



FRANKLIN
UNIVERSITY

Doctoral Studies



Doctoral Studies HANDBOOK

2023-2024

DOCTORAL STUDIES HANDBOOK

FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY

2023-2024

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INTRODUCTION

The Doctoral Studies Handbook is a guide for all doctoral students, doctoral candidates, doctoral staff, and doctoral faculty to use and follow as they navigate programs within Franklin University Doctoral Studies. Please refer to the handbook for key information on doctoral studies policies and processes. The handbook is reviewed and updated annually. This version is current for the 2023-2024 academic year.

MISSION STATEMENT

Franklin University is a student-centered, non-profit, independent institution. Since 1902, the University has been a pioneer in meeting the needs of adult students who have the ambition to continue their education in combination with other responsibilities. Franklin provides high quality, relevant education, enabling the broadest possible community of learners to achieve their goals and enrich the world.

INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Communication: Communicate professionally using a variety of modalities (written, spoken, and analytical).

Critical Thinking: Analyze and evaluate information to make reasoned arguments and solve problems.

Civic and Global Engagement: Integrate knowledge and skills to engage with and respond to social, environmental, and economic challenges at local, national, and global levels.

Ethics: Analyze and evaluate complex issues and situations to make informed ethical decisions.

DOCTORAL DEGREES AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

1. Perform scholarly research and composition essential for the production of a business focused doctoral dissertation.
2. Apply and integrate current research and scholarly-based literature contributing to a major field of business administration.
3. Create, present, and defend business program deliverables reflecting doctoral-level communication and composition competencies.
4. Determine and evaluate the obligations and practices of a business necessary to support and conduct ethical business practices.
5. Interpret and explain scholarly-based leadership, cultural, systems-thinking, and organizational change theoretical underpinnings essential for business effectiveness.
6. Design and defend scholarly research that contributes to the professional body of knowledge for effective business.

Doctor of Healthcare Administration (DHA)

1. Apply research skills to prioritize and plan organizational healthcare change.
2. Analyze organizational healthcare problems, develop solutions, and measure their impact.
3. Demonstrate ethical leadership and management theory in a healthcare organization.
4. Integrate considerations of legal and regulatory requirements for healthcare into decision making for organizational changes.

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

1. Apply evidence-based findings to improve clinical practice and healthcare delivery systems.
2. Analyze and evaluate the local and global aspects of a healthcare organization's structure, functions, and resources.

3. Strategically lead improvements in health outcomes, quality, safety, and policy.
4. Develop interprofessional teams that promote quality care, reduce risk, and improve complex healthcare delivery systems.
5. Integrate data from information systems and technology to support clinical decision-making for clinical prevention and population health.

Note that the DNP uses its own handbook. Use this link to access the latest version:

<https://www.franklin.edu/documents-forms/nursing>

Doctor of Professional Studies in Instructional Design Leadership (DPS)

1. Analyze organizations to determine learning and performance improvement needs.
2. Strategize and implement solutions to complex learning problems.
3. Demonstrate leadership and management in a learning organization.
4. Design and develop advanced curricula and instructional products.
5. Evaluate training and learning at a systems level.
6. Synthesize knowledge from several fields and disciplines.
7. Conduct and synthesize applied research: formulate a research problem; integrate previous literature into an appropriate literature review; design a research study; analyze and interpret data; summarize and present research results; and discuss research results.

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership (EdD)

1. Apply leadership and management theory in an organizational context.
2. Demonstrate ethical leadership and management in an organization.
3. Evaluate data to prioritize and plan organizational change.
4. Respond to industry legal and regulatory requirements impacting an organization.
5. Analyze organizations to determine leadership, learning, and performance needs.
6. Apply research skills to analyze organizational problems, develop solutions, and measure their impact.

STUDENT SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Franklin University is committed to students' success. Administrative and academic support services are available to students at all points of the doctoral journey. Each student is paired with a graduate academic advisor (GRAA), who helps throughout the doctoral process on aspects such as enrollment and understanding policies. Each student also is paired with a doctoral faculty advisor (DFA) from the beginning of coursework. Other opportunities for support are available through the library, the Doctoral Student Association (DSA), and the Dissertation Bootcamp.

