**How many members are on a dissertation committee?**

The initial, three-person dissertation committee will work with the doctoral student. After the dissertation research has been completed and the dissertation has been written, the initial dissertation committee will be expanded to include two additional members who will serve as “readers” and who will participate as equal members of the committee in conducting the final public dissertation defense and approving the dissertation.

**What is the makeup of the dissertation committee?**

One of the most important decisions a doctoral student will make is to select a faculty member to serve as the chair of his or her dissertation committee. Students will select chairs and work with them to form dissertation committees in the spring semester of their second year of doctoral studies. In order to help the students form their committees, they will receive a booklet with the names, contact information, and areas of expertise of faculty in the College of Education, Information and Technology. From that point forward, the dissertation chair will serve as the student's primary mentor, advisor, and advocate throughout the rest of the program.

The dissertation chair should be a full-time member of the College of Education, Information and Technology faculty with expertise related to the student's intended area of dissertation research, or with special expertise in the research methods relevant to the intended topic. The initial dissertation committee will also include two other faculty members in addition to the chair. At least one of those members should be a full-time faculty member from any campus, department, or program at LIU. The third member may either be any other LIU faculty member, or may be an external committee member who holds an accredited doctoral degree in a relevant discipline, and has special expertise in the student's intended area of research. The ability to have committee members from outside the College of Education, Information and Technology and to add an external member from outside the University reinforces the interdisciplinary nature of the doctoral program.

The initial, three-person dissertation committee will work with the doctoral student in selecting a dissertation topic, developing a dissertation proposal, obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, conducting the dissertation research, and preparing the dissertation. The three-person committee will also be responsible for conducting a public defense of the dissertation proposal and for approving the student’s proposal.

After the dissertation research has been completed and the dissertation has been written, the initial dissertation committee will be expanded to include two additional members who will serve as “readers” and who will participate as equal members of the committee in conducting the final public dissertation defense and approving the dissertation. At least one of the readers must be a LIU faculty member with expertise related to the dissertation topic. The other reader may be another LIU faculty member, or may be an external reader.
who holds a doctorate from an accredited institution and has special expertise or
experience related to the dissertation research.

The readers will be provided a copy of the approved dissertation proposal and will
evaluate the acceptability of the dissertation based on the previously approved research
plan reflected in the proposal.

What are the responsibilities of the dissertation chair?

The dissertation chair must be able to:

- Work with the student to develop the e-portfolio and has the authority to approve the e-
  portfolio
- Grade the written portion of the Comprehensive Exams along with one other member of
  the dissertation committee
- Take major responsibility for reading and critiquing the developing proposal
- Act as the supervisor of the entire dissertation process
- Coordinate all communications between the parties engaged in this process
- Lead the proposal and dissertation defense hearings

What are the responsibilities of the members of the dissertation committee?

- Grade the written portion of the Comprehensive Exams along with the dissertation chair
- Read and critique the written research proposal
- Attend a formal proposal meeting
- Consult with the student and faculty during the course of the research
- Attend a formal proposal meeting of the dissertation

What is the compensation for serving as a dissertation chair or committee member?

The dissertation chair will be compensated based on the collective bargaining agreement.
Based on the collective bargaining agreement, committee members will not be
compensated.

How many committees can faculty serve on as a dissertation chair or committee
member?

This is a matter of professional judgment to be made by the individual faculty member.

What is the e-portfolio (digital portfolio)?

The Ed.D. digital portfolio will provide evidence of the doctoral student's intellectual
development and achievement during the coursework phase of the doctoral program. It is
intended to be a showcase of the student's growth in the knowledge base addressed in the
Ed.D. program and of the student's personal intellectual development.

Each doctoral student will assemble a digital portfolio that includes: (a) a home page and
an index with hyperlinks to all materials in the portfolio, (b) one paper or project from
each doctoral course completed in the first two years (36 credits) of the program, and (c) a written personal reflection (of about eight to ten pages) in APA style on the role and nature of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education with a special emphasis on the student's primary area of interest. All materials in the portfolio must be in an Internet-accessible digital format and should include such resources as Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word documents, websites, images, videos, or other digital media.

