

## Oral Examination of the Edd Dissertation Proposal

Revised December 2024

Below is a summary of the key procedures required for the dissertation proposal examination at the Warner School.

The oral examination of the dissertation proposal must be taken at this University. The candidate, the advisor, and the appointed chair must be physically present. Remote participation of others is permitted only if approved in advance by the advisor, the associate dean of graduate education, and the appointed examination chair.

If you have questions, please contact Gal DiMambro at [gdimambro@warner.rochester.edu](mailto:gdimambro@warner.rochester.edu).

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## **Style & Format of the Dissertation Proposal & Dissertation**

American Psychological Association (APA) style is the universal referencing style and format for Education and must be used for all EdD dissertation proposals and dissertations. The most current APA style manual must be used, and it is the responsibility of the EdD student to adhere to APA guidelines. The University bookstore stocks the APA style manual; it is available from APA directly and from a wide variety of popular booksellers.

You may consult ***Formatting the Thesis and Preparing for Final Defense*** at <http://www.rochester.edu/Theses/> for very global University information on dissertation formats.

### References

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychological Association. (2012). *APA style guide to electronic references* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

## Human Subjects Review

You, as Investigator, are ultimately responsible for the safe and ethical conduct of your research. The University's Research Subjects Review Board (RSRB) is intended to assist you in this responsibility. Investigators who are planning a study involving human subjects must prepare an application package for review. No research activities can begin until approval is granted. Your study application should include the following:

- Protocol (Study Design),
- Information Letters and/or Consent Forms,
- Study Measures,
- Institutional Approval Letters,
- Data Security Assessment Form,
- And Risk Acceptance Form

The application will be submitted through the [CLICK IRB](#) system. The University's RSRB must assess proposals involving human subjects to ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place for the protection of the rights and welfare of human research subjects. No Investigator may submit a study without first completing their Human Subjects' Protection Training ([CITI Training](#)). Additionally, all student investigators must have a faculty sponsor serving as a PI Proxy on the study.

The Warner School has an internal review process that provides guidance in preparing these materials prior to RSRB review (See more details in Warner's [Doctoral RSRB Checklist](#)). Training for this submittal process is required by the Warner School and held on Friday evenings several times throughout the year. The dates for the training can be found on the Warner Calendar and communicated through the monthly Student Newsletter. The training program is supported via Blackboard and recommended after Comprehensive exams have been completed. You are encouraged to discuss with your dissertation sponsor when the appropriate time to take the training is. You can also reach out to the trainers at [RSRB@warner.rochester.edu](mailto:RSRB@warner.rochester.edu) for more information or to find out more details about enrolling in the training session.

In addition to your complete study application, you and your dissertation sponsor must complete an **Evaluation For Scientific Merit** for Dissertations and other Student-Led Studies involving human subjects (FORM C, at end of this document), and then submit that form to the Warner School of Education RSRB Departmental Reviewers via email at [RSRB@warner.rochester.edu](mailto:RSRB@warner.rochester.edu).

Students often must make revisions to the dissertation proposal after passing the dissertation proposal examination, and therefore you are encouraged to discuss with your dissertation sponsor the exact time to undertake the RSRB process.

## **Before Initiating the Dissertation Proposal Exam**

The dissertation proposal oral exam process cannot begin until—

- the Comprehensive Exam/Qualifying Exam has been passed.
- the required credit hours of coursework for the EdD degree have been completed.
- all required credit hours of coursework for the EdD degree have received grades—however, grades for ED 593, “EdD Research,” may be submitted by your dissertation sponsor prior to registration of the final dissertation.
- all University and Warner School debts have been paid
- (contact the Bursar’s Office at 585.275.3931).
- your registration is current and has been maintained continuously each fall and spring from the semester of matriculation.
- your dissertation committee has been approved.

## **Initiating the Dissertation Proposal Exam**

An email from you or your advisor stating the proposal has been approved for defense, with all committee members copied, along with a copy of your proposal must be sent to [gdimambro@warner.rochester.edu](mailto:gdimambro@warner.rochester.edu).