Graduate Academic Advisor (GRAA)

All new doctoral students will be assigned a graduate academic advisor (GRAA) by the admissions team as they are registered for their first course at Franklin University. Each doctoral student will remain on GRAA active rosters until they graduate and/or are not enrolled for four (4) consecutive semesters. Academic advisors provide administrative support and resources for doctoral learners, in addition to the support provided by the doctoral faculty advisor and post-candidacy dissertation committee chair and committee members.

Key responsibilities of the GRAA include:

- Assist with course registration.
- Understand and convey degree requirements.
- Set expectations relating to Franklin University policies, such as attendance, grading, and New Student Orientation.
- Understand and facilitate administrative processes.
- Understand and explain Franklin University's calendar, including important dates and deadlines.
- Provide access (and referrals) to university resources or offices when appropriate.
- Liaise with faculty advisors and dissertation committee chairs/members, as needed.

- Provide support, advocacy, and encouragement throughout the student’s academic career, including career advising.

Doctoral Faculty Advisor (DFA)

Students are assigned a doctoral faculty advisor (DFA) from the beginning of their coursework. This is the faculty who supports a student’s goals and can answer questions students have about the program, their research study, and how to create a dissertation committee.

Key responsibilities of the DFA toward the student include, but are not limited to:

- Meet with the student at least two (2) times per semester (preferably at the beginning and at the end of the semester).
- Respond to the student’s questions throughout the coursework stage.
- Serve as a point of contact and refer the student to appropriate resources throughout the coursework stage.
- Discuss research interests:
 - Start discussing research interests in the first semester.
 - Help the student make connections to the professional field.
 - Direct the student to available university resources if the student needs help with writing, statistical support, or academic performance. This includes:
 - Library tutoring on writing and statistics.
 - Library tutoring on database research.
 - Doctoral Student Association (DSA) – helps with statistical tutoring, writing groups, public speaking groups, and coursework peer support.
- Help the student to develop analytical, interpretive, writing, verbal, quantitative, and qualitative research skills, where appropriate, in accordance with the expectations of the discipline.
- Encourage the student to participate in professional meetings or to perform or display their work in public settings.

- Assist a student who is transitioning from industry to academia to gain an appreciation of teaching, to improve academic skills, and to provide guidance in preparing an appropriate curriculum vitae.
- Assist the student in finding and selecting a committee chair and subject matter expert:
 - Familiarize the student with the process of finding a chair and a member.
 - Provide tips on how to search faculty profiles and become familiar with different faculty.
 - Encourage participation in the annual Doctoral Student Association Conference to get to know faculty and their research interests.
 - Encourage participation in doctoral studies activities that facilitate networking between students and faculty.
- Educate the student about research ethics and compliance:
 - Encourage students to review the IRB website.
 - Encourage students to review the Office of Academic Scholarship website.
- Reach out to doctoral studies if there are any concerns about the student and additional support is needed.

Key responsibilities of the student toward the DFA include, but are not limited to:

- Prepare an agenda to meet with the doctoral faculty advisor twice per semester.
- Discuss any questions about the program, dissertation journey, or committee selection.
- Find and select a committee chair and subject matter expert:
 - Become familiar with the process of finding a chair and a member.
 - Search faculty profiles and get to know different faculty.
 - Network with students and faculty.
- Learn about research ethics and compliance:
 - Review the IRB website.
 - Review the Office of Academic Scholarship website.

If a student is not satisfied with their assigned doctoral faculty advisor (DFA), he/she must complete the [Doctoral Faculty Advisor Change Request Form](#) to make an official change request.

Library Support

The Franklin University Learning Commons offers tutoring, workshops, and structured learning assistance. In addition to database research support and interlibrary loan services, the library offers a writing support system that allows students to submit their papers and receive helpful feedback on their writing. This process identifies key issues in writing expertise and helps students improve the quality of their work.

