

California Lutheran University

Graduate School of Education Department of Educational Leadership

Preparing for the Virtual Dissertation Defense Updated, Spring 2022

The final semester of your doctoral program is an exciting time. Not only are you making the final revisions to your dissertation, you are also getting ready to defend your study. Here are a few guidelines on preparing for the dissertation defense.

The purposes of the oral defense are for:

- the candidate to formally present his or her research to the committee;
- for the committee to determine that the candidate fully understands the dissertation's context, research procedures, findings, and implications;
- for the committee to evaluate the dissertation in order to determine if further revisions are necessary and if the candidate may proceed to graduation;
- for the doctoral faculty to be kept apprised of current research of the students within the program.

Before the defense:

1. As you work on completing your dissertation document, you can refer to dissertation guidelines that are on line from the library's website. They can be found here: <http://libguides.callutheran.edu/content.php?pid=208049&sid=4157507>
2. After your chair and committee members give you the thumbs up to schedule a defense, confer with your chair about contacting the committee to check committee members' availability. Once you've agreed on a date and time, confer with your chair about sharing this information with Mason Randall (mrandall@callutheran.edu). Please have your chair create a Zoom link for your defense, and share that information with Mason as well. Additionally, please be sure to inform Mason of all the committee members' names and emails when scheduling the defense so the paperwork for your defense is correct.
3. Make sure to ask your chair and committee members how far in advance they would like you to send them a copy of your final dissertation before your scheduled defense. Typically students are expected to provide the committee with the dissertation two weeks in advance of the defense. The expectation is that the dissertation is in the best possible condition before defense.

4. Before submitting your dissertation to your committee, please submit your document to either Turnitin or Safe Assign. You will review the report with your chair and make any corrections needed to submit the final copy of the dissertation to the committee.
5. After your chair approves your written abstract, email Mason your abstract and the title of your dissertation and Zoom link no later than two weeks before your defense. He will include this information in an email to the GSOE faculty and all doctoral students announcing your defense date and time. The title of your dissertation will be included in the commencement program, so it is crucial that you submit all of this information together.
6. Spring 2022 defenses will be held virtually. The event is open to all university faculty members, other students in the Educational Leadership doctoral program, as well as other interested persons with the approval of the dissertation committee chair. Students are welcome to invite family and friends to attend the presentation as well.
7. The defense must take place prior to May 1st, 2022 in order for you to be able to participate in Commencement.

The day of the defense:

1. On the day of your defense, your dissertation chair will begin the meeting via Zoom. The doctoral candidate should be prepared to present a presentation (presumably using PowerPoint or a Google slide deck) for no more than 30 minutes. The doctoral candidate will then take questions from the audience (about 10-15 minutes) and then questions from the committee (another 20 minutes or so). The candidate should be prepared to take notes while meeting with his or her committee. The candidate is encouraged to arrive a few minutes early to the defense to troubleshoot any technology challenges that may occur. Mason will email the necessary forms for the committee members to complete.
2. At the beginning of the meeting, the chair introduces the candidate and the members of the committee. The chair describes the procedures for the meeting and may ask to present the first question to the candidate, which is usually a request for the student to briefly describe their professional background.
3. Students should plan on the dissertation defense lasting about two hours. The typical presentation format is outlined below. Remember that every dissertation study is different; structure your slides in a way that is appropriate for your own study. When in doubt, ask your chair.
 - a. Title page (1 slide)

