

# **CTX Dissertation Handbook**

**Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)**

**2022-2023**

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## Introduction

### To the Candidate

When you read this document, you should be well on your way to completing your doctoral work. This document is designed to help you through the last part of your doctoral journey. Of course, no document can anticipate all possible questions and needs for every dissertation, since each is unique in many ways. The people who are working with you at this point can guide you in areas not specifically addressed in these pages. We have asked faculty to be available for your questions, but we suggest that you be sensitive to their time and work schedules as well. This document is not a substitute for program information in the current Proposal Course Syllabus or Ed.D. Program/Student Handbook. This is a *supplementary* document, to be used primarily for information about writing the dissertation and details involved in completing the program.

Perhaps the most useful sections of this handbook will be those that deal with working with your committee and developing a dissertation calendar. Although some flexibility is allowed, the timeline should keep you on track and keep everyone informed about your dissertation and related activities. Be careful and realistic in developing a timeline so that everyone who is involved in your work has plenty of time to do his/her job and so that you are not overly stressed in doing yours. *If in doubt, allow extra time.* Start with your anticipated graduate date, then work backward.

### To the Faculty

The most important contribution you can make to doctoral candidates is to be there when they need you. This may not always be at the most convenient time. But it is important that candidates have access to faculty, especially when they cannot move forward without advice. They will be asked not to abuse the privilege and to be considerate of your schedule. As dissertation chair or committee member, your name appears on the signature page of the work. Candidates will always remember their doctoral experiences with you, as most of you remember your experience with your committee members.

Committee members are compensated for their work. Read carefully the section of this handbook detailing your committee responsibilities. If you have any questions, contact the Program Director.

The Ed.D. program addresses Concordia's strategic plan in several areas. Our students represent the future of school leadership. They will exhibit moral, ethical, and Christian leadership, which is the primary goal of our program. You are a large part of the reason our doctoral students will be successful: You taught them, advised them, and showed them the path to program completion. For those things, we and they will be in your debt.

## **Program Overview**

By the time a candidate completes the Concordia Ed.D. program, he or she will have taken 21 credit hours of core courses and 37 hours of specialty area courses and survived the rigors of a Qualifying Exam, research projects, class tests, projects, group work, and so forth. The candidate will have spent two weeks away from home to be in Austin for their residency classes. The candidate will have logged at least 200 clock hours in the field to polish leadership skills in a chosen area. The candidate will have written many papers and completed many assignments under the tutelage of a dozen or more professors and potential committee members along the way.

### **Core Courses (all students take these)**

EDU 6310 – Christian Ethics & Values  
EDU 6311 – Research I – Academic Writing  
EDU 6312 – Research II – Quantitative Research  
EDU 6316 – Research III – Qualitative Research  
EDU 6313 – Multicultural Experiences  
EDU 6314 – Grant Writing  
EDU 6341 – Digital Learning (Summer Institute)

### **Qualifying Examination**

Every CTX doctoral student must pass this comprehensive examination to demonstrate mastery of the Core Course material before progressing to one of two specialty areas.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

Students are admitted to candidacy only after achieving a passing score on the Qualifying Examination. At that point, they begin to take specialization-specific courses (39 credit hours) in one of two areas: Educational Leadership or Curriculum & Instruction. Also, at that point, students begin serious conversations with faculty members about a dissertation topic and ideas for conducting research.

### **Research IV: Proposal (EDL or CAI 6323):**

Several important things happen during the 16 weeks of the Proposal course (Research IV). Each candidate and his or her instructor, and the Ed.D. Director agree on a topic for the dissertation. The candidate develops a “working draft” of the first three chapters of the dissertation: Introduction, Review of Literature, and Methodology.

### **Research V**

During Research V, the candidate works directly with the chairperson and committee to complete the proposal (Chapters 1-3), arrange and conduct the Proposal Defense, apply for and receive CTX IRB approval, collect and analyze data, complete the full dissertation, and participate in the Dissertation Defense meeting. Research V consists of three courses:

Dissertation I, II, and III. Each of these is an online course which students must take as requirements of the Ed.D. program. These are overseen by the Program Director in Bb Learn, as instructor.