Here is a direct link to resources provided by the Learning Commons:

<https://www.franklin.edu/learning-commons/tutoring-workshops>

Doctoral Student Association (DSA)

The Doctoral Student Association (DSA) is a student-led and faculty-supported association within Franklin University Doctoral Studies. It is open to all enrolled doctoral students and candidates. It offers the opportunity for students to socialize, network, and get to know peers and faculty. It also is a hub to express concerns, share achievements, and network throughout the doctoral journey. The association runs several activities throughout the year: formal meetings, Q&A sessions with invited guests, independent smaller groups, and an annual conference generally scheduled at the end of June.

DSA bylaws can be found on the Resources page of the Office of Academic Scholarship (OAS) website: <https://www.franklin.edu/about-us/policy-information/office-academic-scholarship/resources>.

Use this email to reach out directly to the Doctoral Student Association: dsa@franklin.edu

Dissertation Bootcamp

The Office of Academic Scholarship (OAS) offers a weeklong dissertation bootcamp a few times per year that is open to all doctoral students and candidates. The program provides support in key areas of the dissertation process, including writing skills, library resources, research methodology, and Institutional Review Board (IRB) preparation. During the bootcamp, there are opportunities for breakout rooms to get to know additional faculty and their work. The bootcamp program varies, but its intent is always to provide support and collaboration to doctoral students and candidates.

COURSEWORK LAYOUT

The DBA, DHA, EdD, and DPS programs are organized similarly. Students complete 16 credit hours in the major discipline, 18 credit hours of research core, and 16 credit hours of electives.

Descriptions of all the courses offered are found at <https://www.franklin.edu/degrees/doctoral>.

Following the successful completion of coursework, students are required to take at least ten (10) additional credit hours to complete their doctorate degree. These include:

- DISS 9000 Comprehensive Exam – one (1) credit hour
- DISS 9100 Dissertation – minimum of eight (8) credit hours
- DISS 9400 Dissertation Defense – one (1) credit hour

The following applies only to students who enroll in their doctoral program starting in Fall 2024 and after. Following the successful completion of coursework, students are required to take at least **eight (8) additional credit hours** to complete their doctorate degree.

Students starting in Fall 2024 and after will have to take:

- *DISS 9000 Comprehensive Exam – one (1) credit hour*
- *DISS 9100 Dissertation – **minimum of six (6) credit hours***

- *DISS 9400 Dissertation Defense – one (1) credit hour*

Expectations During Coursework

Franklin University expects all doctoral students to uphold quality and integrity during their coursework, such as collaboration with peers, respect for one another, and contributing to an inclusive atmosphere. Our student community standards include:

- Honesty and integrity
- Respect for others
- Respect for the campus community

Academic Misconduct

Forms of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

Plagiarism

The submission of another's work, in part or in whole, as one's own for credit without sufficient citation or credit.

Recycling Assignments

The resubmission of one's own work, in part or in whole, which was previously submitted for credit in an earlier section, course or program, without prior permission from the course instructor.

Facilitation of Academic Misconduct

The willful enabling of others to commit an act of academic misconduct, such as sharing assignments to be plagiarized, completing an assignment for another student, or taking an exam under a false identity.

Fabrication

The unauthorized falsification or invention of false information, citations, or data in any academic research, assignment, or examination.

Additional information on the Franklin University Student Code of Conduct can be found at <https://www.franklin.edu/about-us/policy-information/student-code-of-conduct>.

Dismissal Policies During Coursework

Doctoral students are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 throughout their program of study, and students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 to graduate.

While in doctoral studies, students are permitted to earn one grade of “C” (this includes a “C+”, “C”, or “C-”). If a doctoral student’s cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 at the end of a trimester, the student will be placed on probation and may be scheduled for academic counseling.

After being placed on probation, the student may attempt up to eight (8) hours of coursework to return their overall cumulative GPA to 3.0. Students can achieve this in one of the following ways:

- Retake a course to restore their GPA to 3.0.
- Earn a sufficient number of higher grades to restore their GPA to 3.0. Coursework used to raise the GPA must be part of the normal degree requirements.

