



College of

EDUCATION

Department of Teaching and Learning

**Ph.D. in Teaching and Learning
Program Handbook**

2023-2024

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The Department of Teaching and Learning welcomes you to Clemson University's College of Education and the Teaching and Learning doctoral program. This handbook is intended to familiarize you with the policies and procedures of Clemson University, the Graduate School and the College of Education. Each student is expected to be familiar with the contents of this handbook. The policies and procedures presented here are in addition to and subordinate to those described in the [Graduate School Announcements](#).

The Doctor of Philosophy degree in Teaching and Learning is a research degree designed to prepare the student to become a scholar who can discover, integrate and apply knowledge, as well as communicate and disseminate it. The intent of the program is to prepare the student to make a significant original contribution to knowledge in a specialized field. The program prepares students in a cognate area designed in collaboration with their committee in order to meet their goals and needs.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Department Chair – Dr. David Fleming, dfleming@clemson.edu

Doctoral Program Coordinator – Dr. Brooke Whitworth, bwhitwo@clemson.edu

Student Services Manager – Julie Jones, jgambre@clemson.edu

Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies – Dr. Jeff Marshall, marsha9@clemson.edu

Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies – Dr. Michelle Cook, mcook@clemson.edu

The Program Coordinator should be a student's first contact should any issue arise regarding academic progress, program curriculum, assistantships, and/or any other issue regarding the program. If answers are not satisfactory or if the issue is not resolved, the next step would be to contact the Department Chair, followed by the appropriate Associate Dean depending on the issue.

POLICIES AND RESOURCES

[University Policies](#)

[Graduate School Policy Handbook](#)

[Graduate School Resources](#)

[Graduate School New Student To Do List](#)

COHORT INFORMATION AND LOCATION OF DEGREE PROGRAM

The Teaching and Learning degree accepts one cohort of applicants each year, to begin each fall. Application deadlines will be no later than April 15th of each year, with a January 15th deadline to be priority considered for assistantships and fellowships. Per Graduate School policy, applicants are under no obligation to accept offers of financial support prior to April 15th of each year.

The location of the Teaching and Learning degree is at the Clemson University main campus with an option of in-person or hyflex formats. For this program, the hyflex format is defined as participating synchronously online. In both formats, classes will not start before 4:30pm EST.

IN-PERSON OR ONLINE ONLY PER TERM HYFLEX POLICY

The program is offered through a HyFlex option and can be completed through either traditional face-to-face instruction or online synchronously. Scholars are admitted into a PhD HyFlex program according to the modality selected during the application process (in-person OR synchronous online). Scholars will have the opportunity to change their specified modality prior to the start of each semester. No modality changes will be considered once the semester is in progress. Asynchronous and/or synchronous elements will be included in courses at the discretion of the instructor as stated in the syllabus. In-person students are expected to attend classes in-person unless alternative arrangements have been made with or by course instructors. Scholars receiving an assistantship should consult their employment contract to verify modality requirements.

In-person students are expected to attend classes in-person unless alternative arrangements have been made with or by course instructors.

Students receiving an assistantship should consult their employment contract to verify modality requirements.

Procedure for student: A student wishing to change their designated modality must email a request to the student services coordinator with a detailed explanation. The request will be reviewed by the doctoral program coordinator and the department chair.

SELF-PLAGIARISM (AKA TEXT-RECYCLING) POLICY

[Clemson University](#) has a policy on plagiarism, which is defined as, “includes the copying of language, structure or ideas of another and attributing the work to one’s own efforts” (Clemson, 2022, para. 2) In the same policy, self-plagiarism is described as, “Directly quoting your own text from previous projects or papers without attribution” (para. 3).

The American Psychological Association (APA; 2020) has a slightly different interpretation: Self-plagiarism is described as “the presentation of your own previously published work as original...self-plagiarism deceives readers by making it appear that more information is available on a topic than really exists” (p. 256). However, it goes on to say that different universities may have different views on whether or not using previously turned-in work or building on that turned-in work may be permissible and suggest that students should discuss this with their advisors/instructors.

The Ph.D. in Teaching and Learning program coursework is designed such that assignments will support you in considering research ideas and building on those ideas. Consequently, there may be cases in which it is appropriate to use previous coursework (**in part**) for newer assignments. In this case, we adapt the [Text Recycling Research Project’s¹ \(TRRP\)](#) notion of ‘text recycling’:

Text recycling is the reuse of textual material (prose, visuals, or equations) in a new document where (1) the material in the new document is identical to that of the source (or substantively equivalent in both form and content), (2) the material is not presented in the new document as a quotation (via quotation marks or block indentation), and (3) at least one author of the new document is also an author of the prior document. (TRRP, 2021, para. 1).

TRRP describes three types of recycling: developmental, generative, and adaptive. In the Ph.D. program, you will most likely consider **developmental text recycling**. See the resources below for generative and adaptive recycling (which is for published work). TRRP defines this as “the reuse of material from unpublished documents. This is common in research and generally considered acceptable” (Hall et al., 2021, p. 2). TRRP has nine best practices for researchers to consider, such that one may recycle text ethically and appropriately, legally, and transparently. A few of these practices are particularly important for developmental text recycling:

- **Authors should recycle text where consistency of language is needed for accurate communication.** This might include a wonderful paragraph you wrote about your methods, or a well-crafted paragraph on your theoretical framework. The accuracy of the language is important and you do not want to dilute meaning by rewording.
- **For most unpublished work authors hold copyright and thus can recycle from that work without legal restriction.** There are some exceptions, but until it’s published, your work is yours.
- **Authors should be transparent with editors [or in this case, advisors/instructors].** Many issues can be avoided with clear communication with your advisor/instructor about what you intend to recycle and why. (TRRP, 2021)

