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WILLIAM WOODS  
UNIVERSITY

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Dissertation Handbook

**Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)  
in Educational Leadership**

**&**

**Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in  
Leadership and Adult Learning in  
Organizations**

School of Education  
William Woods University  
Fulton, MO

Revised August 2024

## **About this Handbook**

This handbook is published by the William Woods University School of Education. All policies and procedures are approved by the Dean of the School of Education, the Chair of Doctoral Studies, and the doctoral faculty. This handbook is posted on the William Woods website and updated periodically. The version posted on the website serves as the current copy and supersedes other versions. Any appeals to the policies and procedures in this handbook should be directed to the Chair of Doctoral Studies.

## Overview

### Mission

William Woods University's Doctor of Education Programs produce impactful leaders dedicated to equity and intellectual inquiry. Focused on fostering collaboration and research-based knowledge, we prepare scholar-practitioners to flourish in the rich diversity of today's educational environments.

### Vision

The vision of William Woods University Doctor of Education Programs is to offer relevant courses of study that inform real-world professional practice, develops transformative leaders, and models rigorous educational studies that shape policies, challenge existing practices, and gives hope for the future of education.

William Woods University Doctor of Education Programs' students who pass their comprehensive examinations achieve candidate status. Candidates are expected to complete a dissertation, typically using a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed research design. A candidate must stay continuously enrolled in dissertation hours until completion and defense of the dissertation (see "Continuous Enrollment," below). Requirements may include any or all of the following, which are presented chronologically:

- The research proposal should relate to an education issue or for the Adult Learning Program a work related issue presented within the coursework of the degree program.
- The proposal should begin with a review of the research problem.
- The proposal should include a critical analysis of the problem with the application of higher learning skills.
- The proposal should include a comprehensive review of related literature starting with a historical view and progressing through broad-based literature to the more specific research concerning the issue.
- The proposal should contain a methodological approach that applies the appropriate assessment and review of data.
- The candidate will make a presentation in committee and seek approval from the dissertation committee to proceed with the research.
- The candidate must obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subject research with appropriate confidentiality statements.

- The candidate will conduct the research.
- The candidate will develop appropriate interpretation of research results and discuss conclusions of the findings and implications of the study.
- The candidate will defend the dissertation in an open presentation in front of students, faculty, and the dissertation committee.
- The candidate will submit an electronic copy to the University upon approval of the dissertation.

### **APA Style Guidelines**

The writing style of the dissertation is American Psychological Association (APA) style, Seventh edition. Any modifications to APA style will be outlined in this handbook and will take precedence over APA guidelines.

## **William Woods University Dissertation**

### **Admission to Candidacy**

Students who satisfactorily complete the Ed.D. coursework and pass the written comprehensive examination will be admitted to doctoral candidacy. This signifies that the student is a doctoral candidate actively pursuing the completion of their dissertation research.

### **Dissertation Completion Deadline**

Doctoral students have seven years from the beginning of the program to complete the dissertation. **This timeline will apply to new doctoral students who have enrolled in Fall 1 (August) of the 2023-2024 academic year.**

### **Enrollment in Seminar Courses**

Upon passing the comprehensive examination in RSH 780, candidates are contacted by the Chair of Doctoral Studies on instructions for registering for coursework during the doctoral candidacy phase. Candidates who do not maintain continuous enrollment status are withdrawn from the University by the Registrar and must seek readmission through the Office of Admissions. If readmitted, these candidates are bound to the catalog of time of re-enrollment.

Financial holds against the candidate's account are the most common cause for losing continuous enrollment. Candidates are informed of issues with their University financial account only via the WWU email address they received when enrolled. Candidates are responsible for monitoring this email account for official University correspondence throughout their enrollment.

### **Chair and Committee Members: Qualifications and Roles**

Each candidate in the EdD in Educational Leadership or Leadership and Adult Learning in Organizations has a dissertation committee consisting of a committee chair and two additional committee members. Each committee member must have earned a doctoral degree, typically an Ed.D. or Ph.D. The chair is assigned by the Chair of Doctoral Studies. Each committee must include a doctoral faculty member.

### **Submitting and Reviewing the Dissertation Proposal**

After successful completion of comprehensive exam, the student will work with his or her dissertation chair to complete the dissertation proposal. The dissertation proposal should include the introduction, literature review, research methodology, and references. The chair shall correspond with the candidate periodically and as needed to keep track of progress and to provide detailed feedback on drafts. The dissertation chair will also, on an as-needed basis, communicate with and update the dissertation committee on the progress of the dissertation proposal.

### ***Consideration of Drafts***

The chair will review the proposal to make sure it is complete and satisfies all requested revisions and email it to the full committee.

The committee members will then have two weeks to review the dissertation proposal. At the end of that period, each member should submit their recommendation to the chair. The chair will send committee recommendations to the candidate and may either request an additional draft from the candidate or schedule a proposal hearing.

The other professional (and sometime personal) responsibilities of committee members impact the time needed to review each draft. Committee members teach courses, conduct research, have administrative responsibilities, and frequently have multiple proposal and/or dissertation drafts to review at any given time.

### ***Quantitative Instrumentation***

For the dissertation, students seeking to use research instruments they developed for quantitative research may (a) use an existing, validated survey for the project with the permission of its developer; (b) use a section of an existing, validated survey for the project if the instrument's creator gives permission to employ a portion of the instrument; or (c) develop a quantitative survey using the following steps.

