



**Special Education
Ph.D. Program Handbook
Updated: September 2025**

Special Education Program

**Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education (CHSE)
College of Education**

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Section 1: Introduction

The Special Education (EDSP) doctoral program resides in the [Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education \(CHSE\)](#), one of three departments within the [College of Education \(COE\)](#) at the University of Maryland (UMD). Doctoral studies in the Special Education program emphasize research and scholarship, leadership and professional development, and disciplinary knowledge. The program is designed to prepare future researchers, leaders, and educators for positions in higher education institutions.

This handbook provides essential information about the Special Education Ph.D. program and is intended for doctoral students and graduate faculty. It includes an overview of policies and procedures, along with specific suggestions to guide students through each stage of the program.

The university community, the state of Maryland, and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area provide an unparalleled setting for doctoral study. The program's proximity to the United States Congress and governmental agencies—including the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and the American Institutes for Research—offers opportunities for summer internships and other professional and research experiences. National organizations and resources, such as the Council for Exceptional Children and the Library of Congress, are also located in the metropolitan area. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is based in nearby Baltimore, while the Maryland Higher Education Commission is located in Annapolis. Students may also collaborate with community organizations, public and charter schools, and nonprofit organizations serving immigrant, multilingual, and racially minoritized youth and their families across D.C., Maryland, and Virginia.

Public and private schools throughout the D.C.–Maryland–Virginia (DMV) region educate students from diverse linguistic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Within the larger DMV area, Maryland is home to some of the largest urban schools and districts in the nation, serving culturally and linguistically diverse children and youth with disabilities in high-need areas. UMD also offers extensive campus resources and centers where doctoral students can further develop their knowledge and skills in teaching, service, technology, and research.

While this handbook covers most policies and procedures pertaining to doctoral students in Special Education, it is not exhaustive. Prospective and current students should consult the [Graduate School website](#) for detailed information, including important forms and policies related to graduate studies at UMD. For questions or topics not addressed in the handbook, students should consult their advisors. Graduate School regulations are updated in this handbook; however, in cases of discrepancy, the official policies of the Graduate School take precedence.

Section 2: EDSP Faculty and Research Interests

Name	Website Information
Jennfer Amilivia	https://education.umd.edu/directory/jennifer-amilivia
Katryna Andrusik	https://education.umd.edu/directory/dr-katryna-natalya-andrusik
Philip Burke	https://education.umd.edu/directory/philip-burke
Kelli Cummings	https://education.umd.edu/directory/kelli-cummings
Agnesanne Danehey	https://education.umd.edu/directory/agnesanne-danehey
Shanna E. Hirsch	https://education.umd.edu/directory/shanna-hirsch
Seyma Intepe	https://education.umd.edu/directory/seyma-intepe-tingir
Dawn Jacobs Martin	https://education.umd.edu/directory/dawn-jacobs-martin
Veronica Kang	https://education.umd.edu/directory/veronica-kang https://education.umd.edu/research-and-impact/labs/autism-family-culture-and-communication-education-lab
Tori Page Voth	https://education.umd.edu/directory/tori-page-voth
Sehrish Shikarpurya	https://education.umd.edu/directory/sehrish-shikarpurya
Ana Taboada Barber	https://education.umd.edu/directory/ana-taboada-barber Research site: http://blog.umd.edu/diversereaderslab/

Jade Wexler	https://education.umd.edu/directory/jade-wexler
Gulnoza Yakubova	https://education.umd.edu/directory/gulnoza-yakubova Research site: https://education.umd.edu/research-college/labs/technology-interventions-and-inclusion-autism-lab-tiia

Bolded = Accepting new doctoral students

Administrative Support Personnel

Note: *The administrative support personnel serve the entire CHSE department and are often inundated with requests from faculty and administrators. Please email or visit them in person when possible before calling. Include your student ID number in all email correspondence.*

Name	Title	Email	Phone	Location	Responsibilities
Denisse Garcia	Administrative Assistant II, CHSE	dgarcia7@umd.edu	301-405-2858	3115 Benjamin Building	Course scheduling, ordering instructor copies of textbooks
Stefanie James	Coordinator, CHSE	yjames@umd.edu	301-405-6515	3115 Benjamin Building	GA, TA, or RA appointments and payroll
Blesilda Lim	Director of finance and administration	blim@umd.edu	301-405-6507	3115 Benjamin Building	Budgeting for the department, including student fellowships
Caroline Scott	Graduate Coordinator, CHSE	cscott18@umd.edu	301-405-8384	3115 Benjamin Building	Academic planning (course registration) and fellowships
Amleset Teklegiorgis	Coordinator, CHSE	teklegia@umd.edu	301-405-2879	3115 Benjamin Building	General ordering for the department

Fellowships, Assistantships, and Awards

The Special Education program may offer support for doctoral students in the form of fellowships or graduate assistantships. In most cases, a student's assigned advisor will provide information about these opportunities. However, students are encouraged to review potential UMD opportunities and discuss them with their advisor in advance of deadlines. In addition, [the UMD Graduate School](#) posts information about campus wide fellowships, assistantships, and awards.

For additional funding opportunities:

- Visit the [College of Education Scholarship opportunities](#) webpage.
- Visit the [Graduate School Fellowship and Graduate Assistantship](#) for additional funding opportunities.
- Visit [Policies regarding Graduate Assistantships](#).
- For information about other student financial aid, review the [Office of the Student Financial Aid](#)

Graduate Student Life and Resources

The UMD Graduate School has information on Graduate Student Life and Resources. Click on the links below or go to the [Graduate School website](#) (Select *Prospective Students* on the pull-down menu at the top of page)

Graduate Student Life

- o Graduate Catalog
- o Campus Maps
- o Campus Recreation Center
- o Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
- o Graduate Student Government
- o Shuttle UM
- o Terrapins Athletics

Additional Campus Resources

- o Counseling Center
- o Disability Support Services
- o Division of Research
- o Employment at UM
- o Graduate Catalog
- o Graduate Housing
- o Graduate Student Legal Aid
- o International Student and Scholar Services
- o Office of the Bursar
- o Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- o Office of the Registrar
- o Office of Student Financial Aid
- o Ombudsperson for Graduate Students
- o Residency Classification Office
- o Student Health Center
- o Basic Needs Security (e.g., campus food pantry) via UMD's Division of Student Affairs website
- o University Libraries
- o Writing Center

Off-Campus Housing Services (OCH)

While on-campus housing is not available to graduate students, those seeking housing should begin their search with Off-Campus Housing Services (OCH), located in the Stamp Student Union. OCH provides both print and online resources for housing searches and offers extensive information on transportation, safety, landlord-tenant relations, childcare, and typical rental prices in the area.

Additional resources include:

- **OCH101:** a searchable database of available rental properties.
- **Roommate Finder:** a database where students can connect with others who share similar interests.
- **Short-Term Lodging:** temporary housing options available to incoming graduate students. In addition, two graduate student organizations—the Students Council of India and the Chinese Student and Scholar Association—arrange limited temporary housing through their websites.
- **Long-Term Housing:** two graduate-student housing communities near campus, Graduate Hills and Graduate Gardens. These apartments are located on university property but are managed by Southern Management Corporation, a private company.

The graduate faculty in the Special Education program are proud of the Ph.D. program and its students, and we are committed to helping demystify the journey toward your degree.

Section 3: The Special Education PhD Curriculum

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Special Education prepares researchers, educators, and leaders to advance the education of individuals with disabilities. The program requires a minimum of 60 credits beyond the master's degree. All coursework, credits, and advancement to candidacy must be completed within five years of admission. Transfer of graduate credits may be considered after advancement to candidacy with advisor and Graduate School approval. Students should consult their advisor for current guidance.

Overview of Key Steps in the Doctoral Program *[for program planning]*

_____ **Schedule an initial meeting with your advisor.** Once admitted to the doctoral program, each student is assigned an advisor. Students are responsible for scheduling a meeting with their advisor before the first semester to review the curriculum, program benchmarks, and timelines. During this meeting, the advisor and student will review program requirements and other information provided in this handbook (use [Table 3.](#)) Students are responsible for maintaining electronic copies of all forms and updating them with their advisor on at least an annual basis. These forms are to be submitted as part of the Annual Review process and Comprehensive Portfolio Review (CPR) and used for general advising.

The following steps should guide the advising process:

_____ **Plan Coursework** (use [Table 1](#)): Develop an initial list of courses and experiences based on the student's interests and goals for the doctoral program. This form will be updated and attached to the Annual Review. There are two *examples of sequences* that students may use to plan their doctoral coursework over a four-year period (See [Table 2A](#) and [2B](#)).

