

**Higher Education Ph.D.
Program
Student Handbook
2025-2026**

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Getting Started

Your Panther ID:

Each student is assigned a unique 7-digit Panther ID that is necessary and needed for enrollment, registration, transcript request, application for scholarships and other curriculum activities. If you do not have your Panther ID, you can get your Panther ID online by going to the MyFIU webpage (<https://my.fiu.edu/>), and clicking on the Panther ID Look Up link. All you need to do is input the required information as it appears in your University records. If your Panther ID does not come up, you can call the Office of the Registrar at 305-348-2320. Before registering for classes, you should first be able to log into the university computer system (PantherSoft). To set up your account you can go to the following link: <https://account.fiu.edu/>

Rights and Responsibilities:

The University has developed policies and procedures on the rights and responsibilities of students and a code of conduct assuring that these rights can be freely exercised without interference or infringement by others. The code of conduct, academic misconduct policies, student grievance procedures and policies on student records are reported in detail in the Student Handbook (<https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/student-handbook/>). Also, all administrative procedures and time deadlines must be met, whether or not they are specifically mentioned in this document. Students must operate within the rules and guidelines of the Student Code of Conduct, the FIU Graduate Catalog (<https://catalog.fiu.edu/>) and the FIU Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual. Accordingly, graduate students should obtain copies of these publications from the Graduate Studies Office or visit the University Graduate School website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/>) and be familiar with their contents. Particular attention should be paid to the deadlines posted annually in the University Academic Calendar <https://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/>.

Active Status (UGS Policy 380.0441)

Active status entitles students to utilize the University's resources and advance in their studies. All graduate students must take a minimum of one (1) credit hour per term to maintain active status in the program. Students will be dismissed for non-enrollment if there is a lapse in enrollment for three consecutive terms.

Full-Time Status: For full-time status, the University requires nine (9) credit hours of graduate enrollment for Fall and Spring and six (6) credit hours for Summer.

Once a doctoral student has advanced to candidacy, three (3) dissertation credits is considered full-time enrollment. Similarly, Master's students who have completed their coursework and have an approved proposal may be considered full-time with enrollment in one (1) thesis credit.

The maximum number of hours which a graduate student may carry in a single term without special permission is 15. A heavier load must be approved by both the graduate program director or department chairperson and the dean of the University Graduate School.

Admitted students who are recipients of stipends from the University, whether holders of fellowships or graduate assistantships, must be full-time students.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Minimum GPA: All students must maintain satisfactory academic progress throughout their time in the doctoral program. To do so, students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0. In cases where a student's GPA fall below 3.0, the following structure will be followed:

- **Warning:** a graduate student whose cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0 will be placed on warning, indicating academic difficulty.
- **Probation:** a graduate student on warning whose cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0 will be placed on probation, indicating serious academic difficulty.
- **Dismissal:** a graduate student on probation who's cumulative and semester GPA fall below a 3.0 will automatically be dismissed from his/her program and the University. A graduate student will not be dismissed prior to attempting a minimum of 12 semester hours of coursework.

Progress towards Candidacy: Students have one (1) calendar year from when they complete their coursework to successfully defend their dissertation proposal and advance to candidacy.

Progress towards Dissertation: Once a student has defended their dissertation proposals, they must submit evidence of progress to their chair each year. The Chair evaluates evidence to determine whether the student has made satisfactory academic progress. A student who has not submitted evidence of progress since the last annual evaluation period has not made satisfactory academic progress.

Time Limits for Degree Completion

Doctoral students must complete their degree within nine years of first enrollment, noting that the time of enrollment begins with the first course at FIU that will be applied to the student's program of study. All work used to meet degree requirements, including coursework and the successful defense of a dissertation, must be completed within the nine years prior to degree conferral. Courses transferred from a completed master's degree do not count toward the time-to-degree calculations.

Many students have family and employment obligations that compete for the time and effort needed for doctoral study. It is expected nevertheless that they will sustain the focus and momentum necessary to complete the studies well within the nine-year limit. Establishing a plan of study and a timetable at the outset with your advisor and closely adhering to it will help to ensure your progress and timely completion.

Leave of Absence (UGS Policy 380.048)

A student who finds it necessary to be excused from registration in a graduate degree program for three consecutive terms, or one term in the case of students subject to continuous enrollment, must formally request a leave of absence from the graduate program. Leave time must be requested prior to the beginning of the anticipated leave time and must be approved by the program director or chairperson of the department, the dean of the appropriate school or college and the Dean of the University Graduate School.

Leave will generally be granted in cases involving personal hardship or family need. Academic standing is not considered a reason for granting a leave of absence.

A leave of absence will not be granted for students currently enrolled with conditional status.

A graduate student who returns from a leave of absence may be required to make changes to their research committee and/or research plan due to changes that have occurred in their absence.

Withdrawal from the University

Students who withdraw from the University must file the appropriate paperwork. See the Student Withdrawal Form on the UGS website for additional policies/procedures related to withdrawal.

Health Insurance

For those graduate students receiving assistantships, a university subsidized health insurance plan is included. The payments for the plan are deducted over several salary payments. If you have your own health insurance and plan to use it you must fill out a waiver form through the university insurance provider. This opt out form must be submitted each semester. All international students in F1 status must have medical insurance that meets certain requirements in order to register and continue their studies at FIU. For more information about health insurance and health insurance waivers, go to <https://fiu.myahpcare.com/>.

FIU Employee Tuition Waivers

The employee tuition waiver benefit allows eligible employees and their dependents to have tuition waived up to three times per year: spring semester, summer semester, and fall semester. The available credits are a pool to be split between the employee and dependents. The waiver covers up to six credits for employees and up to 10 credits per semester for dependents. If both employee and dependent are using the waiver, no more than six of the ten available credits may be used by the employee. The available credits are a pool to be split between the employee and dependent. More information can be found at <https://hr.fiu.edu/employees-affiliates/benefits/>. Please be aware that there may be tax implications when using the tuition waiver. The department is not able to provide students advice about tax implications. Please contact Human Resources if you have questions.

Information for International Students

ISSS Orientation

All students at FIU in F1 or J1 student status are required to attend a MANDATORY Immigration Orientation conducted by ISSS. This is a separate orientation from other academic, departmental, or university-wide orientations and it will cover information specific to international students that you MUST be aware of. This orientation is offered at both the Biscayne Bay Campus and the Modesto Maidique Campus every semester.

During the fall semester only, an ISSS Immigration Orientation will be offered as part of the Graduate Student Orientation offered by the Graduate School at the Modesto Maidique Campus. If you are not a graduate student or if you do not attend this orientation, you will be expected to attend a separate ISSS Immigration Orientation offered for all new international students. If you are unable to attend an ISSS Immigration Orientation before the semester begins, you must schedule an appointment with an ISSS advisor at your earliest convenience to receive counseling related to your immigration status. For more information, please visit:

<http://issf.fiu.edu/>

Application

Applying

Applicants should visit FIU Graduate Admissions and follow the Steps to Apply guidelines (<https://admissions.fiu.edu/how-to-apply/graduate-applicant/applications/index.html>).

Application Deadline: Priority deadline: December 1st. Applications accepted through February 15th.

Application Materials:

- A completed online application for Graduate Admission with appropriate fees;
- Official transcripts of all higher education institutions attended;
- Three letters of reference attesting to the applicant's ability to succeed in doctoral study;
- A current résumé/vita;
- A statement that sets forth the applicant's research interests and career goals and relates these goals to the completion of the Ph.D. Program in Higher Education; and
- A writing sample illustrating research skills (such as a thesis, journal article, paper submitted for academic credit; etc.). We recommend a writing sample of at least 10 pages in length.
- Note: Transcripts from institutions outside the United States must be evaluated by a NACES member credential evaluation service. For more details see: <https://admissions.fiu.edu/international/graduate-school/>

Admission into the doctoral program takes place once a year for entry in the Fall semester. No action will be taken on incomplete files. A file is considered incomplete if any of the above is missing.

Application Review

The application and all supporting documentation are reviewed by program faculty using the criteria noted below. Exceptions to one or more of the stated criteria may be granted based on other compelling evidence that the applicant is likely to be successful in this doctoral program.