1. Present a draft of the survey to the committee chair along with the names of three content-area experts that the student proposes to have review the instrument. (The chair may also suggest reviewers.) If a second opinion is needed the chair, then may refer the instrument to the Program Director and the Chair of Doctoral Studies, who will approve the reviewers, or suggest reviewers if that is needed.
2. The student sends the survey draft to the approved reviewers seeking advice on content validity.
3. Once content validity is established, the proposed survey is administered to a pilot

sample of approximately 10 participants. Members of the pilot sample may be coworkers. The pilot sample needs to include an opportunity for the participants to express whether they clearly understood what was being asked in the instrument.

4. Comments from reviewers and from pilot sample participants are included with the IRB application.
5. Adjustments made to the instrument based on the input of the reviewers and/or pilot sample participants are documented in the Instrumentation section of Chapter Three in the proposal.

These steps must be completed before an application is submitted to the Institutional Review Board.

### ***Qualitative Instrumentation***

Proposed qualitative instrumentation (i.e., Interview guides for individual interviewees and questions for focus groups) are approved by the dissertation committee and are reviewed by the Institutional Review Board.

### **Proposal Hearing**

The Dissertation Chair schedules the proposal hearing in concert with the other committee members and the candidate. The Chair presides over the event, which is conducted in person or videoconference. The Chair may invite others with doctoral degrees to observe the hearing and participate at the discretion of the Chair.

Multiple days before the hearing, chairs and students are encouraged to review the presentation being used at the proposal hearing (i.e., PowerPoint or other slides) for clarity.

There are four components to the proposal hearing:

1. The doctoral candidate presents an overview of the proposal
2. The dissertation committee questions the candidate.
3. The committee convenes privately to make a final decision about the proposal.
4. The candidate is informed of the committee's decision.

Candidates should keep in mind that their committee members have read their draft, so a page-by-page recounting of the work is unnecessary. Here are some things to have in the presentation from each chapter:

Chapter One. Candidates introduce the topic and why they are interested in researching this area. Discussing the possible significance of the proposed research is appropriate. Identify and explain the theoretical framework. Present research questions and review limitations, delimitations and assumptions.

Chapter Two. Candidates identify the major components of the literature review. This part of the presentation is strengthened by discussing studies most applicable to forming the proposed research in greater detail. Cited research must be written in simple

past tense. In regard to the sources, 40 out of 50 must be within five years from when the student took and passed comprehensive examinations.

Chapter Three. Review components of the research methodology and integrate the research questions into this part of the presentation. Most comments and questions from committee members typically involve proposed research methodology. It is not unusual for research questions or methods to be amended at the proposal hearing.

Committee members will ask the candidate questions after (and perhaps during) the presentation. After questions are completed, the candidate will be asked to leave either the room or the video conference so that the committee can discuss the proposal and decide which of the four options below is appropriate.

Committee members have four options following a proposal hearing:

- (a) Pass without modifications. The candidate may immediately continue with the research once it is approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).
- (b) Pass with minor modification. The candidate may work with the chair to submit an IRB application and modify the first three dissertation chapters based on feedback from the committee. This revised text should be submitted to the dissertation chair within 15 days.
- (c) Pass with major modifications. The candidate must make the requested changes based on feedback from the committee before the chair submits the IRB application. It is the responsibility of the dissertation chair to determine when the modified dissertation has adequately addressed the requested changes.
- (d) Fail. The candidate must make the requested changes before being able to continue with the research. The modified dissertation proposal must be resubmitted to the chair, then reviewed by the committee members, who have 20 days to submit a decision to the dissertation chair. Upon receiving all of the recommendations of the committee, the chair will synthesize them and present a final decision to the candidate. If necessary, the chair will then work with the candidate to ensure that the modified dissertation proposal meets all committee recommendations.

Once the proposal is approved via options a, b or c above, the candidate works with the chair to complete an IRB application. The completed application is submitted by the dissertation chair to the IRB chair.

## **Institutional Review Board**

### ***About the IRB***

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) consists of qualified faculty and staff. This board is responsible to see that all research complies with University and federal guidelines. The Board focuses particularly on the protection of proposed research

participants from possible harm.

The IRB reviews all proposed research projects in the Ed.D. program for compliance with ethical standards of human research. IRB approval is required before collection of any dissertation.

All research conducted by University faculty, staff and students must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the start of the research. The applications, guidelines and procedures for review can be accessed on the [IRB page](#) on the William Woods website. All active research projects will be reviewed by the Board a minimum of once per year.

### ***Research Competency Requirement***

All researchers must complete a series of modules designed to train and to assess knowledge of protection of human subjects. This training has been a requirement since Fall 2019. The IRB chair will verify that the researcher has successfully completed the modules before the IRB application is reviewed. If the researcher has not completed the training, the application will not be considered. Chairs and Committee Members must also stay CITI certified.

### ***Proposal Review Process***

Doctoral research applications are submitted by the study's principal investigator (Chair) to the IRB chair. The IRB chair will notify the dissertation chair in writing if the IRB has questions or concerns about a research proposal. Notice of an approved proposal will be sent by the IRB chair to the principal investigator and the candidate in writing. Candidates include the IRB approval letter as an appendix in their dissertation research paper.

### ***Research, Data Collection and Analysis***

Following IRB approval, candidates will be allowed to collect and analyze data. All work must be aligned to the methodology as outlined and detailed in the approved dissertation proposal and IRB application. Researchers wishing to change their methodology approved by the IRB must contact the board chair for permission to do so.

### ***Proofing and Editing Chapter Drafts***

The final dissertation must be formatted according to the *William Woods University Doctoral Dissertation Handbook* and *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (Seventh edition)*.