Any student who fails to attain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 within one grading period of enrollment following academic probation will be subjected to academic dismissal. Once dismissed, students may appeal by following the Readmission procedure to re-enroll in the same program from which they were dismissed. Academically dismissed graduate students seeking reinstatement to Franklin University in another graduate program may also submit an appeal by following the Readmission procedure.

ADVANCING TO DOCTORAL CANDIDACY

Advancing to doctoral candidacy includes two milestones: (1) creating a dissertation committee, and (2) passing the comprehensive exam. A student needs to have the full committee formed before being eligible to take the comprehensive exam. Passing the comprehensive exam changes a student's status from a doctoral student to a doctoral candidate. These two milestones are crucial for a successful dissertation journey.

Dissertation Committee

Students work with a dissertation committee, which includes the dissertation committee chair, a methodologist, and a subject matter expert. Dissertation committee members work under the guidance of the dissertation committee chair and typically assist in advising the student in the dissertation literature review, developing study methods and parameters, analyzing data, writing the dissertation report, and preparing to defend the dissertation. The student will work primarily with the dissertation committee chair, who leads the faculty dissertation committee. Typically, at least one dissertation committee member should have knowledge of, and experience in, the research and data analysis methodologies that the student proposes to use. Typically, one other dissertation committee member should have knowledge, experience, and/or scholarly interest in the subject matter of the student's proposed dissertation.

It is intended that the assignment of student and dissertation chair will be a mutually productive and rewarding relationship. The doctoral program should be a positive learning experience for the student, as well as a positive professional growth experience for both the student and his/her dissertation committee chair. Students and faculty are expected to make every effort to ensure that the working relationship between student and dissertation committee chair—and among all students and faculty—meets these expectations.

Selecting a Dissertation Committee

Doctoral students are encouraged to own their dissertation process and be responsible for excelling in coursework, leading the committee formation, and undertaking the dissertation journey.

To form a dissertation committee, students should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Students are responsible for their dissertation committee formation, specifically for selecting the committee chair and subject matter expert.
- It is encouraged that students start this process early but also take time to make a solid decision. Remember that this is perhaps one of the most impactful decisions you make during the doctoral journey.
- Students can use Franklin University's Establishing Your Committee website (<https://www.franklin.edu/committee-listing>) to review faculty profiles.
- Students are strongly encouraged to reach out to faculty who might be a good fit for the committee and have a conversation with them before asking for their service. A cold request via email may result in rejections.
- Students can select faculty from other disciplines, but still need to adhere to their program outcomes.
- Once the student has secured both a committee chair and subject matter expert, the student will send **one (1) email** to dissertations@franklin.edu that includes:
 - acceptance email from the committee chair;
 - acceptance email from the subject matter expert; and
 - a brief description of the research topic and/or a proposed methodologist.

This email needs to be sent to dissertations@franklin.edu at least **four (4) weeks before the comprehensive exam date and no earlier than 180 days before the comprehensive exam date**. If this email is not received within the deadline, the student's comprehensive exam will be postponed to the following offering.

Students will be assigned a methodologist and the committee will be complete within one week from receipt of the email to dissertations@franklin.edu.

The Role of Committee Chair

The committee chair is at the core of a student's dissertation committee. This faculty works closely with the student on the research study and oversees all aspects of the dissertation. The chair shares and reviews the Turnitin score with other committee members before the comprehensive exam grades are posted. The committee chair posts the comprehensive exam grades after a conversation with the committee members.

During candidacy, the committee chair is responsible for directing the candidate's expectations and performance. This faculty reviews and provides feedback on every single part of the dissertation before it is passed to the other committee members. The chair frequently engages the methodologist to work with the student from the beginning, during the design stage.

The chair also coordinates the feedback between the committee members and the student throughout the dissertation. This faculty is the primary contact for anything that arises during the candidacy stage and is expected to meet with the student frequently throughout the dissertation work. The chair is responsible for entering the DISS 9100 grades in a timely manner. Failure to enter students' grades for DISS 9100 may result in being removed from a student's committee.

The committee chair is the co-PI (principal investigator) of a student's dissertation research. The chair is responsible for reading and reviewing the student's entire IRB protocol before certifying it in Cayuse and sending it to the IRB for review. Failure to do so can result in the removal of the chair from the student's committee.