- A grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in upper level undergraduate credits;
- A cumulative 3.25 GPA for all graduate work attempted.
- International graduate student applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). A total score of 80 on the iBT TOEFL or 6.5 overall on the IELTS is required. (see: <https://admissions.fiu.edu/international/graduate-school/> for more information).
- The evidence from the writing sample that the applicant can perform doctoral-level work.
- A possible interview with the Doctoral Admissions Committee.

Members of the program's graduate faculty will constitute the Doctoral Admissions Committee. Upon completion of the review of the applicant's file and the interview, the Doctoral Admissions Committee will make recommendations to the University Graduate School.

Application Decisions

As admission to programs is competitive, meeting minimum admission requirements does not assure admission into the program. A candidate for admission to the program will be judged not only on prior academic achievement, but also in relation to prior related experience.

Admission into the doctoral program takes place once a year for entry in the Fall semester. Applicants should prepare all application materials in time for the program faculty and the Office of Graduate Admissions to receive them no later than December 1 for the following year's fall admissions.

Application Tips

- Faculty give substantial attention to the statement of research interests and writing sample.
- The statement of research interests should demonstrate an academic interest in an area, issue, theory, etc. related to the field of Higher Education. Such an interest may be related to the applicant's professional work, but the faculty privilege an academic and not purely practical engagement with the field.
- The writing sample should be a Master's thesis or other paper submitted previously for academic credit that demonstrates the applicant's scholarly writing ability. This requires a cogent scholarly argument supported by peer-reviewed literature. The writing sample should be a minimum of 10 pages.

Degree Requirements/Plan of Study

Minimum Number of Credits Required

The minimum number of required credits is determined by the student's Master's degree. Note that these are only credit minimums; students may need to take additional courses to be adequately prepared for their dissertation work. Such decisions are made at the discretion of the faculty advisor.

- A **minimum** of 54 credits for those entering with a Master's Degree in Higher Education or related field from an accredited institution;
- A **minimum** of 63 credits for students entering the Ph.D. Program with a Master's Degree from an accredited institution in a nonrelated field; or
- A **minimum** of 75 credits are required for students entering the Ph.D. program without a Master's Degree

Composition of Coursework

Coursework for students *entering the Ph.D. Program with a Master's Degree in Higher Education or related field* are as follows:

- EDH 7981 Doctoral Seminar (3 credits)
- Research Methods/Methodology (12 credits **minimum**)
- Higher Education Core (24 credits **minimum**)
- Dissertation (15 credits minimum)

Coursework for students entering the Ph.D. Program *with a Master's Degree in a non-related field* are as follows:

- EDH 7981 Doctoral Seminar (3 credits)
- Research Methods/Methodology (12 credits **minimum**)
- Higher Education Core (33 credits **minimum**)
- Dissertation (15 credits minimum)

Coursework for students entering the Ph.D. Program *without a Master's Degree* are as follows:

- EDH 7981 Doctoral Seminar (3 credits)
- Research Methods/Methodology (12 credits **minimum**)
- Higher Education Core (45 credits **minimum**)
- Dissertation (15 credits minimum)

The Research Methods/Methodology courses Higher Education Core courses are selected in consultation with your Academic Advisor

Doctoral Forms

The University Graduate School (UGS) requires a series of forms throughout students' doctoral work (Milestone forms). As of Spring 2022, these forms (with the exception of the D1R – Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee) are completed through an electronic system. Please visit the UGS website (<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>) for information about accessing and completing these forms. The most recent version of the D1R form can be found here (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>). See Appendix K for instructions to secure signatures for the D1R.

All Milestone forms, with the exception of the D1R, are automatically routed to the appropriate graduate program director, Dean's Office and UGS. It is the student's responsibility to facilitate the acquisition of all required signatures and submit the form to the relevant faculty. When submitting a D1R, a student should obtain signatures from their chair, relevant faculty, and the Graduate Program Director. The Graduate Program Director will send the D1R to the College for the appropriate signature.

Please see Appendices for detailed information about each form.

Appointment of Dissertation Committee (former D1)

This form establishes your dissertation committee. It should be completed by the fourth semester of coursework and must be submitted the semester prior to that which the student intends to complete the candidacy exam. For more detailed information, see Appendix B: Appointment of Dissertation Committee.

Form D-1r – Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee

This form is only required if there is a change in the student's dissertation chair or committee composition. Currently, this is the only D form that is a .pdf that you will need to complete then send via DocuSign – see Appendix K.

Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy

This form officially acknowledges all coursework that will be included in the students' program of study and certifies that they have advanced to candidacy. Part 1 of this form details the courses to be included in the student's doctoral program (including transfer courses and courses taken as a nondegree student). Note: To prevent delays, courses should be transferred within the first two weeks of the semester in which the student seeks to advance to candidacy. Students work with their chair to submit the appropriate transfer memo. Part 2 of the form certifies the result of the comprehensive examination. Students should indicate on Part 3 that the program does **not** require the submission of the Doctoral Dissertation Milestone form with the Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy form. The form is due to the Graduate Program Director 22 days prior to the start of the term in which a student seeks to take

dissertation credits. For more detailed information, see Appendix C: Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy.

Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

This form certifies student's Dissertation Chair (Major Professor) and Dissertation Committee Members have approved their dissertation proposal. According to UGS policy, this form must be submitted at least 3 semesters prior to anticipated graduation. Please see specific deadlines on this page: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>. For more detailed information, see Appendix E: Doctoral Dissertation Proposal.

Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense

This form attest that each member has read the dissertation and find it provisionally acceptable. You must submit a draft of your dissertation to your committee (and cc the Graduate Program Director) 8 weeks prior to your scheduled defense. After securing the committee's preliminary approval, the form must be submitted to the Graduate Program Director no later than five (5) weeks prior to the scheduled defense date. The GPD will then send the form to the CASE Dean's Office no later than four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled defense, and the Dean's Office will submit it to UGS at least 3 weeks before the date of the dissertation defense. For more detailed information, see Appendix H: Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense.

Final ETD Approval Form – Approval of Defense, Dissertation, and Electronic Submission of Dissertation

This form certifies that your dissertation has been reviewed and accepted by the student's dissertation committee, the final oral defense was successful, the final dissertation was approved, and the student has made all suggested formatting changes per UGS comments. It also includes information about publishing an embargo options for the student's dissertation. For more detailed information, see Appendix J: Final ETD Submission.

Academic Advisor, Dissertation Chair, and Dissertation Committee

The Role of the Academic Advisor

Upon entry into the program, the student is matched with an initial Academic Advisor who has:

- Is approved to chair dissertations in the department;
- Faculty research that is congruent with the student's research interests; and
- Faculty availability

The student and the Advisor jointly plan the student's plan of study. The Advisor works with the student during the initial stages of the program, guiding and monitoring the student's plan of study. The student and the Advisor have joint responsibility for ensuring that each step in fulfilling degree requirements is completed and that an official record is kept. It is not uncommon for students to discover, once in the program, that another faculty member may offer a better match for the student's research interests than the Advisor initially assigned. It is entirely acceptable and appropriate for the student to change advisors at any point in the program.

Students are responsible for contacting their advisors prior to being registered for courses each semester so their specific program of study can be reviewed. Students should see their advisors if they find they are having personal or academic difficulties that could impede their progress toward graduation.

After having course experiences with a range of faculty, the student will be ready to select a Dissertation Chairperson who will continue to monitor the student's Plan of Study and direct the student's Dissertation research. The Dissertation Chairperson may or may not have served as the Academic Advisor. In order to form a committee by the end of the fourth term, it is important to have conversations with potential chairs by the beginning of the fourth term.

Selecting the Dissertation Chairperson

As soon as the student has identified a proposed area of research, a Dissertation Chairperson (also referred to as the Major Professor) is selected. The Dissertation Chairperson must be an appointed member of the FIU Graduate Faculty. A current list of Graduate Faculty is available on the University Graduate School website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#facultylist>), and approved to chair dissertations in Educational Policy Studies.

The identification and selection of the Dissertation Chairperson is initiated by the student and the selection of this individual is dependent upon mutual agreement between the student and the faculty member who is asked to guide the Dissertation research. The choice of the Dissertation Chairperson should be made based on the student's proposed area of research and the faculty member's expertise and scholarly interests.

The Dissertation Chairperson must be the Committee member who can supervise the research as a whole but need not be the primary resource person for all aspects of the study. A recommended approach for students to use in identifying a Dissertation Chairperson is to become informed about faculty members' research interests and areas of expertise. The student and Chairperson will work together, often intensively, over a protracted period, so careful selection is essential.