Proofreading and editing are the responsibility of the candidate. However, the dissertation chair is available to assist in the process. When requesting that dissertation information be reviewed by the dissertation chair, the candidate should allow plenty of time for the text review to occur. The chair may alert the candidate about repeated errors in style and/or grammar without marking every instance of those errors. The candidate may work with online editing companies with approval from their dissertation chair.

The chair shall correspond with the candidate periodically and as needed to keep track of progress and to provide detailed feedback on drafts. The dissertation chair will also, on an as-needed basis, communicate with and update the dissertation committee on the progress of the dissertation research. The chair will review the dissertation to make sure it is complete and satisfies all requested revisions and relay it to the full committee.



The committee members will then have two weeks to review the dissertation proposal. At the end of that period, each member should submit their recommendation to the chair. The chair will send committee recommendations to the candidates and may either request an additional draft from the candidate or schedule a proposal hearing.

## **Dissertation Defense**

### ***About the Defense***

The dissertation defense, along with submitting all required documentation, is the culminating experience before degree conferral. It is a public event. With the approval of the dissertation chair, candidates that are on track to submit the final dissertation may present and defend that document before their committee members and the university community. If the candidate does not continue to make satisfactory progress after the defense is scheduled, the chair retains the right to postpone or cancel the defense. Such a right is based on the dissertation chair's responsibility to make every effort to ensure that all candidates who enter the dissertation defense are prepared to pass the defense.

The written final dissertation must be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship by the dissertation chair at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral presentation of the final dissertation defense. The draft copies will be made available to members of the university community prior to each presentation.

The oral final dissertation defense will be presented in an open format that allows for university community attendance either in person or via videoconference. The dissertation chair will provide the date, time, and location (or videoconference information) to the Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral presentation of the final dissertation defense. This information will be shared with the university community by the Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship.

### ***Preparing for the Defense***

At the defense, like the proposal hearing, candidates present an overview of their work, typically supported with electronic slides created using presentation software. As with the proposal, chairs and students are encouraged to review the presentation being used multiple days before the defense for clarity.

Candidates should remember while preparing for the defense that their committee members are familiar with their text, so it is unnecessary to have slides containing long passages from their five chapters. Candidates with successful proposals use the presentation as a visual aid to guide a discussion with the faculty.

The presentation should accent the study's research findings and a discussion of same – chapters Four and Five. Complete reviews of chapters One and Two are not necessary. From Chapter One, candidates are welcome to speak briefly about the background of the study (including what interested them in the topic) and the study's statement of the problem and purpose. Chapter Two review should note works of other researchers that guided the structure of the candidate's research.

When discussing Chapter Three, the candidate confirms that the study was

conducted as presented at the proposal hearing. If applicable, response rates to surveys are covered. After the candidate presents their study findings in Chapter Four, the presentation is strengthened by discussing how the findings of the candidate's research compare and contrast with findings of other researchers, whose studies are documented in Chapter Two. This discussion of findings is included in Chapter Five.

Candidates are encouraged to begin working on their presentation after submitting all five chapters to their chair for the first time.

### ***Scheduling the Defense***

After all committee members agree that a defense is in order, the dissertation chair is responsible for scheduling the event. The chair will work with the candidate and the committee members to determine a time to convene. Defenses are held in person or via videoconference. The Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship must be notified at least two-weeks in advance of the defense to ensure that the defense can be offered as a university-wide event. The Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship is notified through the google doc form provided by the Chair of Doctoral Studies.

### ***Conducting the Hearing***

The defense is a public event. Anyone may attend the event; however, only the candidate, dissertation committee members and guests with doctorates may speak during the defense.

There are three components to the defense:

1. The doctoral candidate presents an overview of the dissertation
2. The dissertation committee questions the candidate.
3. The committee convenes privately to make a final decision about the defense.

Immediately after the private committee meeting, the chair reports the results of the dissertation defense to the candidate.

There are three potential outcomes:

- (a) pass (with or without minor modifications);
- (b) fail; or
- (c) no consensus reached.

If the candidate passes the defense, the chair oversees completion of the signature page. If the committee requires any changes to the dissertation before final submission, the chair will submit the change requests to the candidate in writing within one week of the defense.

If the dissertation committee does not find the defense acceptable, the candidate will be informed, and a meeting scheduled with the chair to discuss the next steps. Candidates that do not pass the defense must continue to enroll in Research Seminar in the following term, and each consecutive term, to continue degree candidacy and dissertation advising until the dissertation advisor believes the dissertation is ready to be defended again. At this point, the procedure outlined previously in the "scheduling"

section takes effect. The second defense is also the last attempt at passing. Any individual not successfully defending his/her dissertation on the second attempt will be withdrawn from the program.

If the dissertation committee cannot come to an immediate consensus about the outcome of the dissertation defense, it must attempt to do so within the next 10 days. If consensus does not emerge, the dissertation chair, in consultation with the Chair of Doctoral Studies, will make the final decision of whether the dissertation passes or fails.

### **Publishing and Archiving the Dissertation**

Candidates who have successfully defended are responsible for providing the Chair with an electronic dissertation copy containing any edits requested at the defense hearing. The Chair will check to see that the requested edits have been made, then forward the document to the Chair of Doctoral Studies with all committee members' signatures. Electronic Signatures will be accepted. The Chair of Doctoral Studies will then send the final dissertation with signatures to the Executive Dean of the School of Education. The Executive Dean of the School of Education will provide his or her final signature and send the document back to the Chair of Doctoral Studies.

