sign the Request for Change of Program of Study prior to the student submitting it to the Office of Graduate Studies for filing.

#### **D. Transfer Credits**

Transfer credits refer to graduate courses taken after the awarding of a master's degree and prior to admission to this program, whether taken at VCU or another accredited college or university.

To request that credits be transferred you must submit the following to Office of Graduate Studies:

1. Request for Special Action Form
2. Transfer Equivalency Form
3. Statement of support from advisor and chair

You can request these forms from the Office of Graduate Studies or access them via the Graduate School web site at <http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/forms/index.html>

The Office of Graduate Studies will forward those materials to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval and then to the Graduate School for approval.

In making a request to transfer credits to this program, be aware that:

1. You may apply up to **nine** credit hours that are applicable to another accredited graduate program. These credits must be acceptable by the offering institution toward its own graduate program.
2. You may not transfer graduate credit earned prior to the awarding of a master's degree. This does not apply to the Educational Psychology concentration.
3. You may not apply credits earned toward another degree.
4. You must have received a grade of "B" or above in each course for which you are requesting transfer.
5. You must have earned Continuing Doctoral Status (CDS) before you can transfer credits.
6. Transfer credits must have been awarded no more than **eight years** prior to completion of all requirements for awarding the Ph.D.

*For credits earned at another institution during the program:*

If you have already begun the program and want to study at another university for the purposes

of transferring credits, you will need to first request permission from your track coordinator and the Director of Graduate Studies. Your request should include:

- a. the name of the school
- b. course description
- c. name of offering professor
- d. statement of how the proposed course relates to the concentration area
- e. statement of support from your advisor/chair.

Your request must be signed by your advisor and track coordinator, and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval by the Director of Graduate Studies. After taking the course, you must submit official transcripts to your track coordinator and a copy to your advisor and Office of Graduate Studies reflecting your grade in the course, along with the Transfer Equivalency form. The Office of Graduate Studies will forward those materials over to the Graduate School along with a special action form.

*For required Ph.D. in Education program courses taken prior to being admitted to the program:*

You must submit a request to have these courses considered for transfer along with a statement of support from your advisor/chair to the track coordinator and the Director of Graduate Studies. If the request is granted, you will then submit the Transfer Equivalency form to the Office of Graduate Studies.

To access the Graduate School policy on transfer credits go to:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/transfer-credit/>

## **E. Leave of Absence**

An admitted student may request a leave of absence any time after having been enrolled for program course work. The student must make a request in writing to their advisor, track coordinator and Office of Graduate Studies. The request may be for a maximum period of one year.

If the requested leave of absence includes exceeding the time limit in the program, a request for an extension and a letter of support from his or her advisor is also required. All letters can be addressed to the track coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to submit the requested documents to the Office of Graduate Studies for processing. If the leave of absence is granted, the original eight-year time limit for completing the degree requirements, including successfully defending the dissertation, remains in effect. Students are responsible for maintaining any paper related to the granting of a leave of absence and must contact the Office of Graduate Studies prior to their scheduled return. Students are responsible for checking the university calendar prior to their return in order to ensure that they are aware of registration deadlines.

## **F. Withdrawal from Courses & Program**

### Withdrawal from Courses

To withdraw officially from VCU courses, students may withdraw online via e-services (<http://www.ts.vcu.edu/askit/university-resources/eservices/>) or submit complete withdrawal forms to the Office of Records and Registration by the official withdrawal date as published in the official VCU Calendar. The Official Withdrawal Form is obtained from the Office of Records and Registration (Monroe Park Campus: Harris Hall, First Floor; MCV Campus: Sanger Hall, Room 1-055). Failure to complete this process may result in the assignment of failing grades in all or some of the courses.

A grade of withdrawn (W) will be recorded on the permanent student academic record for all courses from which students officially withdraw.

To see more on the Graduate School withdrawal policy, please go to:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/withdrawal-graduate-program/>

### Withdrawal from Program

To withdraw from the program, a student must submit a written request to their advisor, track coordinator and the Office of Graduate Studies stating that he or she wishes to be withdrawn. The Office of Graduate Studies will then file a Special Action form with the Graduate School and the student will be officially withdrawn. If the student was enrolled in classes at the time of the request, the student must also submit a Course Request Form with the advisor's signature to the Office of Graduate Studies indicating the courses from which he or she will be withdrawn.

## **G. Termination from Program**

The following are the conditions under which a student could be terminated or reviewed for termination from the program:

1. *Termination*
  - a. Earning three grades of "C" or lower while enrolled in the doctoral program
  - b. Earning a cumulative GPA of 2.99 or lower in the semester in which the 15th program hour is earned and the student has not yet taken the Qualifying Exam will be terminated from the program
  - c. Earning two "U" grades or an "F" in EDUS 899: Dissertation Research
  - d. Earning a final grade of "F" in the thesis or dissertation
  - e. Unprofessional conduct while a doctoral student or candidate
2. *Reviewed for possible termination*
  - a. Earning any grade of "D" or "F"
  - b. Earning a grade of C prior to passing the Qualifying Exam

## **H. Reinstatement into Program**

A student who has been terminated from the program may appeal to the program faculty to be reinstated. If the program faculty does not reverse the decision, the student has the right to appeal to the dean of the Graduate School. If the decision to terminate is reversed, the student will be reinstated into the program. The student may be allowed to register for courses during

the pendency of the appeal, understanding that he/she will be dropped retroactively if the termination is upheld

## **I. Readmission Policy**

If a student leaves the program voluntarily or because of failure to meet one or more program requirements and was not reinstated upon appeal, he/she may seek readmission. Readmission must be sought through the regular admission process adhering to deadline dates. The process is as follows:

1. The applicant submits a complete admission packet. This includes recent references, current GRE scores (less than five years old), transcripts, resume/vita and personal statement.
2. The applicant submits a written statement indicating that the application is for readmission. This statement must include a rationale for consideration of readmission, and a summary of relevant factors that have changed the applicant's situation and increased the expectation of success for the applicant.
3. The applicant completes the entire admission review process. This includes all steps of the two-tier process.
4. The track coordinator, Director of Graduate Studies and Senior Associate Dean must be informed that the applicant is seeking readmission, and will review the applicant packet only if it meets all the above conditions.

If readmitted, the applicant will be expected to meet all other program requirements, including continuous enrollment, grades, program requirements, and the eight-year time limit for completion of the program.

## **IV. Track Transfer**

In the event that a student should want to transfer from one track to another, the student makes the request in writing to their current track coordinator as well as to the track coordinator of the track they wish to transfer to. Students will need to complete the second tier of the admission process. Students will need to complete an interview or submit a writing sample if the track coordinator requests.

The track coordinators then make a recommendation to the Director of Graduate Studies whether the student could be accepted into the new track. If all agree, the student is notified and the transfer is completed. If it is decided that the request is not in the best interest of the student and/or the program, the student is notified by the Director of Graduate Studies that the request is denied and no further action is taken.

It is important to note that a change in tracks may necessitate the student taking additional course work. When a student is considering a request for a change in program track, it is recommended that he or she talk with track coordinators who can provide more details about the expertise of

faculty and the courses that are part of the concentration.

## V. CURRICULUM

### A. Organization of the Curriculum

The program curriculum is organized into five (5) components. A chart summarizing these components and how each is included within the tracks is presented in. The components are as follows:

#### 1. Foundation Component (6 hours minimum)

This component emphasizes theoretical and social issues of scholarly inquiry, policy, and ethics which all leaders in urban service institutions must research in order to be better able to respond to the challenges they confront in their organizations. The courses in this component include the following.

- a. **EDUS 702: Foundations of Educational Research & Doctoral Scholarship I** is the first course of a two-semester sequence and is designed to explore the limits and validity of scholarly inquiry and research within a social and political context.
- b. **EDUS 703: Foundations of Educational Research & Doctoral Scholarship II** is the second course of a two-semester sequence and is designed to examine in greater detail the limits and validity of relationships between politics, policy and ethics and research in an urban context.

#### 2. Research Component (12 hours minimum)

This component emphasizes the prerequisite skills essential to designing, conducting, and interpreting research. It also provides the research, statistical, and computer tools and resources necessary to produce research beneficial to the urban leader. Students are required to demonstrate competency in areas of research methodology and statistics appropriate to doctoral level study and must have obtained a grade of B or better in EDUS 660 and STAT 508 or the equivalent, prior to enrolling for courses in this component. EDUS 660 or STAT 508 may be used for one's restrictive elective but not for the research elective. The courses included in this component are the following:

- a. **STAT/SOCY 608: Statistics for Social Research**
- b. **EDUS 710: Educational Research Design**
- c. **EDUS 711: Qualitative Methods and Analysis**
- d. **Advanced Research Elective**

#### 3. Concentration Component: Track Options (18 hours minimum)

This component is designed to allow the student to pursue a series of courses that provide a specific focus and serve as the student's primary discipline. These courses are expected to

develop the in-depth knowledge and skills in an identifiable area that is congruent with the student's current or projected career field. It is at this point in the program that the student pursues study in one of the following tracks which includes courses related to the professional roles and responsibilities typical of track enrollees. More specifically, these are:

- a. **Art Education.** The Art Education concentration of the Ph.D. in Education allows students to connect contemporary art and education theories and philosophies, practical and professional experiences, and impactful research to develop an area of expertise relevant to the field of art education. The program distinguishes itself by integrating urban community engagement, digital and emerging media, and research and assessment in diverse settings. Graduates will be highly qualified to serve in teaching, research, and leadership positions at universities and in arts and education organizations.
- b.. **Counselor Education.** The Counselor Education and Supervision track of the Ph.D. program is designed to prepare students for careers as counselor educators, counselor supervisors, researchers, and leaders in the counseling profession. The program provides a unique emphasis on social justice and advocacy.
- c. **Curriculum, Culture & Change.** Designed to offer doctoral students rigorous perspectives on curriculum, advocacy and social justice, while maintaining a commitment to instruction and learning, its graduates are well prepared for curriculum and instruction (C&I) leadership positions in academia and in school systems at the building level and above. The Track's theoretical depth also readies scholars with a wide range of curricular interests—urban education, rural education, linguistically diverse groups, adult learners, oppressed groups, critical pedagogy, philosophical and sociocultural foundations of education, etc.—to advocate for change across institutions and contexts, including communities, families, systems, schools and the university.
- d. **Educational Leadership.** Designed primarily for those interested in critically examining leadership in education. This track is conceptualized as a set of learning experiences that allow students to grow from being consumers to producers of research that draws inspiration from real-world problems of education and leadership. Emphasis is placed on conducting problem-finding, problem-solving, and especially translational research.
- e. **Educational Psychology.** Designed for research-oriented doctoral students who want to study the success of students in educational environments. Doctoral students will integrate theory and research in the areas of educational psychology, including; developmental psychology, cognition, motivation, assessment, and diversity to better study learning in schools or school-like settings. Graduates are well prepared to teach in educational psychology and related programs at the university level; as well as take leadership positions in state and local research and policy environments.



