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GENERAL INFORMATION FOR
Clemson Doctoral Students

Policies and Procedures
The majority of policies and procedures affecting the Literacy, Language, and
Culture (LLC) doctoral program are found at the following websites:

- Graduate School Policy Handbook: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/policies-procedures/index.html
- Graduate School Deadlines: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/deadlines.html
- Graduate Assistantships: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/finance-tuition/student-employment/faqs.html
- Graduate School forms: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/forms.html
- Registering for courses: http://www.registrar.clemson.edu/portal/
- Dissertations: www.grad.clemson.edu/manuscript

Other Useful Information and Resources:

- Advice for all doctoral students, including new students: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/index.html
- City of Clemson: (www.clemsonchamber.org
- Tiger 1 Card: http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/tigerone/
- Fellowships: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/finance-tuition/fellowships.html?
- Graduate Student Government: http://www.clemson.edu/students/cgsg/
- Clemson’s policies on harassment: http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/anti-harassment-policy.html
- Computer access/use and instructional short courses:
  - ccit.clemson.edu/services/training
- Library services: http://www.clemson.edu/library/services/
- Bookstore: http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/bookstore/
- Health Services: http://stuaff.clemson.edu/redfern/
- Campus recreation center: http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-recreation/fike/
- Emergency preparedness: http://www.clemson.edu/cusafety/warnings.html
THE LITERACY, LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE (LLC)
DOCTORAL PROGRAM

General Information

For a description of the LLC doctoral program, how to apply, opportunities for financial assistance, and contact information for the program coordinator, see:
http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/academics/program-details.html?m_id=Literacy-Language-Culture

Acceptance Into the Program

When application materials submitted to the Graduate School are complete, they are reviewed by all LLC faculty. In some cases additional information may be requested. A poll of the faculty will be taken to determine if an applicant’s background, experiences, professional goals, and academic potential are well matched to the LLC doctoral program. When a majority of the LLC faculty agrees that there is such a match, the next step is a personal interview with LLC faculty on campus. When a visit to campus is not feasible, the interview may be by phone or video conference. After the interview, LLC faculty vote on admission. If a majority vote for admission, and at least one faculty member agrees to be the default major professor, if needed, (i.e., we will not admit an applicant when no faculty member would consider being a potential major professor), an applicant will be admitted to the program.

Program Requirements (Coursework)

An important perspective
Courses are important, but unlike other degrees, acquiring a doctoral degree is much more than satisfying course requirements followed by writing a dissertation (e.g., see requirements for professional development). Likewise, course content is important. However, at least as important is being exposed to the knowledge and expertise of individual LLC faculty through courses, independent studies, assistantships, collaborations on writing manuscripts, making presentations. Therefore, students should always consult with their temporary or major professor before enrolling in courses.

Planning a course of study
The first year in the program often focuses on required core courses and courses that satisfy research requirements as specified in this subsection. Once a student selects a doctoral committee (see section entitled “Doctoral Committee”), the committee, too, becomes formally involved in
suggesting and approving a course of study. When a course of study becomes finalized in consultation with the doctoral committee, a student must complete and file it with the Graduate School using the GS-2 form (see Graduate School forms at: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/forms.html?)

The following table summarizes the categories of course credit and the number of hours required in the program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Degree Requirements for the Ph.D. in the LLC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Courses</td>
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<td>Cognate Courses</td>
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<td>Department Doctoral Seminar</td>
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<td>LLC Doctoral Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Internship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctoral Research 991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total hours of course work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Core courses (9 hours)**

The following core courses are required:

EDLT 9070 - Sociocultural Theories of Learning

EDLT 9390 - Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading and Writing

EDLT 9140 - Language Development, Diversity, and Discourse

**Cognate course options (12 hours)**

Students select four additional courses (12 credits) that will constitute a cognate. Examples of cognates include areas of study such as dual language learners, disciplinary literacy, reading and writing instruction, early literacy, and digital literacies. The cognate courses can be selected from those offered in the College of Education or outside the College in other disciplines such as sociology, psychology, English, and linguistics. The following are examples of courses directly related to literacy that might be included in a cognate:

