



**Brenau**  
**University**  
1878

*Doctorate of Education*  
*College of Education*  
*Student Handbook*

*Dr. Eugene Williams, Dean*  
*Dr. Kelley Simmons, Associate Professor,*  
*Chair, Advanced Graduate Programs*  
*Director, Ed.D. Programs*

## ***Welcome***

The faculty at Brenau University would like to welcome you to Brenau's Ed. D. program in the College of Education. We offer the Ed. D. with concentrations in Elementary Education, Middle Grades Education, Special Education, Higher Education: Leadership, Higher Education: Teaching and Learning and Higher Education: Healthcare Education Specialist. In addition, we offer a *Doctoral Completion Pathway* curriculum for qualified candidates who have completed all doctoral coursework at a previous University and have aged out of that University. We are excited to have you here and look forward to working with you during this time of growth and continued professional development.

Your admittance into this program is a direct reflection of the quality of writing you submitted as well as your past academic performance. However, those artifacts are merely a representation of your work. You will be expected to work harder, be more resilient, and be entirely more focused than you have on any other academic journey.

The Ed.D. degree is a 54-hour program that can be completed in approximately three years of *continuous* enrollment in an online format of study. The program builds upon a strong foundation developed through previous graduate education courses and the professional experiences of each student.

General dissertation information, policies, and procedures are included in this handbook and are intended to provide guidance as you progress through the program. The faculty and staff are pleased that you have selected Brenau University for the pursuit of your doctoral degree. We are committed to making this a memorable learning experience of your professional career.

Courses are offered online and may be only offered once during your program enrollment; therefore, it is important that students enroll in courses as specified in the plan when they initially enrolled into the program in order to prevent a delay in graduation.

Should it be necessary to revise the sequence, it will be done in such a way as to ensure that a Student is able to complete the degree program as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Simmons**

Kelley Simmons, Ph.D.  
Ed.D. Program Director  
*Brenau University*

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## **Notice of Honesty and Integrity**

Brenau's Ed.D. program is accelerated and intense. It will require substantial sacrifices of time and energy to complete the program and earn the title of "Dr.". This program is a fully online program. To this end, all participants in the program must demonstrate the highest level of honesty and integrity while producing exceptionally high quality work throughout the courses and the writing of the dissertation. If a student is found to have engaged in any unethical academic practices, including but not limited to, blatant plagiarism, the hiring (paid or not) of others to produce any assignment in the program, or blatant cheating as defined by the College of Education, the student will be immediately dismissed from the program with a flag of academic dishonesty.

## **Purpose of this Handbook**

The primary purpose of this handbook is to clarify the steps of the dissertation process. The dissertation is a critical component of the entire program, and this handbook is intended to serve as a guide for the dissertation process, including the initial research, writing, the proposal defense, and the final dissertation defense. In general terms, the roles and responsibilities of the candidate, the chair, other committee members, and the research consultants (if needed) are outlined.

Because the completed dissertation is a hallmark of the doctoral journey and since it represents Brenau University, the College of Education (COE), as well as the student author, candidates are expected to maintain high standards concerning the content and appearance of dissertations. Thus, this handbook will highlight various milestones of the dissertation process and will provide directives and standards for doctoral candidates to follow in the dissertation process.

## **Support Available to Brenau's Doctoral Students**

Faculty and Departmental (COE) Support:

There are several roles within the COE dedicated to student success. Students should learn who occupies these roles and should know they (the student) can reach out to any one for assistance. If one of the listed support people is not able to help the student, that person will direct the student to someone who can.

These roles are:

- **The Dean, COE**
- **Ed.D. Program Director**
- **Academic Advisor for Ed.D. Programs**

- **Office Manager, COE**
- **Dissertation Chair**
- **Dissertation Committee Member**
- **Course Instructors**
- **Graduate Librarian**

#### Resources for Program Support

- **Campus Web**—your online portal accessed via [www.my.brenau.edu](http://www.my.brenau.edu). This portal contains your courses through Canvas as well as your student business page which includes your profile information, your online transcript, and your online degree plan. Please search through this portal in its entirety to become familiar with the tools you will need.
- **Doctoral Seminar**—taken in your first semester, this seminar will familiarize you with the information and tasks in which you need to engage, in order to progress in the program.
- **Ed.D. Site**—available in the canvas portion of your campusweb account, this is a dedicated site designed to provide you with all of the information, tools and forms you need to make adequate progress in the program.
- **Zoom meetings**—
  - you will receive notice of zoom sessions which will be offered by your academic advisor and/or your Program Director. These meetings are live and will not be recorded. They are always scheduled during evening hours. Please make every effort to attend these meetings as they will provide you with additional, and specific, information about the program.
  - you will also have access, through the Ed.D. site to the student events page. Here there will be several zoom sessions on various topics to support you. Please review this page often. New sessions are constantly being offered.
- **Class zoom meetings**-- even though this is an online program, we want you to have live access to faculty members. Many faculty members offer live zoom sessions which will provide clarity to difficult concepts or give you an opportunity to ask relevant questions. These are not mandatory but highly encouraged.