- f. Research and Evaluation.** Designed primarily for individuals with responsibility for conducting research and evaluation projects in and for agencies and educational organizations and for individuals interested in teaching in higher education. Emphasis is placed on developing proficiency quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches of inquiry, providing students with a breadth of ways to study varied educational and social research questions.
  - g. Special Education and Disability Policy Leadership.** Designed primarily to prepare individuals to become future faculty, scholars, and leaders in the field of special education. Emphasis is placed on advanced skills in the areas of research and personnel preparation.
  - h. Sport Leadership.** The sport leadership track in the Ph.D. in Education program is designed for students to research, comprehend and interpret contemporary literature as it relates to leadership in the sport industry and to extend our knowledge and understanding of leadership in that industry. Students will have the opportunity to integrate theory and practice in the specific areas of economics, finance, marketing, management, communications and sociology of sport. Upon completion of the doctoral course work and dissertation, students will be prepared for higher education positions in sport management/administration and/or sport leadership programs across the U.S.
  - i. Urban Services Leadership.** Applicants are expected to have experience working with adult learners in organizational, community, government, healthcare, or non-profit settings, or within the community in roles as faculty, faculty developers, trainers, human resource development and organization development professionals, adult literacy educators, and other roles in which they are actively involved in the teaching and training of adult learners.
- 4. Co-curricular Activities.** Although not a credit-earning part of the program, co-curricular activities are essential to help prepare doctoral candidates for their future roles as researchers, university faculty, administrators, and other leadership positions. Students will work with their advisors to determine necessary co-curricular activities, which are chosen in light of track requirements, student experience, and goals for individual student's professional development. Examples of co-curricular activities include conducting research, teaching at the university level, participation in preparing a proposal for a grant-funded project, presentation at a state or national professional conference, writing a manuscript for publication, and/or participation in leadership positions. Participation in these activities will be monitored and documented by the student's advisor. Advisors will notify the Office of Graduate Studies when required co-curricular activities (as listed on the student's Final Program of Study) are completed. Students must complete a co-curricular activity form, sign it, and obtain the approval and signature of the advisor, then submit it to the track coordinator for approval and signature. The track coordinator will forward the co-curricular activity form (See Appendix K) to the Office of Graduate Studies for filing. The form is available on the Ph.D. in Education Program Blackboard.
- 5. Externship (3 hours minimum).** The externship is an intense, semester-long experience

designed to enhance the student's program, career goals, and professional development. The externship site is outside the setting in which the student is currently employed and ideally in a different, but related career area in which the student has had no or limited prior work experience. It is expected that the student will develop an appreciation for the network of service delivery systems in the urban setting and acquire additional leadership skills to function more effectively within that network. It is important that students discuss their ideas for an externship with their advisor and/or track coordinator as tracks may have specific requirements and/or guidelines for this experience. Students may not register for the externship until they have been awarded Continuing Doctoral Status.

Additional details regarding the externship:

a) Application for Externship. In consultation with his or her advisor, the student, prepares and submits a statement outlining the proposed externship. The advisor, upon approving and signing the application, forwards it to the track coordinator for final approval and signature. The externship application (See Appendix L) is available on the Ph.D. in Education Program Blackboard page. Deadlines for applying are on or about the following dates, please check the Ph.D. in Education Blackboard each semester for exact dates: **December 1st** for spring semester, **July 15th** for fall semester, and **April 15th** for summer session.

b) The Externship Site. It is the student's responsibility to identify a site for the externship; however the student's advisor must approve the proposed site.

c) Individual Responsibilities in the Externship

1. The Student.

Timing and Setting. The student is responsible for consulting with his/her advisor to determine the appropriate timing of the externship and to develop an understanding of appropriate types of settings consistent with the student's experience, program, and professional goals. Based on this information and the requirements of the externship application statement, the student initiates contacts and consults with personnel in possible externship settings. Once the student and advisor agree on a setting, the student, in consultation with the proposed on-site supervisor, completes the written portion of the application. During the externship experience, the student works as a professional under the direction of the on-site supervisor and is responsible for decisions made and tasks assigned within the setting during the externship period. The student maintains the records and materials required for the externship, prepares the final written summary report, and submits all needed materials to his/her advisor within grading deadlines.

Log. The student maintains a log of all hours spent on and off-site, including a brief description of the type of tasks and related experiences completed during the time frame. The log should document which hours were spent on-

site and which off-site. Additional time beyond the 120 hours that is spent in related, but off-site tasks may be reported for information. The log must be submitted to the advisor, who will review it as part of the externship grading process.

**Product.** The student is required to develop and submit to his/her advisor a product from the externship experience. During development of the externship experience, the student discusses with his/her advisor and proposed on-site supervisor the general nature of the expected product or products, e.g., an instrument, manual, booklet, publishable article, bibliography, resource list, workshop kit, or similar material. Any change in the type of product to be developed must be approved in writing by the advisor. The product(s) must be submitted to the advisor, who will include a grade on the product(s) as part of the grade for the externship.

**Final Report.** The student will also submit a final summary report to his/her advisor. At a minimum, the summary report must include the name and address of the agency in which the externship was conducted, the major service or products of the agency, the name of the on-site supervisor, the time log, and a brief review of the purposes of the externship. The summary report must also include evidence of how the five goals and the five specific measurable objectives presented in the Externship Application were met. The summary report is reviewed by the advisor as part of the grade for the externship.

## 2. The University Advisor.

**Oversight.** The student's advisor works with the student to determine the scheduling of the externship within the doctoral course sequence, develop ideas for appropriate types of experience, and approve the site selected by the student. When the student has completed the externship application, which specifies the site, the on-site supervisor, and such specifics as time, experiences, and products; the advisor reviews the application, recommends any needed changes, and gives approval in writing. The advisor submits the approved application to the track coordinator for approval. During the externship experience, the University advisor serves as liaison between the on-site supervisor and the University, as needed.

At the end of the externship experience, the advisor reviews the application, log, product, on-site supervisor's evaluation, and the student's summary report and determines the student's externship grade. The student's advisor also submits the grade to the track coordinator for entry into Banner.

## 3. The On-Site Supervisor.

**Guidance and supervision.** The term on-site supervisor refers to the person at

the externship site who provides guidance and supervision of the student, while also serving as liaison between the agency or institution and the student's university advisor. The on-site supervisor provides professional direction to the student while in the host agency by orienting the student to the setting; acquainting the student with agency tasks and timelines; overseeing the work of the student; and providing a written summative evaluation of the student's performance.

## 6. Dissertation Component (9 hours minimum)

a) EDUS 890 Dissertation Seminar. Three credit hours of the dissertation component are allocated to the Dissertation Seminar, which is designed to aid the student in identifying the resources and refining the skills required to initiate, develop, and complete a scholarly prospectus and dissertation. Students must submit and obtain approval for his or her Concept Paper before participating in EDUS 890 Dissertation Seminar. Prior to enrolling in EDUS 890, students must have selected a chair and must have his or her permission to enroll. EDUS 890 is required of students in certain tracks and these students must take and pass EDUS 890 with a grade of "C" or above prior to enrolling in EDUS 899. For students not required to take EDUS 890, they must have permission of their chair as well as have all committee members in place prior to enrolling in the next requirement, Dissertation Research EDUS 899.

b) EDUS 899 Dissertation Research. Six credit hours of the dissertation component are allocated to Dissertation Research, during which time students are dedicated to scholarly pursuit and completion of the dissertation. The *VCU Thesis and Dissertation Manual and the American Psychological Association Manual 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*, must be followed in the preparation of the dissertation.

1) The student is required to consult with his or her dissertation chair each semester prior to registering for dissertation research hours. The student must register for a minimum of three credit hours of dissertation research each semester, including the summer session if the student will consult with his or her chair or use other university resources, until at least six hours in which the student has earned satisfactory progress have been completed. However, if the dissertation requires additional time for completion, the student is required to register for a minimum of one credit hour of dissertation research each subsequent semester, including the summer session if the students will need to access university resources, until the dissertation is successfully defended.

2) At the end of each semester the dissertation chair submits a grade of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" for the dissertation credits for which the student has enrolled.

3) A student who receives two "U" grades or an "F" in EDUS 899: Dissertation Research will be terminated from the program. "All thesis and dissertation credits are to be graded each semester as satisfactory (S), unsatisfactory (U) or fail (F).

There is no limit to the number of these credits a student may take while pursuing completion of the degree. Receipt of the grade of U is formal notification to the student of unsatisfactory progress. A student who receives a final grade of F in the thesis or dissertation will be terminated from the graduate program. A grade of S or U is not included in the calculation of the GPA. A grade of incomplete (I) may not be assigned for a course approved for satisfactory, unsatisfactory or fail grading.”

To see the Graduate School policies on grades go to:

<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/grades/>

c) In addition to the formal prerequisites and requirements related to the Ph.D. in Education program, students are encouraged to prepare in other ways for the dissertation seminar, as well as completion of the dissertation itself. Students should focus on both general, long term, and more immediate, specific preparation in the following areas:

1. Evolving a scholarly knowledge of a broad area leading to dissertation research. As the student progresses through the program he or she should select electives and course work that will focus on promising and interesting areas for dissertation research. In general, the more thorough the scholarly understanding of relevant areas, the smoother the process of dissertation development. Topic areas can be discarded, refined, or explored further. Specific research questions can be generated.
2. Developing or refining the tools that can enhance and support the development of a prospectus and dissertation. A working knowledge of resources that will facilitate research, writing, and manuscript preparation can assure clear, accurate communication about the dissertation topic. Awareness of and experience in using the reference tools, primary sources, periodicals, organizations, and other research tools in the topical area are critical skills for successful dissertation preparation. Course experiences in selecting research design, processing data, summarizing studies, and critiquing reports should be applied and practiced whenever possible. In addition, the use of word processing, referencing software, and other computerized aids to complete course assignments and research papers throughout the doctoral program can be expected to increase the quality and speed of dissertation preparation.
3. Forge the scholarly and collegial links that can foster direction and support during the dissertation development process. Look for faculty who are conducting research using methodology that would be useful for your dissertation study and work with them as one of your co-curricular activities. Course instructors, externship placement contacts, workshop presenters, and faculty members provide vital avenues for networking that can, in turn, contribute depth and breadth as the dissertation committee is determined and as the dissertation

evolves. The individual interests and talents of each individual can provide further sources and resources, both formal and informal, during various phases of dissertation development.

## **VI. STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

Admission to the doctoral program is based upon an assessment of the student's academic strengths, professional experience, and leadership potential, all of which affect the probability of successfully completing the doctoral program. Such success is dependent upon the doctoral student's continuing growth in knowledge acquisition, concept synthesis, and integrative application.

Thus, periodic student evaluation while enrolled in the doctoral program is important in three ways: (1) it is beneficial to the student in assessing his or her progress; (2) it is essential in determining the student's probability of successful program completion; and (3) it is critical to the maintenance of program integrity.

### **A. Grades**

Within the doctoral program, course grades provide an important evaluative tool for students, as well as guidance for advisors. While doctoral students by their very admission into a doctoral program have demonstrated skills and knowledge beyond that of master's level students, performance in individual courses with specific content and expectations can vary widely. Average doctoral work should, therefore, be at a "B" level or higher. In using course grades within the Ph.D. in Education Program, the following specific regulations apply.

1. Students in the Ph.D. in Education Program must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.2 to graduate.
2. The academic standing of any graduate student who receives a grade of "C" or below or the grade of "U" (Unsatisfactory) on required graduate course work will be reviewed for possible action.
3. A student who earns three grades of "C" or lower while enrolled in the doctoral program is automatically terminated from the program. A student earning any grade of "D" or "F" is reviewed for termination. *This does not include any grades of C that were earned prior to being formally accepted into the program; those grades of C will not be transferred in.*
5. No grades below "C" will be accepted for Continuing Doctoral Status (CDS) or graduation.
6. A student who receives two "U" grades or an "F" in EDUS 899: Dissertation Research will be terminated from the program.

### **B. Qualifying Exam**

Students take their qualifying exam after earning 15-18 credits. The exam is offered three times a year in **January, May, and August**.

The purpose of the qualifying exam is to:

1. assure that students have the appropriate foundational knowledge and skills necessary to progress through their doctoral program
2. provide information to allow early identification of students who may not be sufficiently competent to continue in the program
3. to flag students who need further review to validate student competency from other sources of information as identified by the departments/tracks to determine if the student will continue in the program and if so, what additional courses or other experiences are required.

The Qualifying Exam of research and doctoral education foundations will provide a single measure of student knowledge, understanding, and application of the foundations and research/statistics/measurement areas. The exam will assess student competencies that integrate previously taken foundations and research courses (EDUS 660 and STAT 508 as program prerequisites; EDUS 702, EDUS 703, EDUS 608 and EDUS 710) and require students, on-demand, to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key concepts. The exam will be closed-book. Student will receive the questions at the beginning of the exam period and have three hours to provide their answers.