EDSC 6850 - Composition and Language Studies for Teachers
EDSC 8410 - Advanced Studies in the Teaching of Secondary School English
EDSC 8460 - Current Literature in English Education
EDLT 9130 – Critical Issues in Literacy, Language and Culture
EDLT 9170 – Teaching Disciplinary Literacies
EDLT 9200 – Language Policy in Educational Contexts
EDLT 9210 – Home, Family, and Community Literacy Practices
EDLT 9220 – Research in Early Literacy Development
EDLT 9370 – Reading Recovery Theory I
EDLT 9380 – Reading Recovery Theory II
EDLT 9120 – Advanced Diagnosis and Remediation
EDLT 9160 – Advanced Practicum in Reading
EDLT 9110 – Teaching Reading Through a Literature Emphasis
EDLT 9150 – The Reading-Writing Connection: An Integrated Approach
EDLT 9440 – Reading Research: Review and Critique of the Literature
EDLT 9250 – Special Problems in Reading Education
ED 9010 – Teaching Writing: Theory and Research

Research and methodology course requirements and options (16 credit hours)

The minimum requirement for research courses is 16 credit hours. Students must complete two quantitative courses, two qualitative courses, and one additional research course of their choice. A major professor and doctoral committee may approve exceptions to this requirement.

The following three courses are required:

EDF 9270 - Quantitative Research Designs (with lab)
EDF 9770 - Multiple Regression/General Linear Model in Educational Research
EDF 9790 - Qualitative Research Methods
Two courses selected from the following list are options:

EDF 9710 - Case Study and Ethnographic Research Methods and Design
EDF 9720 - Phenomenology and Grounded Theory Research Methods and Design
EDF 9730 - Narrative and Historical Research Methods and Design
EDF 9750 - Mixed Methods Research
EDF 9780 - Multivariate Statistics for Educational Research
EDF 9810 - Design-based Research
PSYCH 873 - Structural Equation Modeling in Applied Psychology
MTHSC 807 - Applied Multivariate Analysis
EDSP 9360 - Single Subject Research Design

*Teaching internship* (3 credit hours)
ED 9800 – Internship in Curriculum and Instructions (title/no. may change)

Note: The teaching internship is aimed at providing experience in university teaching and may be satisfied in multiple ways. Consult with your major professor.

**Incomplete**

Incomplete should be avoided except in extreme circumstances.

**Auditing courses**

Courses may be audited with the permission of the professor leading the course.

**Grades**

LLC doctoral students are expected, at minimum, to maintain a B (3.0) average. Students who do not meet this minimal standard may be dismissed from the program.

**Transfer credit**

Coursework may be transferred into a program of study at the discretion of a student’s doctoral committee, to the extent that the transfer is permitted by the Policies and Procedures of Clemson’s Graduate School.
Waiver or substitution of course requirements

At the discretion of a student’s major professor and doctoral committee (see subsequent section), and with input from the program coordinator, some course requirements may be waived or substituted. Factors considered include similar courses taken at other institutions, relevant background experiences, unique professional goals, and particular research methods and orientations (e.g., historical analysis, discourse analysis, and survey research).

Program Requirements (Professional Development)

Students are expected to exercise initiative in seeking out and engaging in various professional activities during the LLC doctoral program (e.g., attending a featured lecture of a prominent visiting scholar). Most specifically, they are expected to develop and submit manuscripts for publication and to submit proposals for and present at professional conferences for researchers and for practitioners. Papers and projects in coursework and collaborations with faculty in the context of assistantships or other activities are typically the stimulus for generating manuscripts and proposals. Although faculty look for opportunities for involving and supporting students in such efforts, students are expected to create such opportunities, not wait for them to emerge. There are escalating expectations related to this requirement. That is, a state conference or journal may be a good starting point early in the program, but later in the program, students should challenge themselves to compete for acceptances in presenting at national conferences and publishing in top-tier, peer-reviewed journals.

At minimum, before graduation, students are expected to have presented at 2 national conferences and published 1 article in a state journal, but preferably a national journal. There are various sources of funding for graduate student travel to professional conferences and for research. See: [http://slideplayer.com/slide/5301821/](http://slideplayer.com/slide/5301821/)

If not already a member, students should become members of at least 2 or 3 of the following professional organizations, and perhaps another organization reflecting a specialty in the LLC area.

Some of these professional organizations have reduced membership fees for doctoral students, and they offer special activities and opportunities aimed specifically at the professional development of doctoral students.

**Program Requirements (Major Professor and Doctoral Committee)**

*Temporary advisor and major professor*

If you have not entered the program specifically to study with one of the LLC faculty members who has already agreed to be your major professor, you will be assigned an LLC faculty member as a temporary advisor. A temporary advisor may become a major professor. However, there is no expectation, formal or informal, that a temporary advisor will assume the role of major professor, although that may occur if mutually acceptable. A temporary advisor typically serves for the first year a student is in the program, and perhaps into a second year, depending on circumstances. During that time, students are encouraged to become familiar with all LLC faculty toward making a wise decision in selecting a major professor and mentor. That familiarity can be achieved through various means (e.g., coursework, meetings that students schedule with individual faculty to discuss interests and goals, attending faculty presentations, informally at social events arranged for LLC faculty and students, etc.). The selection of your major professor is one of the most important decisions you will make as a doctoral student, and it should be approached with conscientious reflection and deliberation. Rarely, and only under atypical circumstances, is it justifiable to change major professors and then only when all the parties directly involved with such a change are in agreement.

*Note:* The primary role of LLC faculty in relation to doctoral students is mentoring toward achieving students’ career goals, not advising them about bureaucratic requirements necessary to complete a doctoral program. Doctoral students are responsible for investigating and following the requirements (e.g., deadlines) of the Graduate School and for completing and submitting necessary forms. All relevant information in that regard can be found at the websites listed under “Policies and Procedures” in the initial section of this handbook. Questions and issues related to or not covered by those policies and procedures, should be addressed to the LLC Program Coordinator or to the College of Education’s Graduate Coordinator. Faculty may be helpful in matters related to general policies and procedures, but it is not their responsibility to communicate them to students or to monitor conformance to them.

*Doctoral committee*

A doctoral committee is formed in consultation with your major professor. The committee will approve your course of study, administer the comprehensive written and orals examinations, approve your dissertation proposal, preside over your dissertation defense, and initiate the recommendation for awarding your degree. Your major professor will serve as the chair of the doctoral committee.
The committee consists of at least 4 tenured or tenure-track faculty members including the major professor, who must be a member of the LLC faculty. At least 2 of the 4 committee members must be members of the LLC, or affiliated, faculty. A committee may include a Clemson faculty member outside the College of Education or a qualified faculty member at another university. Occasionally, for good reason (e.g., a change in the direction of the dissertation project), the composition of a doctoral committee may change. However, all current members of the committee must agree to such a change including any faculty member who will no longer serve.

**Program Requirements (Comprehensive Exams)**

Separate written and oral comprehensive exams are required after coursework is completed. These exams aim to provide evidence that a student has mastered the depth and breadth of knowledge and the skills and dispositions expected of an advanced doctoral student and novice scholar in the field. When these exams are passed, a student is considered a candidate for the doctoral degree and moves to the dissertation phase of the program.

A student’s doctoral committee develops, administers, and evaluates these exams. The major professor in consultation with the other members of the committee decides on the format, content, structure, and expectations for these exams, all of which may vary across students and committees. For example, the written exam may entail writing responses to questions submitted by members of the doctoral committee, which may require a student to write independently for several hours on multiple occasions. Or, it might entail writing drafts of manuscripts on specified topics. An oral exam, which involves all members of the doctoral committee, may be an extension of the written exam or, alternatively, an opportunity for members of the committee to ask any question for which they would expect an advanced doctoral student in the field to provide a reasonably informed response. The oral exam also provides an opportunity for the committee to be convinced that a doctoral candidate processes the necessary professional poise and demeanor expected in various professional contexts.

Any member of the doctoral committee may ask a student to revise and resubmit a part of the written exam before deciding whether a student has passed or failed. To pass either the written or the oral exam, a simple majority of a doctoral committee must agree that a student has passed. To fail, at least 2 committee members must agree that a student has failed. If the written and/or oral exam is failed, they may be retaken once. A second failure on either exam will result in dismissal from the program.
Program Requirements (Dissertation)

The dissertation is the culmination of the doctoral program, providing evidence that a candidate for the degree can independently formulate a research question or problem and can rigorously address it using a recognized methodological approach for research and scholarship in the field. It also provides evidence that a candidate can write a coherent and well-articulated research report that represents the highest standards of refinement of writing in a scholarly genre. Another expectation is that the dissertation will make an original contribution to the scholarly literature, and as such, will eventually lead to publication.

Selecting a dissertation topic/project

It is not uncommon for doctoral students to struggle in choosing a topic for their dissertation. Several preliminary ideas may be considered and then discarded before arriving at a viable and important topic or project. There is a temptation to cling to the security of the first topic that emerges or to resist modifying original plans for a project, but many students have lived to regret having succumbed to that temptation.

It is never too early in the doctoral program to begin thinking about ideas for a dissertation, although without feeling undo pressure to select and settle on a final topic. Most students do not have the necessary knowledge and perspective to choose a good dissertation topic early in their programs of study. Thus, an early idea may be seen later, after further study and reflection, as naïve. Deep reading of the literature in a particular area is one of the best ways to arrive at a good topic.

There is also a temptation for doctoral students to take on topics or projects that are too broad in scope, too complicated, or that address multiple dimensions of a topic or issue. Your major professor and your committee will help you resist that temptation and to focus your project, if you are having difficulty reining in your ambitions. Few dissertations, like most published work in the field, are seminal. But, each adds incrementally to the field’s knowledge and perspectives. A modest project carried out with depth and rigor is much preferable to an ambitious one that necessitates less depth and compromises rigor.

The dissertation proposal

Students develop a proposal for the dissertation project and formally present it to the doctoral committee at a scheduled proposal defense. Informal consultations with your major professor, individual members of
the doctoral committee, and/or fellow doctoral students may be helpful in formulating an initial dissertation idea. Before and during the proposal defense it is typical for the committee to make constructive suggestions for improving the project. The committee will approve the dissertation project only when convinced that it is a viable and that it makes a contribution to the field. The proposal itself is typically 5000-7500 words (20-30 pages), excluding references, and includes (a) a specification of the problem, question, or issue; (b) a brief review of the most relevant literature; (c) a detailed specification of the proposed methods, including data collection and analysis; and (d) a timeline for the major events associated with completion of the project. However, a student’s major professor and doctoral committee may decide to deviate somewhat from this standard outline.

**The dissertation and dissertation defense**

Completing the dissertation is an independent research or other scholarly project. However, during the project, students may seek advice and feedback, as needed, from their major professor and members of the doctoral committee. Occasionally, fellow doctoral students may also play a role (e.g., scoring protocols to determine inter-rater reliability). Some major professors may choose to be more or less involved in providing formative feedback to drafts of your dissertation.

The dissertation must conform to specifications set by the Graduate School (see: [http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/theses-and-dissertations/index.html](http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/theses-and-dissertations/index.html))

When the major professor determines that the dissertation is ready for defense, he or she will schedule a defense that accommodates the schedules of the other members of the doctoral committee. The defense must be scheduled far enough in advance to allow members of the committee at least 2 weeks to review the dissertation. At least 10 days before the defense, the Graduate School must be notified of the date, time, and location. That information will be publicized, because dissertation defenses are open to students, faculty, and other interested parties who may wish to attend.

*Note. When candidates schedule the dissertation defense, they should have already reviewed the Graduate School’s requirements and deadlines for graduation.*

The format of a defense is at the discretion of the doctoral committee, but typically includes a 10-15 minute presentation by the doctoral candidate summarizing the dissertation project, followed by 1-1.5 hours of open questions and discussion. The Committee may excuse the candidate and guests briefly at the beginning and end of the defense to meet in private session. **At the defense, a candidate should distribute a copy of their professional vita. A copy should also be provided to the program***
coordinator, who will use the information provided as documentation for accreditation requirements.

At the end of the defense, each committee member will be asked to vote as follows: (a) pass, (b) pass with recommended revisions (i.e., with suggested revisions that do not require committee approval, but may be supervised by the major professor), (c) pass contingent on revision (i.e., pass only after a committee member so voting reviews and approves revisions), or (d) fail. To pass the defense, a majority of the committee members must vote with option a or b. A contingent pass for the dissertation defense will be achieved, pending approved revisions, if more than one committee member votes option c. The defense will be failed if more than one committee member votes option d. At the discretion of the committee a failed defense may be retaken once.

When all contingent conditions, as described in the previous paragraph, have been satisfied resulting in a “pass,” the student must obtain appropriate signatures on form GS7D (see: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/files/pdfs/GS7D.pdf and submit it to the Graduate School along with any appropriate information and forms for graduation.

Program Requirements (Time frame and progress)

The typical time frame for completing a doctorate in LLC is 3-4 years for full-time students, often with a half-time assistantship. Part-time students may occasionally require a year or two longer. Individual circumstances will be considered, but students who the LLC faculty consider to not be making adequate progress in relation to these time frames, may be dismissed from the program. Students who have a graduate assistantship, but who are not making adequate progress in completing their degree, may lose their assistantship. Course credit may also be lost after a period of time specified by the Graduate School.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships, when they are available, are intended to provide financial support to meritorious students and to provide services and support to the program, to the department, or to faculty. Graduate assistantships may be dedicated to teaching courses, supporting faculty research, and engaging in various other tasks directly related to programmatic needs and to furthering faculty productivity. Ideally, these assistantships also further students’ professional development, as noted in the previous section on the requirement for professional development. In that sense, assistantships are more than a source of income, and should not inhibit normal progress through the program. Thus, unless approved
by the majority of the LLC faculty, students will not be assigned, nor
compensated for, an assistantship for more than the equivalent of 20
hours per week (half time). It is also expected that students who are
supported with a half-time assistantship will not be otherwise
employed inside or outside the university. For exceptions, consult
with your major professor.

Students may lose an assistantship if they do not satisfactorily perform the
duties of their assistantship, or if they fail to make reasonable progress in
completing their degree. Faculty, in turn, are expected to have reasonable
expectations for assigned tasks related to assistantships, to provide
appropriate scholarly recognition of graduate assistants who add
substantively to research projects and their products, and to be sensitive
to demands placed on graduate assistants’ time and efforts relative to
compensation and weekly hours.

Some perspective on assistantships
The boundaries between tasks related to assistantships and other tasks
such as independent studies/research, course requirements, preparing a
manuscript for submission to a journal or a presentation at a conference
are sometimes blurred. Likewise, the time and demands required to fulfill
the responsibilities of a graduate assistantship may vary from week, as will
the specificity of responsibilities from semester to semester. For example,
the parameters of teaching a course for an assistantship are usually well
defined in terms of tasks and time and may not involve regular
involvement of a faculty member. On the other hand, assisting a faculty
member in collecting and analyzing data is likely to be more fluid and
require more flexibility and direct accountability for completing tasks.
Especially in the latter instances, good communication and explicit
understandings between faculty and their graduate assistants is vital. Any
issues related to misunderstandings or dissatisfactions, either on the part
of a graduate assistant or a faculty member, should be resolved, if
possible, between the relevant individuals directly involved. However, if
necessary, the LLC program coordinator, the relevant department chair,
and others may need to be consulted and perhaps involved. Mutual
respect and explicit communication between a graduate assistant and a
faculty member who supervises her or his work is the key to minimizing
difficulties, conflicts, and misunderstandings.

Course loads
The standard course load for an LLC doctoral student with a half-time
assistantship (20 hours/week) is 9 credit hours (3 courses) per semester,
although an additional hour is typical in those semesters when a student is
enrolled in a required doctoral seminar. Students should carefully
consider a course load that deviates from this standard in consultation
with their temporary advisor or major professor.
Departmental Affiliation and Resources

The LLC doctoral program is officially housed in the Department of Education and Human Development (EHD), although some of the program's faculty are affiliated with other departments. Thus, various official matters affecting LLC faculty and students are under the auspices of the EHD Department and its chair. For example, EHD plays a predominant role in allocating assistantships to the LLC program, in assigning office space (typically shared space) for LLC doctoral students, and in providing the help of an administrative assistant for courses offered by departmental faculty (and to graduate teaching assistants). There are also departmental policies affecting the availability and use of resources such as the departmental copy machine, phones, mailing, and so forth. Doctoral students who have questions about departmental policies and procedures or who have problems or issues with the availability of departmental assistance or oversight, should consult with their temporary advisor or major professor. The EHD administrative assistant may also be able to advise doctoral students on such matters. Here is her contact information:

Ms. Janet Arnold  
209 Old Main  
864-656-7645  
arnold5@clemson.edu

Other Issues and Questions

For issues and questions not covered in this handbook or the general resources cited at the outset of this document, consult with your temporary advisor/major professor, the LLC doctoral program coordinator, and/or the College of Education's graduate coordinator.