The chair and the student jointly discuss graduation deadlines and the defense. Deadlines are sent out to students and faculty every semester. More information about the defense and graduation can be found at <https://www.franklin.edu/current-students/academic-resources/graduation-information>.

The chair creates a Zoom link on DISS 9100 for the defense and is responsible for moderating the dissertation defense. Defense moderation guidelines are sent to chairs prior to the scheduled defense date.

The Role of Methodologist

The methodologist is a critically important position on the dissertation committee. This faculty is engaged early in the process to work with the student during the research proposal stage as the study design takes shape. The methodologist is the main support during data collection and data analysis to ensure that all steps are followed correctly, and that the student is set up for a successful research project. At times, the methodologists take a more active role while working with the student to make sure the design of the study is sound and feasible.

The Role of Subject Matter Expert

The subject matter expert is the third member of the dissertation committee and the faculty member whose responsibility it is to be critical of the entire work, raise sound questions about the study, and ensure that the student is well rounded in the fundamentals of the specific topic.

Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam is the threshold for doctoral students as they transition to doctoral candidacy. The comprehensive exam is designed to assess student preparation for their dissertation work through their written analyses, syntheses, integration, and interpretations of the exam questions. Students are expected to perform at the doctoral candidacy level to pass the comprehensive exam. Responses to the comprehensive exam questions should communicate complex ideas with clarity and be grounded in a strong command of scholarly

work in the field. Responses should demonstrate expertise in writing quality, research integrity and ethics, and discipline-specific knowledge. Students are provided feedback to help them move forward with their dissertation work.

There are three questions in the comprehensive exam. The questions will be posted in the Canvas shell by the committee chair no later than one week before the comprehensive exam is due (usually this falls on a Monday morning) and no earlier than 4:00 PM the day before (usually this is the Sunday before the exam officially begins). These are broad questions that cover: 1) theories and domains of the chosen discipline; 2) research methodology; and 3) literature review. Students have seven (7) days to complete their exams. Each answer is drafted as a separate document that students upload to Canvas for each committee member to grade.

The entire committee grades the comprehensive exam. Each committee member grades each question independently from the other members. The committee meets without the student to discuss discrepancies, if applicable, in their assigned points for each question. During this meeting, the committee chair shares and reviews the Turnitin report and posts the grading for the student.

Comprehensive Exam Policy

Doctoral students who have started their comprehensive exam are expected to show evidence of successful progress through their examination work and must maintain acceptable DISS 9000 enrollment. Students must officially withdraw from DISS 9000 no later than 12:00 p.m. ET the Friday prior to the course start date or they will be considered enrolled in their first attempt.

Students pass the comprehensive examination by passing all three questions within their allotted attempts with an 84% or higher average for each question. Doctoral students must pass the comprehensive exam to matriculate to doctoral candidacy.

In the first attempt of the exam, students are given three questions to answer. For those students requiring a second attempt to pass the exam, those students are given replacement questions for any question(s) that the student did not successfully answer in the first attempt. These replacement questions can range from one to three questions. Students may take their second attempt during the initial DISS 9000 course or during a future DISS 9000 course no later than the following term. If a student chooses to defer their second attempt to a later course, they are required to pay tuition to enroll in the DISS 9000 course again.

Students who fail their second attempt at the comprehensive exam may appeal for a third attempt no later than the following term by submitting the following form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/7r9PzUFUpq>

A third attempt to pass the comprehensive exam will only be considered upon receiving a written petition by the student requesting a final attempt. The request may or may not be approved based on review by the dean of doctoral studies and the student's doctoral program chair. For those students who appeal and are approved for a third attempt, they must retake their third attempt no later than the term following the rendered approval. Students are required to pay tuition to enroll in the DISS 9000 course for their third attempt, if granted. In the third attempt, students are given three new questions that must be answered successfully for them to proceed to dissertation. No prior responses are credited during the third attempt. Any student who does not successfully answer all three questions in their third attempt will be dismissed from doctoral studies at Franklin University.