All William Woods dissertations will be archived in The Woods Scholars Repository. Any doctoral student who wishes to upload their completed dissertation - formally signed by the Executive Dean of the School of Education - to ProQuest Dissertation and Thesis Database must first confer with their Chair. If the Chair determines that the dissertation is potentially worthy of ProQuest publication, then the student will be directed by their Chair to reach out to the Chair of Doctoral Studies about the process. The archiving process is not part of degree requirements and does not affect the candidate's degree conferral date.

### **Degree Conferral and Commencement**

#### ***Degree Conferral***

Beginning in August 2020, the University confirmed degrees after each eight-week academic term. The terms end in February/March, April/May, June, August, October, and December. See the Academic Calendar, available on the University website, for dates.

#### ***Time Limits***

Doctoral students have seven years from the beginning of the program to complete the dissertation. **This timeline will apply to new doctoral students who have enrolled in Fall 1 (August) of the 2023-2024 academic year.**

#### ***Commencement***

The University has an annual commencement ceremony, after the Spring semester. Candidates may march in the commencement immediately following the date of their successful defense of their dissertation. Candidates must complete the graduation materials online as notification of intent to participate in the April ceremony. Check the Commencement page of the University web site during the spring semester for deadlines.

## **The Dissertation Template**

Candidates should use the current William Woods University School of Education dissertation template when submitting proposal or dissertation drafts to their chairs. This Microsoft Word template follows the Seventh edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, and follows University guidelines for margins, typeface and organization. The latest version of the template is available on the electronic course pages for EDU 781, 790, 791, and 799.

Dissertations should be organized into three sections:

1. Preliminary pages (signature and title pages, abstract, dedication, acknowledgements, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures).
2. Main text (Introduction, Literature Review (written in simple past tense), Research Methodology, Results, and Summary, Discussions and Conclusions)
3. Supplemental Material (references, appendices, biography).

### **Dissertation Sections: Preliminary Pages**

#### **Contents and Order**

The preliminary pages contain the following, in this order. Each item begins at the top of a separate page created by inserting a page break:

Signature page

Title page

Abstract

Dedication (optional)

Acknowledgments (optional)

Table of Contents

List of Tables (if tables appear in document)

List of Figures (if figures appear in document)

#### **Signature Page**

This page, once signed by the committee members after a successful defense, is an official record of the acceptance of the dissertation by the School of Education and the University. Therefore, candidates must have this page formatted as part of their dissertation before they defend and ensure that the correct page is signed at the defense.

The title on this page must match the one on the title page. If the title changes based on committee recommendation after the defense, the candidate will need to submit revised title and signature pages with the final dissertation submission. The dissertation chair is authorized to sign on behalf of all committee members participating in the

dissertation defense who are not present in person.

### **Title Page**

The title should accurately reflect the content and scope of the dissertation and be punctuated appropriately, using a colon if there is a subtitle. Abbreviations, acronyms, symbols and Greek letters should not be used. If the title changes based on committee recommendation after the defense, the candidate will be required to resubmit revised title and signature pages for an additional review before the dean's signature can be obtained.

### **Abstract**

The abstract is a succinct summary of the dissertation research and results. It will often be the first point of reference that people have with the dissertation, and is used by researchers to determine the relevance, reliability, and quality of the dissertation for their research. Therefore, the abstract should be clear and concise, yet dense with key words and definitions, making it a self-contained document. If the abstract changes based on committee recommendation after the defense, the candidate will need to submit the revised abstract with the final dissertation submission. Formatting should follow APA guidelines.

### **Dedication and Acknowledgments**

The dedication usually contains a personal note to family and friends, while acknowledgments usually extend gratitude to those who provided professional and academic assistance. Both of these pages are optional, but most dissertations contain acknowledgments. The dedication and acknowledgments should be on separate pages. They must maintain a professional tone. These pages must be double-spaced and should not exceed two pages each. Formatting should follow APA guidelines.

### **Table of Contents**

The table of contents is compiled by listing the headings in the document pages that follow it; therefore, it should not list headings for any pages preceding it (i.e., abstract, dedication, acknowledgments, etc.). The heading levels that are included should remain consistent; for example, listing the second-level subheadings from the first chapter requires a listing of the second-level subheadings in all chapters. Each level of subheading should be consistently indented a few spaces more than the preceding level. Candidates should double-check after any main text revisions that entries in the table of contents match the ones in the text in terms of exact wording and punctuation, and that the respective contents appear on the page numbers listed. The table of contents should be formatted as outlined in the APA guidelines.

### **List of Tables, List of Figures**

If the document contains tables and/or figures, lists should be included to help readers to access relevant data. Formatting should follow APA guidelines. Candidates should double-check after any main text revisions that entries in the lists match the ones in the text in terms of exact wording and punctuation, and that the actual contents appear on the page numbers.

## **Dissertation Paper Sections: Main Text**

### **Contents and Order**

The main text for the dissertation contains the following, in this order. Each item begins at the top of a separate page created by inserting a page break:

- Chapter One (Introduction)
- Chapter Two (Review of Literature)
- Chapter Three (Research Methods)
- Chapter Four (Results)
- Chapter Five (Discussion and Conclusion)

### **Page Length and Source Requirements**

The University strongly recommends that the five chapters of the dissertation consist of at least 85 pages. A minimum of 50 references should be cited and a minimum of 40 cited references should be from artifacts published within five years beginning with the year the students took comprehensive examinations.

### **Pagination**

Each chapter should begin on a new page with the name (Chapter One, for example) and title (Introduction) presented on separate lines as an [APA Level 1](#) header.

### **Headings and Subheadings**

Headings and subheadings appear in the same font and size as the rest of the text. However, capitalization, italics, and indentation may be applied in a logical and consistent sequence as specified by APA.