The portfolio should be developed with the guidance of the student’s dissertation committee chair who will also have the authority to approve the digital portfolio. Although the primary purpose of the digital portfolio is to provide evidence of a student’s intellectual growth and achievement during the first two years of doctoral coursework, the digital portfolio can also serve as an electronic resume and may be useful for other professional purposes.

Please see Joan McCarthy in the Dean’s Office for the sign-off sheet for the e-portfolio.

What do the Comprehensive Exams look like?

In considering the format of the Comprehensive Exams for the Ed.D. Program, the Doctoral Program Executive Committee wanted to develop an approach that would fulfill the evaluative and assessment objectives of the Comprehensive Exams and also maximize their value as an integral component of the learning experience for our students. The Executive Committee also wanted the format of the comprehensives to avoid any unnecessary or redundant retesting of our students' mastery of course content knowledge that would already have been assessed by individual course instructors. The Executive Committee also wanted to design a format for the comprehensives that would advance our students' progress toward their dissertation research. With those objectives in mind, the Comprehensive Exams have been combined into a single, take-home exam in the form of a research précis that demonstrates the research methods, skills, and perspectives developed by our doctoral students during their core (covering research skills and methods) courses and reflects the field knowledge they developed in their track courses in the Teaching & Learning or Educational Leadership specialties.

The written portion of the Comprehensive Exams will be a research précis comprising three components. The first component will be a preliminary literature review related to the student's proposed area of dissertation research and should reflect both an understanding of research and of the student's specialized field of expertise (e.g., Teaching & Learning or Educational Leadership) [about 10 double-spaced pages plus References]. The second component will present a discussion of a proposed research methodology (including philosophical perspectives, analytic methods, sample, instruments and measures) and its strengths and limitations [about five to seven pages plus References]. The third component will be a statement describing the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed research and of the benefits that will be achieved by the research [about three pages].
The research précis format of the combined Comprehensive Exams will provide an opportunity for the students to demonstrate their mastery of the broad learning objectives of the Ed.D. Program and will jump-start their progress toward the development of their dissertation proposals.

The written portion of the Comprehensive Exams will be graded by the dissertation committee chair and one other member of the dissertation committee. In the event of a split judgment, the third member of the committee would be asked to break the tie. If two members of the committee find the exam not ready for approval, the committee will offer corrective advice to the student and ask that the research précis be revised and resubmitted.

The oral portion of the Comprehensive Exams will be achieved by having the student make an oral presentation of the research précis to her or his three-person dissertation committee. The members of the committee will use that presentation as an opportunity to explore the student's mastery of the content knowledge and understanding of theory and research in her or his field specialization, especially as it relates to the student’s planned dissertation topic.

So, blue books are out and our doctoral students can look forward to a Comprehensive Exams experience that reflects the type of authentic learning, scholarly growth, and assessment that the Executive Committee believes is appropriate for adult professionals engaged in doctoral studies.

At the moment, please see Joan McCarthy in the Dean’s Office for the sign-off sheet for the Comprehensive Exams. It will be included in the dissertation manual.

**Where can information about the Comprehensive Exams be found?**

Information about the Comprehensive Exams can be found in the student handbooks and bulletins from 2012-2013 to the present as well as on the website for the doctoral program (http://eddprogram.net).

**When do students take their Comprehensive Exams?**

The Comprehensive Exams are taken after a student sets up the dissertation committee; has the electronic portfolio approved by the chairperson of the dissertation committee; and has successfully completed 42 credits. Students cannot defend their dissertation proposals until they have passed the written and oral Comprehensive Exams.

**Who grades the Comprehensive Exams?**

See section on What do the Comprehensive Exams look like?
What is the format and length of the dissertation proposal?