Content for the exam will come primarily from the following four courses:

### **EDUS 702-703: Foundations Component Objectives**

This course will:

1. Acclimate beginning Ph.D. students into the realm of doctoral studies
2. Encourage students to reflect on their place in their program in particular and on the wider contexts within which their programs/fields are situated
3. Expose participants to the field of epistemology, or the study of knowledge—particularly as it applies to educational research
4. Provide interdisciplinary exposure by giving students opportunities to work with students from other programs
5. Impart skills necessary for the conduct of research and scholarship.
6. Study the major research paradigms and help students understand what they need to learn to be comfortable working in diverse paradigms
7. Analyze ethical issues in research and scholarship
8. Discuss various research methodologies, especially their ethical and political components
9. Provide a setting where doctoral students from diverse specializations develop heightened sensitivity to the complex nature of contemporary education, especially urban and global issues in education (diversity, race, class, gender)
10. Introduce students to the history and purposes as well as conventions and rules of the IRB process

### **EDUS 660: Research Methods in Education**

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the fundamental terms, concepts, and designs characteristic of both quantitative and qualitative educational research. The course emphasizes the learning and application of skills that will enable you to design your own research studies and critically evaluate published research articles in an effort to encourage data-driven reflection. Specifically you will be able to evaluate: (a) the methodological procedures that an author followed, (b) the results that were reported, and (c) the practical significance of the study. These skills include not only the ability to comprehend common research designs, methods, and procedures but also the ability to interpret and communicate the research results clearly, concisely, logically and in a coherent manner. This course will:

1. Introduce you to different types of approaches to research and methodological designs
2. Enable you to understand, interpret and critically evaluate research articles
3. Prepare you to design your own research investigations

In this course students will develop:

1. An understanding of quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods approaches to research.
2. The ability to select a research problem and formulate appropriate research hypotheses and/or questions.
3. The ability to conduct a review of educational literature from texts, journals and computer library databases.
4. Skills to write a synthesis of the literature as it relates to a specific research problem.
5. Knowledge of experimental, quasi-experimental and non-experimental research designs and their application to different research questions.
6. An understanding of descriptive statistical techniques such as measures of central tendency, standard deviation and correlation.
7. An understanding of the ethical principles that pertain to research involving human subjects and research conducted in educational settings.
8. An appreciation for the conduct of research in education to improve practice; inform decisions, and contribute to better student outcomes.
9. The ability to engage in data-driven reflection through the continued use of published educational research and/or practice-based activities.
10. A viable research proposal.

### **EDUS 710: Educational Research Design**

The purpose of this course is to examine complex quantitative designs and concepts that are commonly encountered in conducting quantitative research in applied social settings. The course assumes knowledge of fundamental principles of research, such as identifying research problems or questions, reviewing literature, sampling, choosing appropriate assessment techniques to gather information, simple research designs, internal and external validity, types of research, descriptive and inferential statistics, and a working knowledge of PASW (SPSS) data analysis software. Specifically, there are two prerequisites for this course, EDUS 660, and EDUS 608. These basic principles and skills are extended to the more complex situations that are frequently encountered in applied



settings. The course is designed for doctoral students. An important goal of the course is to enable students to become critically reflective in the use of quantitative data for decision-making. More specifically, the objectives include student understanding and application of:

1. the effects of sampling on non-experimental and experimental designs
2. data entry and SPSS software for data analysis
3. advanced principles of measurement as related to research design
4. statistical, internal, construct, and external experimental validity
5. survey and non-experimental designs
6. experimental and quasi-experimental designs, including single and multiple factor designs
7. multivariate research designs
8. factor Analysis
9. statistical analyses for single factor and multiple factor designs
10. Nested experimental designs requiring HLM analyses
11. differences between statistical significance and effect size

The following are examples of the nature of the questions that could be asked on the exam. Not all questions would be included for any single exam. A single research article could be used for application of both foundations and research principles.

### **Questions related to the foundations component**

#### *1. Short Answer Comprehension Questions: Sample*

- What are some distinguishing characteristics of positivism, post-positivism, and non-positivism as research paradigms?
- Explain how the NRC report (Shavelson and Towne, 2002) could be described as a document demonstrating how science, social policy and politics meet?
- Compare and contrast modern and postmodern worldviews.
- What role do “values” have in educational research? This is quite obviously a contested point, so please summarize competing positions on this question and be sure to include who might support the positions (i.e. researchers coming from particular perspectives or political positions or employing certain methodologies).

*2. Application Question (s): Sample* - Students will be presented with a description of a research study and the statistical results (note: this will be the same study used for the research component). Students will be asked:

- What research paradigm appears to be operational in this research endeavor?
- What evidence is there to support your answer?
- Select an alternative research paradigm to the one you identified above and consider how the research might differ if the researcher employed this different paradigm. For example, how would the adoption of say, a pragmatic, critical, race, ethnicity or gender-based perspective alter the research (note: this could be in terms of research questions, design/methodology and even findings)?

## Reference

Shavelson, R., & Towne, L. (2002). *Scientific research in education, Report of the National Research Council's Committee on Scientific Principles in Education*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

### Questions related to the research component

#### 1. *Short Answer Comprehension/Understanding*

- a. How do quantitative and qualitative research methods differ?
- b. What are appropriate uses of criterion-referenced and norm-referenced test scores?
- c. What information does the standard deviation and standard error of measurement provide?
- d. What ethical issues should researchers consider when conducting research in school-based settings?
- e. If you were developing a survey instrument what procedures would you employ to enhance the reliability and validity of measurement?
- f. What is the difference between true experimental and quasi experimental designs?
- g. What does the phrase “plausible rival hypothesis” refer to?

#### 2. *Application*

- a. Students will be presented with a description of a research study and the statistical results then asked to identify the research design, independent and dependent variables, extraneous and confounding variables, as well as the scale(s) of measurement that result from the data collection methods/measures. Students will be asked to provide an interpretation of the statistical results.

#### 3. *Journal Article Critique*

- a. What is the problem under investigation and purpose of the study?
- b. What are the research questions?
- c. What approach to research is used (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method)?
- d. What type of research design (e.g. experimental, quasi-experimental, descriptive) and data collection methods are used in the study? Why is this design appropriate to address the research questions?
- e. What are the main results and findings of the study? Do you think the conclusions reached by the researcher(s) are valid?
- f. What are the strengths of the study?
- g. How could the researcher(s) change the design, methods, or procedures to enhance the internal validity of the study?
- h. Do you think this study makes a contribution to the field? Consider the literature, the quality of the study as well as the practical significance of the findings in your response.

## C. Grading of Qualifying Exam Responses

Faculty who teach School of Education classes in Educational Foundations and Research will grade the exam responses. Results will be distributed to students and their advisors. If necessary, a follow up meeting between the student and advisor will be held to discuss any remediation

plans or steps to be taken. At this point, the final program of study will be completed by the student and advisor and will include any of these follow-up classes and/or co-curricular activities. The final program of study will then be forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies.

#### **D. Continuing Doctoral Status**

Students who have passed the qualifying exam and who have earned a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3 by the end of the semester in which the 15<sup>th</sup> program hour is earned will be awarded Continuing Doctoral Status (CDS). Students who have passed the qualifying exam but who have not earned a cumulative GPA of 3.3 by the end of the semester in which the 15th program hour is earned must have a joint conference with his or her advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies to develop a plan designed to achieve CDS. The conference and the plan will include:

- a) A review of a statement written by the student concerning his or her progress in the program, citing strengths, and possible deficiencies, and suggesting ways to improve the GPA.
- b) Specifying the required course work for achieving the 3.3 GPA required for awarding CDS. The student may also be required to enroll in and complete a writing skills course offered by the University or meet other appropriate requirements.

Consideration shall be given to satisfying other degree requirements, including the requirement of completing 12 credits per calendar year.

- c) Establishing the time frame - not to exceed the next two consecutive semesters within which the student will complete courses and other requirements.

Prior to taking the Qualifying Exam, students earning a cumulative GPA of 2.99 or lower in the semester in which the 15th program hour is earned and who do not have the support of their track to continue in the program will be terminated from the program.

#### **E. Comprehensive Examination**

From its inception, the Ph.D. in Education Program has been designed to develop interdisciplinary conceptual skills beyond the traditional in-depth extension of the master's program and to emphasize rigorous thinking and the capacity to integrate theory with practice. The comprehensive examination component of the program seeks to ensure that each degree candidate can demonstrate in writing, the ability to conceptualize, apply, and communicate information at an advanced, doctoral level.

The process of developing, administering and grading the comprehensive examination for a specific track is coordinated by the faculty of the track. The decision concerning when to take the comprehensive examination should be made in consultation with the student's advisor. Consideration should be given to a number of factors, including (a) the degree to which formulating a draft prospectus may assist in writing the examination; (b) the availability and scheduling of final program courses, including EDUS 890 and EDUS 899; and (c) the require-

ments for continuous registration and for sequencing of the seminar, prospectus review, and actual dissertation research hours. A student who wishes to take the examination must notify his or her advisor and/or track coordinator the semester prior to the semester in which he/she plans to take the examination.

For an overview of each track's policy see Appendix M. For specifics, students should consult with their advisor or track coordinator. When comprehensive examination is completed, the result needs to be reported to the Office of Graduate Studies via Appendix N Comprehensive Exam Report Form.

\*Note: Registration for the examination (when a student informs Office of Graduate Studies that they will take the exam) constitutes an examination attempt by the student. Failure to take the examination will count as a failure of the examination and the student will have only one more opportunity to take the examination. Students must be registered for a university course the semester in which the exam will be taken. If the student has no other program course for which to register, he or she should register for EDUS 641.

## **VII. Dissertation Seminar and the Dissertation Committee**

### **A. About Dissertation Seminar**

**EDUS 890: Dissertation Seminar** is a three credit course that can apply toward the nine credit minimum for dissertation research. It is designed to aid the student in identifying the resources and refining the skills required to initiate, develop, and complete a scholarly prospectus and dissertation. Preparation for the Dissertation Seminar is a process that should begin when the student enrolls in his or her initial course work. Permission of the committee chair and submission of an acceptable Concept Paper is required for enrollment in EDUS 890.

An orientation to EDUS 890 and the Concept Paper is held twice each year for students in the Ph.D. in Education program in **September** and **February** (see Ph.D. in Education Blackboard for dates). Students can learn more specifics about the seminar and the requirements of the Concept Paper during these orientation sessions. See Appendix O for the Concept Paper guidelines.

If a student's co-curricular activities, coursework, or research projects have allowed him or her to conduct an extensive, critical review of the literature in the area of their dissertation, and the student is further along in the identification of a dissertation study, more comfortable in applying research methodology to answer research questions, and more comfortable in their technical writing skills, the student may not need to take EDUS 890. The student and advisor/dissertation chair may decide that the student does not need the formal instruction provided in EDUS 890. Instead of submitting the Concept Paper, doctoral students should submit the following to the track coordinator indicating that they wish to opt out of taking EDUS 890:

- Change of Program of Study Form (signed by student and advisor/chair)
- Dissertation Committee Agreement Form (if not already submitted)
- One page abstract (provides an overview of the dissertation study)

## **B. Selecting a Dissertation Committee**

After the student has been awarded Continuing Doctoral Status, and by the time the student has completed 27 credit hours in the program, the student should meet with his or her advisor to begin the process of selecting a dissertation committee. The committee must be selected and names submitted for approval to the Office of Graduate Studies by the end of the semester in which the student completes EDUS 890: Dissertation Seminar. It is highly recommended that students choose dissertation committee members PRIOR to beginning EDUS 890.