¹ TRRP is funded by the National Science Foundation, with several participating universities: Appalachian State University; Duke University; Georgia Southern University; North Carolina State University; and University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

References:

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association 2020: the official guide to APA style* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Clemson University. (2022). *Plagiarism*.
<https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/theses-and-dissertations/plagiarism.html>
- Hall, S., Moskovitz., C. & Pemberton, M. (2021). *Understanding text recycling: a guide for researchers*. The Text Recycling Project.
https://textrecycling.org/files/2021/06/Understanding-Text-Recycling_A-Guide-for-Researchers-V.1.pdf
- Text Recycling Research Project. (2021). *Text recycling: TRRP best practices for researchers*.
https://textrecycling.org/files/2021/04/TRRP_Best-Practices-for-Researchers.pdf

Additional Resources:

- The Hall et al. link above provides more information on generative and adaptive text recycling
- The [TRRP home page](#) has tons of information as well as presentations and publications tabs on their main page if you would like to see how this work has been applied or described elsewhere
- [The Purdue Owl](#) provides citation information on MLA, APA, and Chicago styles (look along the left-hand side of the page for information on each style)
- The [Clemson Graduate School handbooks](#) provide more information regarding plagiarism and other issues related to academic dishonesty (and so much more!)

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

A doctoral degree program in Teaching and Learning shall consist of a minimum of 56 semester hours of graduate credit approved by the student's Advisory Committee and selected from courses typically numbered 8000 or above. Prerequisite and co-requisite courses do not count toward the 56 semester hours of graduate credit required for the degree. Prerequisite courses must be completed before admission as a graduate student, whereas co-requisite courses may be taken concurrently within the program, but must be completed before receipt of the doctoral degree.

Scholar Meetings

Regular scholar meetings will occur during the Fall and Spring semesters and may be held during the summer depending on faculty availability. Students are expected to attend all scheduled scholar meetings unless they are traveling or have some other unavoidable conflict. The intent of the meetings is to provide opportunities to connect outside of class, invite speakers into the program, and participate in scholarly discussions and activities. These meeting dates will be advertised and shared with students. If you can not attend, please communicate with the coordinator as attendance and active participation are expected at these sessions.

COGNATE AREAS

Each student pursuing a doctoral degree in Teaching and Learning will design a cognate area in collaboration with their committee to meet the requirements listed. Substitutions and changes will be allowed upon approval by the student's Advisory Committee.

CURRICULUM

Doctoral Seminars (2 credit hours)

Students will take two doctoral seminars: one in the fall of their first year and one in the fall of their last year of courses. In the first doctoral seminar, students will be introduced to the policies and procedures of doctoral studies and will connect with faculty members with a variety of specializations and research traditions. Students will also complete IRB-required CITI training and become familiar with expectations for professional ethics and academic integrity at the doctoral level. In the second doctoral seminar, students will consider how to prepare for the job search and interview process. It also emphasizes and addresses the needs of students as they approach the end of their doctoral studies and prepare to enter the field as an academic scholar.

- ED 9030 – Doctoral Seminar I (first fall semester)
- ED 9040 – Doctoral Seminar II (last spring semester before dissertation)

Program Core (minimum 12 credit hours)

Core knowledge consists of constructs in educational foundations and Teaching and Learning. Core knowledge should be demonstrated through completion of the following core courses:

- ED 9540 – Curriculum Theory
- ED 9320 – Pedagogy & Practice
- ED 9340 – Literature Review & Framework
- ED 9700 – Equity & Identity

Research Methods (minimum 12 credit hours)

Students will successfully complete at least 4 courses that prepare students to understand and use both quantitative and qualitative research methods and procedures.

Required:

- EDF 9270 – Quantitative Research Designs and Statistics for Education Contexts,
- EDF 9790 – Qualitative Research in Education

In addition, must take at least two of the following: EDF 9710, 9720, 9730, 9740, 9750, 9770, 9780 or 9810

Internships (minimum 6 hours)

Students will successfully complete one semester of involvement with faculty in both research and teaching. In the Research Internship, the student works with a faculty member in a specific line of inquiry. The Teaching Internship links a student’s program of study to a field of professional service. In both courses, students will be engaged in the experience for 10 hours per week. If you are serving as a GTA or GRA, your advisory committee may substitute another research methods or cognate course for the respective internship.

- ED 9800 – Teaching Internship
- ED 9940 -- Research Internship

Cognate Courses (minimum 6 hours)

Students study in a focused area of Teaching and Learning that defines their cognate. Examples of Cognate Courses that may be offered by Teaching and Learning are provided below:

- EDEC 9100 – Foundations of Early Childhood Education
- EDEC 9300 – Early Childhood Research in Educational Settings
- EDSC 8420 – Advanced Studies in the Teaching of Secondary School Mathematics
- EDSC 8470 – Current Literature in Mathematics Teaching
- EDSC 8430 – Advanced Studies in the Teaching of Secondary School Science
- EDSC 8480 – Current Literature in Science Teaching
- EDSC 8440 – Advanced Studies in the Teaching of Secondary School Social Studies
- EDSC 8490 – Current Literature in Social Studies Teaching
- ED 9600 – History and Philosophy of African American Education
- ED 9610 – History of American Education

Dissertation (minimum 18 credit hours)

- ED 9910 – Doctoral Dissertation Research Total minimum program hours – 18 credit hours

TIMELINE

The following table lays out a typical progression through the Teaching and Learning program for a full-time student. Part-time student schedules may vary significantly from this timetable.