### Terms to Know

**Tiger Email:** email is the official means of communicating. Once you have received your Brenau email, (firstinitiallastname[maybe a number]@Tiger.Brenau.edu), you always use this email address. You should check it at least once per day. You will not be sent email to your personal account after your Tiger email account has been established by the IT department.

**Registration Codes:** As you begin to register for courses, you will need the following information: the department, the course number, and the section. Usually, the department is “EDU” for the College of Education. However, if your program plan calls for you to take a course with a different prefix such as MS 801, then you will need to put in Math/Science for the

department. The course numbers should never change. The sections are tricky, though. For quick reference, please visit <https://www.brenau.edu/academics/registrar/reginstructions/>.

**Grades:** Most courses are graded on an A-F grading scale. The dissertation courses are “repeatable”. This means if you need additional time to complete the course you will receive an Incomplete in Progress (IP) and will need to register for the course again. Please consult your instructor and academic advisor if this is something you feel you need to do.

**Asynchronous Classes:** All of your courses are asynchronous. This means you may complete your coursework on your own timeframe, however, within boundaries. In other words, you may work on your own schedule but you must adhere to ALL due dates established by the instructor. While all of the courses are asynchronous, many instructors offer optional evening zoom sessions to explain difficult concepts or to offer clarity. Please try to attend these sessions. They are not required to be recorded.

**Doctoral Student:** A student enrolled and making satisfactory progress in the program is a student until the dissertation proposal is successfully defended

**Doctoral Candidate:** The student is admitted to candidacy and is now referred to as doctoral candidate. They remain a candidate until their degree is conferred upon them at graduation or until the registrar confirms their program completion

**Dissertation Proposal:** Chapters 1-3 of the dissertation

**Dissertation Final:** Chapters 1-5 of the dissertation

**Cohort:** Students are grouped by cohort depending on the semester they begin the program. Please ensure you indicate which cohort you are enrolled when communicating with the Program Director or the Office Manager

**Doctoral Completion Pathway (DCP):** Students who were enrolled in another institution and have advanced to candidacy may be eligible for the “all but dissertation” status, which is termed at Brenau as the DCP.

**Dean’s Review:** Prior to the proposal defense and the final defense, the dissertation Chair will submit the draft to the Dean’s Review committee for review. If the Dean’s Review Committee approves the draft, it is forwarded to the Dean of the College of Education for final review. No proposal or final defense can occur without the Dean’s approval.

## **Progression through the Program**

## Introduction to the Doctoral Program and the Dissertation Process

As with most universities, the doctoral program in the College of Education (COE) at Brenau University consists of two primary components: the coursework and the dissertation. The student completes coursework to develop and enhance critical thinking skills, scholarly writing skills, and professional knowledge. The doctoral dissertation is the final academic requirement for the Ed.D., and is designed to evaluate the candidate's capabilities as a scholar. However, unlike many Universities, Brenau allows the student to begin the dissertation from the very first semester. This saves the student valuable time but more importantly, provides a "just in time" support structure to aid the student through the complex process.

The following are steps involved in completing the program.

1. **Initial Advising of Doctoral Students:** Once accepted into the program, you will receive a communication inviting you to attend a virtual orientation of your new University and the specifics of the program. **It is very important you make time to attend this session** as information regarding first semester course registration will be discussed. If you are unable to attend, you should schedule an appointment with your advisor to discuss your program and determine which courses to register for your first semester/session.
2. **Transfer credits:** If eligible, and prior to the student enrolling in the first semester, the Ed.D. Program Director will conduct an **audit of your graduate coursework** to determine which prerequisite courses have been completed and which must be taken as a part of the student's doctoral program (only if needed).
  - Students who have completed Brenau's Ed.S. degree will be eligible to transfer in 18 credit hours
  - Students who have completed an Ed.S. degree at another regionally accredited institution will be eligible to transfer 6 credit hours into the program
  - Students entering the program with a Master's degree are not eligible for any credit hours to transfer in
  - Students enrolled in the DCP are eligible to transfer in **up to 27** hours if from a regionally accredited University.

These transfer credit amounts are approved by Brenau University and may not be changed. *Please, refer to the Catalog for guidance regarding appropriate coursework and especially for information about requirements related to transfer credits.*

3. **Program Plans:** Each student will receive a customized Program Plan which outlines which semester you will take which course. Each program plan is manually completed and indicates which courses (if any) are transferred in or substituted.
4. **Program Plan—Student Responsibility:** It is the student's responsibility to take ownership of the program plan provided to them by the Program Director. Use the program plan as a guide to know which courses are needed and when. However, the program plan is merely a directional guide. The **official** program plan is maintained by the Registrar's office. Students should monitor their online transcript and their online degree plan via their CampusWeb portal. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to become very familiar with the course numbers and the type of course each number is

(core, concentration, research or dissertation support). Also, reference the research sequence for your cohort in the Ed.D. site.

There is an expectation that all students making satisfactory progress will complete the degree requirements within three years of full time study (see TIME OUT/AGE OUT POLICY).