### **Dissertation Defense**

Once the Chair has determined that the candidate's dissertation is ready for final review, the culminating activity of the doctoral program is the dissertation defense. The defense is generally considered a professional presentation of the candidate's work, punctuated by a scholarly exchange with committee members. Candidates are informed of specific dates by which all dissertation materials must be submitted to the Chair and committee, steps to use in setting a defense date, and so forth. The dissertation defense is a public meeting; other students and faculty may attend, and the candidate may invite guests. The standard format for the dissertation defense is an online forum, however the candidate and committee can agree to a face-to-face meeting that will be held on the CTX campus. Candidates should be aware that the dissertation could be criticized during the defense. The date and time of the defense is published by the College of Education. The dissertation defense is scheduled to last 60 to 90 minutes. Once committee questioning has concluded, the audience and the candidate will be asked to clear the room while the committee deliberates. Like the *CTX Proposal Defense presentation*, the *CTX Dissertation Defense presentation* is scored as "successful completion" or "unsuccessful completion."

Candidates who do not pass the dissertation defense presentation may petition the Program Director, and later, the Senior Director as necessary, where the decision is final.

### **Archiving the Dissertation**

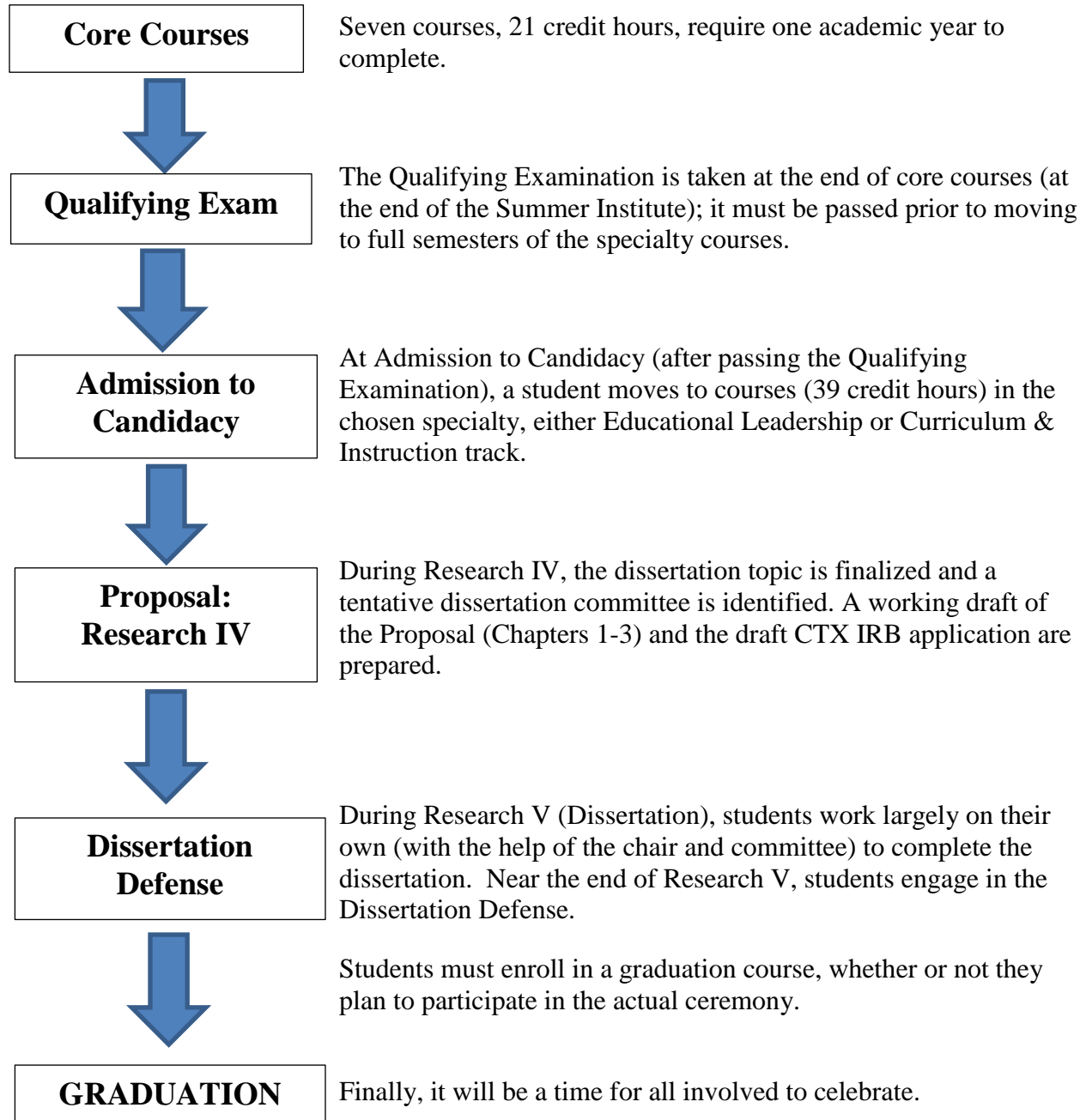
Students are not cleared for graduation until archival responsibilities are completed. CTX requires that *electronic* copies of the dissertation be kept by the College of Education and registered with ProQuest. Prior to archiving, students' dissertations will be submitted to a university APA editor for format checking. Upon completion of all edits, the document will be ready for submission. For graduation clearance purposes, submission to ProQuest for publication must be complete.