A Sample PhD Program Timeline	
Year 1 – First Semester	Take 3 graduate courses, attend seminars, attend faculty research presentations
Year 1 – Second Semester	Take 3 graduate courses, attend seminars, begin work on a research project
Year 2	Take 6 more graduate courses (or more as needed/desired), attend seminars. Continue working on research projects. Prepare and complete comprehensive exams at or near the end of coursework.
Years 3, 4, 5 (as needed)	Continue working on research project. Take more graduate courses as needed/desired, attend seminars. Present dissertation proposal and

write and defend your dissertation when research is completed.

Graduate students enrolled in a degree program are required to maintain continuous enrollment after initial matriculation. If a leave of absence from your program is needed, please follow the Graduate School's [leave of absence policy](#).

Plan of Study (GS2)

All classes listed on the GS2 must be completed before graduation. Prior to graduation, revisions to the degree curriculum may be needed and are subject to Advisory Committee and dean approvals. It may be necessary to change committee membership. In either case, you must submit a revised GS2.

Note: Time limit

*All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within eight (8) years from the date you first matriculate into a doctoral degree program at Clemson. The time limit applies to all doctoral programs, even cases where a student is receiving a master's degree en route to the doctorate. This clock does not stop for **leave of absence**. Programs may petition for different time limits for their program for good cause. In exceptional circumstances, a student may petition the Graduate School for additional time with approval of the advisory committee. A student who exceeds the time limit without an extension can be dismissed from the Graduate School for failure to maintain adequate academic progress. Please refer to the graduate school handbook for more information.*

CHECKLIST/WORKSHEET OF REQUIREMENTS

Use the following checklist to track your completion of program requirements.

What	When to Complete	How/Who
Initial Advisor	Assigned upon entry to the program	Notified in initial acceptance email from the department
Prepare a <u>preliminary</u> Course of Study with your Initial Advisor	Near the beginning of the program of study	In consultation with the Initial Advisor (Course of Study Form)
Select a Major Advisor	By the end of the first year	In consultation with the program coordinator
Selection of Advisory Committee	No later than the beginning of the fourth semester of study following matriculation	In consultation with your Major Advisor and/or program coordinator
Meet with Advisory Committee to approve final Plan of Study and file with the Graduate School	No later than the beginning of the fourth semester of study following matriculation	Submit GS2 - Committee Selection/Plan of Study
Minimum of 18 hours of dissertation credit completed	At or near completion of coursework	Advisory Committee
Comprehensive Exam – Written	At or near completion of coursework	Advisory Committee
Comprehensive Exam – Oral	At or near completion of coursework	Advisory Committee

Admission to Doctoral Candidacy	At least 6 months prior to the date of graduation	Complete GS5D – Results of the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam and Candidacy form (Advisor keeps form to submit after successful proposal defense)
IRB Application Submission	IRB application may be submitted prior to your proposal, but research activity may not commence until your dissertation proposal is approved. Any changes in your study should be submitted via an amendment following your proposal to the IRB office. If conducting a Manuscript Style Dissertation IRB approval for the first paper may be completed earlier - see Appendix B.	IRB Office
Announcement of Dissertation Proposal	No later than 10 days prior to proposal	Submit Announcement of Dissertation to departmental Student Services Program Coordinator - https://www.clemson.edu/education/academics/doctoral/dissertation.html
Approval of Dissertation Proposal	Prior to commencement of research activity. Within approximately one year of completing core classes.	In consultation with your committee, complete GS-ResearchApproval form and submit with GS5D form.
Submit your Final Dissertation	Approved copies by your Major Advisor at least 2 weeks prior to defense	You supply to Advisory Committee members
Announcement of Dissertation Defense & Add Defense to Graduate School Defense calendar	No later than 10 days prior to defense	Submit Announcement of Dissertation to departmental Student Services Program Coordinator Add to Graduate School calendar
Dissertation Defense	At least 3-4 weeks prior to graduation.* Please attend to graduation calendar deadlines.	Major Advisor files GS7D with Graduate School
Submit your final approved manuscript to Graduate School for formatting review	At least 2 weeks prior to graduation.* (earlier is better)	Overview Information

All formatting revisions completed, approval of manuscript by Graduate School	At least 1 week prior to graduation.*	Via email and website; the manuscript review office will notify you of any revisions required and how to submit them
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*Graduation deadlines can be found at <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/deadlines.html>

Graduation Participation Deadlines

Apply for diploma	Beginning of final semester*	Via iROAR. Choose “Apply for Graduation” under the “Student Record” menu
Order cap and gown	Beginning of final semester*	You order through bookstore

ADVISORS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Initial Advisor

Upon acceptance into the program, the Program Coordinator will be automatically assigned as the initial advisor.

Major Advisor

The selection of your Major Advisor is one of the most important decisions as a graduate student. The Major Advisor helps plan curriculum and guides research activities and the preparation of the dissertation. Upon admission, the Program Coordinator will serve as advisor until another faculty member is chosen. You need to consider the selection of your Major Advisor carefully, but it is ideal to make this selection by the end of your first year in the program. To indicate your selection, email the Program Coordinator and copy the selected Major Advisor once you have confirmed their willingness to serve in that capacity.

Advisory/Dissertation Committee

The Advisory Committee will approve curriculum, administer your comprehensive and/or final examinations, and initiate the recommendation for awarding the degree. The Major Advisor will serve as the chair of the Advisory Committee. The major advisor must be a full-time graduate Clemson University faculty member from Teaching and Learning.