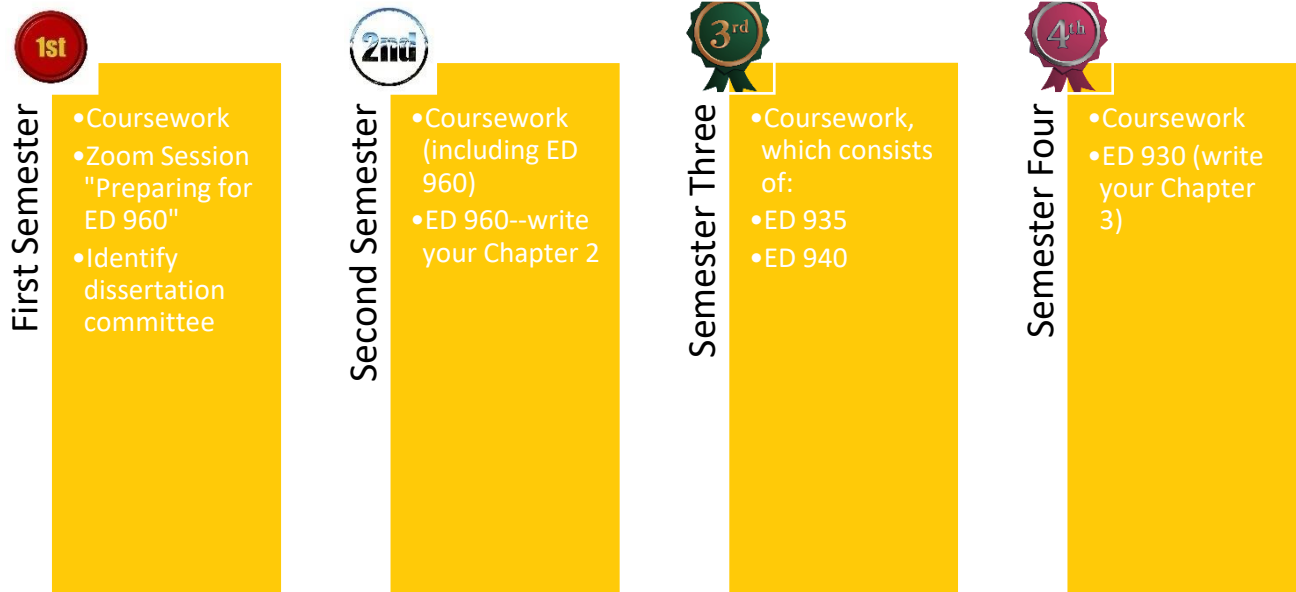
### **What to Expect Your First Year**

During the first semester, students are required to enroll in ED 900, Doctoral Seminar. This seminar is a zero credit course and no tuition is required. However, students must pass the course in order to continue in the program. The Seminar is designed to familiarize the student with the processes, paperwork and tasks needed to complete each step of the doctoral program. The seminar is a Pass/Fail course. Students must successfully complete a minimum of 80% of the tasks in order to Pass the seminar. Failure to complete this seminar will prompt a registration hold and no additional courses may be taken until the seminar is successfully completed. The seminar is offered every semester.

During the first-year, doctoral students complete prescribed courses as a part of their curriculum. This is a busy year and students should be accepting of the time sacrifices, which will be required of them in order to matriculate through the program. One of the unique features of this program is the development of the dissertation proposal (Chapters 1-3) through embedded assignments in a number of courses in which students enroll. Students who are actively working to develop a proposal, which they will submit to their dissertation committee for approval near the beginning of year two, will work with their dissertation advisors to refine the proposal. Through specific coursework, students will develop the description of the proposed research topic, the literature review in support of the topic, and a proposed evaluation method to support the research question(s). Each of these assignments corresponds to a section of the dissertation. After each assignment has been completed, reviewed by course instructors, and revised according to instructor feedback, that content can be used to build the proposal, which will ultimately be submitted to the dissertation advisor for further feedback and refinement.

Generally, it is expected students will spend 20-30 hours per week on course requirements. Your first three semesters will help you set your dissertation journey on the right track. For most of you, the initial research component of your program will look like this:





During the first semester, students are invited to attend a zoom session titled “*Preparing for ED 960*”. ED 960 is your first research course and dedicated to helping you produce a viable draft of Chapter 2 of your dissertation. It is critically important for you to attend this session. This zoom session will help you identify a research topic and refine that topic into a solid dissertation topic. If you do not attend this zoom session, you will be at a disadvantage as you begin ED 960.

During the first semester students will be assigned a dissertation chair. Every effort is made to match Chairs with students based on research interests and certification tracks. However, this is not always possible. Plus, sometimes personality issues arise. While the dissertation process is intense and part of the growth process is to learn to navigate conflicts and differences, sometimes changes need to be made. Students may identify other faculty with whom they would like to work with in a Chair role, and it is perfectly acceptable to request a change as long as all parties (current dissertation chair, Ed.D. Program Director, and proposed dissertation chair) agree that it would be in the best interest of the student. A request that the Ed.D. Program Director facilitates the change to a different Chair may be made **only** after the current Dissertation chair and student have discussed the possibility of such a change. Normally such requests for a change in dissertation chairs will be granted unless there is no other full-time faculty member willing or available to advise the student.

It is recommended that no later than by the end of the first semester, the student should declare a research topic of study and work with their dissertation chair, and in collaboration with the dissertation chair and Program Director select two other members to serve on their dissertation committee. Completing this during the first semester maximizes the opportunity for success in ED 960. Failure to adhere to this timeline may impact your rate of program completion.

The dissertation committee includes the dissertation chair, and two additional full-time faculty members, one of whom must be a member of the College of Education faculty. Each committee

will have a “research methodologist” on the committee. No research study “proposal” will be approved by the Program Director without evidence of consultation with a “methodologist.

After a student and his or her dissertation chair has determined which two eligible faculty members will be invited to serve on the student’s dissertation committee, the student invites the faculty members to serve and reports the response of the faculty members to their dissertation chair. The doctoral student will then complete and forward to the Ed.D. Program Director the Dissertation Committee Approval Form. Submit the **EDD Dissertation Committee Approval Form** to the Ed.D. Program Chair via email once it is complete. Please refer to the Ed.D. Canvas Site for the Selection Form and submission directions. For most students this process looks like this:

1. Student receives committee names from Ed.D. Program Director
2. Student sends invitation, via email, to each committee member, beginning with the Chair
3. When acceptances are received student downloads the Committee Approval Form and sends to each person for signature
4. When all signatures have been received, student forwards the signed form to the Ed.D. Program Director for approval
5. Program director forwards form to student to upload into the Ed.D. site.

#### **Additional Course Information**

Program courses are divided into four types of courses: Core, Concentration, Research, and Dissertation Support. Please become familiar with each type of course and adhere to the following (refer to the program plan for which courses are each type):

<u>Core Courses</u>	<u>Concentration Courses</u>	<u>Research Courses</u>	<u>Dissertation Support Courses</u>
<p>All students take these courses These are 7 week courses. You may take them anytime with no approval. If you would like to add a course during the summer, for example, and the course is offered, then you may take it.</p> <div data-bbox="203 999 488 1787" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Note: All Core, Concentration, and Research courses are awarded by letter grades of A, B, C, D, or F.</p> <p>Students must earn at least a C. Grades of D or F must be repeated and financial aid will not pay for an unsuccessful grade.</p> <p>Students may not earn more than 2 C's at any time in the program. The third C will result in academic suspension. Please see Age Out policy in Addendums.</p> </div>	<p>Students take four courses within their declared concentration. These are 7 week courses. These courses are offered irregularly, so students should take them as indicated on the program plan.</p>	<p>All students take these courses. These courses are 14 week courses. Students may not progress with their dissertation until these courses are satisfied. They should be taken in the scheduled order they appear on the program plan.</p>	<p>All students take these courses. These course are 14 weeks. These courses are designed to support the production of your dissertation. They must be taken in order and approval by your Chair must be gained before taking ED 965, ED 970, and ED 975.</p> <div data-bbox="945 743 1414 1014" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>All dissertation courses are Pass/Fail courses and are repeatable. In the event a student needs additional time to complete dissertation course, they will be awarded an IP. Student will have to register for the course the following semester it is offered. This has no impact on GPA and financial aid will pay for this repeat.</p> </div>

## Residency Seminar

There are no on-site residency requirements. However, students engage in two activities, which make up a virtual residency.

Activity 1: Students will learn about the program and engage in activities, which will introduce the student to the program and inform students of resources available to assist them in successfully completing the program.

Activity 2: Students will also begin to refine their thinking of a research topic and spend time with a faculty member parsing out potential problems and challenges with their topics of choice.

**These activities are satisfied by attending the two zoom sessions titled, “Orientation” and “Preparing for ED 960”.**

## Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive Exams are intended to synthesize what has been studied during a student’s doctoral coursework while incorporating potential dissertation topics the student intends to pursue.

**WRITTEN** Exam: This portion includes questions on subjects that are determined by the student’s declared concentration. The Ed.D. Program Director will provide information about the exam as well as tips for success. Please read all announcements in the Ed.D. site. Please be prepared to attend a zoom session titled, “Preparing for the Written Comprehensive Exam”. **Students will be allowed to enroll in ED 965 even if they have not successfully passed the written comp, however, they will NOT be allowed to defend the proposal. Not defending the proposal puts the student at great risk of failing ED 965.**

**ORAL** Exams: In addition, there are two oral exams:

Students should be prepared to defend their proposal to their dissertation committee while they are enrolled in ED 965. This proposal defense will satisfy one of the oral comprehensive exams. The Dissertation Chair will prepare the student for the protocol to follow for the proposal defense.

Oral exam number 2 will be the student's **final dissertation defense**. All coursework will be completed and the dissertation committee will have signed off on all five chapters of the dissertation. The Dissertation Chair will prepare the student for the protocol to follow for the proposal defense.

## Dissertation Process Information

The dissertation process is straightforward but requires an adherence to the structure and form of the dissertation. It may be easier to understand visually and broken down into sequential phases. Additional information about major steps of this process are found in the addendums A,B, and C.

### **Phase One**

- Attend zoom session titled, “Preparing for ED 960”
- Identify committee
- Enroll and successfully complete ED 960
- Work with Chair and Subject Matter Expert to complete Chapter 2
- Set up IRBnet account and complete CITI training

### **Phase Two**

- Enroll and successfully complete ED 935
- Enroll and successfully complete ED 940

### **Phase Three**

- Enroll in and successfully complete ED 930
- Work with Methodologist to complete Chapter 3
- Register for and successfully complete written comprehensive exam (see next section)

### **Phase Four**

- Enroll in and successfully complete ED 965
- Work with entire committee to complete Chapter 1
- Prepare proposal defense presentation (Chapters 1-3)
- Defend dissertation proposal

The presentation is approximately 30 minutes. The following procedures are recommended for the formal proposal defense:

- Introductions and welcome
- 30 minute presentation of PowerPoint by candidate
- Questions and comments from committee
- Dismissal of candidate for committee deliberation
- Chair will contact the candidate with the committee decision and any required revisions
- Chair will notify the Ed.D. Program Director of the outcome of the proposal defense within 24 hours

*The defense date must be scheduled and the defense successfully completed at least **two weeks** prior to the last day of the semester term.*

- Be admitted to candidacy

Upon the successful completion of the comprehensive exam, which is the dissertation proposal, and approval by the student’s dissertation committee, the student may be formally admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree..

The student's candidacy begins on the date the admission to candidacy form is received by the Graduate School.

→Obtain IRB approval

Although most IRB applications for educational research do not require full reviews, the IRB will make that decision. Modifications to the application should be expected. Candidates should take care to thoroughly review the IRB comments and incorporate all feedback to avoid delays.

Execution of research **CANNOT** begin prior to receiving full IRB approval. **If data are collected or accessed prior to obtaining all necessary and full IRB approvals, the candidate will be dismissed from the program.** After completion of a successful proposal defense, Institutional Review Board (IRB) review and approval is required before any participants may be recruited or data may be collected. IRB is a federally mandated body established to ensure ethical treatment of human subjects. Within 10 business days of the approved proposal defense, the candidate must submit his or her IRB application, ancillary material, and documentation of site permission(s) to his or her chair for an initial review and approval. Upon completion of the application and all supporting documents, candidates will complete the IRB Application Checklist and submit to their chair with all IRB documents. Dissertation chairs are responsible for carefully reviewing the candidate's IRB application and ancillary material to ensure all items on the application are fully addressed and all forms (e.g., consents/assents) align with the templates provided. Chairs will verify their review of their candidate's application and supporting documents. Once the application and all documents meet the chair's satisfaction, the chair will upload the application to the IRB account. **Candidates should NOT submit their application directly to the IRB.** After the application is submitted by the Dissertation Chair, the IRB will correspond directly with the Chair, including the candidate. Candidates must develop their IRB application and ancillary material using the application and templates retrieved directly from the IRB website and the College of Education. Candidates must not use older applications or templates. Candidates must submit documentation of institutional permission from each research site to the IRB prior to receiving IRB approval. If study procedures will involve schools or school districts, permission should come in the form of a letter or email, but if study procedures involve colleges or universities, IRB approval from those institutions will need to be obtained as directed by the specific institution's IRB. Permission from the research site must be sought prior to submitting the IRB application. If a candidate is unable to gain permission from the research site prior to receiving IRB approval, the IRB committee may issue a conditional approval letter, which will assist in obtaining needed permission and in subsequently completing IRB approval. Candidates must not begin recruiting participants until IRB approval is received. *Failure to adhere to this will result in immediate dismissal from the program.* Upload the IRB approval letter to the Ed.D. site.

If the study will include faculty, students, or staff from *a single* department or group within Brenau University, the candidate must obtain permission from the appropriate supervisor (e.g., Dean, Department Chair, Coach, etc.) and submit a signed letter or date/time stamped email to the IRB committee to verify approval to use students from that department or group. The candidate may submit the application without having

obtained this permission; however, the IRB committee will not approve the study until proof of permission has been received.

Once IRB approval is obtained, the student should upload the IRB approval document into the Ed.D. Canvas site.

For IRB general information, see <https://intranet.brenau.edu/institutional-review-board/>  
For IRB specific information, see <https://intranet.brenau.edu/institutional-review-board/#tools>

## **Phase Five**

→ **Enroll in ED 970**

→ **Complete data collection in accordance with Chapter 3 and IRB application**

After IRB approval is given and all necessary consents (adults) and/or assents (minors) is given from participants, the candidate executes his or her research, including data collection and analysis. This is done by enrolling in ED 970. Each candidate should note that depending on his or her level of comfort, ability, and competence with the chosen quantitative or qualitative analysis, he or she may seek an outside consultant. However, the candidate is held responsible to know, to understand, and to answer for ethical behavior, procedures, accuracy, interpretation, and integrity of the research design and analysis.

→ **If time allows, begin data analysis**

## **Phase Six**

→ **Enroll in ED 975**

→ **Complete data analysis**

→ **Work with Chair and Methodologist to produce Chapter 4**

→ **Work with Chair and Subject Matter Expert to produce Chapter 5**

→ **Ensure all formatting is perfect**

→ **Submit Chapters 1-5 to committee for approval to defend**

→ **Prepare final defense presentation**

Once students have completed their study and receive approval for their dissertation committee, they should schedule their Final Dissertation Defense. **Please note that a final defense cannot be scheduled unless the candidate is enrolled in ED 975.**

→ **Defend the Dissertation:**

Candidates, with input and approval from their chair, may choose to conduct the final defense through distance means or as a traditional, on-campus defense. If the chair or any committee members are at a distance, they may attend the defense via the university e-conferencing system, even if the candidate is defending on-campus.

If a distance defense is chosen, the Dissertation Chair is responsible for scheduling and facilitating the electronic meeting. If the option of an on-campus defense is chosen, **candidates must not make travel arrangements prior to receiving confirmation of the defense date.** The Dissertation Chair is responsible for informing each committee member of the date, time, and procedures of the defense.

The candidate is responsible for providing the final copy of the dissertation manuscript to the committee members approximately two weeks prior to the dissertation defense. The candidate prepares a 30 minute presentation of his/her dissertation for the defense; a visual presentation (e.g., PowerPoint) is required. The presentation should be sent to the chair and committee members at least one week prior to the defense. If the defense occurs on campus, the candidate should bring the presentation to the defense on a USB drive, along with three printed copies of the dissertation manuscript. The copies do not need to be bound and may be double-sided. There is a computer, projector, and a presentation clicker in the defense room. Candidates may arrive at the defense room 30 minutes ahead of time to set up for the defense. Parking is very limited, so the candidate should arrive well in advance of his/her defense

For distance defenses, candidates are required to use reliable internet and phone connections, be in professional dress, be in a professional location, and have technological support on hand, if needed, to ensure the distance defense runs smoothly. **The chair and candidate** (not the entire committee) are encouraged to have a “test defense” run-through at least two days prior to the final defense in order to ensure that the technology works properly on the computers and phones that will be used on the day of the defense. Only the candidate is required to share video during the defense.

*The final defense date must be scheduled and the defense successfully completed at least **four weeks** prior to the last day of the semester term if the Candidate is participating in the Fall or Spring graduation ceremony.*

**Note:** Once a Final Defense date has been approved by the Dissertation Committee, significant changes to the topic or research design cannot be made without seeking formal approval. Requests for changes to an approved study should be submitted to the Dissertation Committee, who will make the decision and notify the Ed.D. Program Director.

The dissertation defense takes approximately one hour to complete. The following procedures are recommended and are further discussed in ED 960:

- Introductions and welcome
- 30 minute presentation by candidate with heavy emphasis on findings, analysis, and recommendations

After preliminary remarks by the chair, the candidate gives the defense presentation. The presentation needs to include the following: an overview of the study’s purpose and significance (both practical and empirical), the methods, the analysis, the results, limitations, discussion of the findings, and suggestions for future research. The presentation should be used as an aid. Reading from the presentation or script is not acceptable and may result in an unsuccessful defense.



Following the defense presentation, the committee members and chair will ask questions. Then faculty will be provided the opportunity to ask questions. Following questions and discussion, all individuals not on the committee, including the candidate, will exit the room to provide the committee the opportunity to discuss the defense. Using the Ed.D. Dissertation Defense Rubric for guidance, the committee and Dissertation Committee will make a decision. The candidate is invited back into the room

- Questions and comments from committee members and chair
- Questions and comments from the COE Faculty
- Dismissal of candidate for committee deliberation
- Re-connection with candidate for decision and discussion

Approved with no revisions or minor revisions

Not approved with recommendation to revise dissertation (and schedule a new defense date) or write a new dissertation. In this case, the chair delineates the required steps and specifies a timeline for completion (usually 7-15 days). It should be noted that, at the discretion of the dissertation chair and dependent upon the number of revisions that need to be made, the dissertation chair may require that candidates have his or her manuscript professionally edited again. A maximum of two dissertation defenses may be completed. Failure to defend successfully within two defenses will result in removal from the program.

- Final remarks

Upon successful defense of your dissertation, your chair will submit the **Dissertation Completion Form** to the Ed.D. Program Director.

### **After Dissertation Defense**

Under the guidance of the dissertation committee chair, the candidate refines Chapters One through Five of the dissertation. The dissertation committee chair may advise the candidate to seek guidance from committee members on specific aspects or may require that the candidate seek an outside editor. A typical dissertation is around 100-200+ pages in length. It includes all the elements of a full dissertation. There should be a minimum of 80 pages of text for the quantitative dissertation and 130 pages of text for the qualitative dissertation.

The dissertation committee chair always reviews the manuscript first. When the chair is satisfied with the manuscript and has given approval, the chair disseminates the manuscript (or chapters) or asks the candidate to provide a copy of the manuscript (or chapters) to the other committee for feedback. The candidate should expect that the manuscript (or chapters) will go through multiple revisions before being approved for a defense and that a review may take between two to four weeks depending upon the length and quality of the manuscript. Once your dissertation is approved by all committee members, you should receive approval from your dissertation chair to move forward.

### **Submit the Dissertation Manuscript for a Professional Edit**

During the final revision process, a professional edit of the manuscript is required. The professional edit can be performed prior to or after the defense at the discretion of the

Dissertation Chair and/or Graduate Chair based on the quality of the manuscript. This requirement may include a full edit or may simply be an APA edit. Candidates may use any professional editor. If a candidate needs help finding an editor, he/she may contact the library for a list of editors with experience working with COE Ed.D. candidates.

### **Prepare for Dissertation Publication**

Once your dissertation committee has given their final approval, and sign the required signature page, you have two choices of publishing your dissertation.

1. Using the resources provided by the library and following the directions in the ED 975 course site, you may choose to submit your dissertation to ProQuest for publication into their database. There are firm guidelines required for publication into ProQuest and must be strictly adhered to.

Evidence: email from the library indicating your manuscript has been submitted

2. You may furnish a bound copy of your dissertation to the COE which will fulfill the requirement of publishing your manuscript. Details which standardize this process may be requested from the office manager of the COE. One bound copy of your manuscript must be delivered via USPS to the College of Education at:

Brenau University  
College of Education  
Attn: Ed.D. Department  
500 Washington Street, SE  
Gainesville, GA 30501

Evidence: a receipt from a printhouse must be produced to the COE indicating the order has been placed. You should email this receipt to the office manager of the COE.

The student will not be cleared for graduation until the Dissertation publication requirements of Brenau's Trustee Library or the College of Education are met. In order to have your account cleared for graduation, you must adhere to the evidence above

→**DONE!!!**

*Special Note: Although the above steps are meant to be accurate and up-to-date, please continually check with your dissertation chair for the latest information.*



## **Addendums**

### **WHO MAKES UP THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE?**

- 1) The Dissertation committee must consist of a minimum of three Brenau University Faculty members, including the student's major advisor, who serves as the chair of the committee. All three members are considered voting members.
- 2) Brenau University COE adjunct faculty and affiliate faculty members may serve as a member of the student's dissertation committee.
- 3) Former and retired faculty are allowed to serve as voting members of the student's dissertation committee upon nomination of the Graduate Coordinator.
- 4) Outside experts may be invited to serve as committee members but not Chair or Methodologist. Requests for an outside expert to serve must be submitted to the Program Director. Requirements are a current resume demonstrating relevant skills and/or knowledge and an email from the student indicating why this member is critical to your committee. In the event the request is granted, a second Brenau faculty member will also serve. No committee member, outside of Brenau, is compensated for their service.
- 5) Immediate family members may not serve on the student's dissertation committee.

## **DISSERTATION CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provides mentorship to doctoral candidates (no more than six) through the dissertation process as outlined in the Dissertation Handbook, from the development of the proposal to the final publishing of the dissertation. This includes providing timely and thorough feedback. All feedback on manuscripts, unless otherwise communicated to the candidate, should be provided within a two to four week timeframe.
  
- Provides feedback on doctoral candidate's skills and provides necessary referrals for additional support.
  
- Ensures that the proposal and the dissertation manuscript comply with all university criteria and are acceptable scholarly works, including conformity to content, structure, format, style, and ethical guidelines.
  
- Ensures frequent communication with candidate and consultation with committee members.
  
- Communicates with the committee members frequently and welcomes their suggestions for the candidate's manuscript.
  
- Uses all dissertation technologies as outlined in the Dissertation Handbook.
  
- Completes necessary forms and rubrics as outlined in the dissertation handbook.
  
- Makes proposal and dissertation defense arrangements.

## **DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Brenau University faculty member or approved by Ed.D. Program Director.
  
- Must hold an earned doctorate degree from a regionally accredited university. This normally means a Ph.D. or EdD in an education-related field. If a student wishes to have a committee member who holds a degree other than an EdD or Ph.D. in an education-related field, he or she must receive approval from the Ed.D. Program Director.

### **Responsibilities**

- Provides mentorship to doctoral candidate through the dissertation process as outlined in the Dissertation Handbook, from the development of the prospectus to the final publishing of the dissertation. This includes providing timely and thorough feedback.
  
- Works collaboratively with the committee chair to guide the student in the dissertation process. All feedback on manuscripts, unless otherwise communicated to the candidate, should be provided within a two to four week timeframe.

## GENERAL DISSERTATION STYLE AND GUIDELINES

### Dissertation Style

The dissertation is a scholarly document written for professionals in a specific field of study. A dissertation typically ranges from 80 to 200 pages of text and contains a thorough literature review that is typically 30 to 75 pages in length. Some qualitative dissertations may be up to 300 pages in length. The dissertation needs to follow the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*. All APA guidelines should be followed; however, the formatting guidelines and the templates for the dissertation outlined in this handbook need to be followed where specified. With the approval of the dissertation chair, the personal pronoun *I* may be used judiciously in the candidate's manuscript and only in accordance with APA guidelines.