1. Within the above stated time frame, the student and his or her advisor begin the process of selecting a dissertation chair. Dissertation committees in the Ph.D. in Education Program must have a minimum of four members. Three of the members, including the chair, must be graduate faculty in the School of Education. The fourth member must be a Virginia Commonwealth University graduate faculty member from outside the School of Education. A fifth member may be added at the discretion of the dissertation chair and the student. This member must also be from outside the School of Education and may be from outside the University. There is no expectation that the advisor will chair the student's dissertation committee.
2. After the student and his or her advisor have agreed on the dissertation chair, the dissertation chair and the student develop a list of other proposed dissertation committee members. Members should be chosen based on their knowledge of the content and/or methodology that will be chosen for the dissertation study. One member must be an expert in methodology, although there does not necessarily need to be a separate methodologist (that is, the methodologist could also be the chair, or the VCU faculty outside the school of education). The student contacts those nominees to determine their interest and willingness to serve. If any person declines to serve, the student and the dissertation chair select a replacement. This procedure is followed until a committee has been selected. See Responsibilities of Dissertation Committee Members for a more detailed explanation of the responsibilities of the student, committee chair, and committee members.
3. All members of a dissertation committee must have been granted or be qualified to be granted graduate faculty status or affiliate graduate faculty status. If a student chooses an individual for his or committee that does not have graduate faculty status or affiliate graduate faculty status with VCU, the process of obtaining the status can be found on the Graduate Faculty Appointment request form (Appendix R). The process is also available on the website of VCU Graduate School.
4. No person may serve on a dissertation committee if such service would create the appearance of conflict of interest. For example, a student who teaches in a college or university may not have a faculty member in the same school or department serve on the committee; a student from an agency or commercial organization may not have his or her supervisor serve on the committee.
5. Once all committee members have agreed to serve on the committee, the student

submits a Dissertation Committee Agreement Form to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies and the Director of OGS will review the credentials of proposed members and will approve the candidates submitted, or may, at his or her discretion, reject candidates who appear to have a conflict of interest. (See Dissertation Committee Agreement Form, Appendix Q).

6. Normally, barring resignations, members of a dissertation committee continue to serve until the candidate's research is completed and approved. However, in rare cases it may be necessary to make adjustments in committee membership. If a dissertation committee member is unable to continue to serve, the Office of Graduate Studies should be notified. The chair and the candidate choose a replacement and submit the name to the Office of Graduate Studies. In such cases, the Director of OGS has responsibility for reconstituting the dissertation committee.

### **C. Responsibilities of the Candidate, Dissertation Chair, and Committee Members during the Dissertation Process.**

#### 1. The Candidate

The dissertation is the candidate's research, but it is also the candidate's responsibility to seek out and act upon guidance from the dissertation chair and each committee member. At the same time, the candidate should recognize that faculty workloads vary during the year, so that contacting a committee member, scheduling an appointment, critiquing a written draft, and similar activities may unavoidably require extra time in some instances. Maintaining contact, however, will facilitate the good communication that helps make the dissertation development process a rewarding experience for all. Early in the dissertation process, the student should meet with the chair to establish a realistic time-line for completing the dissertation.

Responsibilities of the Candidate:

- a. Select a dissertation chair, with guidance from his or her advisor.
- b. Nominate committee members with guidance from the dissertation chair and submit Dissertation Committee Approval form to the Office of Graduate Studies after obtaining required signatures.
- c. Establish attainable research goals, with the approval of the dissertation chair and committee members.
- d. Prepare formal written materials in an accurate and scholarly form by:
  - 1) following the *American Psychological Association (APA) Manual 6th Edition* for both prospectus and dissertation; and compliance to academic integrity and research ethics (for details see <http://www.research.vcu.edu/orie/> and VCU Honor System at

<http://www.students.vcu.edu/studentconduct/parents/honor-system/>

- 2) assuring that prior to submission for formal review or defense, the form, grammar, and editing of the written prospectus and dissertation are accurate.
- e. Meet required deadlines for submission of written materials by:
- 1) distributing copies of the completed prospectus to the dissertation chair, each committee member, and the Office of Graduate Studies, at least 21 calendar days prior to the date of the prospectus review.
  - 2) distributing copies of the completed dissertation to the dissertation chair, each committee member, and the Office of Graduate Studies, at least 21 calendar days prior to the date of the dissertation defense.
- f. Present a written outline or summary of the proposed research for review and approval to each of the committee members. In either format, the candidate should be sure to delineate clearly the proposed problem statement, research questions, and methodology.
- g. Develop a formal written prospectus that includes an introduction, a review of literature that includes all major studies relevant to the specific research questions, and the methodology to be used.
- h. Submit application to the Exempt Research Committee or the Institutional Review Board. In addition, seeks IRB approval before making any changes to the research protocol.
- i. Receive formal committee approval of the prospectus and IRB approval before beginning data collection. Submit copy of IRB approval to Office of Graduate Studies.
- j. Understand that when the prospectus is approved by the dissertation committee at the prospectus hearing, it becomes an agreed upon plan between the candidate and committee. Any changes in the approved prospectus must be discussed with and approved in writing by the committee.
- k. Consult with and be guided by the dissertation chair and committee members throughout the research process. Although the specific interaction between the candidate and committee may vary, the candidate is expected to make appointments and, when requested, submit written drafts at least 7 calendar days prior to meeting with the dissertation chair or committee members.
- l. Understanding and being prepared to defend the research methods and data analyses used in the dissertation.

m. Assume responsibility with the dissertation chair for the final proofreading of the dissertation.

n. Contact the Office of Graduate Studies to complete exit forms and submit the final copy of the approved dissertation electronically. Also submit the electronic dissertation to VCU Digital Archives and ProQuest. See guidelines at the Graduate School website: <http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/general-academic-regulations-graduate-students/theses-dissertations/>

## 2. The Dissertation Chair

Serving as a dissertation chair constitutes a major responsibility to the candidate, the School of Education, and the Ph.D. Program. For the dissertation chair, the dissertation process requires extended involvement with both the candidate and committee members. It is time-consuming and, at times, demanding. At the same time it provides an intellectual challenge unlike any other University responsibility. Through successful guidance of a completed dissertation, the chair not only contributes to the expansion of knowledge in a given field, but also becomes an integral part of that contribution as the dissertation becomes a basis for future research.

### Responsibilities of the Dissertation Chair:

a. Guides the candidate in:

- 1) developing a scholarly, researchable question.
- 2) preparing the written outline or summary of the problem statement, research question, and methodology.
- 3) selecting and utilizing instrumentation and statistical analyses congruent with the methodology and research design.
- 4) ensuring academic integrity and VCU honors system are followed.

b. Establishes times when he or she will be available to guide the candidate with prospectus and dissertation drafts.

c. Establishes, with the candidate, attainable research goals and a reasonable time frame for completing the steps in the dissertation process.

d. Clarifies for the candidate and committee members the role of the candidate, chair, vice-chair (where appropriate), and committee; and suggests ways in which each can contribute most effectively to the dissertation development process.



- e. Advises the candidate when materials are at an appropriate level of completeness to share with committee members, as well as when to communicate progress or problems.
- f. Assists the candidate in preparing the application for the VCU Institutional Review Board or the Exempt Research Committee. For IRB purposes, the chair is the principal investigator for the research and is required to complete one of the basic courses in the collaborative IRB training initiative (CITI) human subjects protection education.
- g. Guides the candidate in developing content and format, as well as in using appropriate grammar and style; and assures that the final document is without error and suitable for publication.
- h. Supervises the preparation of and approves both the prospectus and the dissertation prior to the formal review, and the defense.
- i. Assists as needed with scheduling the candidate's prospectus hearing and dissertation defense through the Office of Graduate Studies.
- j. Maintains a climate that facilitates constructive discussion during the prospectus hearing.
- k. Guides the student in enrolling in the appropriate number of credit hours each semester of EDUS 899: Dissertation Research and submits a grade of Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, or Fail for dissertation credit during each semester in which the candidate is enrolled in EDUS 899.
- l. Maintains a climate conducive to a fair review of the candidate's dissertation research during the dissertation defense.
- m. Ensures that all committee members sign the appropriate forms related to the defense.

### 3. Co-chair

Because of the need for special expertise from a given committee member, it may be appropriate to appoint a person on the committee to serve as co-chair. It is anticipated that this person would, comparatively speaking, provide more consultation than any other committee member except the chair.

#### Responsibilities of the Co-Chair:

- a. Confers with the dissertation chair on his or her role on the committee.
- b. Provides needed in-depth review of the areas of the dissertation that are his or her area of expertise.
- c. Guides the candidate in areas of the dissertation research in which he or she has

expertise.

d. Participates in the prospectus review and dissertation defense.

#### 4. Dissertation Committee Members

The expertise of each committee member is essential to the development of the candidate's dissertation research, and as such, will be reflected in the quality of the final product. The contributions and support of each committee member helps assure that the candidate will complete a quality dissertation.

Responsibilities of Committee Members:

a. Assist the candidate by:

1) critiquing all written materials submitted by the candidate.

2) conferring in the selection of instrumentation and statistical analyses congruent with the research design.

3) providing content, methodological, and/or statistical expertise related to the research problem under study.

b. Presents concerns and suggestions to the dissertation chair and candidate during the prospectus development process.

c. Recommends additional committee meetings to the dissertation chair when needed

d. Participates in the prospectus review and dissertation defense.

#### **D. Selecting a Dissertation Topic**

A doctoral dissertation study should be an original study, designed to add to the body of knowledge in the student's discipline. It should be chosen carefully; being large enough to serve as a foundation for a future research agenda (particularly for doctoral candidates who plan to pursue a tenure-track position at a university), but targeted enough to assure that it can be accomplished within a reasonable timeframe. After the dissertation committee has been established, the dissertation chair and the student, in consultation, agree on a suitable dissertation topic. The student then meets individually with the other members of the committee to discuss the dissertation topic, obtain their suggestions and, ultimately, their approval. When all have agreed that the proposed topic is a suitable one, and the student has successfully completed all course work and the comprehensive examination, the student proceeds to conduct a careful review of the literature to identify the research question. For many students, this will be reflected in the concept paper which is submitted prior to enrolling in EDUS 890, Dissertation Seminar.

#### **VIII. Prospectus**

The Prospectus is a plan the candidate develops to serve as a guide in completing his or her dissertation research. It is expected that the plan should be concise, well-articulated, and represent the candidate's best thinking and inquiry on a researchable topic.

The *American Psychological Association (APA) Manual 6th edition* is the style of choice for dissertations completed by students in the Ph.D. in Education program. A student may petition the track coordinator for an exception to the use of the APA style. Students are encouraged to become familiar with the APA Manual and the **VCU Thesis and Dissertation Manual** as guides for the technical preparation of their dissertation. In general, attend to APA style for determining the levels of headings, resolving style issues, particularly with regard to expressing numbers and statistics, using gender neutral language, constructing tables and figures, crediting sources and constructing the reference list. *The Journal Article Reporting Standards* in the appendix of the APA Manual gives good guidance as to what should be included in Methodology chapter. Attend to the Thesis and Dissertation manual for fonts, margins, pagination, constructing the abstract, labeling the tables and figures in the body of the text, developing the List of Tables, List of Figures, and the Table of Contents, and for arranging the contents of your dissertation for upload to the VCU Digital Archives. Should APA style and the VCU Thesis and Dissertation Manual conflict, you may default to APA style.

## **A. Prospectus Format**

Since the prospectus is a detailed plan of the candidate's dissertation, it reflects the dissertation format. The body of the prospectus is composed of three major parts, roughly equivalent to the first three chapters of the final dissertation, as well as some other features typical of a major scholarly work. The relative length and depth of each section may vary somewhat, but it is expected that each section will be included in the prospectus.

The first part, titled Introduction, includes the statement of the problem and its significance, the rationale for the study, a summary of the literature review and methodology, and a listing of specific research questions. In essence, the Introduction should provide a brief overview and understanding of what will be studied, why it is of importance, and how it will be accomplished.