The Advisory Committee must be composed of at least four faculty members. The majority of the Advisory Committee (majority here considered to be 50% of the committee), including the major advisor, must be composed of full-time graduate Clemson University faculty from Teaching and Learning. At least 2 members of the committee should be in the student’s specialty area or have closely-related expertise. At least one member of the committee should hold an appointment outside the Teaching and Learning unit unless an exception is granted by the Program Coordinator and Department Chair.

The tasks of the Advisory Committee include:

- Evaluating the student’s curriculum plan
- Selecting cognate areas to be included
- Composing and administering the comprehensive examination
- Administering the dissertation proposal defense
- Administering the defense of the dissertation, giving final approval of the dissertation as appropriate, and initiating the recommendation to the Graduate School for awarding the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

In addition to these tasks, the Committee Chair assumes the following responsibilities:

- Advising the student on the development of the curriculum plan
- Giving the student timely feedback on the dissertation proposal and the dissertation manuscript
- Supervising the comprehensive examination
- Supervising the dissertation proposal defense
- Supervising the defense of the dissertation, giving final approval of the dissertation as appropriate, and initiating the recommendation to the Graduate School for awarding the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Doctoral students should meet with members of their Advisory Committee upon initial appointment and then at least once prior to the comprehensive exams to discuss program goals.

External Committee Members

Certain non-employees may serve on the advisory committee. External individuals (e.g., tenure track faculty at other institutions, scholars employed in industry or other non-academic venues, etc.) who meet the Department of Teaching and Learning standards for graduate faculty status and are active scholars in an area relevant to the thesis or dissertation may serve as a committee member pending approval of the Department of Teaching and Learning TPR committee and department chair. External committee members may not serve as chair of the advisory committee. This process is started by the student sending a Curriculum Vitae and rationale for the external committee member to the Department Chair and Program Coordinator. This information will be forwarded to the Teaching and Learning TPR committee for evaluation and the student will be notified if the external committee member is approved for service.

ASSESSMENT

Student Evaluation

Annual Reviews

Students will submit annual review forms to the Program Coordinator and their Major Advisor (if chosen). The purpose of this task is to review your progress in the program and provide feedback. As faculty, we want to be sure you are receiving the support you need to be successful. You will be contacted each spring semester with more information concerning the review and deadline for submission.

Professional Development Benchmarks

This information should be entered in Professional Development section of GS2.

- Students will teach a college/university undergraduate class and/or demonstrate competency in instructional methods as they relate to higher education.
- Students will conduct state, regional, and/or national presentations as a primary presenter and/or demonstrate competency in scholarly communication within a professional setting.
- Students will submit manuscripts for publication (national level preferred) as a primary author and/or demonstrate competency in scholarly writing in an external resource.

Comprehensive Exams and Admission to Candidacy

Comprehensive Exams

The Comprehensive Examination is taken by doctoral students at the end of their academic course work (at or near the completion of coursework). The Comprehensive Examination provides students the opportunity to synthesize knowledge at an advanced academic level. The primary purpose is to give the student an opportunity to perform the following:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of basic concepts beyond the final examination taken in specified courses;
2. Form and articulate scholarly arguments and concepts in areas of study;
3. Use the methods of argument, presentation, conclusion, implication, application, and organization to synthesize knowledge from the student's studies; and,
4. Illustrate an ability to integrate concepts from multiple disciplines.

At Clemson, students who successfully complete the Comprehensive Exam are admitted to Candidacy upon the Advisory Committee members' signatures on the Graduate School's GS-5D.

Comprehensive exams should advance the student's research agenda and thus support their dissertation work in some way. Students must work with their Major Advisor and committee to confirm the project before the student begins working on it. All exams require a written artifact to document the product. There are a number of options students can consider for the comprehensive exam. However, most comprehensive exams will take the form of a *Multiple-Question Exam* where students complete a multiple-question (usually 3-4 questions), take-home, or in-person exam that is created with the committee and the input of the student. The product takes the form of written essays with reference lists. The timing is negotiated between the committee and the student and could be one question per week or across multiple weeks, or one question per day.

Students must give their Advisory Committee two full weeks to review the exam product, after which the student will defend their exam to the committee in a meeting if requested. The defense permits students and the Advisory Committee members to engage in a discussion of the student's responses as needed.

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to the Graduate School does not qualify a student as a candidate for an advanced degree. Such candidacy depends upon the acceptance by the Graduate Dean of a written request for admission to candidacy. This request (GS5D Form) must be filed by the student's committee within the three weeks following successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination. Any student desiring admission to candidacy must have received full admission to the Graduate School, have a satisfactory academic standing, have on file with the Graduate School an approved graduate degree curriculum (GS2 Form), and have successfully completed the Comprehensive Examination. The defense should take place in a hybrid format.

Dissertation

Ph.D. Proposal Defense

Once the student has passed the Comprehensive Exam, the Proposal Defense may be scheduled. Depending on whether the student is completing a Five-Chapter Style Dissertation (Appendix A) or Manuscript Style Dissertation (Appendix B), the requirements for the proposal defense will be different (please see the appendices).

The student will defend this plan orally to the advisory committee (and additional observers as approved by the committee) in a hybrid format. The advisory committee listens to and then discusses the proposal, and if a consensus is reached that the proposal passes a rigorous appraisal, the defense is passed, and the results (including committee feedback and signatures) form the contract for the dissertation research.

If a consensus cannot be reached, the process must be repeated with significant changes at a later date. Upon approval of the student's research plan, the GS-Approval of Thesis/Dissertation Research Proposal form is to be submitted to the college's Student Services to be forwarded to Enrolled Services.

IRB Approval

Ph.D. candidates may seek IRB approval for their dissertation research prior to their proposals if they are conducting a Manuscript Style Dissertation or if their advisor approves of an earlier submission date. Research should not commence for a Traditional five chapter dissertation or to the two additional papers for a Manuscript Style Dissertation until a proposal has been successfully defended and any changes suggested by the committee have been submitted to the IRB office as an amendment. Ultimately, the Major Advisor serves as the Principal Investigator (PI) for the candidate's research. The steps in this process are key to Clemson's procedures assuring the ethical construction and trustworthiness of research protocols.

The Advisor serves as the first step and the Advisory Committee serves as the second step in screening the design and methods of Ph.D. research for validity and ethical treatment of participants. The [IRB](#) is a third step in this process, not an initial one. Major Advisors must sign off on the [IRB forms](#) before transmitting them to Clemson's Office of Research Compliance. The Office of Research Compliance communicates through the Major Advisor, not the Ph.D. candidate.

In addition to the prerequisite of a successful proposal defense, the Office of Research Compliance has

two other prerequisites:

1. Research Certification of the Ph.D. Candidate, which should have been obtained in ED 9030, and renewed, if more than two years have elapsed since; and
2. Research Certification of the Major Advisor.

Dissertation

The Teaching and Learning Doctoral Program allows two different dissertation formats – the traditional Five-Chapter Style Dissertation (Introduction, Literature Review, Design, Results, and Discussion) and the Manuscript Style Dissertation. The required sections and proposal procedures for the Manuscript Style Dissertation are different from the Five-Chapter Style format and are described in greater detail in Appendices A and B.

Ph.D. Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense is a public event for the transparent dissemination of knowledge. Dissertation defense dates are communicated within the College of Education and Clemson's Graduate School [calendar](#). Ideally, throughout the program and process, the Major Advisor and Advisory Committee members have worked with the Ph.D. candidate in increasing knowledge dissemination and productivity through presentation of aspects of the student's research agenda at conferences and in preparing manuscripts. Such presentations serve as preparation for the public defense of the dissertation.

All members of the Advisory Committee and the student must agree to the defense date at least a month in advance. Students may not attempt to schedule their defenses without explicit permission from their Major Advisor. The Ph.D. candidate submits a final draft of the dissertation to the Doctoral Advisory Committee at least two weeks before the defense date. Committee members may request more than two weeks to review the dissertation. It is the responsibility of the student to determine the preferences of all Advisory Committee members. The candidate works with the administrative assistants in the College of Education to reserve a suitable location (conference room) for the defense. Once the date and location have been determined, the candidate contacts the graduate programs coordinator (or designee) in the College who will make a public announcement of the defense date and location and to alert the Graduate School. The defense date must also be published using the Graduate School's [online process](#), and the defense must take place in a hybrid format.

Generally, the agenda for the dissertation defense follows a similar format as the proposal defense. Candidates provide a brief presentation of their research studies from the theoretical contributions through design, data collection, analysis and results with a discussion of implications for research and practice. Members of the Advisory Committee as well as other attendees may question the candidate about any aspect of the study. Note that students may not provide refreshments, snacks, gifts, or other inducements during the defense. The department may provide these if desired, as long as the student does not pay for them.

Successful completion of this examination and your dissertation will result in a recommendation (GS7D Form) by your Advisory Committee to the Graduate School that the Ph.D. degree be awarded. The Advisory Committee determines the next steps if the defense is unsuccessful.

The consequences of failure may range from reconfiguration of the Advisory Committee to adding to the research protocol or to restarting the process from the proposal stage.

Information about the dissertation manuscript submission process is available on the Graduate School's [website](#).

Dissertation Publishing

Information pertaining to publishing, archiving, printing and publishing embargoes can be found in the [Graduate Handbook](#).

ASSISTANTSHIP **Minimum Enrollment**

In order to maintain a graduate assistantship, students must maintain full-time enrollment status (nine graduate credit hours during each fall and spring semester). Students on 9-month assistantships are not required to enroll in summer courses. Upper limits on academic loads as related to hours of service per week are delineated in the Enrollment Limits: maximum credit hours chart, and both undergraduate and graduate credits are subject to this limit. The graduate school reserves the right to disallow a student not meeting these requirements to receive an assistantship. A graduate student who fails to maintain compliance with this policy may be considered for immediate termination of the assistantship or loss of future assistantships. Any GA who needs to request a variance from these guidelines should contact the graduate school prior to the beginning of the semester to receive a waiver.

Summer Enrollment

Students on assistantships during the summer (most common with 12-month appointments) must enroll during the period covered by the assistantship. If an assistantship is awarded for the entire summer (long summer), you must register for at least six credits during that session. Any credits for research must be registered in the long summer session. An assistantship in one of the six-week part-terms (SSI, SSII, Mini A, Mini B, Mini C, Mini D) will require registration in three credits during that term.

Performance and Good Standing

In order to remain eligible to continue receiving assistantship support, you must be in compliance with all policies contained in the [Graduate School Policies & Procedures Handbook](#) and policies of the Teaching and Learning Department. You must maintain minimum enrollment levels, maintain at least a 3.0 GPA, make satisfactory progress toward your degree, perform at a high level in your assistantship duties, and follow all other expectations of conduct appropriate to a graduate student. Failure to comply with these expectations can result in loss of support and other sanctions outlined in the Graduate Policies and Procedures Handbook and in your program handbook. Conduct, ethical, and integrity violations can lead to immediate termination of the assistantship as well as other sanctions outlined in the Graduate Policies and Procedures handbook.

Renewal of Assistantships

Graduate assistants have no right to continuing support beyond the term of a current appointment. Renewal of an assistantship can only occur where funds are available, and where performance during the prior appointment has been reviewed and found to be acceptable. Where graduate assistants are not performing within acceptable standards, we encourage supervisors to communicate feedback to students in writing early and often during the appointment. As students often rely upon support from assistantships, it is ideal to communicate intent to renew or to not renew an assistantship as early as is practical. Graduate assistantship appointments require that an annual assessment be completed before any appointment is renewed for the following year. There are several options for this requirement. The Graduate School posts two general evaluation forms plus a customizable template in the Faculty/Staff section of the website (CU login required), but if there is another assessment that the supervisor or program uses, or there is another type of evaluation more suitable for the appointment, it may be used in place of the generic examples we provide. The evaluations should be shared with the student and are maintained in departmental files.

Termination of Assistantships

Non-renewal of an assistantship refers to a situation in which a student completes an appointment and is not offered another. Termination of an assistantship refers to a situation where an assistantship is ended prior to the end of the appointment. Termination of an assistantship can have devastating and permanent consequences for a student, and should only be undertaken after clear feedback on deficiencies and attempts to assist the student in meeting expectations have occurred. Any student who is terminated can seek guidance from the University Ombuds Office, the Graduate School, or can file a grievance with the Graduate Academic Grievance Committee if there is clear evidence that the termination was unfair or that this policy was improperly followed. Termination of an assistantship is different from non-renewal.

Termination by Student

Should a graduate student determine the need to terminate their assistantship appointment, they should consult with the assistantship supervisor as soon as possible — and if at all possible, at least two weeks

prior to termination — in order to ensure a smooth transition in hiring a replacement graduate assistant. The notice of termination, prepared by the student, should be both verbal and written. Withdrawing from the University (that is, withdrawing from all classes) will result in the termination of an assistantship. International students should consult with appropriate offices relating to immigration/visa status if considering this option.

Termination for Academic Deficiency

An assistantship may be terminated for academic deficiency if a student drops below the minimum credit hour requirement (nine per semester or three per summer session) or for failure to meet other academic requirements as described under Academic probation. Any student placed on probation will be at risk for losing their assistantship. Students may lose their assistantship without being dismissed from the University. Departments desiring to terminate a graduate student's assistantship for academic deficiency should prepare a written notice of termination and provide the student with at least two weeks' notice and submit the request to the Graduate School. The Graduate School reserves the right to terminate an assistantship or declare a student ineligible for future assistantship appointments where serious academic deficiencies are apparent.

Termination for Failure to Perform Duties

If, in the opinion of the immediate supervisor of the graduate assistant, a student is not carrying out the duties of their assistantship satisfactorily, the supervisor should immediately provide feedback to the student and attempt to resolve the problem. Early and frequent feedback can help prevent more serious performance problems. All conversations and feedback should be documented and placed in the student's written record with a copy provided to the student. If the student's performance remains unsatisfactory, the student should receive a written warning from the department chair (or designee) delivered through official Clemson University email detailing the nature of the problem. If, after this formal warning, the student fails to improve to reasonable standards, the department chair should give the student a written notice of termination. This letter of termination should be sent to the student through official Clemson University communications channels (i.e., official email), and should specify the date of termination and any requirements for vacating the position. At least two weeks should elapse between the written warning and the notice of termination. The Dean of the Graduate School should be notified of the termination. Notices of termination will be retained in the student's file in accordance with state employment policies.

Termination for Cause

An assistantship may be terminated for other serious violations of Clemson University community norms and values, including violations of the Student Code of Conduct and/or Academic Integrity Policy. Allegations regarding violations of this nature should be referred to the appropriate disciplinary body. If a student is unable to perform their duties as a result of violations such as these, their assistantship should be suspended pending completion of due process. A student suspended from their assistantship but ultimately found to not be guilty of the alleged violations should be reinstated in good standing and reimbursed for lost assistantship revenue.

Termination Due to Loss of External Funding or Financial Exigency

A sudden or unexpected loss of funding from either an external funding source or (in very rare cases) a dramatic change to the University budget environment may result in the termination of an assistantship. While we work diligently to reduce the probability of this outcome, it is possible that unexpected developments could require this step. The unexpected loss of external funding cannot be used to justify termination of assistantships not directly funded by that project. Should the University receive notification that research funding will be discontinued, departments must notify the affected graduate students with as much advance notice as possible. If departments do not provide adequate notification to the research assistant, the department will be responsible for two weeks of stipend support for the student. Departments should make every effort to secure funding to enable affected students to continue throughout the current semester or term. With appropriate documentation, a department chair may request the Dean of the Graduate School for an exception to the policy.

Financial Liability from Loss of Assistantship

Stipend payments will cease immediately upon the termination of an assistantship, regardless of reason for termination. Any pay received erroneously in excess of the contracted amount or after termination of the assistantship must be returned to Clemson University. In the event an assistantship is terminated, whether by the student or by the University, tuition and fees for the current term will be recalculated to the normal rates rather than the highly subsidized rate afforded to a student on an assistantship. The student will be responsible for the full balance once the bill is recalculated. If you are found to have fraudulently received payments from an assistantship, you may also be required to repay those funds.

Other Implications of Loss of Assistantship

If an international student is required to have an assistantship to maintain immigration status, or a student is required to maintain an assistantship for other reasons, loss of an assistantship may change a student's ability to continue studies at Clemson University. Loss of an assistantship may also change eligibility for certain forms of financial aid. It is the student's responsibility to understand these implications and work with appropriate offices where necessary.

Protections

Graduate students at Clemson are future colleagues and should be treated with respect befitting that status. You are entitled to a workplace free from harassment and/or discrimination. If you feel you have been subject to a hostile work environment, harassment, discrimination, abuse, or have any other concern about your working and academic conditions, please contact the Office of Access and Equity, Office of Human Resources, the Dean of the Graduate School, Graduate Academic Grievance Committee, or the Office of the Ombudsman. For additional information, see the Office of Access and Equity's Anti-harassment and Non-discrimination Policy.

For further information regarding student employment, refer to the [Student Employment FAQ webpage](#) on the Graduate School website.

Appendix A Five-Chapter Style Dissertation

Dissertation Proposal

A general prospectus should be developed by the candidate and submitted to the major advisor for discussion. Once the topic and general plan have been agreed upon, the candidate develops the first three chapters of the dissertation: background, literature review, and method. However, the candidate also may need to enlist counsel from one or more members of the committee, especially related to design and analysis. After the first three chapters are developed, the student works with committee members to find an appropriate time for presentation of the dissertation proposal. The candidate may submit appropriate forms to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to receive approval to conduct the investigation prior to the dissertation defense with the Major Advisor's approval. Once the committee approves the proposal, the candidate should submit any changes via an amendment to the IRB. Once any amendments are approved by IRB and the Major Advisor agrees, the student may conduct the investigation.

Dissertation Manuscript

The dissertation should include five chapters: introduction (e.g., background, purpose, rationale, and potential significance), literature review, methodology, results, and discussion (e.g., summary and integration of results of current study as well as in relation to past research, implications for practice, limitations of the study, and future directions). Candidates are encouraged to write their dissertation with the idea that it may be developed into one or more potential manuscripts for submission to professional journals for publication.

- *Chapter 1:* Introduces the topic to your audience. It should describe the general background or context for the topic, the purpose of the study, research question(s), the rationale, and potential significance. Special terminology may be defined here.
- *Chapter 2:* Comprises a literature review relevant to the dissertation topic. Information should be synthesized and critiqued for the reader, and demonstrate knowledge of previous studies. Some literature reviews may be a narrative synthesis; others may be a meta-analysis. The critique is an important part of the literature review, and highlighting similarities and differences among studies is expected. There may be critique of substantive or methodological features of the studies, perhaps highlighting factors that have not been evaluated, differences in method or type of sample, and so forth. The literature review should demonstrate critical thinking and set the stage for how the dissertation study will add to the research base.
- *Chapter 3:* Describes the methodology used. This chapter provides the research question(s) and explains the overall design that is used to address the question(s). The plan for analysis is described as well. It is important to state and describe the research design and how it is appropriate for addressing the research question(s). You should also introduce the context of the research and the participants, noting how participants will be identified and recruited and how you know you have a sufficient number to address your research question(s). A positioning statement may also be important and appropriate depending upon your research approach. The remainder of the chapter should address your procedures for collecting and analyzing data: be specific about each data source and type, how it will be collected, which research question it will address, and how it will be organized and analyzed. A final section should address issues of reliability, validity, and/or trustworthiness and legitimization (depending upon research approaches). Actual instruments should be included as appendices if appropriate.
- *Chapter 4:* Presents the results obtained from the investigation. In this chapter, describe the results of each analysis conducted using narrative and tables to describe the findings. Focus on the findings alone; save interpretation and discussion of the data for Chapter 5.
- *Chapter 5:* In this chapter, please discuss the findings in terms of how they address each stated research question. You may want to begin with an overview of the major findings and then use subheadings to address each question and how the findings provided some direction in

understanding. You will want to expand on how your findings extend our understanding of the literature presented in Chapter 2 and how they may confirm or challenge theoretical views presented - or introduce new theoretical perspectives as needed. Discuss conclusions, but refrain from overgeneralizing results; rather, specify any limitations to the study that might constrain the conclusions. Discuss the implications of the study for practice, and specify directions for future research in this area.

Appendix B

Manuscript Style Dissertation Introduction

A manuscript-style or three-article dissertation is one that takes the form of three thematically linked papers plus an integrative introduction and conclusion. The integrative introduction is a narrative that explains how the papers collectively make progress on the same broad research questions but focus on those questions in different ways. Each of the three papers needs to be stand-alone in that they could be submitted independently for publication. The manuscript-style dissertation entails special preparation and comes with its own set of requirements. Students should decide as early as possible, in concert with their major advisor and committee if selected, whether to pursue the manuscript-style format.

The manuscript-style dissertation is not the ideal format for all students and is not suitable for all research topics. The manuscript-style dissertation is a useful alternative for students who intend to pursue academic careers and want to build a publication record. There must be coherence among the articles that make up the dissertation, and the rationale for grouping the three articles together must be clear. Students may find it difficult to manage their time between writing the dissertation and the publishing “revise and resubmit” cycle, so careful consideration of the time commitment is needed before undertaking this dissertation format. The manuscript-style option is as rigorous as the traditional dissertation.

Requirements

- The completion of a manuscript-style dissertation must be approved by the student’s advisory/dissertation committee. Ideally, this conversation should be undertaken with committee members early in the student’s graduate work.
- Each manuscript included in the manuscript-style dissertation must represent an original contribution to the field. The dissertation must contain a minimum of two empirical articles, each of which must be suitable for submission to refereed journals for publication. A third article, could describe a relevant theoretical framework (e.g., propose a theoretical model pertinent to the students’ empirical papers), be a critical review of the literature (a systematic or integrated review) that is broader than the literature review provided for each article (i.e. a state of the field type of article), or take the form of an additional empirical article.
- Students must be first or sole authors on all articles. Students are responsible for developing and articulating the concept or idea for research, developing the proposal to pursue this idea, developing the research design, conducting research and analysis, writing the majority, if not all, of the manuscript, designing an intervention or assessment (if relevant), and interpreting results. Additional authors could be researchers who assisted in analyzing data or developing instruments or who provided the research project from which the dissertation was developed. A maximum of two articles may have co-authors.
- The journals to which the articles are being submitted must be approved by the dissertation committee. The committee should assist in choosing refereed research journals that represent high quality and offer a reasonable chance of publication success.
- A maximum of one article initiated or published prior to the proposal defense may be included. This article must represent work undertaken while the student is enrolled in the PhD program and be approved by the committee at the time of the student’s proposal defense. This article must be connected to the theme or themes of the dissertation. Co-authors for this article must be identified and approved, including their relative roles and contributions, at the student’s proposal defense. If a previously published article is approved by the committee, the student will be responsible for securing necessary permissions from the copyright holder and role confirmation signatures from other authors.
- The articles submitted for the defense must be of publishable quality. The student’s dissertation committee decides whether the articles meet this standard.
- The dissertation must follow our field’s formatting requirements (i.e., APA) and the same style guide must be used throughout the entirety of the dissertation, even if the journals to which you have submitted or plan to submit utilize different style guides. In the event of a discrepancy between style guides, the Graduate School’s formatting standards will take precedence over others.

The Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal for the manuscript-style dissertation involves additional considerations and requirements. The written proposal should include a completed manuscript and two partially completed manuscripts (i.e., through methods). The proposal should be introduced by a 10 to 15-page introduction or integrative statement, describing the conceptual and theoretical linkages among all three manuscripts. Further, a timetable should be included that details the completion and planned submission of each paper to a peer-reviewed journal.

The proposal meeting typically presents the rationale and logic for each of the three papers. The Major Advisor and the advisory/dissertation committee will ultimately determine the details of the proposal defense. A successful proposal defense entails:

- approval to conduct a manuscript-style dissertation instead of a traditional dissertation;
- approval of the existing manuscripts that will constitute part of the dissertation or approval of revisions to the existing manuscripts;
- approval of the proposed work for the final manuscript(s);
- review and approval of the student's principal authorship role on each of the manuscripts that comprise the dissertation.

Copyright Considerations and Requirements

The inclusion of any previously published articles or articles that have been accepted for publication requires permission from the copyright holder as required by US law. The sections not copyrighted by another party may be covered under the publication of the new manuscript. Up to one article may have been published before the defense. However, if so, the student must obtain copyright permission from the publishing journal to include the article in his or her dissertation. Doing so is required by U.S law.

Order of Required Manuscript Elements for the Three-Article Dissertation

The final dissertation manuscript must follow the Graduate School's formatting standards. Beyond those requirements, the three-article dissertation should include the following:

Prefatory Material

- Copyright Information: Please see the introductory information, above, regarding copyright concerns
- Abstract: The abstract should synthesize the three articles and the work as a whole.
- Acknowledgements and Dedication (Optional): Follow the same layout and format as for a traditional dissertation.
- Table of Contents: Each article included should be identified in the Table of Contents as a separate section by giving the complete title as it appears on each manuscript. Do not list subheadings that occur within the individual manuscripts (unless required by the Graduate School's formatting requirements). List subheadings from the introductory and summary sections.
- Lists of Tables and List of Figures (if applicable): List all tables and figures that appear within the entire document. Numbering of tables and figures will be dependent upon the chosen style and formatting guide for the document as a whole.

Main Body

Introduction

The introduction should explain why the previously published or publishable papers were chosen, including a substantive discussion of the relationship between the various articles and parts of the research that tie together the articles. The introduction should include a clear statement of the student's purpose or singular research hypothesis to be tested. It should provide necessary background information and a broad statement summarizing study findings. The minimum of three articles should form a cohesive body of work that supports themes that are expressed clearly in this introduction. The need for three articles should be clear and, as noted previously, must be approved by the advisory/dissertation committee. Minor tweaks of a work that would be more appropriately reported in just one or two articles is not permitted.

Chapter/Article 1

- Subsections (e.g., Introduction, Review of Literature, Method, Results, Conclusions)

- Article 1 Reference List
- Article 1 Appendices (if applicable)

Chapter/Article 2

- Subsections (e.g., Introduction, Review of Literature, Method, Results, Conclusions)
- Article 2 Reference List
- Article 2 Appendices (if applicable)

Chapter/Article 3

- Subsections (e.g., Introduction, Review of Literature, Method, Results, Conclusions)
- Article 3 Reference List
- Article 3 Appendices (if applicable)

Concluding Material

Overall Conclusion

State the conclusions for the dissertation as a whole. The conclusion should include a general discussion, applications, and ideas for future research that emerge from the three separate articles as well as from the dissertation as a whole.

References

All general references from the introduction, overall conclusion, and any supplementary sections should be included here and should conform to the same style and format as the articles.

Appendices

Include here only any additional appendices that relate to the manuscript as a whole.