### **Graduation**

Graduation at CTX is considered a class for which students must register in order to graduate. Registering for graduation is required whether or not a student intends to attend the ceremony. The tradition of being "hooded" and the pomp and color that surrounds a doctoral graduation ceremony goes back to the Middle Ages. We highly recommend that, after having invested so much time and money in coursework and dissertation, all students take part in this once-in-a-lifetime event. Doctoral regalia must be purchased from the bookstore in order to participate in the commencement festivities.

## General Timeline

Given the complexity of the doctoral program, it is important that students and faculty members review the General Timeline of important events of the program.



## **Timeline Details**

### **The Dissertation Experience: From Proposal Course to Graduation**

Candidate takes the Proposal Course (Research IV)

Candidate prepares the “Working Draft” of the Proposal (Chapters 1–3)

Candidate is matched to potential committee members at the end of Research IV

Candidate completes the Proposal Course (Research IV)

Candidate works directly with the Chairperson and Committee members

Candidate takes Research V, Dissertation I and works directly with his or her Chair and Committee after obtaining all required signatures

Candidate prepares headings and subheadings of text of the ‘Completed Draft’ of the Proposal according to Proposal Rubric Expectations, with revisions, additions, and changes as necessary for Committee approval

Candidate and Committee arrange the Proposal Defense meeting

Committee decides to pass, pass with stipulations, or not pass the Proposal Defense

Committee reviews the candidate’s IRB application for revisions, additions, and changes

Candidate completes and submits the IRB application, makes required revisions

Candidate obtains approval from CTX IRB and specific research sites

Candidate implements data collection and data analysis

Candidate writes Chapters 4 and 5 according to CTX Template and Rubric expectations

Candidate takes Research V (2) and (3) as needed until Committee approves the dissertation or candidate’s timeline expires

Candidate completes Dissertation Defense when deemed ready by Chairperson and committee

Committee decides to pass, pass with stipulations, or not pass the dissertation

Candidate completes the final draft of the dissertation with close chair oversight

Candidate sends final draft to the Director of the Ed.D. Program for final editing approval review

Candidate submits the final draft of the dissertation electronically

## **The Dissertation Committee**

The members of the dissertation committee follow these guidelines and responsibilities.

### **Guidelines for Dissertation Committee Service**

All dissertation committees will be composed of three members (a chair and two others).

At least one committee member must be a CTX College of Education faculty member with a terminal degree.

