

DISSERTATION DIRECTOR/CHAIR

The dissertation chair guides the student through all work during official doctoral candidacy – the dissertation outline, proposal writing and hearing, dissertation study, writing, and public defense. Often the academic adviser during coursework is also the student’s dissertation director; however, if the student’s choice of dissertation topic and/or methodology warrants a new chair/director, the student may select one. This selection is by mutual consent between the student and the faculty member. Such a change in advisor also needs to be reported to the Director of Graduate Studies so that records in the Graduate School can be updated.

A list of the current faculty who serve as Advisers and Dissertation Directors for EDPL doctoral students, along with their academic interests, can be found in the FACULTY section of this handbook.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Candidates select their dissertation committee with the assistance of their adviser. There must be at least three members on the committee, including the chair. At least two members of the committee must be from the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership. Additional members of the committee can be selected from graduate faculty at Marquette University and may include one member from outside of the university. If the committee includes a non-Marquette member, the department must submit a current curriculum vitae for that member to the Graduate School with the *Outline for Dissertation* form.

DISSERTATION DIRECTIVES

Detailed information and directions for planning the dissertation, assembling a dissertation committee, formatting the dissertation, arrangement order and detail in the dissertation, copyright law, and submission of the dissertation to the Marquette University Graduate School can be found on the Graduate School website at: www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml

In addition, all dissertations submitted to the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership must follow the most recent edition of APA Style Guidelines.

DISSERTATION CREDITS

Doctoral students must take 12 hours of dissertation credits and may enroll for these while working on their dissertation outline and/or while working on the dissertation research. Students work with their advisors to determine how many credits hours they should take during any one term during the dissertation work. Students who enroll in, and pay for, dissertation credits before actually beginning work on their project will not be entitled to any tuition refund of these credits even if they should subsequently drop out of or are withdrawn from the program.

If the student has already completed the 12 dissertation credits required for graduation, but is still working on his/her dissertation, registration in dissertation continuation is required using the “Dissertation/Thesis/Professional Project Continuation Registration Form” which is available online at www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml. The student may register for less than half-time, half-time, or full-time, based on the amount of work that is being done.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL & HEARING

The third required doctoral seminar, EDPL 8960 Dissertation Proposal Seminar, is designed to assist doctoral students in the preparation of their dissertation proposal. The seminar is taken toward the end of course work after at least 33 doctoral credits have been taken.

Typically, the dissertation proposal includes the components of what are traditionally in the first three chapters of the dissertation: Problem Statement and Research Questions, Literature Review, and Methodology. With the help of the dissertation director, the student prepares a dissertation proposal for review by his/her committee and subsequent discussion with the committee in a scheduled proposal hearing where all members of the committee have an opportunity to question the student about the planned research, offer suggestions, and either approve the research plan or ask the student to do further work on the proposal.

DISSERTATION OUTLINE

Students must submit an outline for their proposed dissertation using the Outline for Dissertation, Thesis, or Professional Project form available online at www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml. This form is typically submitted to the Graduate School during the first term that dissertation credits are taken and after the dissertation proposal has been approved by the student's dissertation director and committee. The student's dissertation director, committee, and department chair must register their approval of the student's research plan on the dissertation outline form which is then submitted to the Graduate School for approval, along with the dissertation proposal.

If the student's research involves human subjects, the student is required to obtain written approval of the research from the Office of Research Compliance (ORC) PRIOR to initiating his/her dissertation research. The approval forms for human research may be obtained through ORC and must be submitted to the Graduate School upon approval. ORC requires the STUDENT to submit the necessary protocol forms for review and approval of his/her research.

For more information about the research compliance process, students may check the ORC website at www.marquette.edu/researchcompliance or contact ORC at (414) 288-1479.

Approval of the student's Dissertation Outline form by the Graduate School does NOT constitute approval by the Office of Research Compliance.

Once the outline form is completed and signed by all parties, it is an agreement between the student, the dissertation committee, and the Graduate School for the student's planned research. Any significant changes in the outline must be approved by all parties (dissertation director, committee, department chair, Graduate School).

PUBLIC DEFENSE & EVALUATION OF THE DISSERTATION

A public defense of the dissertation is conducted after the candidate has completed all other formal requirements for the doctoral degree. Before a public defense of the dissertation, a copy of the dissertation must be given to each member of the committee at least three and preferably four weeks before the defense date. The student and his/her adviser must select a date for the defense during the weekday working hours and must avoid public or religious holidays. If the student intends to graduate the same term the defense is made, the defense must be held before the deadline listed in the Academic Calendar.

Students must submit the Announcement for Public Defense of the Dissertation form, available online at www.marquette.edu/grad/forms_index.shtml, along with an electronically submitted dissertation abstract in MS Word format to the graduate School. Each committee member must sign the form confirming the date and time of the defense. **The form must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the scheduled defense date.** The Graduate School uses this form to announce the upcoming defenses to the campus community.

Evaluation of both the written and oral defense of the dissertation is based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrates understanding of main arguments
- Identifies a question or questions that challenge current wisdom on a subject
- Uses an appropriate methodology to address the research question(s)
- Develops an evidence-based, persuasive argument that contributes to the literature in a field
- Evaluates the quality and representativeness of the evidence offered to support arguments
- Evaluates the interplay of argument and evidence in multiple texts
- Demonstrates a grasp of how the arguments of the texts are related to one another
- Identifies a gap or gaps in the literature