Doctoral Suspension During Comprehensive Exam

A doctoral student in the comprehensive examination phase may be suspended under the following conditions:

- Failure to maintain acceptable DISS 9000 enrollment.

- Conduct issues or academic integrity violations, as outlined in the University code of conduct policy.

Doctoral Dismissal During the Comprehensive Exam

Following an earlier suspension, or directly for certain infractions, a doctoral student in the comprehensive exam phase may be dismissed from Franklin University Doctoral Studies for any of the reasons below:

- Failing the comprehensive examination two times, or failing the examination three times when a third attempt was granted through appeal.
- Failure to maintain adequate academic status or progress, following an earlier suspension and readmission.
- Failure to maintain acceptable DISS 9000 enrollment, including enrollment deadlines, following an earlier suspension and readmission.
- Conduct issues or academic integrity violations, as outlined in the University code of conduct policy.

Dismissed students and candidates will not be considered for admission to any Franklin University doctoral program.

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE ENROLLMENT

Traditional Dissertation vs. Dissertation in Practice (DiP)

All students have the option of selecting a traditional dissertation or a dissertation in practice (DiP). Both types of dissertation are included in the DISS 9100 course that students take repeatedly until they are ready for the dissertation defense. A traditional dissertation is often theoretical, relies heavily on literature and prior studies conducted on the specific topic of interest, and follows a format where there are obvious theoretical implications and findings. The traditional dissertation is driven by a specific theory and ends with either adjusting the starting theory or developing a new one. By contrast, a dissertation in practice focuses mostly on a practical problem. There may or may not be a theory that drives the dissertation, but the

dissertation will include a practical implications chapter from the findings. The goal is to advance our understanding of how to solve a practical problem.

A traditional dissertation often approaches literature with the intention of finding specific gaps and addressing those gaps through the proposed study. A dissertation in practice approaches literature to get information but not with the intention of contributing to the body of knowledge on a topic. A dissertation in practice is mostly focused on implementation of a training, service, or change that would improve a circumstance identified as the problem. Traditional dissertations include a theoretical framework, but no such component is included in the dissertation in practice. Also, it is common to find an implementation chapter in the dissertation in practice but no such chapter in the traditional dissertation. The differences between the traditional dissertation and the dissertation in practice are specified in all the modules of the dissertation course DISS 9100.

DISS 9100

Regardless of whether a student is conducting a traditional dissertation research study or a dissertation in practice study, all students take the DISS 9100 course repeatedly during the candidacy stage. DISS 9100 is a pass/fail course. The committee chair makes the decision of passing or failing a candidate in each term based on their progress. *If the candidate is producing poor quality or unacceptable work, or they are not working toward the dissertation, the committee chair will likely assign a failing grade for that semester.*

A passing grade in DISS 9100 assumes one of the following:

- The candidate is working toward the dissertation and the entire committee has reviewed and accepted parts of the written work.
- The candidate is working toward the dissertation by collecting or analyzing data and the committee chair is aware of the progress.

- The candidate is working toward the dissertation, but the committee members may not have received any parts of the work; however, the committee chair is aware of the progress the student is making.

A failing grade in DISS 9100 assumes one of the following:

- The candidate has lost contact with the committee chair and the committee members during the entire semester.
- The candidate has produced sporadic, poor, or unacceptable work during the semester.

A candidate who fails DISS 9100 for two consecutive terms may be suspended from the doctoral program.

There is no Incomplete grade for DISS 9100. An Incomplete grade is a temporary mark that is assigned only when the committee chair fails to enter a grade for the student. It is the responsibility of the chair to enter grades every semester. Failure to do so may result in the removal of the chair from that student's committee.

DISS 9100 is designed with an understanding that students will use it as a helpful tool for the resources it provides; *however, DISS 9100 is NOT to be followed blindly.* Every dissertation is unique, and every research or practical study has its specific elements. Some modules in DISS 9100 are more useful to some students while others may dismiss them. The course provides a broad source of information that attempts to include all types of resources any student may need during their candidacy. Doctoral candidates and their chairs work together to select what applies to a specific research or practical study.