_____ **Complete CITI Training - Human Subjects Review.** All research that involves the use of human subjects requires review and approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the initiation of the research. [CITI Training](#) is required for all researchers as a condition of IRB approval and should be completed as early as possible.

_____ **Complete the Supervised Research, Policy or Practice Internship.** Identify early what organization or school you are interested in working with to allow time to apply.

_____ **Prepare and Submit Annual Reviews** (use [Table 4](#)): It is important for a student and advisor to plan early for how the student will complete the required research, teaching, and leadership experiences in this program. The items or evidence that must be submitted are part of the required **Doctoral Graduate Outcome Assessment (DGOA)**.

_____ **Establish a Portfolio Review Committee** in discussion with your advisor. This committee consists of at least three EDSP graduate faculty members. Please see Section 4 for detailed description.

____ Develop and Submit Comprehensive Portfolio: It is important to identify, develop and finalize the items that are part of the Comprehensive Portfolio Review (see [Table 6](#)). A positive evaluation of the Comprehensive Portfolio allows the student to Advance to Candidacy. The portfolio and review process are described in the next section, [Section 4](#).

Required Coursework: Doctoral students must complete four courses in special education that address issues and trends, policies, current research and practice, theory, and technological advancements in the education of individuals with disabilities. Students also begin developing knowledge and skills in research (e.g., theory and design), college-level teaching, and leadership (e.g., policy, instruction, and research-to-practice).

Special Education Coursework:

Doctoral students will take the following four (4) EDSP courses:

- **EDSP 850** Intervention Research in Special Education
- **EDSP 860** Doctoral Research Seminar
- **EDSP 872** Theory and Empirical Design in Educational Research
- **EDSP 875** Legal and Policy Foundations for Individuals with Disabilities

Research Methodology and Design Coursework: Doctoral candidates take a minimum of 5 courses to become familiar with a variety of research methods and designs.

- **EDMS 645** Quantitative Research Methods I (*only required for students who did not complete an intro statistics course prior to enrolling in the doctoral program*)
- **EDMS 646** General Linear Models
- **EDSP 870** Single Case Research Designs in Education
- **EDSP 871** Qualitative Methods in Special Education

Choose 1-2: Intermediate Qualitative or Quantitative Methods Course(s):

- **EDMS 610** Classroom Assessment and Evaluation
- **EDMS 622** Theory and Practice of Standardized Testing
- **EDMS 623** Applied Measurement: Issues and Practices
- **EDMS 626** Instrumentation
- **EDMS 647** Causal Inference and Evaluation Methods
- **EDMS 651** General Linear Models II
- **EDMS 655** Introduction to Multilevel Modeling
- **EDMS 657** Exploratory Latent and Composite Variable Methods
- **EDMS 722** Structural Modeling
- **EDMS 724** Modern Measurement Theory
- **TLPL 790** Mixed Methods Research in Education
- **TLPL 792** Qualitative Research II: Analysis and Interpretation of Data
- **Other** [Determine with Advisor]

Pre-Candidacy Research (EDSP 898). Students must enroll in a minimum of 3 credit hours of EDSP 898 with their advisor when engaged in research projects or activities related to the comprehensive portfolio (e.g., research papers, systematic review).

Supervised College Teaching. Doctoral students participate in experiences to develop competence in teaching at the college level. To earn the required two credits, students should consult with their advisor to identify an appropriate learning path based on prior experience and future goals. Options may include completing a university teaching course (e.g., TLTC 798: University Teaching and Learning) to build foundational skills, participating in TLTC workshops, or expanding prior teaching experience through additional supervised teaching assistant or course instructor roles.

Electives. Students must complete a minimum of three elective courses (9 credits) approved by their advisor. Electives typically supplement current or prospective research interests and can be taken outside the department or college. In consultation with their advisor, students may select electives that include additional supervised teaching (EDSP 888), additional research (EDSP 898), or other relevant courses.

Supervised Research, Policy, or Practice Internship. The doctoral internship in special education is a structured, supervised experience that deepens expertise in research, policy, or practice related to individuals with disabilities. Within the EDSP program, the internship is required for full-time students and optional for part-time students. Full-time students must complete an internship (research, policy, or practice) during the summer after their first or second year.

An internship within the EDSP doctoral program at UMD consists of:

- A temporary, mentored placement where a Ph.D. student engages in research, policy analysis, teaching, or field supervision.
- An experience designed to build leadership skills, scholarly competence, and professional expertise.
- Opportunities tailored to the student's interests (e.g., autism, sensory disabilities, inclusive education, disability policy).
- Supervision by a faculty member—or, with advisor approval, an external expert—with clearly defined goals, activities, and evaluation criteria.

Examples of Research Internships include:

University-Based Research Internship

- Students may collaborate with an external faculty mentor on a funded research project from inception through completion, including co-authoring a manuscript.
- Activities may include data collection, data analysis, manuscript preparation, and conference presentations.

Examples of Policy Internships include:

Federal or State Policy Internship

- A student may complete an internship at the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Tasks may include contributing to research-to-practice initiatives, supporting grant programs, and analyzing policy impacts on students with sensory disabilities.
- A student may also participate in the [Maryland State Internship Program](#), aligning the placement with their research or professional interests to develop a report of use to the Maryland State Department of Education.

Examples of Research to Practice Internships include:

- A student may supervise pre-service teachers during practicum or student teaching. The experience builds skills in mentoring, providing feedback, and evaluating teaching practices.
- The student produces a practice report for teachers and/or a practitioner paper for a professional journal.

See **Table 10** for detailed internship guidelines.

Remaining Coursework: Dissertation Research Requirements

Advancement to Candidacy: After completing, or while nearing completion of, all coursework, the doctoral candidate begins preparing materials for the CPR (see [Section 4](#) for additional information). The portfolio demonstrates attainment of the knowledge and skills identified in the Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment. Completed in lieu of comprehensive exams, the Comprehensive Portfolio is reviewed by the CPR Committee. Upon successful completion, the student advances to candidacy and begins work on the dissertation proposal.

EDSP 899: Dissertation Research: Following a successful portfolio defense, students must complete a minimum of 12 dissertation research credits. Once advanced to candidacy by the Graduate School, students are automatically registered each fall and spring for 6 credits of EDSP 899 (Post-Candidacy/Continuous Registration). For example, a student advanced to candidacy during a semester will be automatically registered for 6 dissertation research credits beginning the following semester.

Benchmarks: The dissertation must be completed within four years of advancing to candidacy, in accordance with Graduate School policy.

Section 4: Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessments (DGOA)

Each graduate program at the University of Maryland maintains an approved Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment (DGOA) plan that provides students and faculty with clear, consistent information about progress toward degree completion. In the Special Education doctoral program, the DGOA is organized into three categories of outcomes that guide doctoral preparation. These categories are described in detail in [Table 5: Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment](#):

- **Research and Scholarship**
- **Disciplinary Knowledge**
- **Leadership and Professional Knowledge**

Each category includes specific learning outcomes assessed throughout the program using:

- a) coursework rubrics to demonstrate competence, and
- b) a structured review process to monitor progress toward the degree.

Student progress is evaluated at the following program milestones, as depicted in [Table 5: Doctoral Graduate Outcome Assessment \(DGOA\)](#):

Assessment Milestones

- Annual Review (Early Assessment): Year 2 until advancement to candidacy.
- Comprehensive Portfolio Review (Mid Assessment): Advancement to candidacy.
- Dissertation Research (Late Assessment).
- Post-Graduation Follow-Up (Late Assessment).

These assessments provide students with feedback on their progress toward degree completion and outline the experiences and accomplishments expected at each stage. The DGOA also provides faculty with benchmarks to update or revise program requirements as needed.

Annual Review – Year 2 until Advancement to Candidacy (Early Assessment)

The Special Education Graduate Committee reviews and evaluates doctoral student progress annually. Students must meet with their advisor at least once per year to complete and update the Annual Review Form. Regular meetings also allow students and advisors to plan coursework and monitor progress in a timely manner.

Annual Review Process

1. **Student submission:** Beginning in Year 2 and continuing until advancement to candidacy, the student must complete or update *Table 4: Annual Review Form for Doctoral Candidate and Advisor* and submit it electronically to their advisor by **October 31**.
2. **Exemptions:** Students scheduled for a Comprehensive Portfolio Review or

dissertation defense during the fall semester are exempt from the annual review; the review is replaced by the scheduled milestone.