In a special circumstance, one committee member may be non-CTX faculty with a terminal degree. The student will be required to explain in writing the reason for such a request, as well as the qualifications of the person being requested.

Full-time CTX faculty members with terminal degrees will be generally limited to chairing no more than six dissertations simultaneously. Exceptions may be approved by the Program Director.

### **Responsibilities of the Chair**

Be a coach and part of a general support system for the student, especially if technical or personal problems arise

Be familiar with policies and procedures related to dissertations

Reach agreement with the student regarding mutual communication

Work with the student to establish a realistic timeline to graduation

Guide the student toward a product of which all parties can be proud from technical and ethical viewpoints

Assist the student with IRB issues

Advise the student regarding methodology, data collection, and data analysis

Prepare the student for the defense process, up to and including delaying the defense if significant problems are apparent

Mediate misunderstandings among committee members or between the student and a committee member

### **Responsibilities of Committee Members**

Have a copy of the student's timeline to graduation as negotiated with the Chair

Be available in a timely manner when the student has a problem or question



Provide subject matter or technical expertise as needed by the student or requested by the Chair

Contact the Chair at the first sign of difficulty

Be knowledgeable about the doctoral program and the dissertation handbook

Read dissertation drafts and return comments to the student in a timely manner

Advise the student regarding methodology, data collection, and data analysis

Work with the Chair to make the dissertation experience as seamless as possible

### **Student Responsibilities to the Committee**

Be present and on time for all meetings with the Committee or individual members

Present drafts that are as error free as possible

Meet the established timeline to graduation if at all possible

Be clear about communication expectations of all Committee members

Maintain a respectful and professional attitude at all times

Hire an independent editor/proofreader if those skills are lacking. It is permissible to hire someone for *editing* or *proofreading* purposes. It is NOT permissible to hire someone to *conduct research* or *perform any writing activities* that would call into question the originality of the dissertation. Keep the Chair informed about outside help.

Copy the Chair on all communication with other Committee members

### **Institutional Review Board Approval (IRB) Process**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a committee established to scrutinize research projects that involve human subjects in an effort to ensure the rights and welfare of study participants. It can also be viewed as an arbiter of ethics in conducting research studies of this type. The IRB handbook and application can be found at: [Concordia.edu/irb](http://Concordia.edu/irb).

### **Background**

The story of the modern-day IRB has its roots in a much darker time. The so-called Nuremberg Code of 1948 was written as a result of the post-World War II Nuremberg Trials, which exposed mistreatment of research subjects by Nazi physicians in prison camps. The Code established the first protocols for conducting research involving human subjects. Those protocols involved (a)

voluntary participation and informed consent, (b) a favorable risk/benefit analysis, and (c) the right to withdraw without penalty.

Unfortunately, the passage of time resulted in incidents that compromised the well-being of study participants, perhaps most notably the Tuskegee Study, which took place from 1932 to 1972. Congressional hearings held in 1974 resulted in establishment of the modern IRB system through the National Research Act of 1974 and the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. The document codifying the main principles of the modern IRB is known as the Belmont Report, an eight-page document that serves as the mainstay of work conducted by local IRBs. The Belmont Report focuses on three principles: (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice. The Belmont Report is on the OHRP website, <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.htm>.

All dissertation projects undertaken at CTX must be approved by the CTX IRB before a study may be conducted. After reviewing the CTX policy (available on the CTX website), **students should factor the work of the IRB Committee into their timeline.** Failure to take this work into consideration could lead to serious delays in completion and graduation. (See the CTX IRB Manual for application requirements of the present school year.)

### **Working with Third-Party Agencies**

In planning a Timeline to Graduation, students should factor in working with any third party that will be asked to grant permission to the student to enter a facility to conduct research or to gain access to copyrighted information. Unfortunately, all past researchers may not have been as ethical in their dealings with third parties; therefore, agencies that have had negative experiences in working with researchers may resist agreement. It is highly recommended to treat all parties with the utmost respect and courtesy. Such treatment will not only prove valuable in completing research; it could well affect future researchers who need access to the same agency.