### **In-text Citations**

All sources for concepts, ideas, quotations, or paraphrased text used in the document must be cited as referenced in the APA guidelines. All in-text citations must be included in the reference section except for personal communication citations.

### **Tables and Figures**

Formatting of tables (including borders), table titles, and figure captions, including placement, typeface, alignment, and wording should follow APA style. Candidates may reduce the size of a table or figure by using a smaller size type within the table or figure, to meet the margin requirements, while maintaining readability. The fonts of table titles and figure captions should remain the same size as the regular text, even if the actual tables or figures are reduced.

If the dissertation includes a table or figure that appears in another source, it is the candidate's responsibility to obtain permission from the original author to use the table or figure in the dissertation. Such permissions should be included in the dissertation's Appendix.

## **Dissertation Sections: Supplemental Material**

### **Contents and Order**

Supplemental material may consist of References and appendices, in that order. Each item begins at the top of a separate page created by inserting a page break.

### ***References***

Before submitting the final dissertation, candidates should ensure that the information within is accurate and not plagiarized. The reference list should begin on a new page following an inserted page break. Candidates should consult the *APA Manual* for specific formatting and organization of their comprehensive list of references. They should verify that each in-text citation is matched with a reference in the reference list and vice-versa (that all references in the reference list are indeed in the dissertation).

### ***Appendices***

Appendices generally include material such as questionnaires, blank informed consent forms, and data collection instruments (with copyright permission). Any IRB approvals and copyright permissions should be included as appendices. If more than one appendix is used, they should each be labeled with a letter, consecutively beginning with "A." Each appendix should also have a descriptive title. The titles should be listed in the table of contents. A separate cover page should be provided for each appendix with appendix label and descriptive title as the header (See APA Level 1 Header). In-text references to the appendices should refer to specific appendices by label (example: see Appendix A for the original survey).

## Appendix A: Formatting the Dissertation

The requirements and guidelines listed in this handbook were developed to comply with current publishing and archiving standards and are consistent with peer institutions. Any formatting concerns not addressed in this handbook should be directed to the candidate's dissertation chair and/or the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

### Organization

Dissertations should be organized into three sections:

1. Preliminary pages (signature and title pages, abstract, dedication, acknowledgements, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures).
2. Main text (Introduction, Literature Review, Research Methodology, Results, and Summary, Discussions and Conclusions)
3. Supplemental Material (references, appendices, biography).

### Alignment

Left justification is required. Justifying the margins may add spaces between words to stretch out a line, leaving awkward gaps in the text.

### Font and Size

The required font is Times New Roman, 12 point. This must be used throughout the document, including headings, page numbers, and tables.

### Margins

Every page of the document, including the reference page and appendices, must have consistent margins. Margins must be one inch on the top, right, and bottom, and 1.5 inches on the left margin.

### Headings

All pages listed in the Organization section, except for the signature and title pages, should have [APA Level 1 headings](#).

### Pagination

The entire document is divided into three sections. No page number or running header appears on the signature or title pages that comprise section one. Section two include all remaining pages prior to the first page of Chapter One. The Abstract page is page i of the dissertation. These pages are numbered in lower case Roman numerals and the numbers are bottom centered in the footer. An ALL CAPS running header is included on all pages of section two in the top left header. Section three begins with the first page of five chapters and are numbered in Arabic numerals in the upper right hand corner of the header with no running header or page number visible on the first page of Chapter One. The first page with a visible page number and running header in this section is page



2 of Chapter One. The page numbers and running header continue through the last page of the final appendix. The Biography, if used, constitutes section four and does not include a running header or page number.

### **Signature Page**

The signature page should be formatted as follows:

The title should be printed in upper and lower case and double-spaced, centered between left and right margins.

On a new line (double-spaced and centered), the word “by” in lowercase letters should be typed. Some word-processing software will automatically capitalize the first letter of a new line, so candidates should manually check that both letters are in lowercase.

On a new line (double-spaced and centered), the doctoral candidate’s full name should be typed as it appears on their transcript.

On a new line, six spaces below, double-spaced and centered, the month and year of the dissertation defense should appear, with no comma in between.

On a new line, eight spaces below, left aligned, should be typed with the colon:

Approved:

Two spaces below that, five signature lines extending from left to right margins should be created, one for each member of the dissertation committee. These lines can be created by holding down the shift and dash keys at the same time.

The first line should begin with the label of “Chair” followed by a colon:

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Centered directly below each signature line should appear the name and title of each committee member: Joe Smith, Ed.D.

Each signature line should appear three spaces below the name and title of the preceding committee member.

### **Title Page**

The title should be printed in Upper and Lower case and double-spaced, centered between left and right margins. On a new line (double-spaced and centered), the word “by” in lowercase letters should be typed. Some word-processing software will automatically capitalize the first letter of a new line, so candidates should manually check that both letters are in lowercase. On a new line (double-spaced and centered), the doctoral candidate’s full name should be typed as it appears on their transcript. At the center of the page, the following description should be typed, single-spaced, with the exact wording and line breaks, as shown:

**Appendix B: Signature Page Formatting**

Title of the Dissertation

by

Student's full name

December 2022

Approved:

Chair:

---

Joseph A. Smith, Ph.D.

Committee Member/Reader:

---

First MI Last, Ed.D.

Committee Member/Reader:

---

First MI Last, Ph.D.

CONCURRENCE:

I agree with the recommendation of the dissertation committee. The student named above has completed all requirements for the award of the degree, Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership/Leadership and Adult Learning in Organizations.