3. **Advisor review:** The advisor reviews the form, provides comments if needed, and submits the document with an assessment of the student's progress to the Director of Graduate Studies in Special Education by **November 15**.
4. **Committee review:** Two members of the Graduate Committee review the Annual Review Form (with Table 1 attached) to determine whether the student is making satisfactory progress.
5. **Outcome notification:** By **December 1**, the student and advisor receive a letter from the Graduate Committee with the review outcome: **Satisfactory** or **Unsatisfactory with Conditional Provisions**. Recommendations, supports, or conditions for continued progress may be included. The student must develop a plan to meet any conditions during the following year.
6. **Failure to meet provisions:** If a student does not meet the conditional provisions by the next annual review, the Graduate Committee, after consultation with the advisor, may recommend dismissal from the program to the Graduate School.

Advancement to Candidacy: Comprehensive Portfolio Review (CPR; Mid Assessment)

All doctoral students must complete a Comprehensive Portfolio as a requirement for advancement to candidacy. The portfolio review committee consists of three EDSP graduate faculty members. This review serves as the mid-assessment stage, and students are not required to complete the Annual Review during the year of the portfolio review. The Comprehensive Portfolio is completed in lieu of comprehensive exams.

Upon completion, or near completion, of all required core, methodology, and elective coursework, the student should have most of the materials needed for the Comprehensive Portfolio (see [Table 6](#)). The portfolio is a compilation of products and experiences that demonstrate achievement of specific doctoral outcomes. The sections below outline the required portfolio items and the process used by the Graduate Committee to review and evaluate the student's work.

Comprehensive Portfolio Review (CPR) Items

Each doctoral student must include four required items in the portfolio: two fixed items (a Curriculum Vitae and a Systematic Review Paper) and two variable items selected based on individual experiences. Variable items must represent distinct areas such as research and scholarship, disciplinary knowledge, or leadership and professional practice. No item may be used to satisfy more than one category. In addition to submitting an electronic portfolio, students must complete an oral defense. Students should complete [Table 7: EDSP Rubric for Portfolio Review](#) when submitting these materials to the Graduate Committee.

1. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Students must maintain an up-to-date CV that includes publications, presentations, and relevant experiences. Students are encouraged to consult with their advisor and to use

the University of Maryland's CV template.

2. Systematic Review

The systematic review is a formal, methodologically rigorous analysis of the empirical literature on a selected topic. Unlike a traditional literature review, a systematic review provides a detailed methodology, synthesizes evidence, and generates new insights—for example, a refined understanding of current practice, a historical analysis, or a meta-analysis of intervention effects.

- The paper must be of publishable quality, defined as ready for submission with only minor revisions from the committee (not at the “revise and resubmit” level).
- It must be prepared in accordance with the submission guidelines of a target journal (e.g., *Exceptional Children*). Students must include the target journal's author guidelines when submitting the paper for review.
- The student must serve as the first or sole author.
- An oral presentation of the systematic review is required as part of the Portfolio Review.

Note: A revised version of the systematic review will also serve as the first paper (i.e., Chapter 2) of the dissertation and will be presented to the dissertation committee at the proposal meeting.

3. Evaluation of Research and Scholarship

Choice of one or more from the following (only one is required)

- First or co-authored published journal article, or article submitted for publication to a peer-reviewed journal.
 - Date submitted/published or to be submitted for publication:
 - *Title:*
 - Describe your level of involvement in the study/manuscript
- First or co-authored published chapter/submitted for publication, or to be submitted for publication. Chapters should be published in reputable academic publishing houses or university presses.
 - Date submitted/published or to be submitted for publication:
 - *Title:*
 - Describe your level of involvement in the manuscript
- First or co-authored policy paper or brief published or submitted for publication.
 - Date submitted/published or to be submitted for publication:
 - *Title:*
 - Describe your level of involvement in the manuscript

4. Evaluation of Leadership and Professional Knowledge

Choice of one or more from the following (only one is required)

- Internship: Description of type of internship (i.e., Research, Policy or Practice) and specific information on agency, grant, or study project the student will be involved in. In addition also include the student's responsibilities, products if applicable, and evaluation of the student's participation.
 - Date
 - *Title of Description*

Note: *Internship is not a requirement for passing the portfolio review, but it is a requirement of the program as a full-time student.*
- First or co-authored conference presentation or poster presentation. For poster or oral presentations, a copy of the accepted/submitted proposal should be provided.
 - Date submitted/presented
 - *Title:*
 - *Conference name:*
- Grant proposal to be submitted to an external funding agency. This may include a grant proposal for a research project; proposal to obtain support for one's dissertation work; proposal for personnel preparation grants; proposal for research. Rules for co-authorship are as above for papers or chapters (or faculty member attests to the components completed by the student). The student's advisor determines the appropriateness of the granting agency.
 - Status (e.g., In preparation; submitted; funded; include due date for proposal)
 - Date submitted:
 - *Title:*
- Service or leadership experience or Internship: Examples include membership and service to a professional organization; service to a departmental, college, or campus committee; service in a community organization; evaluation from internship experience; and professional development activity for organization or school system
 - Dates of activity:
 - *Title and Description*

Recommended Steps for Graduate Student to Compile and Submit Portfolio

Students must meet with their advisor to finalize the optional items for inclusion in the Comprehensive Portfolio and to establish timelines for completing the required items ([Table 6](#)). Once all portfolio materials are finalized, the student and advisor will select members of the portfolio committee. The committee consists of the advisor and two additional faculty members whose research interests align with the student's. Committee members are generally drawn from the EDSP program or other UMD programs. If a student wishes to include a faculty member from outside EDSP, CHSE, or UMD, the student must notify their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies at least two months before the exam date so the external member can be nominated and approved to serve on the CPR Committee.

Comprehensive Portfolio Review Process

1. **Portfolio Submission:** Students must assemble all portfolio documents

electronically and share them with committee members at least two business weeks before the oral defense.

2. **Oral Exam Scheduling:** The student schedules the Comprehensive Portfolio Review oral exam, typically consisting of a 20-minute presentation followed by committee questions. Most students provide a brief introduction/background and may include one or two slides highlighting key documents from the portfolio.
3. **Advisor Review:** The advisor signs off on the *Checklist for Portfolio Items* and submits completed rubrics from each faculty member (see Table 7 for evaluation criteria).
4. **Revisions:** After the oral exam, the student revises portfolio items as needed, under advisor oversight.
5. **Final Submission:** The student submits the final Comprehensive Portfolio electronically to the CPR Committee.
6. **Record of Completion:** Upon successful completion of the oral exam, the faculty advisor submits the student's Comprehensive Portfolio Review to the Graduate Committee's shared cloud workspace.

Review and Evaluation of the Comprehensive Portfolio

1. **Committee Review:** CPR committee members have two working weeks to evaluate the student's written materials (CV, synthesis paper, and variable items). Each item is rated as **Satisfactory** (minimum of two committee members rating Satisfactory) or **Revise and Resubmit** (based on two committee members' reviews).
2. **Revisions:** If revisions are required, the student and advisor are notified. Students are given one opportunity to resubmit revised items. Failure to achieve a satisfactory rating after resubmission may result in a recommendation for dismissal from the program.
3. **Advancement to Candidacy:** Upon satisfactory completion of the portfolio review, the committee recommends advancement to candidacy. The student must work with their advisor to complete the necessary Graduate School forms. Required paperwork following the portfolio review can be found [Advancement to Candidacy Form](#).

Late Assessment (Dissertation Phase)

During the dissertation phase, students are assessed annually by the Graduate Committee until they pass the dissertation proposal exam. Afterward, evaluation is conducted by the dissertation committee.

Note: If more than one year passes after the proposal defense without a dissertation defense, the student must complete an annual review in consultation with their advisor.

Section 5: The Dissertation Process (Final Assessment)

Overview: The purpose of the dissertation is to demonstrate the ability to successfully conduct original research that contributes to the knowledge base in special education and related fields. A dissertation is a significant undertaking that involves applying, integrating, analyzing, and advancing research in the area in which the student has chosen to specialize.

Special Education Dissertation: Three-Paper Model

The EDSP program uses a three-paper format for the dissertation.

Paper 1

- *Must be a systematic review of the literature on a relevant topic.*

Note: *This paper is not necessarily a systematic review. Students should consult with their advisor to determine whether a systematic review or another form of synthesis is most appropriate.*

Papers 2 and 3

- *Should be based on empirical research.*
 - *At least one paper must be a full empirical study (with all corresponding sections).*
 - *The other paper may also be empirical, or it may be a policy or practitioner paper that connects meaningfully to the empirical study.*

All three papers must:

- *Be tied together by an overarching theme.*
- *Form a coherent contribution to a significant issue in special education or a related field (e.g., educational psychology, school psychology).*

More information on dissertation format is provided later in this handbook. Students should begin considering their dissertation as soon as they begin their doctoral studies, in close consultation with their advisor. As per UMD Graduate School regulations, a dissertation must be completed and defended in no less than six months and no more than four years from advancement to candidacy.