### **Technical Specifications**

*The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> edition, 2020), informally referred to as the *APA Manual*, is the official source of writing and formatting guidelines for the CTX dissertation. However, since the APA manual is designed primarily for instructions related to publication of scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals, it does not contain everything one needs to know to write a dissertation. The following guidelines supplement and supersede the Manual. If these two sources do not provide specific information, the candidate should consult with dissertation Chair.

### **General**

It is strongly recommended to use latest version of Microsoft Word for the dissertation. The use of professional editors for completion of the dissertation is recommended.

## **Fonts, Size, Spacing, and Margins**

Candidates are urged to use the Times New Roman, 12-point font, double spacing throughout the text of the dissertation, as well as for the cover pages, signatures page, copyright page, Abstract, Acknowledgements, Dedication, Table of Contents, Lists of Figures and Tables, End Pages, Appendices, and References pages. Other pages may have different spacing instructions for top margins (see CTX Dissertation Template). There may be one or two spaces following each period. Indent the first line of each paragraph, except for Reference page material, in which case the first line of each citation is not indented (flush left) but each subsequent line of the citation is indented the same as indentation for a new paragraph (Word provides a Paragraph Format feature of “hanging” paragraphs). Margins should be 1” at the top, on the right and left, and at the bottom of each page.

## **Pagination**

Pages should be numbered in the bottom right corner, using the Word function. Cover pages are paginated with lower case Roman numerals. The title page is not numbered but it is counted as i; the next page is ii. Arabic numerals begin with the first page of text in Chapter 1 and continued consecutively through the last page of the Appendices.

## **Headings, Tables, References**

Begin by using the CTX Dissertation Template. Also, the *APA Manual* has guidelines for headings, subheadings, table and figure design, in-text citations, and references. Most CTX main headings are in boldface and centered; subheadings are in boldface at the left margin. Other headings would follow these guidelines.

## **Ordering of Materials**

Use the CTX Proposal Rubric for the Proposal and the CTX Dissertation Template on the following pages for the complete dissertation.

*[center vertically]*

TITLE

TITLE

in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Education

by

Student

Concordia University Texas

Submission date

*[center vertically]*

TITLE

TITLE

by

Student

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Committee. It is accepted by the undersigned faculty members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the College of Education, Concordia University Texas.

Approved by

##, Committee Chair

##, Committee Member

##, Committee Member

Dr. Stephanie Hartzell, Director of the Doctor of Education Program

Dr. Chris Winkler, Senior Director of the College of Education

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Student

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TITLE

TITLE

Student

**ABSTRACT**

*(max 350 words, no citations, 2 spaces after period)*

## **DEDICATION (OPTIONAL)**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (REQUIRED)**

*[write ABOUT people, not TO them; limit 1 page]*

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Text. Text. [*Normal paragraph style: 1 space after period, 1 space after colon*]

### **Statement of the Problem**

Text. Text. Text.

### **Purpose of the Study**

### **Significance of the Study**

### **Definition of Terms**

*Term:* definition (with citations)

### **Research Questions**

### **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

### **Limitations**

### **Delimitations**

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

**Further Headings and Subheadings (as determined by researcher – Focus on Theoretical/Conceptual Framework)**

#### **Level 2 Heading**

Text.

#### Level 3 Heading

Text

**Level 4 Heading.** Text follows

***Level 5 Heading.*** Text follows

### **Summary of Chapter 2**

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction and Research Design**

#### **Settings**

### **Participants & Sampling Procedures**

#### **Instruments**

#### **Plan for Data Collection**

#### **Plan for Data Analysis**

#### **Reliability & Validity**

### **Plan to Address Ethical Issues**

#### **Chapter Summary**

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

### **Findings (with Sub-headings by the Researcher)**

#### **Summary of the Findings**



## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS**

**Discussion**

**Recommendations for Practice**

**Recommendations for Further Research**

**Conclusions**

## REFERENCES

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**APPENDIX A**

**Title**