The Role of the Dissertation Chairperson

Specific responsibilities of the Dissertation Chair are to:

- Be accessible to the students under their supervision during all phases of graduate education;
- Be sincere, fair, and committed to students' welfare and progress;
- Supervise, encourage, and support students carefully in their academic endeavors and assist them in securing research support and seeking career opportunities and professional employment;
- Will read, provide feedback and editorial guidance in a timely manner on all documents written by the students;
- Will not discriminate among graduate students on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, ethnic background, disability, religion, national origin, or any other factor unrelated to competence or performance;
- Will recognize the power they hold on students they supervise and will avoid engaging in conduct that exploits or demeans students or that could be construed as an abuse of that power;
- Advise students concerning the ethics of the profession, encourage the practice of research and publication consistent with ethical standards, and help students avoid ethically questionable projects;
- Be objective in the evaluation of research and academic performance and communicate that evaluation fully and honestly to their students. Report accurately on the competence of students to other professionals who require such evaluations; and
- Will not permit personal animosities or intellectual differences with colleagues to prevent student access to those colleagues or interfere with students' research or progress toward a degree.

Selecting the Dissertation Committee

The purpose of the Dissertation Committee is to guide the student's Dissertation research. *In consultation with the Dissertation Chairperson*, the student selects members of her/his Dissertation Committee. Students should choose Dissertation Committee members who will provide substantive support during the dissertation proposal and completion process. This support may come in the form of methodological expertise, theoretical knowledge, content knowledge, a supportive pedagogical relationship established during doctoral coursework, or other assistance.

The dissertation committee must have a minimum of four members including the chair. Typically, dissertation committees have four members. The committee must consist of at least

two members of the Department and at least one member from another department at FIU. All FIU faculty who are members of the Dissertation Committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty. All Committee appointments must be approved by the Dean of the University Graduate School. A current list of Graduate Faculty is available on the University Graduate School website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#facultylist>).

The student must include a detailed description of each committee member's expertise and a summary that identifies the expected contributions of each committee member and his/her qualifications to serve in that capacity. If a Committee member is not FIU faculty, his/her curriculum vitae must be attached to the form along with a signed Non-FIU Commitment form <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/NonFIUcommitmentMemo2022.pdf> . Any change in the membership of the committee must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and the University Graduate School.

The Role of the Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee is responsible for assisting the student in creating and executing an original research/scholarly project, assisting in the preparation of an acceptable dissertation, and administering the oral dissertation defense. The full committee should meet as needed to ensure the student progresses in a timely manner.

The responsibility of the Committee is to provide sufficient pedagogical guidance to the candidate to result in a dissertation of high quality. Ultimately, however, producing a high-quality dissertation is the candidate's responsibility. Many times, the process can be viewed as an apprenticeship in which the candidate works closely with the Dissertation Chairperson, learning how to do research and how to present the results of that research while under careful supervision of the faculty.

Changes in Dissertation Chairperson or Committee Member(s)

Changes in the Dissertation Chairperson or Committee membership must be acknowledged by the previous and chair and approved by the new chair, Director of the PhD Program, the student, and the Dean of the University Graduate School through the D-1r form. The student is responsible for obtaining signatures if Committee membership is changed.

Performance Expectations

Coursework and Grades

All students are expected to maintain good academic standing. Full-time students are expected to enroll in 9 credits per semester and part-time students are expected to enroll in at least 6 credits per semester. Students who have reached candidacy are required to enroll in at least 3

dissertation credits per semester. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is required. Students who fail to maintain a 3.0 may be dismissed from the program.

Incomplete Grade (IN)

An incomplete grade is a temporary designation given at the discretion of the instructor for work not completed because of serious interruption not caused by the student's own negligence (e.g., extended illness). An incomplete must be made up as quickly as possible and in a timeline agreed upon by the instructor, but no later than two semesters or it will automatically default to an "F". See the Graduate Catalog for additional policies/procedures related to an incomplete grade. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the faculty member has received the missing materials in a timely fashion and submitted the Change of Grade in PantherSoft.

Expectations for the Quality of Doctoral Dissertations

The PhD program faculty expects their students to produce high-quality dissertations. Such dissertations are characterized by originality, excellent writing, and compelling findings that make an important contribution to the existing literature in the field. We expect that students will demonstrate a deep level of thought and insight and lead to innovative research questions. Students must demonstrate a sophisticated grasp and use of theory, research methodology, and data analysis skills. This demonstration is made visible through a dissertation that: 1) asks new and innovative questions; 2) addresses important omissions in the existing knowledge base; 3) addresses problems or weaknesses in current theory or methodology; 4) pushes the discipline's boundaries and opens new areas for research; 5) has practical and policy implications; 6) is of sufficient quality and value to warrant its publication in a reputable professional journal or other scholarly outlet.

Annual Evaluations of Performance

All students who have enrolled in 18 credits in the doctoral program (including any non-degree courses) are required to complete and submit the online Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan. This is required by the Department, the College, and UGS. The evaluation is an assessment of the ongoing scholarly activities to ensure successful program completion. The evaluation process is initiated by the student each spring via a link provided in their MyFIU to do list. For more detailed information, see Appendix A: Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Form.

Students will receive an email from UGS and the Graduate Program Director when the evaluation period begins with relevant information regarding the submission timeline.

Students who do not yet have an Appointment of Dissertation Committee Milestone form approved and on file at UGS must have a meeting with their advisor/major professor to discuss their annual accomplishments as part of the evaluation process.

Students who have an Appointment of Dissertation Committee Milestone form approved on file by UGS must have a meeting with the full dissertation committee and all members of the committee must offer feedback on the student's performance and approve the evaluation in the online system. Any meeting held after January may serve as an annual evaluation meeting.

Any student who receives "occasionally does not meet expectations" or worse in one or more areas must have a performance improvement plan included in the evaluation. The student and Dissertation Chair and, if necessary, Dissertation Committee members must identify ways to address the shortcomings identified in the annual evaluation plan. As part of the evaluation, students are notified of the improvement plan. The student has one year (or less, if the performance plan specifies an earlier deadline) to meet the requirements of the performance improvement plan and provide evidence to the advisor/chair. Students may be dismissed from the program if they are not maintaining satisfactory progress in the program and if they do not meet the expectations in the performance improvement plan. Any student receiving two consecutive unsatisfactory overall evaluations will be dismissed from the program.

The Department will not support petitions for late annual evaluations. Failure to submit an annual evaluation will incur a registration hold for the following Fall term. Students with registration holds will not be able to register for classes or dissertation credits, so will be unable to continue in the program.

The Completion of Core Coursework

All students are expected to complete their pre-candidacy coursework in 3 years.

The Candidacy Examination

To advance to candidacy, the student must select a dissertation committee and submit a draft of their proposal to the dissertation committee. The dissertation committee will review the proposal and determine, by majority votes, whether to advance the student to candidacy and to the proposal defense. This process constitutes the candidacy exam. Typically, the committee has at least two weeks to review the proposal and vote.

To continue in the program and barring official approval by the University Graduation School of a leave of absence during this process, the student will have 1 year after completion of all non-dissertation coursework to be admitted to candidacy and defend their dissertation proposal.

If the dissertation committee advances the student to candidacy, the student will continue to work on their proposal, complete the IRB approval process, if applicable, and successfully defend his or her dissertation proposal. If the dissertation committee does not advance the student to candidacy, the student will be able to submit their proposal a second time. If the dissertation committee does not advance the student to candidacy following the second submission, the student will not be able to continue in the program. The student will be required to submit all documents and forms related to the advancement to candidacy.

After advancement to candidacy, students must be continuously enrolled in a minimum of 3 dissertation credits (EDH 7980) each term until graduation. Students who have not advanced to candidacy cannot enroll in dissertation credits.

Application to Candidacy

The Graduate Program Director and the Dean of the University Graduate School must certify, using the Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy Milestone form, that the candidate has completed all required and recommended course work, has passed the Candidacy Examination, and is applying for Dissertation Candidacy. All transfer credits that are part of the student's program of study must be properly listed on the candidacy milestone form. To prevent delays, courses should be transferred within the first two weeks of the semester in which the student seeks to advance to candidacy. The candidate is responsible for completing the forms and obtaining signatures. The Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy Milestone is completed via MyFIU. Visit <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/> for detailed instructions.

The Dissertation Proposal

A student admitted to candidacy must successfully complete and defend a proposal for their dissertation, which constitutes the research plan for the dissertation. In general, the dissertation proposal should be scheduled approximately 2 weeks after successful defense of the candidacy exam.

The Dissertation Proposal has several functions and benefits. One function is that a clear and lucid description of a problem and a proposed method of solving it is a learning process and

helps the candidate avoid oversights and possible mistakes. The Proposal also helps the members of the Committee to provide appropriate assistance to the candidates in their task.

The Proposal should explain the problem to be investigated and convince the Dissertation Chairperson and the Committee members that the problem merits investigation. It should show that the candidate has read the relevant and recent literature on the subject and is knowledgeable about the theoretical and methodological foundations of the proposed study.

Developing the Dissertation Proposal

Although the Dissertation Committee may be formed, members should be consulted primarily on those aspects directly related to their areas of special competence after discussion with the Chair. Additional faculty or resource persons may be consulted as needed. It is the joint responsibility of the candidate and Chairperson to make the final decisions on problem and method, even if decisions are made that one or more Committee members believe to be less than optimal. The Committee's responsibility is to act in an advisory capacity rather than as directors of the research, though committee members reserve the right not to approve the proposal at their academic discretion. It is up to the candidate to recognize useful advice and to integrate the study into a coherent whole. See Appendix F for proposal guidelines.

Announcement for the Dissertation Proposal Defense

Dissertation proposal defenses are public. At least two weeks prior to defense, send an announcement of the defense to the Graduate Program Director and the Office Coordinator. The announcement is an invitation to members of the department community to observe the Defense. NOTE: This Announcement will be posted through EPS listservs for the academic community to view. Thus, the abstract should be written clearly, in language accessible to non-specialists, and free of unnecessary disciplinary jargon; all acronyms should be fully identified. The format should be similar to the Example Dissertation Announcement, see Appendix I.

Proposal Defense and Approval

Although the candidate is responsible for arranging the meeting for the Proposal Defense and distributing copies of the Proposal, the Committee Chairperson will conduct the defense.

Prior to submitting the Dissertation Proposal Milestone to UGS, the candidate must receive IRB approval from the FIU Institutional Review Board if conducting research involving human subjects. The IRB protocol needs to be submitted by the Dissertation Committee Chair, but its substantive parts should be completed by the student. UGS requires information about the proposed study on the milestone form. Students are expected to make any required changes stemming from the defense prior to submission. Proof of completion of Responsible Conduct of Research training is also required with the Dissertation Proposal Milestone see:

<https://research.fiu.edu/rcr/>. Typically, students complete this training in the Doctoral Seminar.

Please note this is NOT proof of completion of Human Subjects training.

FIU Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

Students are required to follow the policies and procedures of the FIU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and any other IRBs required by external agencies/institutions when conducting research on animal or human subjects. There is human subjects involvement when living human beings are asked to participate physically in an activity or to donate their tissue, organs, fluids and other bodily materials; when human beings or their environment is manipulated; when information is sought from them directly (as through interview, examination, or questionnaire) or indirectly (as through observation), and when information concerning specific, individually identifiable human beings is asked for from third parties whether through access to files, data banks, or other depositories or through direct inquiry.

The FIU Institutional Review Board web site has up-to-date information, current policies and procedures related to research, and required forms to be completed. Since candidates may be engaged in the Dissertation project over an extended period of time, he/she must access the IRB web site on a regular basis to determine if there is new information or policies/procedures have been revised. For additional guidance on conducting research with human subjects, please visit: <http://research.fiu.edu/irb/> You must complete the Responsible Conduct of Research training and Human Subjects training prior to beginning your data collection. The IRB reserves the authority to suspend or terminate approval of research. Anyone conducting research with human subjects without the approval of the IRB may be subject to a finding of research misconduct.

The Dissertation

Writing the Dissertation

There is no “right way” to write a dissertation, and there is no single format to which you must conform. Many dissertations contain five chapters: 1) Introduction/Overview, 2) Literature Review, 3) Methodology/Methods, 4) Results, and 5) Conclusions, though this structure is not required and may not be appropriate for all studies. Students should work closely with their dissertation chair to determine the optimal structure.

General Guidelines

The candidate’s work is carried out under the direction and supervision of his/her Dissertation Chairperson and the Committee members who supervise it for the intellectual content. The Dissertation Chairperson and Committee members may specify certain aspects of style, such as footnote style and placement, and the manner in which references are cited. Candidates are urged to consult with their Dissertation Chairperson early in the preparation of the manuscript regarding both the subject and the general plan of investigation as well as style preferences. As to format, the regulations included in the FIU Regulations for Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Manual <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/> supersede any style manual instructions. Format includes manuscript arrangement, organization of specific preliminary pages, spacing, typeface, margins, page number order, page number placement, and the requirement for permission to reproduce copyrighted material. No joint authorship will be accepted. Candidates should not use dissertations previously filed, or out-of-date FIU regulations for format examples,

because changes are made from time to time, and candidates are responsible for following the requirements in effect when the manuscript is filed.

In order for responsible review by the Graduate program Direction, College, and the Graduate School, dissertations must be submitted well in advance of the expected graduation date. The specific dates vary from semester to semester; however, this information is available on the FIU Academic Year Calendar (<https://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/>) and University Graduate School website - <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>. In general, the deadline to defend a dissertation and graduate in that same semester is approximately 6 weeks prior to the end of the semester. However, the formal process begins 8 weeks prior to the defense date when the student submits the dissertation to their committee for review (the Graduate Program Director must be cc'ed with the dissertation). The Graduate Program Director must receive the final dissertation no later than 5 weeks prior to defense, and when approved, sends it to the CASE Dean for Graduate Studies no later than 4 weeks prior to defense. Thus, to defend in time for graduation requires a final draft of the dissertation be finished approximately 11 weeks prior to the end of the semester. See the table provided in Appendix B: Doctoral Form Information and Checklist - Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense for more detailed information.

Preparing for the Dissertation Defense: Preliminary Approval

All Committee members must preliminarily approve the Dissertation document before the candidate can apply for Dissertation Defense. By their signatures on the Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense Milestone form, committee members certify that the Dissertation is original and ready for Defense. A copy of the dissertation and the dissertation defense announcement are submitted with the Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense Milestone form. An electronic copy of the Defense Announcement should be sent to the Graduate Program Director and Office Coordinator accordance with the format in the Regulations for Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Manual.

Announcement for the Dissertation Defense

The Announcement is an invitation to members of the University community to observe the Defense. NOTE: This Announcement will be posted on the University Graduate School's website and through EPS listservs for the academic community to view. Thus, the Dissertation abstract should be written clearly, in language accessible to non-specialists, and free of unnecessary disciplinary jargon; all acronyms should be fully identified. For more detailed information, see Appendix I: Example Dissertation Announcement.

Format of the Dissertation Defense

The candidate should consult with his/her Chairperson on the format and the time parameters of the Defense. The material should be organized and orally presented as a research study. The candidate should prepare visual aids, such as PowerPoint slides. The candidate should keep

his/her oral presentation within the agreed time limit and provide time for questions and comments at the conclusion of the presentation.

Final Approval of Dissertation

When a Dissertation has been accepted and successfully defended, the signatories - the Chair and Committee members, the Dean of the College, and the Dean of the Graduate School - are affirming the originality and significance of the product for the discipline, the College, and the University.

Important Note on Remote Doctoral Procedures

Doctoral forms have transitioned from paper-based, requiring original signatures on the forms themselves, to electronic forms completed within MyFIU, with the exception of the D1R, which is completed via DocuSign. Please see <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/> and the appendices of this manual for instructions on how to facilitate the submission of these forms.

Presently, formal doctoral meetings are being held in-person. According to University policy, Dissertation Defenses must be held in person with the student and chair physically present. Please work with your dissertation chair to facilitate those meetings.

Appendices: Doctoral Form Information and Checklists

Appendix A: Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Form

Required for all students who have enrolled in 18 or more graduate credits (including FIU non-degree credits) by the start of the spring term. The only exception is for students with an approved D5 on file.

Important Note: Annual evaluations are due to the Graduate Program Director at least 2 weeks prior to the UGS deadline. Fall registration will be blocked/dropped for those students who do not submit their completed annual evaluations to UGS by the deadline.