Graduate School Requirements: A dissertation is required for all doctoral students, and it is up to the student, Advisor, and Dissertation Committee to determine appropriate content, methods, and writing quality. The student should plan to utilize the UMD Graduate School Center for Writing and Oral Communication to support their work.

Research Approval Requirements

Doctoral students must obtain several levels of approval before conducting research:

1. **Dissertation Committee and Advisor:** The student must first secure approval from both the dissertation committee and advisor.
2. **UMD Institutional Review Board (IRB):** Approval is required for any research involving human subjects or the use of their data.
3. **External Organizations:** If research is conducted in schools or other organizations, the student must obtain approval letters or documentation from the organization's IRB or review authority.

For additional guidance and tutorials, see the [UMD IRB webpage](#).

Dissertation Proposal.

The doctoral candidates must defend their proposed dissertation research plans. See the evaluation criteria for the proposal in **Table 8: EDSP Rubric for Dissertation Proposal**

Dissertation Proposal: The doctoral candidate and advisor should invite all five required committee members to the proposal meeting. In accordance with Graduate School policy, the meeting may proceed with a minimum of three members present, including the advisor. Committee membership may change before the final oral defense.

Once the Examining Committee approves the dissertation proposal, the student must obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before beginning research. The IRB application is available online via the [UMD IRB website](#). The student prepares the IRB application, which must be reviewed and approved in the following order:

1. **Advisor:** Reviews and approves the application.
2. **EDSP IRB Liaison:** Reviews the application, provides feedback, and signs off once revisions are complete.
3. **University IRB:** Conducts final review and may request additional revisions.

Research may not begin until both the student and advisor receive official IRB approval. Students should allow a minimum of **four weeks** to obtain approval from the IRB Office.

Continuous Registration. A doctoral candidate must register for six dissertation credit hours every semester, excluding summer and winter sessions, until the degree is awarded. A minimum of 12 hours of dissertation credits must be completed (EDSP 899). During the dissertation stage, Waivers of Continuous Registration are only granted under the University's policy for Leave of Absence for Graduate Students for Childbearing, Adoption, Illness, or Dependent Care. This requirement applies to all graduate students, including part-time students. All graduate students must register for courses and pay associated tuition and fees each semester, not including summer and winter sessions, until the degree is awarded.

Dissertation Examination Committee. Each doctoral candidate and their advisor will select members for a Dissertation Committee.

EDSP follows the requirements from the University Graduate School for the [formation of the Dissertation Committee](#).

Dissertation Examining Committee

- The committee must include at least **five members of the Graduate Faculty**, with a minimum of **three Full Members**.
- The chair is normally the student's advisor, who must be a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty or have an approved exception from the Dean of the Graduate School.
- A representative of the Dean of the Graduate School must be appointed to each committee.
 - The Dean's Representative may serve as one of the five voting members, or may serve as a non-voting member.
 - Whether the Dean's Representative is voting or non-voting is determined by the student, advisor, and the Dean's Representative before nomination to the Dean of the Graduate School.
- If the Dean's Representative is non-voting, the committee must have at least **six members** (five voting members plus the non-voting Dean's Representative).

Nomination of the Dissertation Examining Committee

- Membership on a Dissertation Examining Committee requires nomination by the student's advisor and the Graduate Director, and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.
- The nomination must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar at least **six weeks before** the scheduled dissertation defense.
- The dissertation defense cannot be held until the Graduate School has approved the committee composition.
- If the Graduate Faculty status of any approved committee member changes, the approval may be void, and a new committee nomination will be required.
- The doctoral candidate and advisor must complete the [Nomination of Thesis Dissertation or Dissertation Committee](#).

Eligibility to Defend the Dissertation

A doctoral candidate is eligible to defend the dissertation when all of the following conditions are met:

- Has advanced to candidacy for at least **six months**.
- Has satisfied all program requirements for the dissertation examination.
- Is in **good academic standing** as a graduate student at the University.
- Has registered for at least **12 credits of EDSP 899**.
- Has an approved **Dissertation Examining Committee** on file with the Graduate School.

Dissertation Format. The Graduate School's formatting requirements for dissertations are outlined in the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Style Guide, available via the **UMD Graduate School webpage**. The *ETD Style Guide* provides detailed instructions for formatting the dissertation in Microsoft Word. Students should download and review the guide before beginning the writing process.

Dissertation

The three-paper dissertation consists of five chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Systematic review paper (completed as part of the Comprehensive Portfolio Review)
3. First empirical study
4. Second empirical study **or** a policy/practitioner paper
5. Conclusion

All three papers must be of publishable quality and formatted according to the guidelines of potential publishing outlets. Students are encouraged to identify target journals in the proposal stage and to consult their submission requirements for tone, length, and format. While manuscripts do not need to be submitted before the dissertation defense or graduation, submission during or shortly after graduation is expected.

Students must serve as the first author on all papers resulting from the dissertation. Multi-authored papers, including those co-written with advisors, are permitted; however, the student must clearly describe their unique contribution in the proposal so the committee can determine whether it is sufficient for a dissertation.

● **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The introduction presents the overall theme of the dissertation and includes:

- a) statement of the problem,
- b) summary of the most relevant literature reviewed in the synthesis,
- c) theoretical framework, and
- d) overview of the three papers included in the dissertation.

● **Chapter 2: Systematic Review**

The systematic review introduces the problem addressed in the dissertation, provides a critical review of the relevant literature, and includes discussion, conclusions, limitations, and future directions. This paper may expand upon work completed in EDSP 872 and for the Comprehensive Portfolio Review (See [Section 4](#)). Submission of the systematic review to a journal is expected, in consultation with the faculty advisor, prior to program completion. This provides constructive feedback from the field and supports the eventual publication of the review.

● **Chapters 3 and 4: Empirical Studies or Policy/Practice Paper**

- Two Empirical Studies: May be conducted using data from the same context or sample but must address different research questions and include some unique data.
- Empirical Manuscript Structure: Each study must include an introduction, a brief literature review (based largely on the synthesis), methods, analysis and results, and a discussion with limitations and conclusions.
- Alternative Option: One empirical study may be paired with a policy or practitioner paper.

Alternative Options:

Option 1: One Empirical Study and One Policy/Practice Paper.

Students may substitute a non-empirical manuscript in place of a second empirical study. This second paper should either:

- focus on policy implications of the primary empirical work, or
- disseminate empirical findings for a practitioner audience.

Submission to a journal is expected, though acceptance is not required.

Option 2: One Empirical Study and One Policy/Practice Paper

Students may substitute a non-empirical manuscript for the second empirical study. The paper must either:

- examine policy implications of the primary empirical work, or
- translate empirical findings for a practitioner audience.

Submission to a journal is expected, though acceptance is not required.

- **Chapter 5: The Conclusion** to the dissertation should provide a general discussion about the contribution of the dissertation to the field as well as possible applications and directions for future research.
- **References** must appear at the end of the entire dissertation for the Graduate School. It is recommended that the student provide references at the end of each chapter if the chapters represent manuscripts for submission to journals (or published papers) to aid in reading each, due to the “stand alone” nature of each part of the overall project.

Example of Dissertation. To illustrate a three-paper dissertation process, the following examples are provided:

Example 1:

A student conducts a systematic review on vocabulary intervention for children with

disabilities. They then conduct an intervention study comparing two methods of intervention (between subjects) and two text types (within subjects).

The student's dissertation consists of:

1. An introduction about the importance of vocabulary in language and literacy development and seminal research on vocabulary intervention and the affordances of various text types (chapter 1)
2. A systematic review on previous vocabulary interventions implemented with children with disabilities (chapter 2)
3. An empirical paper about the effects of two different methods of intervention on the vocabulary learning of students with disabilities (chapter 3)
4. An empirical paper about the effects of text type on students' vocabulary learning (chapter 4)
5. A conclusion tying the papers together and summing up the contribution of the dissertation to the research base (chapter 5).

Example 2:

The student writes a research paper based on intervention research and a practitioner paper. The student's dissertation consists of:

1. An introduction chapter (chapter 1)
2. A systematic review (chapter 2)
3. Empirical research. This could be qualitative, quantitative (intervention or non-intervention), or mixed-methods study (chapter 3)
4. Practitioner paper (chapter 4)
5. Conclusion (chapter 5)

Oral Defense Announcement

The Graduate School requires that an announcement of the oral defense be disseminated to all faculty and graduate students in the candidate's home department. The announcement must include the candidate's name, dissertation title, and the date, time, and location of the defense. The program is responsible for circulating this information. Doctoral candidates in Special Education should submit defense announcement requests to Carol Scott at cscott18@umd.edu

Procedures for the Oral Dissertation Examination

The Candidate and chair of the dissertation committee will schedule a two-hour time block for the oral examination and reserve a room with staff in the CHSE office.