The candidacy stage differs from student to student. The candidate and their chair discuss the layout of the dissertation and what parts are written in what order. This is often a personal preference; however, all candidates must write a research proposal that is approved by their entire committee before conducting a formal proposal presentation. The proposal presentation

is intended to give a student the opportunity to showcase their proposed study to their committee and to a larger audience. The committee and the audience may make suggestions for improvement or offer new ideas. After the proposal presentation, the student addresses the feedback they received during the presentation, submits any modifications to the committee for approval, and prepares for submission to the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

A candidate enrolls in the same DISS 9100 course each semester until they are ready to defend their dissertation. At that point, they will enroll in the DISS 9400 dissertation defense course.

For DISS 9100, candidates have the option to register for one (1) to four (4) credit hours per term. Candidates who require financial aid need to register for a minimum of two (2) credit hours per term, but candidates paying out of pocket can register for a minimum of one (1) credit hour per term. Doctoral candidates need to complete, with a passing grade, a minimum of six (6) credit hours before they can defend their dissertation.

It is the responsibility of the student to apply for graduation by the deadlines stated on Franklin’s website. [Franklin Graduation Process](#) If you fail to graduate in the trimester for which you apply, you must complete a new application for any subsequent trimester, including required fees.

DISS 9400

Once the entire dissertation is approved by each committee member, the candidate will enroll in DISS 9400, the dissertation defense course. During this three-week course, the candidate defends the dissertation to the public. The candidate and the committee select a date and time that is available to the candidate and all committee members for the defense and then notify the doctoral studies coordinator to send an invitation to the university community. Dissertation defenses are moderated by the committee chair and follow a format that starts with the

candidate's presentation to be followed by questions from the committee and the public audience.

*It is important to note that dissertations **rarely** pass without changes following the defense.*

There are four possible outcomes from the oral dissertation defense:

- Pass with no changes to the written dissertation/DiP.
- Pass with minor changes to the written dissertation/DiP.
- Does not pass oral defense (the written dissertation/DiP is accepted with/without minor changes).
- Does not pass the oral defense (and the written dissertation is not accepted due to major changes needed).

DISS 9400 includes a dissertation publication guide and a program reflection survey for students. Completing this survey helps us understand your experience and is essential for the continuous improvement of our doctoral programs.

Break Term and Leave of Absence During Candidacy

Understanding that circumstances arise in one's life that may require a doctoral candidate to briefly step away from their academic work, there are two conditions under which a candidate may temporarily pause their studies:

Break Term - A doctoral candidate may voluntarily take a term off and not formally enroll in dissertation courses. The goal of the break is to focus on dissertation phase academic work, including research, writing, and analysis.

Because the purpose of the break term is to focus on their academic work, candidates on a break term will be able to utilize Franklin University library resources. The candidate's

dissertation committee will remain intact so when they return from this one-term break, they will pick up where they left off.

Candidates must request a break term in writing to their doctoral program chair, indicate that their purpose in doing so is to continue their academic work, and request continued library access during the break term.

Leave of Absence - A doctoral candidate may take a voluntary leave of absence, lasting up to three consecutive terms, and pause their work on the dissertation, which includes research, writing, and analysis. All course registration and withdrawal policies still apply. The leave is due to conditions in a person's life such as personal or professional needs.

If the doctoral candidate requires more than three consecutive terms, a new leave of absence must be requested and approved.

In order for the doctoral candidate to return to their studies from their leave of absence, either during or at the conclusion of the three consecutive terms, they must give a 45-day notice to the doctoral program chair or dean of doctoral studies. This action requires the reformulation of the dissertation committee, depending on the availability and interest of the named members. The candidate will resume their dissertation academic work from the point where they left it.

A doctoral candidate engaged in dissertation work may be counseled by the dean of doctoral studies, or their designee, for the option of selecting a break term or leave of absence under these conditions.

Suspension Policies During Candidacy

A doctoral candidate engaged in dissertation work may be suspended under the following conditions:

- Failure to meet required program expectations, as evidenced by two consecutive terms of a grade of N/C or No Credit.
- A third failure to obtain IRB authorization to begin data collection.
- