

# **Instructions and Procedures Guide for the Human Development Program**

## **Independent Empirical Research Project**

All students earning a Ph.D. in Human Development are expected to complete a pre-dissertation project in collaboration with their advisors. The purpose of the pre-dissertation project is for the student to experience the various aspects of conceptualizing, conducting, analyzing, and writing up a small, well-defined empirical study. This serves as preparation for both future publications and for the conceptualization and conduct of a dissertation. The project is usually completed during supervised research experience while registered for Apprenticeship credits (EDHD 888) with the advisor.

The planning for this project typically begins during the first year. The project should be completed *no later* than December 1 of the third year. The expectation is that the student will review existing literature on the topic to be studied. In addition, it is expected that empirical data will be collected and analyzed by the student. Although the preference is for students to have experience in collecting data, in some cases data previously collected by the advisor or available in a large-scale dataset will be more appropriate for a particular student's research plan and is acceptable for this project. The literature review, research problem/questions, method, analysis, and results of the project should be written up in the format of a manuscript in APA style with the student as first author. The student should make a public presentation of the project and its results, for example at a colloquium organized by one of the specializations or at a departmental research event. Submitting a proposal for a poster or other presentation for a professional meeting based on the project is encouraged but not required. Submitting the manuscript for publication is also encouraged but not required.

Students' progress in fulfilling the pre-dissertation project requirement will be monitored by their advisors. Upon completion of the requirement, an Empirical Research Project form with the title of the project and the date of completion signed by the advisor should be sent to the Graduate Coordinator to be filed in the student's folder. Progress toward completing the project will be reported by the advisor to the group conducting the annual reviews of students for Developmental Science or for Educational Psychology. Special attention will be given to the

project's status during the review at the end of the second year. If a student does not complete this project by the end of the first semester of the third year, the annual review committee has the option to request that the student be asked to leave the program with a master's degree, pending successful completion of requirements for this degree.