A written copy of the proposal must be sent to the student's Dissertation Examination Committee at least **10 working days prior to scheduled oral defense** along with **Table 9: EDSP Rubric for Final Defense (Written and Oral Presentation)**. It is the Advisor's responsibility to make sure committee members complete all forms and send them to the Director and Coordinator of Graduate Studies in Special Education.

All members of the Examining Committee must attend the oral examination in person unless permission to conduct a remote-participation defense has been obtained by the

dissertation chair from the Graduate School **in advance**. The Graduate School, prior to the defense, and in conjunction with the College Graduate Studies Office must approve last-minute changes in the constitution of the Committee. The Dissertation Chair must submit in writing any requested substitution to the Associate Dean of the College of Education. The substitution is not official until the Graduate School grants the approval and the written confirmation is received by the Associate Dean. The oral defense may not be held until the official written substitution has been made. A defense that is held with one or more substitute members on the committee, but without prior written confirmation of approval of the substitution from the Graduate School, will be voided and the defense will have to be repeated.

Remember that the Dean's Representative is responsible for ensuring that *all* Graduate School policies are followed during the oral exam; *this person should be identified at the outset of the meeting*. The oral exam consists of two parts:

Part 1 - A public presentation by the candidate on the main aspects of the research reported in the dissertation (typically 15 -20 minutes). This includes a brief summary of the research with an emphasis on the important results and the reasoning that led to the conclusions. During Part 1, questions from the audience to the candidate will be permitted. For questions from persons, who are not members of the Dissertation Examining Committee, the Chair of the Dissertation Examining Committee will have discretion to decide whether such questions are germane to the topic of the dissertation and how much time will be allotted for the answers.

Part 2 - A formal examination of the candidate by the Dissertation Examination Committee. This part is open only to the Dissertation Examination Committee and the doctoral candidate.

At the conclusion of questioning, the doctoral candidate is asked to leave the room as the discussion and vote is limited to the members of the Dissertation Examining Committee. The Committee has the following options:

- **Accept** the dissertation without any recommended changes and sign the Report of Examining Committee.
- **Accept** the dissertation with recommendations for changes and, except for the chair, sign the Report of the Examining Committee. The chair will check that the changes to the dissertation have been made, and, upon his or her approval, sign the Report of the Examining Committee.
- **Recommend revisions** to the dissertation and not sign the Report of Examining Committee until the student has made the changes and submitted the revised dissertation for the Dissertation Examining Committee's approval. The Dissertation Examining Committee members sign the Report of Examining Committee if they approve the revised dissertation.
- **Recommend revisions and convene a second meeting** of the Dissertation Examining Committee to review the dissertation and complete the student's

examination.

- **Rule the dissertation unsatisfactory.** In that circumstance, the student fails. Following the examination, the chair, in the presence of the Dean's Representative, must inform the student of the outcome of the examination. The chair and the Dean's Representative both sign a Report of the Examining Committee indicating which of the above alternatives has been adopted. A copy of this statement is to be included in the student's file at the graduate program office, and a copy is given to the student.

Filing the Dissertation in Digital Form

The doctoral candidate is responsible for following the specific procedures for preparing and submitting the dissertation electronically by the published deadline in *Important Dates for All Graduating Graduate Students*. Note that there is a fee associated with this submission. See the Graduate School webpage for more information on procedures and guidelines.

Graduation Requirements and Deadlines

The student is responsible for filing and completing all forms required throughout their respective degree program as well as for graduation. Forms can also be found at the UMD Graduate School.

To ensure each student has met the graduate degree requirements, a request for a graduation "AUDIT" can be retrieved from the Student Services Office in the College of Education (Room 1204 Benjamin). The Student Services Office also provides a step-by-step graduation toward requirements guide.

- **Graduation Application:** Students must apply for graduation by the **10th day of classes** in the semester they intend to graduate. This deadline applies only to the application and does not represent the deadline for the dissertation defense.
- **Defense and Deposit Deadlines:** The Graduate School sets defense and deposit deadlines each semester. These are distributed by the Department's Coordinator of Graduate Studies (CG) and published on the Graduate School's academic calendar. Students must review these dates each semester.
- **Financial Obligations:** All outstanding accounts (e.g., late registration fees, library fines, parking tickets, diploma fee) must be paid in full before the degree will be conferred. Diplomas and transcripts will not be issued until all balances are cleared.
- **Reapplication:** Students who do not graduate as planned must reapply for the diploma in the semester they intend to complete degree requirements.
- **Academic Regalia:** Regalia (robe and cap) is required for all graduates. Students are responsible for placing regalia orders.

When in doubt about a form or a specific deadline, contact Ms. Carol Scott, cscott18@umd.edu, Coordinator of CHSE Graduate Programs.

Graduation Clearance

The College of Education, Graduate Studies Office provides documentation to the Graduate School that each graduating student has met all graduation requirements. The Graduate School official clearance office must receive all required graduation forms from the College of Education. Students should allow sufficient time to obtain necessary signatures and meet published deadlines. Required forms are available online in printable format. To graduate, students must:

- meet all requirements and policies of the program, department, College of Education, and Graduate School, and
- adhere to all published deadlines.

The College of Education and the department may establish regulations and requirements in addition to those of the Graduate School.

Post-Graduation Assessments

Once a student has submitted the dissertation electronically, the UMD Graduate School requires them to complete a short survey that is confidential. The [UMD Doctoral Experience Survey](#), conducted by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment, is used to improve and enhance the doctoral student experience at UMD. In addition, the Special Education Graduate Committee sends out a short Exit survey by email one year after the student exits the programs. The Special Education PhD Exit Survey is designed to collect information on the individual's post-graduate employment and to solicit feedback regarding the strengths and needs of the PhD program.

Handbook Use

This handbook provides an overview of the Ph.D. program in Special Education. It is not a definitive statement of policy. Students should consult their advisor, the offices and websites referenced in this document, and the CHSE Graduate Coordinator for the most current policies and forms.

List of Websites

[Campus General Needs Assistance](#)
[College of Education](#)
[Commencement Regalia](#)
[Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education \(CHSE\)](#)
[CHSE Faculty](#)
[CITI Training – IRB](#)
[Determination of In-State Status](#)
[Division of Information Technology](#)
[Doctoral Experience Survey](#)
[Electronic Dissertation](#)
[Electronic Dissertation Style Guide](#)
[Graduate School](#)
[Graduate School Catalog](#)
[Graduate School Catalog Academic Policies for Graduate Students](#)
[Graduate School Catalog Admissions Policies](#)
[Graduate School Writing Resources](#)
[Graduate School Student Services](#)
[Graduate Student College of Education Forms](#)
[Graduate Student General Forms](#)
[Graduation Overview](#)
[Housing, Long-Term](#)
[Immunization Form](#)
[International Student Graduate Policy](#)
[Leave of Absence Policy](#)
[Residency Classification](#)
[Thrive Center for Essential Needs](#)
[UMD Counseling Center](#)

If you feel you are encountering problems that hamper your academic performance or life on campus, contact the Counseling Center 301-314-7651 or Mental Health Services 301-314-HELP for resources or referrals or visit their website.

APPENDIX A: TABLES FOR STUDENTS AND ADVISORS
Table 1: Doctoral Course List

Total Credits: All coursework post Masters	60	Date Taken – Grade
EDSP Required Courses:	12	
EDSP 860 Doctoral Research Seminar	(3)	
EDSP 875 Policy Issues Affecting Individuals with Disabilities	(3)	
EDSP 850 Intervention Research in Special Education	(3)	
EDSP 872 Theory and Empirical Design in Educational Research	(3)	
Research Methodology & Design Courses	15	
EDMS 645 Quantitative Research Methods I	(3)	
EDMS 646 General Linear Models I	(3)	
EDSP 870 Single Case Research Designs in Education	(3)	
EDSP 871 Qualitative Methodologies in Special Education or equivalent	(3)	
Example qualitative or mixed-methods course (choose one): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TLPL 790 Seminar in Mixed Methods Research in Education • TLPL 791 Qualitative Research I 		

Intermediate Quantitative or Qualitative Methods Course (choose one): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDMS 651 General Linear Models II • EDMS 655 Introduction to Multilevel Modeling • EDMS 657 Exploratory Latent and Composite Variable Methods • EDMS 722 Structural Modeling • EDMS 724 Modern Measurement Theory • TLPL 790 Mixed Methods • TLPL 792 Qualitative Research II: Analysis and Interpretation of Data • Other [Determine with Advisor] 	(3)	
Teaching Apprenticeship. [Determine with Advisor] Students apprentice in college teaching in a variety of ways, through Graduate Assistantships, and working with advisors or other faculty. Coursework up to 3 credits.		
TLTC 798 University Teaching and Learning	(1)	
EDSP 888A Supervised College Teaching in Special Education (variable hours, may be repeated)	(1)	
Dissertation Research	15	
EDSP 898 Pre-Candidacy Research (minimum 3)	(3)	
EDSP 899 Doctoral Dissertation Research (minimum 12)	12	
EXAMPLE Elective Areas/Courses Chosen with Advisor	15	
<p>Example Elective Area: A student may choose to take additional research methodology courses as electives (variable courses and credits) or other courses based on their content or research interest from within or outside the department and across other Colleges. Students should discuss these courses with their advisor. Additional electives may be taken after the student advances to candidacy, if desired and the student's funding allows. Additionally, the following EDSP courses can be taken as electives:</p> <p>EDSP 798 Independent Study EDSP 898 Pre-dissertation research</p>		

Table 2A: EDSP Sample Course Sequence A 60 Credits**Year 1 = 18 credits**

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
EDSP 875 Legal and Policy Foundations for Individuals with Disabilities	3	EDSP 850 Intervention Research in Special Education	3
EDMS 645 Quantitative Research Methods I	3	EDSP 870 Single Case Research Designs in Education	3
EDSP 860 Apprenticeship in Special Education: Doctoral Research Seminar	3	EDMS 646 Quantitative Research Methods II	3
	9		9

Year 2 = 19 credits Year 3 = 11 credits

Elective	3	EDSP 872 Theory and Empirical Design in Educational Research	3
EDSP 871 Qualitative Methodology	3	EDSP 898 Pre-dissertation credits	2
TLTC 798 Universal Teaching and Learning	1	EDSP 888A Research Apprenticeship in Special Education teaching with advisor	1

Elective	3	Intermediate Methods Course	3
	10		9

Year 4 = 12 credits

EDSP 898 Pre-Candidacy Research	2	EDSP 899 Dissertation Research	6
Elective	3		
	5		6

EDSP 899 Dissertation Research	6	EDSP 899 Dissertation Research	6
	6		6

Notes. Students finish their Comprehensive Portfolio for review by the EDSP Graduate Committee. Upon successful completion, students apply to Advance to Candidacy. Others register for additional credits of EDSP 898 until the Portfolio is complete and reviewed by the Graduate Committee.

For part-time students, credit loads may vary by semester (e.g., 3 credits one term, 6–9 credits in another). It is important that students meet Graduate School timelines for advancing to candidacy and completing the dissertation defense. Students should work closely with their advisor to plan a schedule that ensures timely progress.

Doctoral students have the option to pursue the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate (PBC) in Measurement, Statistics, and Evaluation (EDMS). The certificate requires 21 credits of EDMS coursework; students who complete EDMS 645, 646, and 651 as part of their doctoral program will already have 9 credits applied toward this requirement. For additional details, please see the [program page](#).

Table 2B: EDSP Sample Course Sequence B 60 Credits
Year 1 = 19 credits

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
EDSP 875 Legal and Policy Foundations for Individuals with Disabilities	3	EDSP 872 Theory and Empirical Designs in Education Research	3
EDMS 645 Quantitative Research Methods I	3	EDSP 870 Single Case Research Designs in Education	3
EDSP 860 Apprenticeship in Special Education: Doctoral Research Seminar	3	EDMS 646 Quantitative Research Methods II	3
		TLTC 798 University Teaching and Learning	1
	9		10

Year 2 = 18 credits

Intermediate Methods Course	3	EDSP 898 Pre-Dissertation credits	2
EDSP 871 Qualitative Methodology	3	Elective Area	3
Elective Area	3	EDSP 850 Intervention Research	3
EDSP 888A Research Apprenticeship in Special	1		

Education teaching			
	10		9

Year 3 = 11 credits

EDSP 898 Pre-Dissertation Research *	2	EDSP 899 Dissertation Research	6
Elective Area	3		
	5		6

Year 4 = 12 credits

EDSP 899 Dissertation Research	6	EDSP 899 Dissertation Research	6
	6		S

Notes. Students finish their Comprehensive Portfolio for review by the EDSP Graduate Committee. Upon successful completion, students apply to Advance to Candidacy. Others register for additional credits of EDSP 898 until the Portfolio is complete and reviewed by the Graduate Committee.

Table 3: Advising Highlights by Year

Admit	<p>Student-Advisor Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Requirements in the <i>Special Education Program Doctoral Handbook</i> • Develop Tentative Schedule of Courses • Review College of Education Office of Student Services Website for Required Forms, Dates • <i>Sign up for CITI Training</i>: Human Subjects Research Training-IRB <p>*Clearance to Register: After advising, student and/or advisor emails Carol Scott cscott18@umd.edu for clearance to register; this is required each semester</p>
Annual Review Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student and Advisor Complete <i>Annual Review Form Table 4</i> and Submit to Director of Graduate Studies in Special Education • Student and Advisor meet to update any changes to Course Schedule, plan for Portfolio Requirements • Check <u>Important Dates for Graduate Students</u>, COE Student Services
Portfolio Year 3	<p>Advancement to Candidacy: Comprehensive Portfolio Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student and Advisor Meet to Finalize Requirements for Comprehensive Portfolio (EDSP 889) • Student Receives Advisor approval to forward Portfolio • Graduate Committee Reviews and Evaluates Portfolio • Apply for Research Using Human Subjects (IRB) - Must be approved before dissertation research begins • <i>File Form: Application for Advancement to Candidacy</i> OR continue to register for EDSP 889 Pre-dissertation Research * • Check <u>Important Dates for Graduate Students</u>, COE Student Services
Dissertation Research Year 4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student and Advisor Complete <i>Annual Review Form Table 4</i> and Submit to Director of Graduate Studies in Special Education • Continuous Registration for EDSP 899 Dissertation Research – six credits each semester is required* • Check <u>Important Dates for Graduate Students</u>, COE Student Services • <i>File Form: Nomination of Dissertation Examination Committee</i> • Proposal • Dissertation Oral Exam

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>File Form:</i> Oral Examination by Dissertation Committee• <i>Rubric:</i> EDSP Dissertation Oral Exam• <i>File Form:</i> Graduation Audit• <i>File:</i> Dissertation Electronic Publication Form; Pro-Quest
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Table 4: Annual Review for Doctoral Candidate and Advisor**Annual Review- Year 2 (Early Assessment)****Research and Scholarship**

Please list and briefly describe the research and scholarship activities in which you have participated during the past year. Also, please attach your CV highlighting the publications, presentations, and workshops that you have completed or have had in progress during the past year.

Disciplinary Knowledge

Coursework. Please complete the table below with information about which required classes you took and what grades you received in those classes.

Course	Semester	Grade
EDSP 875 Policy Issues Affecting Individuals with Disabilities		
EDSP 860 Apprenticeship in Special Education: Doctoral Research Seminar		
EDSP 850 Intervention Research in Special Education		
EDSP 870 Single Case Research Designs in Education		
EDSP 872 Theory and Empirical Design in Educational Research		
EDSP 888A Supervised College Teaching		
EDSP 898 Pre-dissertation credits		
EDSP 899 Dissertation credits		
TLTC 798 University		

Teaching and learning		
EDMS 645 Quantitative Research Methods I (only required for those students who did not complete an intro statistics course prior to enrolling in the doctoral program)		
EDMS 646 General Linear Models		
Qualitative or Mixed Methods Class (e.g., EDSP 871, TLPL 791):		
Intermediate Methods Class:		
Elective 1:		
Elective 2:		
Elective 3:		

Synthesis Paper

Please describe your progress on your research synthesis. Have you chosen a topic? Have you begun your literature search? Have you begun critiquing studies.

Leadership and Professional Knowledge

Please list and describe leadership or professional activities in which you participated during the past year. These might include teaching or internship experiences or service opportunities (e.g., conducting professional development at a school, leadership position in a campus student organization).

Self-Assessment

Please indicate whether you think you have made satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress in each of the three areas above. For areas that you note as unsatisfactory, please develop an action plan for how you will develop in that area over the next year.

Annual Review - Years 3 And 4 (Later Assessments)

Research and Scholarship:

Please list and briefly describe the research and scholarship activities in which you have participated during the past year. Also, please attach your CV highlighting the publications, presentations, and workshops that you have completed or have had in progress during the past year.

Please describe your progress on the empirical studies in your dissertation. Have you completed your proposal? Have you begun collecting data? Have you begun analyzing data? Have you begun writing your first empirical? Have you begun writing your second empirical paper?

Disciplinary Knowledge

Please describe your progress on the synthesis in your dissertation. Have you updated your synthesis since you advanced to candidacy? Have you responded to faculty feedback from your comprehensive portfolio review committee?

Leadership and Professional Knowledge

Please list and describe leadership or professional activities in which you participated during the past year. These might include teaching or internship experiences or service opportunities (e.g., conducting professional development at a school, leadership position in a campus student organization).

Self-Assessment

Please indicate whether you think you have made satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress in each of the three areas above. For areas that you note as unsatisfactory, please develop an action plan for how you will develop in that area over the next year.

Annual Review Criteria for Advisors

Based on your advisee's annual self-evaluation, please rate your student as showing satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress to degree in each of the graduate outcomes assessment domains. Also, please explain your rating. For any rating of unsatisfactory, please note recommendations for the future.

Graduate Outcomes Assessment Domain	Rating (Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory)	Explanation
Research and Scholarship		
Disciplinary Knowledge		
Leadership and Professional Knowledge		
Overall		

Table 5: Doctoral Graduate Outcome Assessments (DGOA)

Category	Learning Outcome	Class or Experience	Stage of Graduate Career and Assessments (Early, Mid, Late, Post)	Progress to Degree for Students
Research and Scholarship	Demonstrate research competence including the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate a research problem that responds to identified gaps in professional literature Design and execute – study appropriate to exam the problem Analyze and interpret data 	EDSP 898 Pre-dissertation Research credits and EDSP 850	Mid: <i>Comprehensive Portfolio Review</i> Year 3	Satisfactory: Students Advance to Candidacy Revise and Resubmit: One Opportunity within six months
		EDSP 899 Doctoral Dissertation Research	Late: Rubric: Dissertation Proposal Exam Year 4 or 5	Satisfactory: Students Undertake Dissertation Research
Disciplinary Knowledge	Demonstrate an understanding of the history, issues, and policies related to persons with disabilities or at risk for disabilities	EDSP 875 Legal and Policy Foundations	Early: Rubric: Policy project/paper Year 1	Satisfactory: Student shows promise in terms of writing quality, synthesizing information from research, presenting paper appropriately with technology
	Demonstrate an understanding of current educational and disability issues and policies pertaining to children, youth, and adults with disabilities.	EDSP 860 Doctoral Research Seminar	Early: Literature Review Year 1	Satisfactory: Student shows promise in terms of understanding and applying policy to programs and services for individuals with disabilities
	Demonstrate understanding of the theoretical and empirical foundations within special education and elective area	EDSP 870 Single Subject Research Designs	Early: Rubric: Single Subject Study Paper Year 2	Satisfactory: Student conducts literature review, identifies problem, selects design for single subject research, writes up study

Category	Learning Outcome	Class or Experience	Stage of Graduate Career and Assessments (Early, Mid, Late, Post)	Progress to Degree for Students
	Demonstrate the ability to write and communicate the outcomes of research to multiple audiences	EDSP 850 Intervention Research in Language and Literacy	Early: Rubric: Interpretative Analysis Paper Year 2	Satisfactory: Student shows sustained growth in terms of writing quality, ability to synthesize information, understanding of research methods, and oral presentations which incorporate technology
	Demonstrate understanding of various research designs as well as the ability to conduct literature reviews, syntheses, and meta- analysis	EDSP 872 Theory and Empirical Design in Education		
		EDSP 898 Pre-dissertation Research	Mid: Comprehensive Portfolio Review Year 3	Satisfactory: Student demonstrates competence in the three categories and corresponding learning outcomes; advances to candidacy
		EDSP 899 Doctoral Dissertation Research	Late: Rubric: Dissertation Proposal Exam Year 4	Satisfactory: Student undertakes dissertation research which is original and contributes to knowledge of field
		EDSP 899 Doctoral Dissertation Research	Late: Rubric: Dissertation Final Exam Year 4 or 5	Satisfactory: Student defends dissertation research work orally & written and graphics, tables appropriate
Leadership & Professional Knowledge	Translate research to practice and demonstrate use of evidence-based practices	TLTC 798 University Teaching and Learning	Early: Rubric: <i>Teaching Collection</i>	Satisfactory: Student demonstrates ability to construct a syllabus for blended learning, incorporate UDL into presentations, determine grading procedures, collect resources for course topics

Category	Learning Outcome	Class or Experience	Stage of Graduate Career and Assessments (Early, Mid, Late, Post)	Progress to Degree for Students
	Apply principles of UDL for teaching at the college level and/or in professional development activity	EDSP 888A Supervised College Teaching	Early: <i>Rubric: UDL and technology integration</i>	Satisfactory: Student teaches course or makes presentation on state or national level, collects evaluation data from audience; demonstrates use of UDL and technology integration along with other optimal presentation techniques
	Demonstrate the ability to provide service to profession	EDSP 898: Pre-dissertation Research	Mid: Comprehensive Portfolio Review Year 3	Satisfactory: Student demonstrates competence in the three categories and corresponding learning outcomes; advances to candidacy
	Demonstrate the ability to write effectively regarding leadership, advocacy experiences and/or teaching philosophy	EDSP 898: Pre-dissertation Research	Mid: Comprehensive Portfolio Review Year 3	Satisfactory: Student demonstrates competence on the Personal Statement for Leadership and Professional knowledge and other portfolio items related to this category
	Demonstrate the ability to write and communicate the outcomes of research to multiple audiences	EDSP 872 or elective Area courses	Early: Comprehensive Portfolio Review Year 3	Satisfactory: Student demonstrates competence in the writing a synthesis review
		EDSP 899: Doctoral Dissertation Research	Late: Rubric: Dissertation Final Exam Year 4 or 5	Satisfactory: Student defends dissertation research work orally & written and graphics, tables appropriate

Table 6: Comprehensive Portfolio Review Checklist

Date Submitted to the Comprehensive Portfolio Review Committee:

Dear CPR:

I am submitting my Comprehensive Portfolio with my Advisor Approval. I understand that the EDSP Graduate Committee reviews my Portfolio, which includes my CV and three products/evidence of competence (e.g., published articles, submitted manuscripts, etc.),
 _____CV

Evaluation of Scholarship and Mastery of Academic Discipline

_____ 1. Synthesis Paper:

- Title

If this is a co-authored published journal article, or article submitted for publication to a peer-reviewed journal.

- Date Submitted/Published/to be Submitted:
- Name of Journal

_____ 2. Choice of one or more from the following (only one is required)

- o First or co-authored published journal article, manuscript submitted for publication to a peer-reviewed journal, or a manuscript is of publishable quality (i.e., ready to submit following minor revisions) if it is not yet submitted.
 - Date Submitted/Published/to be Submitted:
 - Title:
- o First or co-authored published chapter, or chapter submitted for publication. Chapters should be published in reputable academic publishing houses or university presses.
 - Date Submitted/Published/to be Submitted:
 - Title:
- o First or co-authored policy paper or brief published or submitted for publication.
 - Date Submitted/Published/to be Submitted:
 - Title:

Evaluation of Professional Practice

_____ 3. Choice of one or more from the following (only one is required)

- o Research, Policy or Practice Internship: Description of agency, grant, or study, my responsibilities, products if applicable, and evaluation of my participation.
 - Dates of activity:
 - *Title of Description*
- o First or co-authored conference oral or presentation. For both oral and poster presentations, students should also submit a copy of their submitted conference proposal.
 - Date Submitted/Presented
 - *Title:*
- o Grant proposal including grant proposal for a research project; proposal to obtain support for one's dissertation work; proposal for personnel preparation grants; proposal for research. Rules for co-authorship are as above for papers or chapters (or faculty member attests to the components completed by the student). The student's advisor determines the appropriateness of the granting agency.
 - In Preparation (include due date for proposal):
 - Date Submitted:
 - *Title:*
- o Internship, Examples include: Membership and service to a professional organization; service to a departmental, college, or campus committee; service in a community organization; evaluation from internship experience; and professional development activity for organization or school system
 - Dates of activity:
 - *Title and Description:*
 - *Report from Internship*

Student's Signature:

Advisor's Signature

Table 7: EDSP Rubric for Comprehensive Portfolio Review**Date:****Candidate Name:****Name of the Examining Committee Members:**

Criterion	Meets	Does not Meet
Criteria used to judge the synthesis paper (written) include:		
Has the student clearly described the process for the literature search included in the synthesis?		
Has the student critically synthesized the body of literature that supports the research problem or void in the extant literature?		
Has the student clearly described the purpose of the synthesis for the reader and linked that purpose/need to gaps in the literature?		
Has the student reviewed the appropriate literature and research in enough detail so that the reader can understand what is known about the topic and what gaps/limitations are apparent in the research?		
Has the student developed and clearly stated a research question as a result of the synthesis		
Has the student prepared a manuscript of publishable quality that follows the guidelines for a specific journal in the field? Publishable quality is defined as the synthesis paper being ready for submission, requiring only minor suggestions from the committee (but not at the journal's "revise and resubmit" decision level).		
The requirements for clarity of expression,		

quality of work and methodology, and originality are at the level of the journal		
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Overall Assessment: Overall performance of the candidate based on the evidence provided above.