## **Appointment of Reader/Independent Chair, Approval Of Proposal, And Scheduling Of Exam**

- Following approval of your committee and submission of your proposal, Warner School's Associate Dean appoints a Reader/Independent Chair for your dissertation proposal. The function of the Reader/Independent Chair is (1) to determine if the proposal is ready for examination and (2) to conduct the proposal examination itself.
- Once you are notified of the name and availability of the Reader/Independent Chair, you may choose to schedule a two-hour block of time with your committee members or if you prefer, Student Services will assist with scheduling. **Please remember that proposal exams cannot be scheduled on Tuesdays, from 1:30 - 3pm.**
- The Reader/Independent Chair has three weeks to read your proposal.
- The Office of Student Services will send a notice informing all concerned of the examination day, date, time, and location of the proposal defense.
- Each member of your dissertation committee and the Reader/Independent Chair will be emailed a copy of the proposal. It is imperative that each member of your committee has an identical copy of your proposal. If a committee member requests you provide them with a paper copy, it must be identical to the final copy submitted to the Office of Student Services.

## Conduct of the Proposal Examination

- The purpose of the oral examination of the proposal is to determine (a) the significance of your proposal, (b) the adequacy of your research plan, (c) the availability of needed resources to conduct your research, and (d) your competence to pursue the proposed dissertation.
- Attendance at the exam is limited to the following:
  - (a) Student
  - (b) Dissertation Committee
  - (c) Reader/Independent Chair
  - (d) Faculty members and other persons—with the approval of the Warner School's Associate Dean, the sponsor, the Reader/Independent Chair, and the student
- Procedures for conducting your exam are at the discretion of the Reader/Independent Chair and your dissertation committee. These procedures are usually agreed upon immediately preceding the examination. You will be asked to leave the room while the procedures are being discussed.
- At the conclusion of the exam, you will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates and votes in camera to recommend "pass" or "fail." The Reader/Independent Chair does not have a vote, but records both the committee's recommendations and committee members' comments on the report form provided by the Office of Student Services. The Reader/ Independent Chair adds their own comments, if desired. (These comments may include observations regarding the conduct of the exam by the committee; compliments to the student; inadequacies of the study; comments by the committee; comments on the student's responses during the exam; and any recommendations for the student to follow, including a possible revision of the proposal or the conduct of the research.)
- You will then be asked to return to the examination room to learn the outcome of the exam and the comments of your committee members. The Reader/Independent Chair is responsible for reading these comments.
- For cases in which there is not unanimous approval by the dissertation committee, the final decision rests with the Associate Dean.
- In the case of a student failing the examination, re-examination will be allowed unless the dissertation committee, with the concurrence of the Associate Dean, rules that no re-examination will be allowed.

## **Reporting Results of the Examination and Admission to Candidacy**

- After the examination, the Reader/Independent Chair sends their report, which includes the committee's recommendations, to the Warner School Office of Student Services. Both you and your dissertation committee members will receive a copy of the Reader/Independent Chair's report.
- Upon confirmation that you have passed the proposal examination, you are advanced to candidacy for the EdD degree. You then proceed with the dissertation, guided by your committee.

(If the committee stipulates "pass, contingent upon required revisions," it is the responsibility of the dissertation sponsor to write a letter to the Associate Dean stating if and when the revisions have been completed. It is the student's responsibility to distribute a revised copy of the proposal to each committee member and the Office of Student Services. The student will then be advanced to candidacy for the EdD degree. The student proceeds with the dissertation, guided by the committee.)

**SAMPLE TITLE**  
**PAGE**

An Evaluation of an Elementary Teacher Education Program by

Sara Smith

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree Doctor of  
Education

Supervised by

Professor Jane Andrews

Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development

University of Rochester  
Rochester, New York

2022 (or year of degree Conferral)