The second part of the prospectus, called the Review of Literature, describes and documents the theoretical, historical, experiential, and/or experimental background of the proposed study. The review should be carefully organized to clarify the various conceptual and interdisciplinary roots from which the proposed study has emerged and illuminate the way in which the study will expand upon, rather than duplicate, past knowledge. Thus, it includes a thorough review of the literature and research relevant to the dissertation question, although it may not provide the exhaustive review of supportive and related areas that will be found in the final dissertation. In addition, this part usually includes a subsection listing the terms and definitions that are critical to the study.

The third part, termed Methodology, presents the detailed procedures that will be followed in conducting the research and, therefore, is written in the future tense. Dependent upon the specific methodology to be employed in the study, such components as the population,

instrumentation, procedures, research design, data analysis steps, and other information needed to understand the study should be included and described in detail. In most instances, the limitations of the study are also delineated in this part of the prospectus.

Although the content of these first three parts has been carefully developed to provide both a clear overview of and detailed plan for conducting the dissertation study, placement of two specific components may vary. Depending upon the area of inquiry and the nature of the study, the definition of terms may be placed in the first or second part and the limitations and/or delimitations of the study may be located in the first or third part of the prospectus. In such situations, clear guidance should be sought from the doctoral Committee.

In addition to the three basic parts of the written prospectus, a Title Page and Table of Contents should precede the Introduction. A bibliography, which lists all sources cited, but no additional supporting references, follows the Methodology part of the prospectus. Appendices should also be used as appropriate, to include any documents, such as letters, permissions, data gathering instruments, or other exhibits that will be used in conducting the dissertation research. (See Sample Prospectus Contents for an outline of this information).

## **B. Prospectus Hearing**

When, in the opinion of the dissertation chair, the prospectus is ready for critical review, a meeting of the dissertation committee is scheduled. To schedule a prospectus hearing, a student must:

1. Get approval from dissertation chair (grades and program requirements checked)
2. Contact Office of Graduate Studies to reserve doctoral hearing room for date agreed upon by dissertation committee. Please have at least two alternative dates available. Schedule no later than 3 weeks prior to desired date.
3. Submit copy of prospectus to Office of Graduate Studies and committee **3 weeks** prior to hearing via hard copy or electronically to [soedocstudy@vcu.edu](mailto:soedocstudy@vcu.edu)
4. E-mail Office of Graduate Studies at [soedocstudy@vcu.edu](mailto:soedocstudy@vcu.edu) with name, title of prospectus and list of committee chair and members.

The student should contact his or her committee chair to determine the method of submission (paper copy or e-copy) for the committee's copy of the prospectus.

E-mailing the Office of Graduate Studies is essential for final approval of the hearing and for efficient posting of the prospectus hearing announcement. The prospectus hearing is a public meeting and is announced to the School of Education only after the Director of Graduate Studies has reviewed and approved the student's prospectus.

## **C. Prospectus Approval Process**

Upon completion of the prospectus hearing, the candidate is excused from the meeting room and the committee makes its decision. A minimum of three positive votes is required for approval. The committee may decide to:

- a) approve the prospectus without changes,
- b) approve with specified changes,
- c) or to disapprove the prospectus altogether.

If the prospectus is approved without changes, the dissertation committee signs the Prospectus Review Report (See Appendix S) and the VCU Advancement to Candidacy Form (Appendix T) and forwards it to the Office of Graduate Studies. If the prospectus is approved with specified changes, the dissertation committee signs the Prospectus Review Report and the VCU Advancement to Candidacy Form noting the specific changes to be made and forwards it to the Office of Graduate Studies.

If the prospectus is disapproved, the dissertation committee then explicitly identifies in writing on the Prospectus Review Report the additional work to be completed by the candidate prior to a second review. At the second meeting, the committee must approve the prospectus without change, approve with specified changes, or disapprove the prospectus.

Regardless of the decision, all members of the committee sign the Prospectus Review Report signifying the committee's action. It is the responsibility of the dissertation chair to communicate the decision to the candidate for implementing any changes requested by the committee. The approved Prospectus Review Report then becomes a part of the candidate's file.

#### **D. VCU Institutional Review Board**

##### **Initial CITI Training Requirement**

VCU requires all research personnel on a study to complete the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) Basic Course before beginning human subjects research. For details please see: [http://www.research.vcu.edu/human\\_research/citi\\_requirements.htm](http://www.research.vcu.edu/human_research/citi_requirements.htm)

VCU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews all proposed research studies that involve human subjects. After the prospectus hearing and after the candidate has completed any proposed changes, the candidate with their adviser work on VCU RAMS-IRB (<https://irb.research.vcu.edu/>), and select on the IRB application the Director of Graduate Studies as the Department Chair/Dean Designee for review and approval. If you are submitting an Exempt form, also select the Director of Graduate Studies as the approval designee. Once the Director of Graduate Studies has reviewed and signed the application electronically, the candidate submits the application on RAMS-IRB. Candidates can obtain further instructions about that process from the VCU Office of Research website ([http://www.research.vcu.edu/human\\_research/rams\\_irb.htm](http://www.research.vcu.edu/human_research/rams_irb.htm))

While the dissertation chair is the principal investigator for all dissertation research studies, it is the students' responsibility to ensure that IRB approval has been obtained before beginning any data collection activities and that an electronic copy of the approval letter has been submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. Students using secondary data must contact and receive formal approval from IRB before the use of any data.

## **DOCTORAL CANDIDATES**

(Students who have passed the prospectus stage)

Congratulations! You have completed the required courses and co-curricular experiences that serve as the didactic component of your doctoral degree. You have completed the qualifying and comprehensive exam, an externship experience, and have worked with faculty mentors (or a mentor) to fine-tune your skills as a scholar. You have assembled a committee, received committee and IRB approval for your proposed study, and now you are ready to begin the study, guided by a committee which is composed of faculty with the necessary content knowledge and/or research methodology skills. You should rely on your dissertation chair to advise you as you go through this phase of your studies. Of course, the School of Education's Office of Graduate Studies is always available to help answer questions and provide guidance along the way.

The following information includes:

- I. The Dissertation
- II. Dissertation Defense
- III. Graduation

### **I. The Dissertation**

#### **A. Format**

Although the dissertation follows the format already used for the approved prospectus, minor revisions must be made as the prospectus parts are developed into dissertation chapters. Two additional major components and some new specific pages must also be prepared and included in the final dissertation. The three prospectus parts become the first three chapters of the dissertation and additional chapters titled "IV. Findings" and "V. Conclusions and Recommendations" complete the written record of the candidate's study.

For the dissertation, the Introduction, as presented in the prospectus, requires the addition of a brief summary of the findings and conclusions. Often the Review of Literature also has to be expanded to include greater information about areas that support or relate to the dissertation question under study. The part on Methodology in the prospectus must be revised from future to past tense. Any changes in the procedures or difficulties which developed in carrying out the methodology are also reported.

The quantitative and/or qualitative results of the study, where appropriate, are reported in the Findings chapter. In addition to data describing the actual population used in the research, both tables and explanatory clarification of the actual data collected in the course of the study are presented in the first section of the chapter. Narrative analysis of the data and any trends

observed are discussed in a final section of the same chapter.

The Conclusions and Recommendations chapter uses the data already reported and relates those findings to the specific research problem and questions delineated in the Introduction and each subsequent chapter. Therefore, the chapter must be carefully crafted to reflect the actual content of the preceding four chapters, as well as to provide logical extensions of that content. It is in this chapter that the implications of the findings and how they impact policy should be demonstrated.

The recommendations, which are highly dependent upon the nature of the dissertation problem, attempt to put the dissertation research into practical terms. Thus, the recommendations which emerge, in part, form the basis for further research. (See Sample Dissertation Contents in Appendix U.)

## **II. Dissertation Defense**

To schedule the dissertation defense, a student must:

1. Get approval from dissertation chair (grades and program requirements checked)
2. Contact Office of Graduate Studies to reserve doctoral hearing room for date agreed upon by dissertation committee. Please have at least two alternative dates available. Schedule no later than 3 weeks prior to desired date.
3. Submit copy of dissertation to Office of Graduate Studies and committee 3 weeks prior to hearing via hard copy or electronically to [soedocstudy@vcu.edu](mailto:soedocstudy@vcu.edu) .
4. E-mail Office of Graduate Studies at [soedocstudy@vcu.edu](mailto:soedocstudy@vcu.edu) attachment with a)name b) address c)concentration d) title of dissertation e) committee chair/members e) IRB approval #

The student should contact his or her committee chair to determine the method of submission (paper copy or e-copy) for the committee's copy of the prospectus.

E-mailing the Office of Graduate Studies is essential for making sure you have a room in which to make your presentation and efficient posting of the defense announcement. The defense is a public meeting and is announced to the School of Education only after the Director of Graduate Studies has reviewed and approved the student's dissertation.

Once the defense is scheduled, the Office of Graduate Studies Administrative Assistant sends out an announcement to the School of Education community with the candidate's name, date, place, time, title of the dissertation, and name of the Director of Graduate Studies inviting them to attend.

The candidate's family members are not invited to attend the defense.

Dissertation defenses must be held 10 days prior to the Graduate School's deadline for final submission of the dissertation to the digital archives. The School of Education's last day to defend for each semester will be posted on the SOE Doctoral Programs Blackboard at the beginning of each academic year. The Graduate School's deadline for Digital Archive and Pro-

Quest submission can be found on the VCU Academic Calendar and accessed through the Graduate School website: <http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/thesis.html>

### **A. Approval of the Dissertation**

Following the oral examination of the candidate by members of the dissertation committee, the candidate is excused from the meeting room and the committee makes its decision. The committee may decide to approve the dissertation as written, or request the candidate to make specific major or minor changes. A minimum of three positive votes is required for approval. The committee members signify their approval of the dissertation by signing the Dissertation Approval Form (See Forms on Graduate School website) and the Dissertation Defense Report (Appendix V).

If major changes (defined as conceptual, factual, or interpretive changes) are needed, a second dissertation defense is scheduled, at which time the dissertation committee reviews and acts on the revisions. If the recommended changes are minor ones, (spelling, typographical or syntactical), the committee may empower the dissertation chair to act on its behalf in supervising the corrections. In this case, the candidate is expected to make the required changes within a week (5 working days) and resubmit the corrected copy to the dissertation chair for approval.

### **B. Submission of the Final Dissertation**

The Graduate School requires the electronic submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School and to the Library (ProQuest) through the VCU Digital Archives. Note that you should convert your dissertation to PDF format as the VCU system will not allow you to upload a Word document. Please review the most up to date information in the VCU Theses and Dissertation Manual accessed at:

<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/media/graduate-school/docs/pdf/ThesisandDissertationManual.pdf>

Or at <http://www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/thesis.html>

The submission of the final dissertation with all edits occurs within 10 days of the dissertation defense and before the deadline for final submission of dissertation to the digital archives. Students who desire personal bound copies of their work will select a binder for the work and pay for the binding themselves.

Finally VCU requires that you publish your dissertation with ProQuest and complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates. See the Thesis and Dissertation Manual for Guidance.

## **III. Graduation**

To graduate, after the defense, the student must:

1. Submit a final version of the dissertation with all edits agreed upon at the defense before the deadline for final submission of the dissertation to the digital archives.



2. Upload the dissertation to both ProQuest via the VCU Libraries and VCU Digital Archives at the VCU Graduate School.
3. Complete and submit the Survey of Earned Doctorates to the Graduate School  
<https://sed.norc.org/doctorate/showRegister.do>

The Office of Graduate Studies will forward the students Dissertation Approval Sheet (ETD Form) to the Graduate School and Graduation Application to Records and Registration.

Students may go to [www.commencement.com](http://www.commencement.com) for logistical details such as how to order regalia and invitations. The site is updated each semester.

Please refer to the Student Checklist for a comprehensive listing of all program requirements (See Appendix B).