Step 1: No later than April 1, contact advisor/dissertation chair and set up annual meeting to be held prior to May 1

Step 2: By April 1, visit my.fiu.edu → Student Environment → Tasks and initiate the Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring plan. This includes:

Section 1: Doctoral Student Information

- Anticipated/Completed date of Milestones
- Approved Dissertation Committee
- Advancement to Candidacy
- Research Proposal Approval
- Dissertation Defense
- Financial Support during the Evaluation Period
- External Fellowships and Scholarships for the Evaluation Period
- Presentations
- Publications
- Honors/Service
- Career/Internships/Professional Development Activities

Section 2: Goals and Accomplishments

- List your major accomplishments for the evaluation period
- Describe any research integrity training
- Identify at least three performance goals you would like to achieve prior to your next evaluation. Goals should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed-upon, Results-focused and Timed)
- Identify specific goals/topics you would like to discuss during your evaluation

Step 3: By May 1, meet with committee (or Advisor/Chair if a committee has not been formed)

Step 4: Review Advisor Performance Summary, Future Goals, and Evaluation of Core Competencies.

Complete Section 5: Student Comments and Sign-off

Appendix B: Appointment of Dissertation Committee

Deadline: The Appointment of Dissertation Committee Milestone is to be completed at the time your committee is formed. This should be in your fourth term. In addition, UGS requires that it be no later than 4 semesters before the anticipated graduation semester.

Submit forms to the Academic units well before the deadline to allow sufficient time for approval and signature.

Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to make sure forms are received by the University Graduate School on time and that all deadlines are met.

Active Status Enrollment Requirements: Doctoral students who have not advanced to candidacy are required to be enrolled in at least 1 graduate credit hour in the term in which they submit the Appointment of Dissertation Committee Milestone. Doctoral candidates are required to be enrolled in at least 3 dissertation credits.

Step 1: Visit <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/> for instructions. The Milestone form is completed through: <https://my.fiu.edu/>

- ☐ Your “Dissertation Topic” can be general. We do not expect this to be the title of your dissertation.
- ☐ Type all committee member names (as they would like to be listed) and departments.

Step 2. Prepare the Required Associated Materials

- ☐ Include a 250-Word abstract of your proposed research project.
- ☐ Committee Expertise: Provide a brief summary of the expertise of your committee members. The summary should identify the expected contributions of each committee member and his/her qualifications to serve in that capacity (a paragraph on each member is sufficient). **Make sure to specify how each member’s expertise will support your particular study.**
- ☐ If additional committee members do not have FIU Graduate Faculty status, a full CV, a brief statement of expertise related to student’s project, and confirmation of commitment of time must be attached.

Step 3: Initiate the form via myfiu. To check the status of your form, please log on to my.fiu.edu, and check under the “To Do List” Section.

Appendix C: Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy

Deadline: This candidacy form must be submitted to UGS by no later than five business days before the first day of classes. Candidacy forms must be on file and approved by UGS by the first day of classes in the term in which the student advances to doctoral candidacy. This means that Candidacy forms must be submitted to the GPD three weeks before the start of classes in which the student seeks to enroll in dissertation credits. **Students cannot register in dissertation credits without an approved Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy Milestone Form on file at UGS.**

Continuous Enrollment Requirements: After achieving doctoral candidacy, doctoral candidates are required to be enrolled in at least 3 dissertation credit hours every term, including summer.

Step 1. Ensure that all of the courses that will be part of your program of study have been transferred and are listed. If not, you and your advisor will need to complete a transfer memo and submit it to the office coordinator (see Appendix D). Please be advised that the process to include courses via transfer memo will take, minimally, several weeks. Non-Degree courses taken at FIU should be brought into the program of study via the Graduate Course Inclusion Form: see: https://onestop.fiu.edu/_assets/forms/grad-course-inclusion-form.pdf

Step 2: Visit <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/> for instructions. The Milestone form is completed through: <https://my.fiu.edu/>

- ☐ Part 1: Coursework
 - ☐ Be sure to list all courses included in your doctoral program. This includes all courses taken as an active student, transfer courses your advisor has approved to be included in your program of study, and any courses taken as a non-degree student.
- ☐ Part 2: Comprehensive Examination
 - ☐ Your Comprehensive Examination is the written proposal submitted to your committee, who determines whether or not you pass and can move forward for proposal defense.
 - ☐ The “field” is Higher Education, the “grade” will be Pass, and the date is the date you submit your proposal to committee.
 - ☐ There is no language/skill requirement.
- Part 3: Dissertation Proposal
 - ☐ Be sure to check “No” to the question, Does your program require submission of Dissertation Proposal with the Program for Doctoral Degree and Advancement to Candidacy Milestone.

Step 3: Submit the form via MyFIU. To check the status of your form, please log on to my.fiu.edu, and check under the “To Do List” Section.

Appendix D part 1: Transfer Memo Template [External Graduate Transfer from Multiple Institutions]

Memorandum

Date: Tuesday, January 24th, 2023
To: **FIU Office of the Registrar**
 Attn: Henry K. Cheng, Associate Registrar
From: Jane Doe, Graduate Program Director
 Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Science
Re: Transfer of Graduate Credits
 Roary Panther – 1234567, PhD in Computer Science

We are hereby approving the following graduate courses to be transferred towards their doctoral in Computer Science degree requirements. This transfer of graduate credits meet the requirements of the University's [Graduate Transfer Credit Policy](#). An official hard copy/PDF transcript which shows that these courses were taken as part of (a completed/an incomplete) graduate program can be found in ImageNow/Perceptive Content. A copy of the official transcript is attached to this request.

K.N. Toosi University of Technology Degree: Master's in Environmental Studies on 08/15/2017						FIU Equivalent Course		
	Term (ie Fall 2018)	Course Prefix	Course Name	Credits	Grade *	Course Prefix	Course Name	Credits
1	Spring 2016	N/A	Theory & Applications of Power Circuit Breakers	3.00	B	EEE 5348	Digital Electronics	3.00
University of Utah Degree: Incomplete Doctoral						FIU Equivalent Course		
2	Fall 2019	ECE 6960	Special Topics: Linear Systems	3.00	B+	TRF 5000	Transfer Credit - Graduate	3.00
3	Spring 2020	ECE 6960	Special Topics: Convex Optimization	3.00	A-	COT 6936	Topics in Algorithms	3.00
North Dakota State University Degree: Incomplete Doctoral						FIU Equivalent Course		
4	Fall 2020	ECE 705	Stochastic Processes	3.00	A	STA 6807	Queuing&Stat Models	3.00
5	Fall 2020	ECE 748	Elements/Information Theory	3.00	A	TCN 5455	Information Theory	3.00
6	Spring 2021	ENGR 729	Machine Learning for Engineers	3.00	A	CAP 5610	Introduction to Machine Learning	3.00
7	Spring 2022	CSCI 724	Survey/Artificial Intelligence	3.00	A	CAP 5602	Introduction to Artificial Intelligence	3.00
						Total		21.00

***Provide U.S. equivalent grade for non-U.S. institutions.**

Appendix D part 2: Transfer Memo Template [External Graduate Transfer from One Institution]

Memorandum

Date: Tuesday, January 24th, 2023
To: **FIU Office of the Registrar**
 Attn: Henry K. Cheng, Associate Registrar
From: Jane Doe, Graduate Program Director
 Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Science
Re: Transfer of Graduate Credits
 Roary Panther – 1234567, PhD in Computer Science

We are hereby approving the following graduate courses to be transferred towards their doctoral in Computer Science degree requirements. This transfer of graduate credits meet the requirements of the University's [Graduate Transfer Credit Policy](#). An official hard copy/PDF transcript which shows that these courses were taken as part of (a completed/an incomplete) graduate program can be found in ImageNow/Perceptive Content. A copy of the official transcript is attached to this request.

K.N. Toosi University of Technology Degree: Master's in Environmental Studies on 08/15/2017						FIU Equivalent Course		
	Term (ie Fall 2018)	Course Prefix	Course Name	Credits	Grade *	Course Prefix	Course Name	Credits
1	Spring 2016	N/A	Theory & Applications of Power Circuit Breakers	3.00	B	EEE 5348	Digital Electronics	3.00
2	Fall 2019	ECE 6960	Special Topics: Linear Systems	3.00	B+	COT 6936	Topics in Algorithms	3.00
3	Spring 2020	ECE 6960	Special Topics: Convex Optimization	3.00	A-	COT 6936	Topics in Algorithms	3.00
4	Fall 2020	ECE 705	Stochastic Processes	3.00	A	STA 6807	Queuing&Stat Models	3.00
5	Fall 2020	ECE 748	Elements/Information Theory	3.00	A	TCN 5455	Information Theory	3.00
6	Spring 2021	ENGR 729	Machine Learning for Engineers	3.00	A	CAP 5610	Introduction to Machine Learning	3.00
7	Spring 2022	CSCI 724	Survey/Artificial Intelligence	3.00	A	CAP 5602	Introduction to Artificial Intelligence	3.00
						Total		21.00

***Provide U.S. equivalent grade for non-U.S. institutions.**

Appendix D part 3: Transfer Memo Template [Internal FIU Transfer of Credits]

Memorandum

Date: Tuesday, January 24th, 2023
To: **FIU Office of the Registrar**
Attn: Henry K. Cheng, Associate Registrar
From: Jane Doe, Graduate Program Director
Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Science
Re: Transfer of Graduate Credits
Roary Panther – 1234567, PhD in Computer Science

We are hereby approving the following graduate courses to be transferred towards their doctoral in Computer Science degree requirements. This transfer of graduate credits meets the requirements of the University's [Graduate Transfer Credit Policy](#). A copy of the transcript is attached to this request.

Florida International University					
Degree: Master's in Environmental Studies on 08/15/2017					
	Semester	Course Prefix	Course Name	Credits	Grade
1	Spring 2016	EEE 5348	Digital Electronics	3.00	B
2	Fall 2019	COT 6936	Topics in Algorithms	3.00	B+
3	Spring 2020	COT 6936	Topics in Algorithms	3.00	A-
4	Fall 2020	STA 6807	Queuing&Stat Models	3.00	A
5	Fall 2020	TCN 5455	Information Theory	3.00	A
6	Spring 2021	CAP 5610	Introduction to Machine Learning	3.00	A
7	Spring 2022	CAP 5602	Introduction to Artificial Intelligence	3.00	A
			Total	21.00	

Appendix D part 4 – Graduate Course Inclusion Form

To bring in non-degree courses taken at FIU to your doctoral program of study, use the Graduate Course Inclusion Form: https://onestop.fiu.edu/_assets/forms/grad-course-inclusion-form.pdf

Complete the form and follow the instructions at the bottom of the form. Include the name of your Graduate Program Director (currently Amy Li) and the name of the CASE Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (currently Dean Brian Raue).

Appendix E: Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

Deadline: The Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Milestone is to be completed at least 3 semesters before the anticipated graduation semester.

Continuous Enrollment Requirements: After achieving doctoral candidacy, doctoral candidates are required to be enrolled in at least 3 dissertation credit hours every term, including summer.

Step 1: Write your proposal. See Appendix F: Higher Education Dissertation Proposal Guidelines for more the proposal format.

Step 2: Defend your proposal. See Appendix G: Dissertation Proposal Defense Guidelines for more information.

Step 3: Visit <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/> for instructions. The Milestone form is completed through: <https://my.fiu.edu/>

- ☐ Be sure to check the appropriate IRB category.

Step 4. Prepare the Required Associated Materials

- ☐ Responses to UGS Prompts:
 - ☐ Introduction/Statement of the problem/Aims (250 word max)
 - ☐ Research questions/objective/hypothesis (250 word max)
 - ☐ Methods/Experimental Design/Techniques for Research Question(s)/Objective/Hypothesis.
 - ☐ 1) Describe in detail your planned research design and analysis,
 - ☐ 2) Include what type of data will be collected,
 - ☐ 3) How they will be collected, and
 - ☐ 4) Any field, laboratory and/or data analysis methodology to be conducted
 - ☐ Timeline to degree completion/Schedule of work. Include milestones such as data collection, chapter writing, editing, and defense timeline. Make sure to include months/year for each milestone.
- ☐ Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Completion Report: This is the report you receive after completing the CITI Course in the Responsible Conduct of Research. Please note – IRB applications require proof of completion of Human Subjects training. **This is different** than Responsible Conduct of Research Training (<http://research.fiu.edu/rcr/training/>).
- ☐ If dissertation involves human subjects, attach the IRB memorandum of approval. (Instructions available at: <http://research.fiu.edu/irb/>) You should be cc'ed on the IRB approval letter.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Allow AT LEAST 4 weeks between submission of IRB protocol and approval. Because of the delay between submitting protocols to IRB and final IRB approval, it may be advisable to submit the IRB protocol prior to defense (after

consultation with chair and committee members). If necessary, amendments to the IRB protocol can be filed after defense.

Step 5: Submit the form via MyFIU.

To check the status of your form, please log on to my.fiu.edu, and check under the “To Do List” Section.

Appendix F: Higher Education Dissertation Proposal Guidelines¹

Part I: Introduction [5 pages]

- Brief Background
- Statement of the Research Problem ○ What problem needs to be studied? This is a current, concise, and scholarly presentation of the research problem and its importance that gives clear evidence you have reviewed the current literature relevant to the planned research.
- Purpose of the Study ○ How does your study address the research problem? This is a brief but clear explanation of your study and how it addresses the problem you have identified as needing study.
- Research Questions ○ These are the specific questions arising from the statements of the problem and purpose that your study will be answering in the form of statements of findings.
- Statement of Significance ○ Why is your specific study significant? To which audience(s) will your study directed, what policy, practical, and scholarly impact will it have, and to which body literature will your study contribute?
- Delimitations/Assumptions of Study ○ Delimitation inform the readers what you are studying, and what you are not studying. Assumptions are warrants; they inform the reader what you assuming to be the case in conducting this research.
- Definitions ○ This section is necessary for technical terms or qualifications of terms that may have multiple meanings.

Part II: Literature Review [10 pages]

- Background Literature/General Literature Situating Study ○ This is a brief discussion of the literature in which your study will be situated. This usually entails of seminal works in the general areas of your study.
- Literature Justifying the Research Problem ○ This is a synthesis of the prior key studies relating to the research problem. This is not simply a summary of prior studies, but a critical argument about the strengths and weaknesses of the existing theories, methods, results and recommendations. By the end of this literature review, the reader should clearly understand why your specific study (research questions and methodology) is necessary.

Part III: Methods [10 pages]

- Research Design/Methodology ○ This is a brief discussion of your overall methodology and design and the assumptions undergirding it.
- Data Sources ○ What will constitute your data? From where, whom, and will data come? What is your sampling plan if using human subjects? Who are the members of the sample?

¹ Please check with your chair to confirm the guidelines that are appropriate for your study. These are general guidelines for empirical studies and may not be suitable for non-empirical studies.

How would you choose them? Why would you choose them? If you are not using human subjects in your research, what are the sources of your data? Justify your decisions using the research literature.

- Data Collection
 - How will you collect your data and when? What techniques will you use to collect your data? Describe the instruments and/or techniques you will use. Justify your decisions using the research literature.
 - With a quantitative design, explain what will you do to the participants, if you have any? If you are using databases, what will do with them? How will gain access to your data? If there are treatments, describe them. If you are conducting a survey, please attach the survey.
 - For a qualitative design, justify your data-collection techniques (i.e., interviews, observations, document analysis, etc.). Include a discussion of your interview or observational scheme (e.g., how many, when, etc.). If using interviews or focus groups, provide your interview protocol. If using documents, provide a list of the kinds of documents you will be using.
 - Include a time schedule.
- Data Analysis
 - Please describe how you will analyze your data. Justify your decisions using the research literature.
 - With a quantitative design, what statistical procedures will you be using to analyze your data?
 - With a qualitative design, what will be your coding scheme? If you are using software in your qualitative plan, which one is it?
 - Provide examples of possible initial codes, given your research questions, conceptual framework, and methodology
- Data Integrity
 - How will you ensure the credibility your study? Justify your answer using the research literature.
 - What are the ethical considerations in your study?
 - With a quantitative design, cite evidence of validity and reliability of your data collection and analysis.
 - With a qualitative design, how will you ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of your study?

Part IV: References/Work Cited

- If you need this explained, you are not ready for the candidacy exam!

Appendix G: Dissertation Proposal Defense Guidelines

(Note: Many faculty approach structuring and facilitating dissertation proposal defenses and dissertation defenses in different ways. Below are guidelines that have worked in the past for some faculty members, and students should consult with their chairs prior to the defense.)

1. Know your dissertation proposal inside and out. Have a copy of it easily available in case you need to refer to it to answer questions. If you have made changes to the draft sent to the committee, please send them a copy of the proposal to be defended at least a week in advance.
2. If you made changes to the proposal after you sent the Committee a copy, please send the draft to be defended at least a week prior to the defense.
3. Send a reminder to the Committee about the date and time of the defense.
4. Presentation: 15-20 minutes.
5. Use PowerPoint to keep you on track.
6. Come at least ½ hour early to make sure the technology works. If some committee members are participating remotely, please sign into Zoom at least ½ hour early. Have a Plan B in case the technology fails (e.g., handouts).
7. Once you finish, you can sit down to answer questions. You should have something on which to take notes if they will be helpful as you respond to questions/comments, but I will make sure to take notes for you. You can just worry about answering questions.
8. You don't have to bring food or drinks; if you do, keep them to a minimum.
9. Be ready to submit your Program for Doctoral Degree and Advancement to Candidacy form when you submit your Dissertation Proposal Form. Please check with the Graduate Program Director about what you will need.
10. Relax about the presentation; no one ever fails because of the bad presentation. People have trouble when they cannot defend their proposed study. Know it inside and out and be able to justify everything you wrote.

Appendix H: Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense

Deadlines: These are extremely important! Please attend to them, as your graduation will be postponed if you miss them! All deadlines related to the Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense form are in relation to the dissertation defense date.

Below is a chart of deadlines based on a defense on the last possible date in the semester and graduating in that semester. Please do not plan to defend on the last possible day! The chart is meant to provide a general sense of the deadlines, not a prescription your actual defense.

Step	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025
Last date to defend and Graduate	11/14/2025	3/27/2026	7/2/2026
Submission to Committee (8 weeks prior to defense)	9/19/2025	1/30/2026	5/7/2026
Submission to GPD (committee members have signed) (5 weeks prior to defense)	10/10/2025	2/20/2026	5/28/2026
Final ETD Approval Form To GPD	11/21/2025	4/3/2026	7/10/2026

Oral Defense: The University Graduate School (UGS) sets the final date in which students can hold their defense and graduate in that semester. These deadlines are provided at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines>.

Committee Submission: No later than eight (8) weeks prior to your scheduled defense date, you must submit your dissertation via email to your committee. You must cc the Graduate Program Director when you do so, as this starts the official Milestone process.

GPD Submission: No later than five (5) weeks prior to your scheduled defense, you must submit your completed Milestone form and all associated materials to the Graduate Program Director. See below for specific information concerning the content of the form and materials and the submission process.

CASE Dean Submission: The GPD will review your dissertation and Milestone form, and if approved, will submit the packet to the CASE Dean's office no later than four (4) weeks prior to your scheduled defense. You do not have to do anything to facilitate this process (so the deadlines are not listed) but be attentive to your email in the case of questions/requests for additional information.

UGS Submission: The Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education will review your materials and, if approved, submit them to UGS no later than three (3) weeks prior to your scheduled defense. You do not have to do anything to facilitate this process (so the dates are not listed) but be attentive to your email in the case of questions/requests for additional information.

Continuous Enrollment Requirements: Doctoral candidates are required to be enrolled in at least 3 dissertation credit hours in the term in which they submit the Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense Milestone.

Step 1: Visit <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/> for instructions. The milestone form is completed through: <https://my.fiu.edu/>

- ☐ Be sure to check the appropriate IRB category.
- ☐ Dissertation Defense Announcement: The announcement should be prepared in accordance with the template available on the next page and at:
<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/>.
 - ☐ It should include the date, time, and venue and should be no longer than one page.
 - ☐ The abstract, part of the announcement, should be written in a scholarly style appropriate to the discipline.
 - ☐ Follow the guidelines provided by UGS and the example included in Appendix K to create your defense announcement.
- ☐ Be sure to format your dissertation in accordance with UGS guidelines. Please refer to Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual available at:
<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/#formatting>
- ☐ Be sure to include the following in the dissertation copy:
 - ☐ Signature page (unsigned). Be advised that you must use one of the dissertation approval page templates found at <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/#formatting>
 - ☐ Title Page (mandatory)
 - ☐ Abstract (mandatory)
 - ☐ Table of contents (mandatory)
 - ☐ List of tables (mandatory for 5 or more tables)
 - ☐ List of figures (mandatory for 5 or more figures)
 - ☐ References (mandatory)
 - ☐ VITA (mandatory)
 - ☐ Copyright Page (optional)
 - ☐ Dedication (optional)
 - ☐ Acknowledgments (optional)
 - ☐ Appendices (optional)

Step 3: Submit the form via MyFIU.

To check the status of your form, please log on to my.fiu.edu, and check under the “To Do List” Section.

Appendix I: Example of Dissertation Announcement

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

Doctoral Dissertation Defense

Abstract

The Promise and (Im)Possibility of the Debt-Free Student: A Qualitative Analysis

Michael W. Ward

As economic inequality in higher education continues to increase, many states and universities have started to introduce financial promise programs meant to eliminate college costs for eligible students. Further, many lawmakers and politicians have also brought “debt free college” to the forefront of their campaigns, creating a discourse of the “debt free” student. While debt is most commonly associated with financial liability, scholars have also started to consider other, non-financial ways debt can manifest (e.g. Biss, 2015; Gildersleeve, 2017; Lazzarato, 2011; Lazzarato, 2015; Peters, 2016). For Gildersleeve (2017), “debt...includes but also expands beyond the common association with money” (p. 55). Financial debts require repayment in dollars, while non-financial debts might require ‘repayment’ not in money, but in feeling, conduct, attitude, or sense of obligation, for example.

When more than the association of money is considered, it is possible to contemplate the other ways that debt, both financial and non-financial, might work to affect individual decision making across multiple temporalities (e.g., past, present, and future). Much has been written about the foreclosing aspects of debt theoretically, but little empirical research has been conducted in this area. Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to understand how low-income students in a promise program understand and make meaning of their present and future decision making in relation to perceptions of their own debt.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirteen low-income college students who qualified for a need-based promise program. Transcripts of each interview were analyzed to identify themes relevant to each research question.

The results of this study suggest that the participants in this sample experienced not only financial debts with attending college, but non-financial debts as well. Specifically, students discussed their experiences navigating non-financial emotional, social, and racial/ethnic debts, among others, as they “paid” for the opportunity to attend college. Additionally, many of the students in this sample experienced the foreclosing aspects of these non-financial debts as they navigated the college decision making process including where they felt they could attend and what major to pursue. Importantly however, these non-financial debts were not only foreclosing. In fact, many of the students expressed the opportunities they were able to pursue as a result of the commitments and non-financial debts they felt they “owed” their families, highlighting the both the foreclosing and opportunity creating nature of these non-financial debts.

Date: March 26, 2020
Time: 10am – 12pm
ZEB 325

Department: Educational Policy Studies
Major Professor: Dr. Daniel Saunders Place:

Appendix J: Final ETD Submission

Deadline: Complete the Final ETD Approval form after a final copy of the dissertation is approved by the committee. Deadlines for submission of this form to the UGS are available at: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>. Submit form to the Graduate Program Director before the deadline to allow sufficient time for approval and signature. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to make sure the form is received by the University Graduate School on time.

Continuous Enrollment Requirements: Doctoral candidates are required to be enrolled in at least 3 dissertation credit hours in the term in which they submit the ETD Form.

Step 1: Visit <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/> for instructions. The D form is completed through: <https://my.fiu.edu/> Be sure to complete the information at the top of the form.

- ☐ Be sure to check the appropriate IRB category in the middle of the form.
- ☐ Be sure to complete the Publishing & Embargo Option information on page 2 of the form.
 - ☐ Ensure you and your major professor signs the embargo option portion of the form.
 - ☐ Ensure you sign the Student Agreement portion of the form.