- b. Statement of the problem (1-2 slides)
 - c. Research question(s) (1 slide)
 - d. Literature/Conceptual framework (2-3 slides)
 - e. Research Design (1-2 slides)
 - f. Data Analysis (1 slide)
 - g. Findings (4-6 slides)
 - h. Discussion of Findings and connections to the literature (2 slides)
 - i. Implications for practice/policy (1 slide)
 - j. Future studies (1 slide) – what would you do differently, what couldn't you answer
 - k. Thank You and Questions (1 slide)
4. Practice, practice, practice. Before your defense, practice your presentation in front of a family member, colleague, or friend. Doing this will help you to determine needed revisions to your verbal presentation, text on the slides, timing of the presentation, etc.
5. Unlike the proposal defense, the dissertation defense is public. You are welcome to invite your family and friends to attend your presentation and ask you questions once you have delivered your presentation. After the question and answer period with your audience is over, your dissertation committee will move with you into a breakout room to allow the committee to ask further questions about your study. Your guests will remain in the main Zoom room. After the committee has asked their questions of you, you will be placed into the main Zoom room with your guests, and your committee will discuss your dissertation privately. You then will be asked to return to the room where the committee will share their comments with you.
6. The committee must unanimously approve the candidate's defense of the dissertation. Approval of the defense indicates that the committee is fully satisfied that the candidate adequately understands the dissertation's context, research procedures, findings, and implications. Approval of the dissertation signifies that the dissertation is a scholarly research contribution. Committee members may approve the dissertation at the defense and rely upon the chair to withhold final approval until all requested revisions are made, or they may elect to withhold their signature until they have seen the revisions themselves.

7. Remember that your defense will culminate in a celebration! Your committee and any guests will be there to support you. After a successful defense, we will do a virtual bell ringing to commemorate this milestone.

After the defense:

1. When your study activity has concluded, the IRB Final Report Form must be used to notify the IRB committee of study termination and outcomes. This form is available on the CLU IRB web site (<http://www.callutheran.edu/IRB>).
2. Following the defense there are often recommendations for follow-up from the committee. Meet with the chair to discuss any final revisions and timelines.
3. Students may take the summer to make any required edits to the dissertation without being charged tuition, as long as the final copy is submitted prior to the last day of the summer semester. In this case the degree would not be posted until August. Students who take longer to turn in a complete and corrected manuscript will be charged one unit of tuition and need to register for one unit of independent study, EDLD-690 each semester until the dissertation has been submitted.
4. The majority of the doctoral students in the program hire an editor to ensure that all APA and CLU Dissertation formatting requirements are met before uploading to ProQuest. The CLU library has a list of editors you may use if you do not have your own. It is highly recommended that you speak with the editors and determine whose services best fits your particular needs. Editors set their own rates for their services. This list is provided for your convenience only. CLU does not endorse any particular editor or service or guarantee the quality of the editor's work. Any contract or agreement is solely between you and the editor: <http://libguides.callutheran.edu/content.php?pid=143577&sid=1783523>
5. The chair will not sign the title page until all revisions are made and APA/CLU formatting guidelines have been met, as indicated below. Once all edits are made and your chair has given final approval to your dissertation you will send it to Dr. Henri Mondschein at the CLU Library (mondsche@callutheran.edu) to approve the format. You may need to make some formatting changes. Once approved, he will then give you instructions on how to submit your dissertation electronically to ProQuest for inclusion in the Dissertation Abstracts database. Dissertations are housed electronically in ProQuest, an international repository for research content (<http://www.proquest.com/>). This step also registers your work with the U.S. Copyright Office. This is a requirement of all doctoral graduates of California Lutheran University. Once you have uploaded your dissertation to ProQuest Mason Randall will send Henri a copy of your signature page. Henri will attach this to your submission on ProQuest. Once your completed dissertation is posted on ProQuest, your final grade will be posted.

6. Your final grade for EDLD 636 will only be posted after you upload a final document to ProQuest approved by your Dissertation Chair and Henri Mondschein. Grades are typically submitted at the end of the Spring Semester. Depending on when you finish you will have to wait for the next degree posting deadline according to the Registrar's Office before it is officially reflected on your transcripts. For more information about degree posting dates please contact the Registrar's Office.

<http://www.callutheran.edu/students/registrar/staff.html>

Congratulations!

Optional: If you choose to order bound copies of your dissertation we recommend ordering from Thesis on Demand to receive your printed copies. Please make sure you do not send an order until Henri has added your signature pages to your ProQuest document. You may then download a copy of your final document from ProQuest to use in your Thesis on Demand order.