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A



**PH.D. IN EDUCATION & Ed.D in Leadership  
TRACK COORDINATORS**

<b>Concentration</b>	<b>Coordinator</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Art Education</b>	<b>Dr. Sarah Wilson McKay</b>	<b>swilsonmckay@vcu.edu</b>	<b>828-0471</b>
<b>Counselor Education</b>	<b>Dr. Donna Gibson</b>	<b>dgibson7@vcu.edu</b>	<b>828-1305</b>
<b>Curriculum, Culture &amp; Change</b>	<b>Dr. Valerie Robnolt</b>	<b>vjrobnolt@vcu.edu</b>	<b>827-2649</b>
<b>Educational Leadership</b>	<b>Dr. Whitney Newcomb</b>	<b>whsherman@vcu.edu</b>	<b>828-8724</b>
<b>Educational Psychology</b>	<b>Dr. Sharon Zunbrunn</b>	<b>skzumbrunn@vcu.edu</b>	<b>827-2625</b>
<b>Research &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>Dr. Lisa Abrams</b>	<b>lmabrams@vcu.edu</b>	<b>827-2620</b>
<b>Special Education &amp; Disability Policy</b>	<b>Dr. Kevin Sutherland</b>	<b>kssuther@vcu.edu</b>	<b>827-2652</b>
<b>Sport Leadership</b>	<b>Dr. Brendan Dwyer</b>	<b>bdwyer@vcu.edu</b>	<b>827-5131</b>
<b>Urban Services/ Adult Learning</b>	<b>Dr. Robin Hurst</b>	<b>rrhurst@vcu.edu</b>	<b>828-8021</b>
<b>Ed.D in Leadership</b>	<b>Dr. Cheryl Magill</b>	<b>ccmagill@vcu.edu</b>	<b>828-9805</b>

## Appendix B



### STUDENT CHECKLIST OF GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS PH.D. IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

When forms are required, students are responsible for obtaining advisor and track coordinator signatures prior to submitting them to the Office of Graduate Studies. All forms other than the Dissertation Approval Sheet are on the SOE Doctoral Programs Blackboard. Students receive the Dissertation Approval Sheet at the Dissertation Defense.

- Preliminary Program of Study.** Completed by the student and advisor during the first semester.
- Qualifying Examination.** Students must take the qualifying exam after completion of fifteen to eighteen credits, including four courses in research and educational foundations (EDUS 702, 703, 710 and EDUS 608) and at least one concentration course (determined by advisor).
- First Year Review Form.** Students must submit this to two faculty members whose courses they have taken during the first year of the program in order for the faculty to provide descriptive information about student performance (including writing, critical thinking, and/or research skills). This information is used in combination with qualifying exam results to determine student program of study.
- First Year Meeting Summary Form.** Completed by advisor to summarize the goals and objectives of the student after reviewing qualifying exam results, input from faculty on first year review forms, and grades in courses. Any remediation required to address deficiencies identified during this review are specified on this form including timelines for completion and/or other recommended action.
- Final Program Plan of Study Form.** Completed by the student and advisor after the first year review meeting, before CDS has been awarded, and before the completion of the 18th credit hour.
- Continuing Doctoral Status (CDS).** Awarded by the Director of Graduate Studies once the student has passed the Qualifying Exam, completed any remedial plan, and filed their Final Program of Study form.
- Request for Change in Final Program Plan of Study Form.** Completed by the student and advisor if there are any changes in the Final Program Plan of Study prior to student enrolling in alternate course(s).
- Co-curricular Activity Form.** Completed by the student and advisor to outline the specifics of co-curricular activities determined to assist the student in gaining professional experiences important for long-term career goals in research, teaching, leadership, and/or service to the field. Submit to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- Externship Application.** Completed by the student, advisor, and on-site supervisor in the semester prior to the Externship experience.
- Comprehensive Examination.** In consultation with the advisor, the student follows track-specific

steps for registration, preparation, and administration of the comprehensive exam.

- Dissertation Committee Agreement Form.** In consultation with the student, the advisor submits a dissertation committee agreement form to the Office of Graduate Studies requesting committee membership no later than the end of the semester in which EDUS 890: Dissertation Seminar is completed.
- Prospectus Hearing.** The student is allowed to schedule this with the agreement of the dissertation chair and committee members. The student confirms room availability and schedules the room with the Office of Graduate Studies Administrative Assistant. **Three weeks** prior to the hearing, the student e-mails soedocstudy@vcu.edu to notify OGS that the hearing has been scheduled and to provide information for the hearing announcement. The email must include the date, time, and location of the hearing, title of prospectus, chair name, and names of all committee members. At the same time, the student forwards his or her prospectus to the committee and the OGS. On the day of the hearing, the student must pick up a folder of documents for the committee to sign, provide the folder to the chair, confirm documents were completed and signed, remove documents for the students use.
- Admission to Doctoral Degree Candidacy Form.** Completed by dissertation committee and student after successfully defending their prospectus.
- Graduation Application.** This is submitted at the beginning of the semester in which the student expects to graduate. The student's advisor/chair must thoroughly review the application. The student, advisor, program director, and senior associate dean of academic affairs must sign it.
- Dissertation Defense.** The student is allowed to schedule this with the agreement of the dissertation chair and committee members. The student confirms room availability and schedules the room with the Office of Graduate Studies Administrative Assistant. **Three weeks** prior to the defense the student e-mails soedocstudy@vcu.edu to notify OGS that the defense has been scheduled and to provide information for the defense announcement. The email must include the date, time, and location of the defense, title of dissertation, chair name, and names of all committee members, and IRB approval number. At the same time, the student forwards his or her dissertation to the committee and the OGS. On the day of the defense, the student must pick up a folder of documents for the committee to sign, provide the folder to the chair, confirm documents were completed and signed, remove documents for the students use.
- Final Edits.** Once the dissertation is approved, the student must make any final edits and revisions recommended by the committee within 10 working days of the defense.
- Upload Dissertation.** Student uploads final dissertation to ProQuest and to the Graduate School within 10 working days of dissertation defense date. See the Electronic Theses and Dissertations link of the VCU Libraries for specifics at: <http://www.library.vcu.edu/help/etd/>

Appendix C



**Curriculum Overview for the Ph.D. in Education Program**

<b>Program Component</b>	<b>Minimum Number of Hours</b>
<b>1. FOUNDATIONS COMPONENT</b>	<b>6</b>
EDUS 702	3
EDUS 703	3
<b>2. RESEARCH COMPONENT</b>	<b>12</b>
EDUS 608	3
EDUS 710	3
EDUS 711	3
Research elective	3
<b>3. CONCENTRATION COMPONENT</b>	<b>18</b>
Minimum of 18 credits in concentration	18
Co-Curricular Activities	0
<b>4. EXTERNSHIP COMPONENT</b>	<b>3</b>
EDUS 700	3
<b>5. DISSERTATION COMPONENT</b>	<b>9</b>
EDUS 890 (Dissertation Seminar)	3
EDUS 899 (Dissertation Research)	6
<b>Total Minimum Post-Masters Hours</b>	<b>48</b>

## Appendix D



### Ph.D. in Education Curriculum

#### FOUNDATION COMPONENT (6 hours minimum)

- EDUS 702: Foundations of Educational Research and Doctoral Scholarship I (3 credits)
- EDUS 703: Foundations of Educational Research and Doctoral Scholarship II

#### RESEARCH COMPONENT (12 hours minimum)

- EDUS 608: Statistics for Social Research
- EDUS 710: Educational Research Design
- EDUS 711: Qualitative Research Methods & Analysis

Three credit research elective

#### CONCENTRATION COMPONENT (18 hours minimum)

##### *Art Education Concentration*

- ARTE 701 Issues in Art Education
- ARTE 702 History of Art Education
- ARTE 703 Contemporary Philosophies in Art Education
- ARTE 704 Research in Art Education
- ARTE 780 Cultural Diversity in Art & Society

##### *Counselor Education*

- CLED 720 – Counselor Education Doctoral Seminar I
- CLED 721 – Counselor Education Doctoral Seminar II
- CLED 730 – Advanced Counseling Theories & Practicum (4 credits)
- CLED 740 – Counseling Supervision
- CLED 750 – Advanced Group Counseling
- CLED 760 – Advanced Career Counseling and Development
- CLED 810 – Counselor Education Doctoral Internship

##### *Curriculum, Culture & Change (Required Sequence)*

- TEDU 617 Instructional Models
- TEDU 730 Educational Staff Development
- TEDU 731 Instructional Theories and Strategies
- TEDU 732 Advanced Seminar in Curriculum Studies
- EDUS 706 Educational Theory and Praxis in Historical and Contemporary Contexts
- EDUS 707 Socio-Cultural Perspectives on Schooling, Society and Change
- Other courses selected in consultation with the adviser

Co-Curricular Activities: Grant-writing; present at a local or national conference; complete a capstone experience.

#### *Educational Leadership Track*

- ADMS 702: Leadership for Change/Reform
- ADMS 703: Leadership for Social Justice and Equity in Education
- ADMS 704: Distributive Justice/Resource Equity
- ADMS 706: Leadership Perspectives on Learning
- ADMS 707: The Politics of Education
- ADMS 651: Special Topics

Co-Curricular Activities: Research with faculty members; equity projects with faculty members, participation in journal club, presentation at a national, regional, state, or local conference.

#### *Educational Psychology*

- EDUS 720 Proseminar in Educational Psychology I
- EDUS 721 Proseminar in Educational Psychology II
- EDUS 662 Educational Measurement and Evaluation
- EDUS 720 Seminar in Cognition and School Learning
- EDUS 721 Seminar in Social Processes and Education
- Elective from outside the School of Education
- Elective from SOE programs

#### *Research and Evaluation Track*

##### *Research Concentration (Select 6 courses)*

- PPAD 723: Survey Research Methods
- SWKD 724: Constructivist Inquiry
- NURS 772: Qualitative Research Design
- MGMT 643: Applied Multivariate Methods
- SWKD 705: Multivariate Analysis in Social Work and Human Services Research
- SOCY 626: Applications of Advanced Research Methods
- SBHD 610: Behavioral Measurement
- PPAD 726: Advanced Research Design
- EDUS 661: Educational Evaluation
- EDUS 662: Educational Measurement
- PSYC 643: Principles of Psychological Measurement
- STAT 643: Applied Linear Regression
- STAT 642: Design and Analysis of Experiments

##### *Evaluation Concentration (Select 6 courses)*

- EDUS 661: Educational Evaluation
- PPAD 723: Survey Research Methods
- EDUS 662: Educational Measurement
- PPAD 627: Workshop in Policy Analysis and Evaluation
- SOCY 605: Survey Research Methods
- PSYC 643: Principles of Psychological Measurement
- PADM 654: Program Design and Evaluation in the Nonprofit Sector
- SWKD 722: Evaluation of Human Service Programs

HADM 763: Health Program Evaluation

Co-Curricular Activities: Journal article prepared from externship; attend a conference within first two years; present at conference once prior to graduation; work with a faculty member on a research project; co-author with a faculty member a manuscript that is submitted for publication.

***Special Education & Disability Policy***

SEDP 705 Seminar on Disability Policy  
SEDP 706 Personnel Development in Special Education  
SEDP 707 Critical Issues in Special Education  
SEDP 708 Designing, Funding and Conducting Research in Special Education  
SEDP 709 Directed Readings in Special Education  
Other courses selected in consultation with the adviser

***Sport Leadership***

SPTL 701 Seminar in Sport Research  
SPTL 702 Seminar in Sport Leadership and the Profession  
MGMT 643 Applied Multivariate Methods  
SPTL elective  
6 credits of doctoral course work in focus area  
(universitywide electives)

***Urban Services Leadership Track (Adult Learning)***

*ADLT 702: Seminal Readings in Adult Learning Literature*  
*ADLT 601: The Adult Learner*  
*Students who have already completed ADLT 601 must take another substitute course*

*Other courses to be determined by faculty advisor*

Co-Curricular Activities: Urban Services/Adult Learning  
Attend and present at national conferences and local and regional presentations; publish in journals; serve as graduate assistant or teaching assistants; conduct extensive literature reviews and involvement in ongoing research interests/projects of faculty advisor; participate in grant-writing workshop and develop and write grant applications.