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Executive Dean of the School of Education or Designated Representative Signature

### Appendix C: Title Page Formatting

The title should be printed in Upper and Lower case and double-spaced, centered between left and right margins.

On a new line (double-spaced and centered), the word "by" in lowercase letters should be typed. Some word-processing software will automatically capitalize the first letter of a new line, so candidates should manually check that both letters are in lowercase.

On a new line (double-spaced and centered), the doctoral candidate's full name should be typed as it appears on their transcript. At the center of the page, the following description should be typed, single-spaced, with the exact wording and line breaks, as shown:

A Dissertation Presented  
to the Faculty of  
William Woods University

On a new line double-spaced type:

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of (Education, Philosophy, etc.)

On a new line, type the month and year of the date the degree is conferred should be typed, formatted as follows, with no comma between the month and year:

December 2022

On a new line five spaces below type the following text in exact wording (single-spaced, in italics and centered) as shown:

*The author hereby grants to William Woods University permission to reproduce and distribute publicly paper and electronic copies of this dissertation in whole or in part for educational purposes.*

The font and size for all text on the page should be consistent and use Times New Roman 12-point font. No page number should appear on the title page. See next page for an example title page.

Title of the Dissertation

by

Student's full name

A Dissertation Presented  
to the Faculty  
of William Woods University

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy

December 2022

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## Appendix D: Responsibilities

### Responsibilities of the Chair include:

- Reviewing the current university policies and procedures, relevant laws, and regulations related to the student's research and dissertation.
- Ensuring availability to chair a dissertation and having realistic expectations of the time commitment necessary to serve the student throughout the dissertation process.
- Guiding the student in the selection of an original research topic and planning the research project that can be successfully completed within the expected time frame for the degree program.
- Establishing a realistic timeframe with the student for completion of various phases of the research project, turnaround times, and setting expectations for draft submissions.
- Guiding the student in the selection of research methods, procedures for data collection, tools, and methods for data analysis; assisting the student in navigating the IRB approval process.
- Ensuring that the student understands the relevant concepts, theories, methodology and technical skills necessary to carry out research.
- Guiding the student in developing an effective research proposal, reviewing the proposal, and scheduling a meeting of the committee at which the proposed study is discussed. The proposal is given to committee members at least two weeks before the date of the proposal meeting.
- Following the Dissertation Assessment Rubric and ensure committee members/readers also follow the rubric throughout the dissertation process.
- Checking student progress on a weekly basis and providing timely, professional, and constructive feedback. If the student's academic performance is not meeting expectations, the chair must provide an outline for what actions need to be taken in order to return to good academic standing and a timeline for doing so.
- Ensuring that the student adheres to university policies for dissertation, abides by relevant laws, and demonstrates responsible conduct of research standards.
- Guiding the student in preparation for the defense by maintaining regular contact with the student and committee members/readers.
- Scheduling and facilitating the oral defense once all members of the committee and the student are confident that the dissertation is ready for an oral defense.

- Holds committee members/readers responsible for reading the dissertation drafts, reporting concerns for the quality and integrity of the work and student wellbeing, and making necessary suggestions for improvement.
- Forwarding a draft copy of the written dissertation to the Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral presentation of the final dissertation defense. The chair will also send the Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship the date, time, location (or videoconference information) for the defense, and completed Dissertation Assessment Rubric (APPENDIX E) of the dissertation draft.
- Reviewing the final dissertation manuscript post-defense to ensure any identified edits or revisions from the defense are completed.
- Ensuring committee members/readers have reviewed the final dissertation manuscript post-defense and approved the final manuscript.
- Ensuring all members of the committee sign the signature page (APPENDIX B) approving the completion of the dissertation process.
- Ensuring that the Executive Dean of the School of Education or designated representative signs the signature page verifying that the student has completed all requirements for the award of their degree.
- Returning the final dissertation **with** all signatures to the Chair of Doctoral Studies as a single PDF (note: if a committee member is unable to physically sign a hard copy, the chair may sign for them).
- Encouraging the student to participate in local, national, and international conferences, seminars, and colloquia, and to publish their work in appropriate journals.
- Avoiding personal or business interactions and relationships that may constitute a conflict of interest.
- Providing a safe and equitable research environment that is free from harassment and discrimination.

**Responsibilities of Committee Members/Readers include:**

- Reviewing the current university policies and procedures, relevant laws, and regulations related to the student's research and dissertation.
- Ensuring availability to serve as a committee member/reader and having realistic expectations of the time commitment necessary to serve the student throughout the dissertation process.
- Advising the student throughout the process of completing the dissertation, from the proposal stage through the final defense.
- Providing subject matter expertise as needed or requested by the student or the chair.

- Reading the successive drafts of the dissertation within the agreed-upon minimum time frame (per committee members), suggesting substantive editorial changes, and providing the rationale for their support and critiques.
- Follows the Dissertation Assessment Rubric throughout the dissertation process.
- Providing student feedback on all aspects of the written documents, including grammar and clarity of writing, organization of the literature review, thoroughness of studies presented, quality of the methodology proposed, appropriateness of proposed statistics, and formatting.
- Conferring regularly with the student to discuss the progress of their research and writing-related tasks.
- Corresponding with the student and the chair as needed for clarification or resolution of methodological issues during the process. Communicating with the chair after reading the dissertation draft to ensure appropriate progress is being made by the student.
- Sharing concerns related to the quality and integrity of the work and student wellbeing with the chair in a timely manner.
- Maintaining a respectful and professional attitude at all times while avoiding any possible conflicts of interest.
- Assisting the chair in conducting the dissertation defense.
- Reviewing the final dissertation manuscript post-defense to ensure any identified edits or revisions from the defense are completed.
- Signing, when appropriate, the Signature Page indicated approval for completion of the dissertation process (electronic signatures are acceptable).
- Informing the chair and the student immediately and directly if the member/reader wishes to resign from the committee.