**Note:** It is highly recommended that candidates retain their textbooks from their previous research and methods courses.

### Dissertation Research Topics

Students should start considering future dissertation topics from the very beginning of their program. When opportunities exist, students should research the topic of interest in the form of literature reviews and related papers for doctoral coursework. It is important to note that a research topic is not the same as a research study. A topic is general in nature whereas a research study is very narrow in focus with defined methods to answer a particular question(s).

Candidates are encouraged to pursue dissertation topics that are of personal relevance and significance; however, a candidate needs to ensure that the topic is researchable. It is wise to avoid topics that are overly ambiguous, challenging, and esoteric, thus ensuring that the dissertation process results in successful completion. Ideally, the research topic should be within the expertise and research interests of potential dissertation chairs. To become familiar with the COE faculty and their research interests, candidates are required to participate in research dialogue with faculty throughout their coursework. Furthermore, the dissertation needs to align with the discipline of education.

### Dissertation Research Designs

Dissertations may consist of various research designs; however, all research studies for the purpose of a dissertation should include a rigorous production of scientific knowledge. For quantitative studies, standard research designs that a candidate may choose include true experiments (rarely done in education), quasi-experiments, causal-comparative designs, and correlational studies. Other quantitative forms of research that may be acceptable for a dissertation if they exhibit sufficient rigor and value to the field, and these include survey research, descriptive research, and evaluation research.

For qualitative research, a candidate may choose to utilize phenomenological, grounded theory, case study, historical, or ethnographic designs. If a candidate wishes to use an alternate design, he or she will need to provide a rationale and seek approval from the Graduate Chair and approved methodologist consultant.

## TIME OUT/AGE OUT POLICY



### Ed.D. Time Out and Barriers to Graduation Policy

Students enrolled in the doctoral program have the responsibility to follow through with their plans of completing the program in a timely manner according to the university/college requirements and according to accreditation requirements. In accordance with accreditation requirements, Brenau's Ed.D program is a minimum requirement of 54 credit hours, including any courses transferred in.

While many supports are in place to assist students through the rigorous process and attainment of obtaining this advanced degree, there are times when students do not make adequate progress through the program and find themselves at a point where progress is either stalled or halted completely. These barriers to graduation are driven by time constraints and are listed below:

It is the policy of the College of Education to require all students enrolled in the Ed.D. program to:

- Maintain an acceptable GPA
  - Students are required to **successfully complete the required number of courses** according to the degree plan on file with the registrar. If a student does not meet the required GPA, 3.0, in one semester, the registrar will automatically put the student on academic probation. The student must bring their GPA up to a minimum of 3.0 in the semester immediately following academic probation. If the student fails to bring the GPA to a 3.0, the registrar's office will place the student on academic suspension. The student may appeal to the Provost's office for reinstatement to the program. Until a reinstatement is granted (often after one year) the student cannot continue with the current program. If a student earns more than two grades of "C" as part of the cumulative GPA, the registrar will put the student on academic suspension. This also applies to students enrolled in the Doctoral Completion Program (DCP)
- The student must successfully **pass the written comprehensive exam**.
  - If a student fails the comprehensive exam once, they are entitled to a retake of the exam. A second failure is cause for dismissal from the program. This dismissal



may be appealed to the Dean and the decision is final. This applies to students enrolled in the Doctoral Completion Program (DCP)

- Advance to Candidacy by **successfully defending the dissertation proposal by year 3** after the initial enrollment semester.
  - If a student cannot pass the initial proposal defense by year 3 then the student may appeal to continue with their program by writing a letter to the program director and Dean. The letter must state the reasons the barriers to success were and how they will overcome the barriers to pass the proposal and dissertation phase in the months to come in a timely manner. They must provide a 3-6 month plan/timeline and their most current written document. The dissertation chair will be consulted as well about their professional experience of working with the student. If approved, this appeal is effective for 6 months. Up to two extensions may be granted for advancement to Candidacy. Extensions are not automatic and must be requested for each extension. The Dean's ruling on this appeal is final. For students enrolled in the Doctoral Completion Program (DCP), the time to successfully pass a proposal defense in 2 years from the initial enrollment semester
  
- Complete the entire program (all courses) and **successfully defend the final dissertation by year 5** after the initial enrollment semester
  - If a student cannot pass the final dissertation defense by year 5 then the student may appeal to continue with their program by writing a letter to the program director and Dean. The letter must state what they believed their barriers were and how they will overcome the barriers to pass the proposal and dissertation phase in the months to come in a timely manner. They must provide a 3-6 month plan/timeline and their most current written document. The dissertation chair will be consulted as well about their professional experience of working with the student. If approved, this appeal is effective for 6 months. Only one extension may be granted for dissertation defense. Extensions are not automatic and must be requested. The Dean's ruling on this appeal is final. For students enrolled in the Doctoral Completion Program (DCP), the time to successfully pass a proposal defense in 3 years from the initial enrollment semester