___ Satisfactory (Student has addressed the criteria satisfactorily, comments provided)

___ Revise and Resubmit (Comments and recommendations) provided

In the event the student receives a rating of Unsatisfactory on the paper, it is returned to the student for revisions with specific recommendations from the Graduate Committee. Students are given **one chance to revise and resubmit** the paper within **six weeks** of the first review along with a letter explaining how the recommendations have been followed.

Table 7: EDSP Rubric for Comprehensive Portfolio Review (Continued)

Criterion	Meets	Does not Meet
Criteria to Evaluate Paper Submitted for the Evaluation of Scholarship		
<p>The paper submitted as part of the evaluation of scholarship is either published, submitted, or of publishable quality if it is not yet submitted.</p> <p>Publishable quality is defined as the paper being ready for submission, requiring only minor suggestions from the committee (but not at the journal's "revise and resubmit" decision level).</p>		
Criteria to Evaluate Oral Exam for Comprehensive Portfolio Review		
<p>Oral presentation of synthesis paper includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear statement of purpose of the research, • Clear research questions that allow student to address the purpose of research • Summary of major points in the body of literature • Summary of gaps in the literature for this topic • Summary of ideas for research designs that will contribute meaningful data to the field. • Student demonstrates evidence of analytical and integrative thinking in reflecting on the program at the end of coursework, especially with respect to upcoming dissertation work integrity and ethical practice. 		
<p>Oral presentation includes a brief review of the student's goal for the program and future employment. Students are able to reflect upon different activities, consider his or her own products and experiences during coursework, and reflect on progress to date in the program. This can include service,</p>		

research, and teaching experiences		
Oral presentation includes a brief review of other optional items submitted for the Comprehensive Review Portfolio. The student demonstrates the ability to interact with the graduate committee regarding descriptions or reasons for including materials from the list of optional items included in the Comprehensive Review Portfolio.		

___ **Satisfactory: The student has demonstrated readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase of the program.** The student is ready to enroll in EDSP 899 Dissertation Research and proceed with his or her plan for research.

___ **Unsatisfactory: The student has not demonstrated readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase of the program** (specific recommendations for modifications or additional work are provided by the committee). The student has one opportunity to make revisions and schedule **a second meeting no later than six months from the date of the first meeting**. The student will attend to all required actions taken by the committee and provide a checklist that verifies how these actions have been completed. *If the student does not pass the second Comprehensive Portfolio Review, his or her program will be terminated.*

Table 8: EDSP Rubric for Dissertation Proposal (Written and Oral Presentation)**Date:****Candidate Name:****Names of the Examining Committee Member:**

Criterion	Meets	Does not Meet
Problem Definition: Provides an introductory chapter that includes: (a) statement of the problem encompasses all three papers: (b) summary of the most relevant literature reviewed in the synthesis (i.e., a systematic and critical review of the literature base relevant to the problem addressed in the dissertation), (c) theoretical framework, and (d) overview of the three papers to be presented in the dissertation.		
Synthesis: A full draft of the first paper		
Partial drafts of the other papers (i.e., the empirical studies, or policy or practitioner paper) that include, at a minimum, (a) rationale for each study, (b) research question(s) for each study, (c) proposed methods and analyses for each study.		
Presentation: Oral presentation (approximately 15- 20 minutes) on the purpose, significance of the research, methods, and literature reviewed. The student's ability to respond to oral questions is key to passing the proposal meeting.		
Broader Impact: Demonstrates awareness of broader implications of the research; discusses results in terms of implications for field, research		

Critical Thinking: Demonstrates capacity for independent research in the area of study; ability to make original contributions to the field		
Quality of Written Communication: Dissertation is professionally written; APA style is followed		

Overall Assessment: Overall performance of the candidate based on the evidence provided above.

☐ Pass

☐ Revise and Resubmit (Comments and Suggestions Attached or in Proposal)

☐ Does Not Pass

Table 9: EDSP Rubric for Final Dissertation Defense (Written and Oral Presentation)**Candidate Name:****Date:****Names of the Examining Committee Members:**

Criterion	Meets	Does not Meet
Part 1 – Public presentation by candidate: The candidate summarizes main aspects of the research reported in the dissertation in a summary of the dissertation, emphasizing the important results and explaining the reasoning that led to the conclusions reached. The audience (if present) is permitted to ask questions (Chair of the Dissertation Examining Committee has the discretion to decide whether such questions are germane to the topic of the dissertation and how much time will be allotted for the answers).		
Part 2 – Formal examination of the candidate by the Dissertation Examination Committee. The chair invites questions in turn from each member of the Dissertation Examining Committee. The questioning may continue as long as the Dissertation Examining Committee feels that it is necessary and reasonable for the proper examination of the student. The candidate is evaluated regarding his or her ability to respond to questions from the Committee about the research reported in the dissertation.		
Quality of Written Document Written product addresses criteria outlined in proposal, see Table 8 . APA style is followed		

Conclusion: The committee has the following options:

- o To accept the dissertation without any recommended changes and sign the Report of Examining Committee.
- o To accept the dissertation with recommendations for changes and, except for the

chair, sign the Report of the Examining Committee. The chair will check that the changes to the dissertation have been made, and, upon his or her approval, sign the Report of the Examining Committee.

- o To recommend revisions to the dissertation and not sign the Report of Examining Committee until the student has made the changes and submitted the revised dissertation for the Dissertation Examining Committee's approval. The Dissertation Examining Committee members sign the Report of Examining Committee if they approve the revised dissertation.
- o To recommend revisions and convene a second meeting of the Dissertation Examining Committee to review the dissertation and complete the student's examination.
- o To rule the dissertation (including its examination) unsatisfactory. In that circumstance, the student fails. Following the examination, the chair, in the presence of the Dean's Representative, must inform the student of the outcome of the examination. The chair and the Dean's Representative both sign a Report of the Examining Committee indicating which of the above alternatives has been adopted. A copy of this statement is to be included in the student's file at the graduate program office, and a copy is given to the student.

Table 10: Research, Policy or Practice Internship Guidelines

Requirements

- Internships are **required** for all full-time students. Program funding is dependent upon availability to support this effort.
- Internships are **not required** for part-time students, but we encourage it, and program funding is dependent upon availability to support this effort.
- If a student feels there is a legitimate need to waive this requirement, the student will need to write a letter of appeal, have it signed by their advisor, and voted on by the graduate committee. This should happen before the student expects to do their portfolio review.

Funding

- Students are encouraged to seek graduate school summer funding for internships. If unavailable or ineligible, they may apply for EDSP backup funds—up to \$5,000 annually—based on availability, for internships lasting 6–8 weeks with at least 3 days/week or equivalent. Contact the current DGS to confirm EDSP summer or semester funding.
- If a summer internship is not feasible, students may complete a semester-based internship for up to 3 elective credits, provided it matches the time commitment outlined in Section 3, p. 11.

Timing. Internships may be completed at any point during the program, but students are encouraged to do so in their first or second year—ideally before the portfolio review. Early completion supports career planning, access to resources (e.g., data sites), and deeper learning about interventions.

Logistics. Students should coordinate with their advisor and the graduate committee to arrange internship details, including hours, credit, and funding. Planning should begin at least one semester in advance. Some sites (e.g., OSEP) require up to a year of preparation and background checks.

Evaluation Before starting, students must submit:

- Statement of duties (signed by intern and supervisor)
- Internship goals
- Funding application (if applicable), reviewed by the DGS and graduate committee

Progress checks occur at two and four weeks for summer internships, and at the $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ marks for semester/year-long internships. Supervisors complete these with the intern and send them to the advisor.

After completion, students submit a 5-page APA-formatted reflection paper detailing their learning and development. They may also present their experience at an EDSP event or symposium.