Other courses selected in consultation with the adviser

**EXTERNSHIP COMPONENT (3 hours minimum)**

EDUS 700: Externship

**DISSERTATION COMPONENT (9 hours minimum)**

EDUS 890: Dissertation Seminar (3 hrs.)  
EDUS 899: Dissertation Research (6 hrs. minimum)

**TOTAL MINIMUM CREDITS: 48**



## Appendix E

**Ph.D. in Education Program  
STUDENT PRELIMINARY PLANNING FORM**  
To be submitted by the end of the student's 15<sup>th</sup> credit hour.

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TRACK: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

	HOURS	SEMESTER	GRADE
<b>FOUNDATION COMPONENT (6 HOURS MINIMUM)</b>			
EDUS 702: Foundations of Educational Research and Doctoral Scholarship I	3		
EDUS 703: Foundations of Educational Research and Doctoral Scholarship II	3		
<b>RESEARCH COMPONENT (12 HOURS MINIMUM)</b>			
EDUS 608: Statistics for Social Research	3		
EDUS 710: Educational Research Design	3		
EDUS 711: Qualitative Methods and Analysis	3		
Three Credit Research Elective	3		
<b>QUALIFYING EXAMINATION</b>			
<b>CONCENTRATION COMPONENT (18 HOURS MINIMUM)</b>			
See Bulletin for program specific requirement			
<b>CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>EXTERNSHIP COMPONENT (3 HOURS MINIMUM)</b>			
EDUS 700: Externship	3		
<b>COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION</b>			
<b>DISSERTATION COMPONENT (9 HOURS MINIMUM)</b>			
EDUS 890: Dissertation Seminar	3		
EDUS 899: Dissertation Research	6		
<b>PREREQUISITE COURSES (AS APPLICABLE)</b>			
<b>TRANSFER COURSES (9 HOURS MAXIMUM)</b>			

Students Signature & Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor's Initials & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Track Coordinator's Initials & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 4/14

Appendix F



**Ph.D. Program Academic Performance Evaluation  
First Year Review**

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **Semester/Year** \_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reviewer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** The ratings provided on this form are intended to guide the first year student and his or her academic advisor in evaluating the student’s academic performance. Please rate the above student on the basis of his or her actual performance in your course, observations, and/or, in the case of multiple instructors for your course, reports of performance. For each item, check the box under the number that best describes the student’s performance using the following scale.

- 1-Unsatisfactory
- 3-Satisfactory
- N/O Not Observed
- 2-Needs Improvement
- 4-Outstanding

Academic Performance	1	2	3	4	N/O
1. Performance during class meetings					
2. Mastery of material					
3. Effort					
4. Commitment to excellence					
5. Writing skills					
6. Oral communication skills					
7. Research skills					
8. Knowledge of professional literature					
9. Openness to feedback					
10. Meets deadlines					
11. Comparison to course peers					
12. Overall rating					

Please elaborate on the doctoral student’s performance on any items that you rated 1 or 2 so that we may have a more complete understanding of any area of weakness.

**Please return the completed form to the student’s advisor** within one week of receipt. Direct any comments or questions about this evaluation to the advisor. Thank you for providing supervision and/or instruction and for assisting in the professional development of our doctoral students.

Appendix G



**First Year Advising Meeting Summary Form**

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **Track** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**After completion of the first year in the SOE Ph.D. in Education program. The student has:**

- Completed prerequisites
- Completed preliminary program of study form
- Adhered to SOE continual enrollment policy
- Maintained 3.3 GPA
- Passed Qualifying Exam

**After review of the student's grades, submitted review forms from instructors, and qualifying exam results it has been determined that the student is:**

- Recommended for Continuing Doctoral
- Recommended for Continuing Doctoral Status with remediation required  
\* Please attach document outlining details of remedial plans, i.e. courses, activities, assignments and timeline for completion
- Not recommended for Continuing Doctoral Status (please attach document with reasoning)

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Office of Graduate Studies only:

- Continuing Doctoral Status approved
- Continuing Doctoral Status not approved

Director of Graduate Studies: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix I



**PH.D. IN EDUCATION PROGRAM  
REQUEST FOR CHANGE IN FINAL PROGRAM PLAN OF STUDY**

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TRACK: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPOSED COURSE(S) TO BE DROPPED:

Course Number and Name	Credit Hours
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PROPOSED COURSE(S) TO BE ADDED:

Course Number and Name	Credit Hours
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

REASON(S) FOR CHANGE:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signatures: (Students must sign and obtain advisor signature before submitting form to ODS)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor/Chair Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Track Coordinator Date

## Appendix J



### PH.D. IN EDUCATION PROPOSAL FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

All independent study proposals must be approved by the track coordinator, as well as the student's advisor and faculty mentor. All signatures must be obtained prior to registration for the semester in which the course will be taken. Students should begin the process of developing and negotiating their proposal well in advance of the registration deadline.

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

Semester: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Credits: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions to Faculty Mentor: Please indicate the requirements the student must meet in order to earn the assigned credit hours. The student may work with others; however, the faculty member must assess each student's independent work.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

Instructions to student: Attach a brief description of your proposed project which includes the following:

1. **Learning goals & objectives.** What are the learning goals & objectives of the independent study?
2. **Integration/analysis & application.** In what way will this independent study contribute to your ability to integrate, analyze and apply knowledge to clinical and policy practice?
3. **Rationale.** What is the rationale/relevance to your educational needs and why do you need to meet these needs through an independent study course rather than an established course?
4. **Procedure.** How will goals be pursued (elaborate in some detail) including frequency and duration of contacts with faculty mentor?
5. **Tasks & Timeline.** What are the major tasks of the project and the timeline for completing them?
6. **Products.** What products (interim & final) will you produce?

Approvals: (Student must obtain advisor signature before submitting this form to the Office of Graduate Studies)

Student Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

Track Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

Appendix K



**PH.D. IN EDUCATION PROGRAM  
PROPOSAL FOR CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY**

Co-curricular activities are those experiences throughout your doctoral program that provide you with an opportunity to work with VCU faculty as you expand your skills in research, teaching, and/or service at the University. These activities should be carefully chosen with your advisor and should expand your skills as a scholar of practice in your field. Examples of co-curricular activities can include (but are not limited to): collecting or analyzing data, writing a manuscript for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, presenting research findings at a state, regional or national conference, participating in writing and submitting an application for grant funding, teaching a class, developing and/or evaluating university preparation programs/courses, supervising student teachers/externs, participating on university committees, and/or serving as a student representative of a professional organization. This form will help organize your efforts and describe how your work will be evaluated. You do not need to be registered in a class for the co-curricular activity, but if it requires a significant amount of effort, it can be an independent study. Co-curricular activities can be work you do with your advisor or another faculty member.

*For work that involves human subjects in a research study, it is important to remember that all appropriate human subject safeguards must be followed and IRB approval obtained prior to beginning the research study.*

Student name \_\_\_\_\_

Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Number of credits (if relevant) \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature and date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions to Faculty Mentor: Please indicate the requirements the student must meet in order to complete the co-curricular activity and whether independent study credit will be earned.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Mentor/Advisor \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

Instructions to student: On a separate sheet of paper, describe your co-curricular activity.

Include the following in your description:

1. **Co-curricular activity overview.** What is the nature of the co-curricular (presentation/grant proposal/research/teaching, etc.) you are planning to address and how it is relevant to your long range career goals and/or learning needs?

2. **Product.** What products (interim & final) will you generate as part of this co-curricular activity?

3. **Tasks & Timeline.** What are the major tasks of the project and the timeline for completing them? If this is a joint project, indicate your specific responsibilities and those of others involved.

4. **Evaluation.** How will your work in this co-curricular activity be evaluated and by whom? How will you document that evaluation?

*\*If this proposal for a co-curricular activity is in the area of research skills, the proposal must specify how the student will gain experience in one or more aspects of conducting a research project, including conceptualization of the question, research design, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination of findings.*

Students must obtain advisor and track coordinator signatures before submitting this form to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Student Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

Track Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

Received by:

Office of Graduate Studies \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix L



PH.D. IN EDUCATION PROGRAM
EXTERNSHIP APPLICATION

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ON-SITE SUPERVISOR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

\*STARTING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ \*ENDING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ \*HOURS PER WEEK:

\*Must provide for a total of 120 clock hours of which 90 are on-site experience.

INSTRUCTIONS: Using the following headings, submit a statement outlining your proposed externship.

- I. Name and address of agency.
II. Major services or products of the agency.
III. Qualifications of on-site externship supervisor.
IV. Indicate how this experience relates to your career goals and doctoral training objectives.
V. List a minimum of five general goals for the proposed experience related to one's future career.
VI. Describe the nature of the proposed experience including schedule and specific activities.
VII. List at least five specific measurable objectives of the proposed experience and explain how each objective will be measured, specifying at least one product from the experience.
I. Explain how the proposed experience differs from your previous education and work experience.

Students must sign and obtain on-site supervisor and advisor signatures before submitting this form to the Office of Graduate Studies.

Student Date

On-Site Supervisor Date

Advisor Date

Track Coordinator Date

Appendix M



## COMPREHENSIVE EXAM POLICY OVERVIEW

(For additional information, please consult with track coordinators.)

	<b>EDLP</b>	<b>EDPSY</b>	<b>CCC</b>	<b>R&amp;E</b>	<b>SEDP</b>	<b>USL</b>	<b>CLED</b>	<b>SPLD</b>
<b>Eligibility</b>	Completion of all course work, not including EDUS 890  (Semester of last class will be allowed, semester after last class is preferred.)	Completion of all course work, not including EDUS 890	Completion of all course work, not including EDUS 890	Completion of all course work, not including EDUS 890.  (Semester of final coursework may be allowed.)	Completion of all course work, not including EDUS 890	During last semester of course work, student must not be enrolled in more than 3 credit hours, not during EDUS 890	Completion of all course work, not including EDUS 890	Completion of all course work, not including EDUS 890
<b>Administration</b>	Fall, Spring or Summer. 6 weeks to complete the exam, common start date. Submitted to TC at end of course work.	Fall/Spring	Fall/Spring	Fall/Spring  Students have one week to complete the exam.	Fall/Spring/Summer	Fall/Spring	Fall/ Spring	Fall/ Spring
<b>Format</b>	Take-home project that includes competencies in data analysis	Timed exam or literature review	Literature Review	Individualized take-home questions for a 20-page paper and an oral exam	Major area paper, timed-computer-based exam on campus, and an oral presentation  Please see the SEDP Track Handbook for details.	AL=Timed computer-based exam on campus HPE= Oral Exam, Written literature review & overview of diss. topic	Consult Track	Consult Track

<b>Preparation</b>	Students to compile/coordinate any artifacts of learning in advance. Students encouraged to collaborate with others taking the exam. TC is available for questions during the 6 weeks.	Students meet w/ their advisor by the first week of the semester in which the exam is to occur to determine the topic and scope of the literature review or to submit topics for the timed exam questions.	Students receive questions and can meet with TC 45 days in advance	Students receive questions 1 week prior. Take-home questions require approximately 25 hours of preparation	Please see the SEDP Track Handbook for details.	Exam must be scheduled 2 months in advance. 30-45 days in advance students may meet with TC. Questions not provided in advance.	Student will consult with advisor about exam preparation	Student will consult with advisor about exam preparation
<b>Art Ed.</b>	Consult Track							
<b>Grading</b>	<p>In the case of a computer-based exam, two-three SOE faculty readers will evaluate the exam and two will need to assign a rating of “pass” or “pass with honors” in order for the student to have successfully passed the Comprehensive Examination. Students can expect their comprehensive exam results within 4 to 6 weeks of test administration. A student who fails one or more questions will be allowed to retake the exam once. All questions will be graded Honors, Pass, or Fail. Until a student has passed all components of the comprehensive exam, a grade of I (incomplete) will be recorded on the student’s transcript.</p> <p>For other exam formats, please consult with the TCs.</p>							



## Comprehensive Exam Report for Ph.D. in Education

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

Track of Ph.D. Program in Education \_\_\_\_\_

The Comprehensive Examination is completed with:

\_\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory; \_\_\_\_\_ Unsatisfactory; \_\_\_\_\_ Remediation &/or Conditions to be met

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Print Names

Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Exam Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Exam Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Exam Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Exam Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Track Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Graduate Studies

## Appendix O



### **PH.D. IN EDUCATION CONCEPT PAPER GUIDELINES**

#### **Purpose of the paper**

The student will develop a “mini-literature review” of 8-10 pages, not including references. The review should describe and evaluate key studies in the student’s area of interest, provide a synthesis of studies cited, and identify key gaps in the literature. The review should follow APA style and close by identifying the student’s topic of inquiry.