## Appendix E: Dissertation Assessment Rubric

The assessment rubric uses the following metrics:

- **Criterion Met:** Student has satisfactorily completed and met the criterion.
- **Criterion Not Met:** Student has not met the criterion; information is incomplete or missing. \*
- **NA:** Criterion is not applicable to the dissertation.

\*When committee members rate an area as "Criterion Not Met", specific and clear feedback must be provided.

<b>Thesis/Dissertation Assessment Rubric</b>			
<b>To be completed by the thesis/dissertation committee members</b>			
<b>Thesis/Dissertation Proposal</b>	<b>Criterion Met</b>	<b>Criterion Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>General Information</b>			
1. The dissertation chair or committee member(s) either has an interest in the topic, knows the student, or has taught at least one of their graduate/doctoral courses.			
2. The student meets the academic requirements necessary to pursue a thesis/dissertation			
3. The student is capable of completing thesis/dissertation work.			
4. The thesis/dissertation topic is appropriate to the student's area of study.			
5. The thesis/dissertation adheres to formatting guidelines.			
5.a. Appropriate style guide if followed.			
5.b. Appropriate language is utilized. Appropriate tense (past, present, future) is utilized.			
5.c. Content and order is followed.			
5.d. Signature Page is included and properly completed.			
5.e. Title Page is included and properly completed.			
5.f. Copyright Page is included and properly completed (optional).			
5.g. Acknowledgements and Dedication is included and properly completed (optional).			
5.h. Table of Contents is included and properly completed.			
5.i. List of Tables and Figures is included and properly completed.			
5. j. Abstract is included and properly completed.			
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>Criterion Met</b>	<b>Criterion Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>Chapter Introduction</b>			



1. Thesis/dissertation topic is introduced, and the introduction includes reference to the chapter contents.			
<b>Background to the Problem Under Investigation</b>			
2. Discussion reflects the importance of the research problem.			
<b>Statement of the Problem</b>			
3. The problem statement is clear, concise, and connected to the background of the problem.			
<b>Purpose of the Study</b>			
4. The purpose is clear and is connected to the problem statement.			
5. The research methodology and design are introduced and appropriate.			
6. Location of the study is identified (confidentiality is maintained).			
<b>Research Questions</b>			
7. Research questions are presented, and variables identified.			
<b>Significance of the Research</b>			
8. Discussion of why the study is important is presented along with anticipated value to theory and/or practice.			
<b>Definition of Constructs and Terms</b>			
9. Constructs and terms presented or that will be utilized in the thesis/dissertation are defined with citations included.			
<b>Conclusion and Transition to Chapter 2</b>			
10. Conclusion discusses key points of the chapter and provides a transition to chapter 2.			
<b>Quality and Depth</b>			
11. Chapter 1 meets the expectations for thesis/dissertation quality/depth.			
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b>	<b>Criterion Met</b>	<b>Criterion Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>Chapter Introduction</b>			
1. Introduction provides a brief overview of what is contained in the chapter.			
<b>Conceptual or Theoretical Framework</b>			
2. Discusses sources of the literature relevant to selected variables, constructs and terms from chapter 1.			
<b>Review of the Research</b>			
3. Organized by constructs, major themes or chronologically.			
4. Includes some methodology accomplished in previous research on the selected topic.			
5. Includes literature from seminal researchers in the field.			

6. Includes historical and recent sources.			
<b>Conclusion and Transition to Chapter 3</b>			
7. Includes conclusions from analysis of the literature presented in the chapter.			
8. Summary discusses key points of the chapter and provides a transition to chapter 3.			
<b>Quality and Depth</b>			
9. Chapter 2 meets the expectations for thesis/dissertation quality/depth.			
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b>	<b>Criterion Met</b>	<b>Criterion Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>Chapter Introduction</b>			
1. Introduction reiterates the purpose of the study and provides a brief overview of what is contained in the chapter.			
<b>Study Design</b>			
2. Discusses rationale and appropriateness for research methodology (quantitative, qualitative, mixed method).			
3. Discusses how the research design will accomplish the goals of the research and why the chosen research design is optimum.			
<b>Research Questions and Hypotheses</b>			
4. Research questions are developed into hypotheses that are consistent with references made in previous chapters.			
5. Hypotheses are fully developed and includes null hypotheses which are testable.			
<b>Participants and Procedures</b>			
6. Study population is described in detail.			
7. Discusses how participants will be recruited for participation.			
8. Discusses any permissions needed to collect primary/secondary data.			
9. Discussed the process for obtaining informed consent from participants.			
10. Discusses how confidentiality will be maintained.			
11. Includes justification for participant sample size and other sources of proposed data.			
<b>Data Gathering and Sample Plan</b>			
12. The data gathering, and sample plan is clearly explained and is detailed.			
13. Discusses the role of the researcher.			

14. Discusses instrumentation to be used to collect primary data (questionnaires, surveys, etc.).			
15. Provides reliability for instruments (ex: Cronbach's Alpha).			
16. Discusses any pilot tests conducted on instruments to include results of pilot studies or field tests.			
17. Includes approved IRB documentation for any/all previously completed pilot or field studies conducted as part of the thesis/dissertation.			
<b>Validity Concerns</b>			
18. Assumptions, limitations and delimitations are discussed.			
19. Discusses internal and external validity concerns.			
20. Generalizability of the study is discussed.			
<b>Conclusion and Transition to Chapter 4</b>			
7. Includes conclusions from analysis of the literature presented in the chapter.			
8. Conclusion discusses key points of the chapter and provides a transition to chapter 4 which will be added after thesis/dissertation proposal approval and data collection/analysis.			
<b>Quality and Depth</b>			
9. Chapter 3 meets the expectations for thesis/dissertation quality/depth.			