The format and length of the dissertation proposal will be determined by the dissertation committee based on the nature and topic of the dissertation. All dissertations must conform to the style prescribed by the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Generally, the first chapter consists of an introduction; the second chapter consists of a review of the related literature; and the third chapter consists of the research methodology. Students and dissertation chairs are encouraged to see Joan McCarthy in the Dean’s Office who has copies of dissertation proposals. Two copies of the dissertation proposal should be handed in to Joan McCarthy prior to the dissertation proposal defense. Students should prepare an abstract for distribution to the audience at the proposal defense.

Who decides when the student is ready to defend the dissertation proposal?

When the student believes that the dissertation proposal is ready for defense, the student requests that a defense be scheduled by the chairperson and the dissertation committee. The decision to schedule the proposal defense will be made by the dissertation committee.

When does the student defend the dissertation proposal?

Before a student defends the dissertation proposal, the student must have successfully completed 42 credits; had the e-portfolio approved; successfully passed all components of both the written and oral portions of the student’s comps, and have met the requirements of the dissertation committee.

Who sets up the dissertation proposal defense?

Once the student has the approval of his or her dissertation committee, the dissertation chair notifies Joan McCarthy in the Dean’s Office that the student is requesting a date and a location for the defense. The dissertation chair should inform Joan about any equipment or special needs. Generally, there should be one week’s notice, unless an exception is approved by the Dean. At least two printed copies of the dissertation must be available for review in the Dean’s Office by any member of the College faculty as of the date of the announcement of the dissertation defense (i.e., one week prior to the event). In lieu of printed copies, if the student prefers, an online pdf version may be made available, and the link to that document should be provided in the announcement of the dissertation defense to the faculty.

Who convenes and who attends the dissertation proposal defense?

The student and the dissertation committee will be present. In addition, students and faculty are invited. In addition, family, partners, and friends may attend, but not participate in the questioning.
Upon the recommendation of the dissertation committee, the Program Director (or designee) will convene the proposal defense. The questioning portion of the defense is moderated by the dissertation chair. Normally, the student will be asked to make a brief presentation. The questioning normally proceeds with the committee members, then the chair and other faculty members who are present, followed by questions invited from the other doctoral students in the program.

**How long does the dissertation proposal defense last?**

The public portion of the questioning normally lasts one hour. At the end of the public session, the dissertation committee continues in executive session. All others except for the student, are excused at this time.

**How is the dissertation proposal graded?**

There are three designations: approved, approved with changes, and not approved. Please see Joan McCarthy in the Dean’s Office for the sign-off sheet for the dissertation proposal.

**What does a dissertation look like?**

Our first three cohorts of doctoral students will follow the sixth edition of the APA Publication Manual. Chapter Two, in the APA Publication Manual describes the manuscript structure and content. Generally, the first chapter consists of an introduction; the second chapter consists of a review of the literature; the third chapter consists of the research methodology; the fourth chapter consists of the data analysis; and the fifth chapter consists of the summary, conclusions, implications, and suggestions for future research. There is a title page, a table of contents, a list of tables, an abstract, a reference list, and appendices, if needed. Students are encouraged to view other dissertations in their area of interest and discuss format issues with their dissertation chair.

**When does the student defend the dissertation?**

Before a student defends the dissertation, the student must have successfully defended the dissertation proposal, completed 51 credits, have been admitted to doctoral candidacy, and have met any other specific requirements established by the dissertation committee.

After the dissertation research has been completed and the dissertation has been written, the initial dissertation committee will be expanded to include two additional members who will serve as “readers” and who will participate as equal members of the committee in conducting the final public dissertation defense and approving the dissertation. At least one of the readers must be a full-time LIU faculty member (from any campus or department) with expertise related to the dissertation topic. The other reader may be another LIU faculty member or may be an external reader who holds a doctorate from an accredited institution and has special expertise or experience related to the dissertation research.
Who convenes and who attends the dissertation defense?