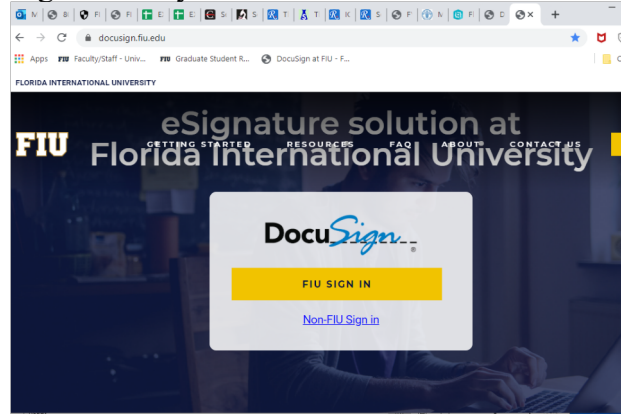
Step 2. Prepare the Required Associated Materials

- ☐ Submit a full version of your CV (this is different from the 2- page VITA in your dissertation). The CV must include your contact information.
- ☐ OPTIONAL: Complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates at: <https://sed-ncses.org/> and download the Certificate of Completion

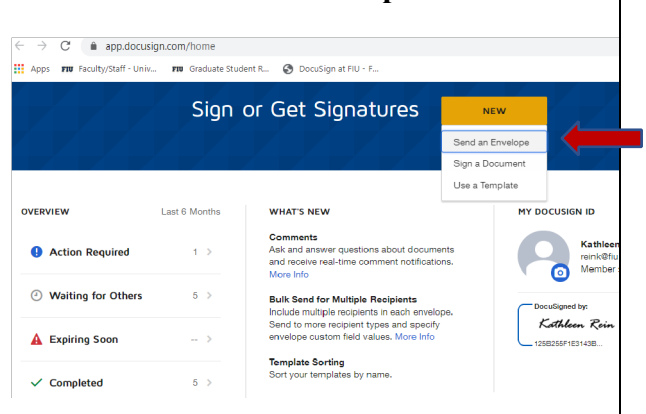
Step 3: Submit the form via MyFIU. After submission, you will receive an email with upload instructions for the final manuscript towards the end of the term.

Appendix K: DocuSign Instructions (for D1R)

STEP 1: Go to <https://docusign.fiu.edu/>
Sign in with your FIU credentials

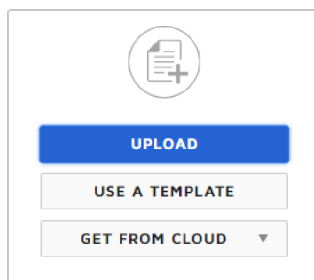


STEP 2: Start a new document. Click on “New” and select “Send an Envelope”



STEP 3: Upload documents, enter email addresses of recipients, set signing order

Add Documents to the Envelope



Complete the form for which you need signatures. You may sign, scan and upload the completed form **OR** you can upload the form and sign it electronically. Remember to upload any associated required documents such as proof of enrollment, RCR certificate, etc.

Add Recipients to the Envelope

As the sender, you automatically receive a copy of the completed envelope.

ADD FROM CONTACTS SIGNING ORDER

STEP 4: After you upload documents, you will ~~add~~ add recipients and to set signing order. Note that the signing order begins with you (the student) and ends with the Graduate Program Director. The GPD facilitates the Dean and UGS approval

Add Recipients to the Envelope

As the sender, you automatically receive a copy of the completed envelope.

ADD FROM CONTACTS SIGNING ORDER

☐ Set signing order

Name *

Email *

NEEDS TO SIGN MORE

ADD RECIPIENT

Add recipients here

Set to sign or to receive a copy here

reink@fiu.edu

5

Name *

Magali Autie

Email *

mautie@fiu.edu

CC RECEIVES A COPY ▾

MORE ▾

STEP 4: Continued



Set to receive a copy here

Add Recipients to the Envelope

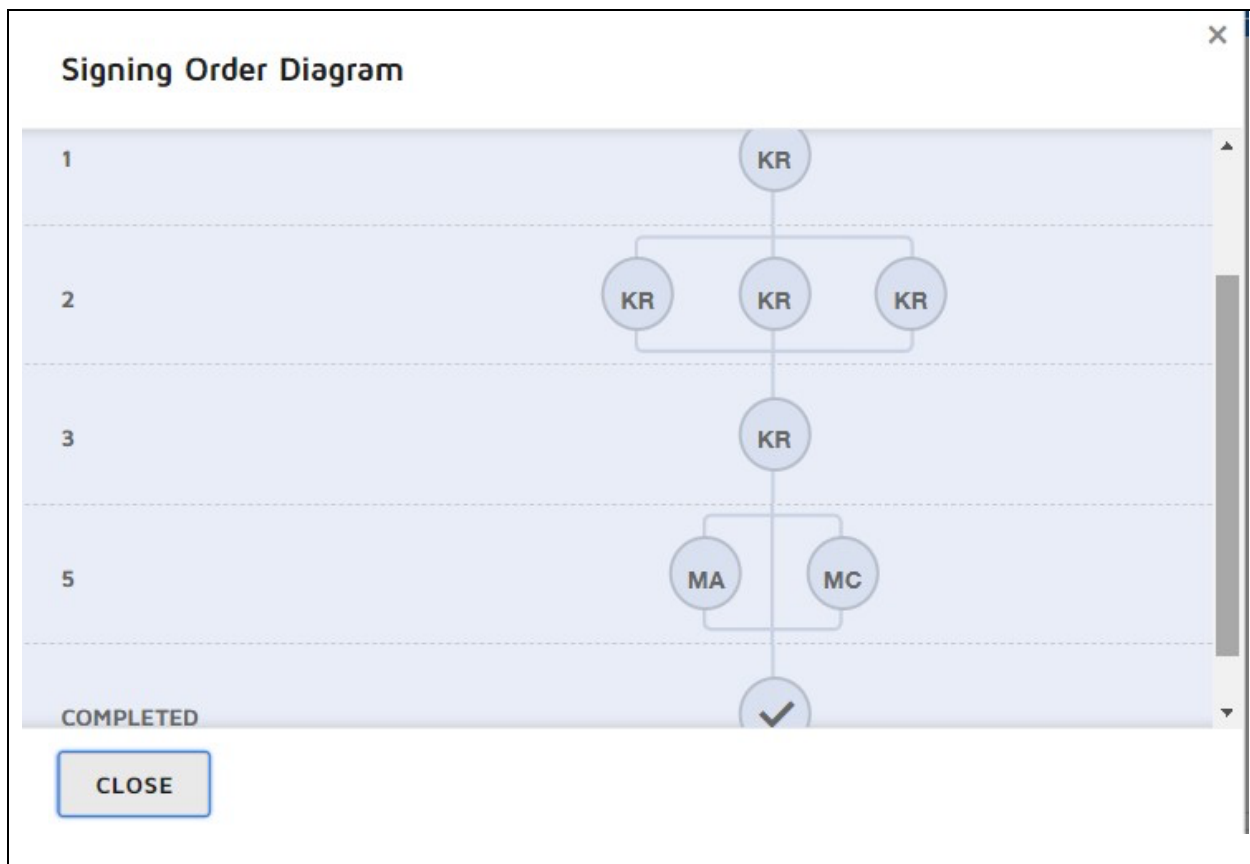
As the sender, you automatically receive a copy of the completed envelope.

 ADD FROM CONTACTS

 SIGNING ORDER

☒ Set signing order

STEP 5: Check signing order



2

Name *
Kathleen Rein

Email *
reink@fiu.edu

NEEDS TO SIGN ▼ MORE ▼

SEND NOW NEXT

STEP 6: Click “Next”

STEP 6: You will see the recipient preview. If everything is in order, Click “SEND”

Please DocuSign: Brief_summary_of_relevant_expertise_of_all_committee_members.pdf

Kathleen Rein

85%

DocuSign Envelope ID: 6981EFCD-342F-4DA1-9A80-907C8847E82F

My dissertation topic is "Potential therapeutic applications of cyclodextrin Host:Guest interactions for remediation of PFAS (Perfluoro alkyl substances) in biological systems". This study requires techniques and knowledge in the areas of fluorescence study, circular dichroism study, molecular docking studies, mass and NMR spectrum analysis. I have mainly focus on doing a characterization between human serum albumin (HSA) and emerging PFASs. These experimental data will be used to develop a therapeutic application of cyclodextrin to remove the interactions between HSA and emerging PFASs, thereby to restore the protein functions.

1) **Dr. Kevin O'Shea (Advisor):** His research interests involve aspects of organic/environmental/analytical chemistry. Current researches are mainly focus on environmental aspects including PFAS contamination crisis. I believe that his experience, input and thoughts would make a positive impact towards a high-quality dissertation output.

2) **Dr. Jaroslava Miksovska (Co-Advisor):** Her research interests focus on the application of photoacoustic calorimetry and photothermal beam deflection to investigate variety of chemical

Brief_summary_of_r...
Pages: 2

1

BACK SEND