<b>Thesis/Dissertation Proposal</b>	<b>Criterion Met</b>	<b>Criterion Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>Alignment with Program</b>			
1. The proposal aligns with the student's program of study and is of sufficient detail and depth for a thesis project proposal or doctoral dissertation proposal			
2. The study title is accurate throughout the document and reflects the study's purpose.			
<b>Organization/Formatting</b>			
1. The proposal document is properly organized and has been edited by the student.			
2. The proposal document is properly paginated and follows APA (or other approved) formatting.			
3. Heading and subheadings are properly formatted.			
4. In-text citations are utilized where appropriate and are properly formatted.			
5. Tables and figures are properly formatted.			
6. Reference pages are included and are properly formatted.			

7. As required, appendices are included and properly formatted.			
<b>Writing Mechanics, Style, Composition</b>			
1. Document is clearly written and communicates the proposed study.			
2. The proposal has been written in future tense.			
3. The proposal does not contain first-person language.			
4. Grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, etc. is free of error throughout the document.			
5. Writing is clear and does not include redundancy.			
6. A logical flow of ideas is presented, and smooth transitions are included.			
7. The proposal is written in scholarly language and is accurate to the field.			
8. Generalities, platitudes and declarative statements, opinion, hyperbole, etc. are avoided.			
9. Cited references are utilized rather than the author's opinion.			
10. Voice is clear and consistent throughout the proposal.			
<b>Overall Thesis/Dissertation Proposal</b>	<b>Criterion Met</b>	<b>Criterion Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>
1. The thesis/dissertation proposal is ready for presentation.			

*Chapters four and five are written after the proposal defense and upon approval by the thesis/dissertation committee. The final thesis/dissertation assessment will include scoring for all criterion presented above as well as those presented below.*

<b>Chapter 4: Results</b>	<b>Criterion Met</b>	<b>Criterion Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>Chapter Introduction</b>			
1. Introduction reiterates the purpose of the study and provides a brief overview of what is contained in the chapter.			
2. Research questions and hypotheses are presented and match those presented previously.			
<b>Study Findings</b>			
1. Informed consent and data collection process is discussed in detail.			
2. Participant demographics are discussed in detail.			
3. Reliability and validity are reported.			
4. Discussion of the importance of the study and contribution to knowledge and practice is provided.			
5. Quantitative analysis: hypotheses results are clearly reported in appropriate statistical language and includes discussion of the outcome of null hypotheses testing.			

6. Qualitative analysis: themes are supported by sufficient examples.			
<b>Conclusion and Transition to Chapter 5</b>			
1. Conclusion includes key points from the chapter, reiterates study results and provides a transition to chapter 5.			
<b>Quality and Depth</b>			
9. Chapter 4 meets the expectations for thesis/dissertation quality/depth.			
<b>Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion</b>	<b>Criterion Met</b>	<b>Criterion Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>Chapter Introduction</b>			
1. Introduction provides a brief overview of what is contained in the chapter.			
<b>Summary of Findings</b>			
1. Research questions and hypotheses are presented and match those presented previously.			
<b>Conclusion and Discussion</b>			
1. Results from chapter 4 are compared, and contrasted with existing literature.			
<b>Research Limitations</b>			
1. Limitations to the study are provided and are focused on the study and not outside sources.			
<b>Future Research and Recommendations</b>			
1. Based upon findings, future research opportunities are provided that will advance the purpose of the current study.			
<b>Conclusion</b>			
1. Conclusion includes key points from the chapter, reiterates study results and the contribution made by the study to theory and/or practice.			
<b>Quality and Depth</b>			
9. Chapter 5 meets the expectations for thesis/dissertation quality/depth.			

<b>Thesis/Dissertation Defense</b>	<b>Criterion Met</b>	<b>Criterion Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>Alignment with Program</b>			
1. The thesis/dissertation (chapters 1 through 5) aligns with the student's program of study and is of sufficient detail and depth for a thesis project or doctoral dissertation defense.			
2. The study title is accurate throughout the document and reflects the study's purpose.			

<b>Organization/Formatting</b>			
1. The document is properly organized and has been edited by the student.			
2. The document is properly paginated and follows APA (or other approved) formatting.			
3. Heading and subheadings are properly formatted.			
4. In-text citations are utilized where appropriate and are properly formatted.			
5. Tables and figures are properly formatted.			
6. Reference pages are included and are properly formatted.			
7. As required, appendices are included and properly formatted.			
<b>Writing Mechanics, Style, Composition</b>			
1. Document is clearly written and communicates the proposed study.			
2. The document is written in proper tense.			
3. The document does not contain first-person language.			
4. Grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, etc. is free of error throughout the document.			
5. Writing is clear and does not include redundancy.			
6. A logical flow of ideas is presented, and smooth transitions are included.			
7. The document is written in scholarly language and is accurate to the field.			
8. Generalities, platitudes and declarative statements, opinion, hyperbole, etc. are avoided.			
9. Cited references are utilized rather than the author's opinion.			
10. Voice is clear and consistent throughout the document.			
<b>Overall Dissertation Defense</b>	<b>Criterion Met</b>	<b>Criterion Not Met</b>	<b>NA</b>
1. The dissertation is ready for presentation and final defense.			