The student and the dissertation committee will be physically present, except when expressly approved by the Program Director or Dean. Such approval for remote participation will only be granted when absolutely necessary, as in the case of a committee member who is located at a great distance from the LIU Post campus. In addition, all doctoral students and faculty are invited to attend. In addition, family, partners, and friends may attend, but not participate in the questioning.

Upon the recommendation of the dissertation committee, the Program Director (or designee) will convene the dissertation defense. The questioning portion of the defense is moderated by the dissertation chair. Normally, the student will be asked to make a brief presentation. The questioning normally proceeds with the committee members (including the two outside readers) and then the chair. Other members of the faculty and then other doctoral candidates or students will then be invited to ask questions or offer comments within the time limits set by the committee chair.

How long does the dissertation defense last?

The public portion of the presentation and questioning session normally lasts about one hour. At the end of the public session, the dissertation committee continues in executive session. All others are excused during the executive session, but are invited to wait nearby if they wish. At the end of the executive session, the doctoral candidate is invited to return to hear the decision of the committee. After that point, the other guests may be invited to return.

What is the format and length of the dissertation?

The format and length of the dissertation will be determined by the dissertation committee based on the nature and topic of the dissertation. Students and dissertation chairs are encouraged to view dissertations online to determine the appropriate format based on the nature of the research. All dissertations must conform to the style prescribed by the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Generally, the first chapter consists of an introduction; the second chapter consists of a review of the related literature; the third chapter consists of the research methodology; the fourth chapter consists of the data analysis; and the fifth chapter consists of the conclusions, summary, and implications. This outline may be modified as needed based on the nature of the dissertation and with the explicit approval of the dissertation committee.

How is the dissertation graded?

There are three designations: approved, approved with changes, and not approved. Please see Joan McCarthy in the Dean’s Office for the sign-off sheet for the dissertation proposal.
Can a student register for EDD 1009 and EDD 1010 during the same semester?

Students may register for both classes with the approval of their dissertation chair. Doctoral students and candidates are reminded, however, that they must be continuously registered and enrolled in every fall or spring semester until and including the semester in which they successfully defend the dissertation.

Can a student graduate before May?

Students can graduate in September, January, or May. The official commencement ceremony is held once a year in May and includes all graduates who have completed their degrees since the previous commencement. Students are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in the commencement ceremonies, in which they will be hooded and individually acknowledged, which symbolizes that they have admitted to the highest level of academic achievement.

When does the doctoral student apply for IRB approval and how long does it take to get IRB approval?

The student should not apply for IRB approval until successfully passing the dissertation proposal defense. The time it takes for IRB approval depends upon the number of requests that they have and the schedule of IRB committee meetings.

The student may, however, consult with staff in the Office of Sponsored Research prior to the proposal defense in developing a draft application.

What is the process for IRB approval?

Students must take an online federal training program before submitting their request to the IRB. Once the training module has been completed, students will be prompted to print out a certificate of completion. A copy of this certificate must be submitted with the IRB application (The training and certification are normally taught as a component of EDD 1005).

Please go to www.liu.edu and click on Academic Affairs at the top of the page. Then click on Office of Sponsored Research on the left hand side of the page. Then click on Human Subjects Research and/or Forms.

For more information, please contact Michele Kuchera, Associate Director and IRB Secretary at 516-299-3591 or e-mail her at michele.kuchera@liu.edu

Why does the student’s dissertation chair need to co-sign the IRB application?

The student’s dissertation chair needs to sign off under faculty supervisor. This certifies that the project is under the direct supervision of the dissertation chair who is responsible for ensuring that the investigator (student) complies with all provisions of approval.
**Where can information about policies be found?**

Information about policies can be found in the latest student handbook (2012) and/or bulletin (2012). Hard copies are available in the Dean’s Office. In addition, information is available online at http://eddprogram.net. If there are any policy changes that take place after the printing of the current student handbook and bulletin, these changes will be included in the latest copy of the doctoral newsletter until the next editions are published.

Updated: November 2012