The student will develop this literature review in consultation with his/her chair. The purpose of a concept paper is two-fold. First, it should provide an indication to the reader that the doctoral candidate has a sufficiently developed idea for a dissertation topic that is based on the literature. Second, it should provide an indication of the candidate’s ability to write about research literature and a research idea.

#### **Preparation**

Students can be proactive in the preparation of the concept paper to have a greater likelihood that they will be ready for the requirements of the class. Therefore it is recommended that students follow these steps:

- a) Meet with your dissertation chair or advisor to determine whether enrolling in EDUS 890 is appropriate for you, your readiness for EDUS 890, and for how to go about writing the concept paper.
- b) Meet with your dissertation chair to receive direction for the concept paper.
- c) Attend the concept paper orientation to learn the timelines and submission guidelines.
- d) Submit the concept paper to your dissertation chair 2 weeks before finals the semester prior to when you intend to take EDUS 890.

Because students whose concept papers are not accepted must wait until the next semester EDUS 890 is offered to revise and resubmit the concept paper and attempt to enroll again, it is especially important that you follow the above recommended steps and work with your chair to prepare the best possible concept paper the first time. Please be aware that you should submit a concept paper formatted in APA style that is free of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and typing errors.

## **Review and Submission Process**

The dissertation chair or other faculty designated by the student's track will provide a written review of the student's paper. If the advisor or chair deems the literature review sufficiently substantive, the advisor/chair will sign and submit an approval sheet and an electronic copy of the review to the Office of Graduate Studies on behalf of the student. Upon receipt of the approval sheet and an electronic copy of the review, the Office of Graduate Studies will advise the student in the process for enrolling in EDUS 890 as needed.

Track coordinators will notify the Office of Graduate Studies of the number of students with whom they are working on the literature review early in the semester in which the papers are due to ensure that an appropriate number of sections of the course are scheduled.

The advisor/dissertation chair will discuss the review with the student. If the paper is accepted, the student will consult with their advisor/dissertation chair on which section of EDUS 890 to enroll. If the paper is not accepted, the student will not be permitted to enroll in EDUS 890, however they will receive feedback about why the paper was not acceptable.

If you are not accepted into EDUS 890, your first step should be to discuss this with the Director of Graduate Studies as well as your advisor/dissertation chair. In this situation, many students enroll in an independent study section to review the literature related to their topic and revise their previously submitted paper.

Appendix P



Concept Paper Approval

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ V# \_\_\_\_\_

To identify a potential topic of inquiry and to demonstrate the ability to write about research literature and a research idea, the above student has submitted a concept paper for review.

- Identify topic of inquiry
- A sufficiently developed idea for research
- Significance of proposed study
Demonstrate knowledge in the area of interest
- Describe/synthesis/evaluate key studies
- Identify key gaps in the literature
- Describe contribution of the proposed study
- Reference list and annotated bibliography
- APA style

Upon review, it has been determined that the student has:

- Successfully met the criteria required for the concept paper
Not met the criteria required for the concept paper

Comments (or attached document): \_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_
\_\_\_\_\_

Advisor signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix Q



PH.D. IN EDUCATION
DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AGREEMENT FORM

A minimum of four VCU faculty members must agree to serve on a student's dissertation committee. Please see the Ph.D. in Education Handbook for details about the requirements for committee members. Students must submit this dissertation committee agreement form prior to completing EDUS 890 (Dissertation Seminar) and/or enrolling in EDUS 899. If opting out of EDUS 890, students must submit this form at the time they request to opt out. This form can be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies as a hard copy or an email attachment to soedocstudy@vcu.edu. If the form is e-mailed, students must have obtained all necessary signatures prior to sending.

To be completed by the student:

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed title of dissertation: \_\_\_\_\_

The following faculty members have agreed to serve as members of my dissertation committee:

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

SOE Member 1: \_\_\_\_\_

SOE Member 2: \_\_\_\_\_

VCU Faculty (other than School of Education): \_\_\_\_\_

Track Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature) (Date)

Department Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature) (Date)

To be completed by the Office of Graduate Studies:

\_\_\_\_\_ The above-listed faculty members are listed as having Graduate Faculty or Affiliate Graduate Faculty Status with VCU's Graduate School.

\_\_\_\_\_ The above listed faculty members do not have Graduate Faculty or Affiliate Graduate Faculty Status with VCU's Graduate School. Action Recommended:

Director of Graduate Studies: \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature) (Date)

CC: Student, Dissertation Committee Chair, Track Coordinator



## Appendix R



### **Appointment to Graduate Faculty and Affiliate Graduate Faculty Status**

All members of a dissertation committee need to have been granted graduate faculty status or affiliate graduate faculty status. Eligible faculty members may initiate the process by making a request to his/her department chair in writing and providing a recent resume. When the department chair approves the request, he/she will forward the request to the Director of Office of Graduate Studies, the Dean of School of Education and the Dean of the Graduate School for concurrence.

#### The Eligibility Criteria for Graduate Faculty Members:

1. Appointment as full-time faculty in the university.
2. Professorial rank (assistant professor and above).
3. Earned terminal degree or, if no terminal degree, exceptional contributions to graduate education.
4. Engagement in research or other scholarly or creative activities.
5. Participation in graduate education.

Affiliate Graduate Faculty Member Status: Provision may be made for individuals with special skills and knowledge to serve as Affiliate Graduate Faculty members. These individuals may include visiting faculty and professionals in the field. An Affiliate Graduate Faculty member may teach graduate courses and may advise and serve, but not chair, thesis or dissertation committees. This status is temporary.

**Graduate/Affiliate Faculty Status Appointment Request**

Faculty Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Professorial Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Faculty ( ) Affiliated Faculty ( ) in Program of \_\_\_\_\_

**Appointment Recommended: Yes** \_\_\_\_\_ **: No** \_\_\_\_\_

**Department Chair:**

(Print) \_\_\_\_\_ (Sign) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Director of Office of Graduate Studies (SOE):**

(Print) \_\_\_\_\_ (Sign) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Dean of the School of Education:**

(Print) \_\_\_\_\_ (Sign) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

A. Brief description of recent research or other scholarly/creative activities (attach a separate sheet if necessary)

B. Brief description of participation/involvement in graduate education

C. Please attach your recent resume

Appendix S



**PH.D. IN EDUCATION PROGRAM  
PROSPECTUS REVIEW REPORT**

Title of Prospectus:

This is to certify that the undersigned have read and approved the Prospectus of:

\_\_\_\_\_ presented on \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Date

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dissertation Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

Copies to: Office of Graduate Studies, Dissertation Chair, Student

Appendix T

## Admission to Master's or Doctoral Degree Candidacy

Student \_\_\_\_\_ SS or VCU ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_

**My signature acknowledges that I have read and understand the following policies regarding research involving human or animal subjects and continuous enrollment requirements.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student's signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

Research involving human or animal subjects must receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before collection of data may begin. I understand that failure to obtain a copy of the IRB or IACUC approval letter from the project principal investigator will negate the use of that data for my thesis/dissertation or in any form of presentation or publication. (Information on human and animal subjects can be found at [www.research.vcu.edu/irb/index.htm](http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/index.htm) and [www.vcu.edu/research/iacuc/index2.htm](http://www.vcu.edu/research/iacuc/index2.htm).)

University Graduate Council and Graduate School continuous enrollment policy requires that any student engaged in any form of study at VCU that involves use of university facilities, laboratories/studios and/or libraries, or who is supervised by or consults regularly with a faculty member concerning graduate work on a project, work of art, thesis or dissertation must register formally for a course while engaged in these activities, including the semester in which the student graduates.

Graduate students approved for candidacy must register for at least one graduate credit hour at VCU each fall and spring semester until the degree is awarded (including the semester of graduation). Students should consult with their program directors regarding additional enrollment requirements. Graduate students with approved leaves of absence are exempted from continuous enrollment requirements for the LOA period. Note: While an LOA temporarily suspends continuous enrollment requirements, it does not extend the time limit for degree completion.

**Major Adviser and Advisory Committee Members (if applicable):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Major adviser

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee member

**The program director, major adviser and/or advisory committee (if applicable) have approved this student for admission to candidacy effective \_\_\_\_\_ and confirm the following (check all that apply):**

- A 3.0 GPA has been maintained on all graduate course work attempted after acceptance into program (for repeated courses, both original and repeat grade must be included in calculation of graduate GPA).
- No more than 6 semester hours or 20 percent of total semester hours attempted (whichever greater) at "C" or below level (C, D, F).
- Graduate course work only (500 level or higher) may be applied to a graduate degree with at least one half of required course work designated exclusively for graduate students (600 level or higher).
- Written and oral comprehensive and/or qualifying examinations (if required) have been passed.
- The thesis or dissertation prospectus (if required for candidacy) or final research project has been approved.
- The major adviser and/or advisory committee members (if applicable) have been identified (**please identify above**).
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Approval signatures**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Major Adviser's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate Program Director's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Dean's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate Dean's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix U



## SAMPLE DISSERTATION CONTENTS

Abstract  
\*[Title Page]  
Acknowledgements  
\*[Table of Contents]  
List of Tables

I. INTRODUCTION .....

- Statement of Problem.....
- Rationale for Study of Problem .....
- Statement of Purpose .....
- Literature/Research Background .....
- Research Questions.....
- Methodology.....
- Findings and Conclusions.....
- Summary.....

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....

- Overview of Related Areas.....
- \*[Organized review of literature/research] .....
- Definition of terms.....

III. METHODOLOGY .....

- Design
- Population .....
- Instrumentation .....
- Procedure .....
- Data Analysis.....
- Limitations .....

IV. FINDINGS .....

- Results
- Discussion.....

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....

REFERENCES .....

APPENDICES .....

VITA

\* Bracketed portions indicate that dissertation specific information, rather than the indicated heading, should be provided in the actual prospectus.

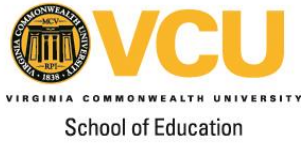
Sample Prospectus Contents

\*[Title Page]

\*[Table of Contents]

I. INTRODUCTION .....  
    Statement of Problem.....  
    Rationale for Study of Problem .....  
    Statement of Purpose .....  
    Literature/Research Background .....  
    Research Questions .....  
    Methodology .....  
    Summary .....  
  
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....  
    Overview of Related Areas .....  
    \*[Organized review of literature/research] .....  
    Definition of terms .....  
  
III. METHODOLOGY .....  
    Design .....  
    Population .....  
    Instrumentation .....  
    Procedure .....  
    Data Analysis .....  
    Limitations .....  
  
REFERENCES .....  
  
APPENDICES .....

\* Bracketed portions indicate that dissertation specific information, rather than the indicated heading, should be provided in the actual prospectus.



**PH.D. IN EDUCATION PROGRAM  
DISSERTATION DEFENSE REPORT**

Title of Dissertation:

This is to certify that the undersigned have read and approved the dissertation of:

\_\_\_\_\_ presented on \_\_\_\_\_  
Student Date

Comments:

_____	_____
Dissertation Committee Chair	Committee Member
_____	_____
Committee Member	Committee Member
_____	_____
Committee Member	Committee Member

Copies to: Office of Graduate Studies, Dissertation Chair, Student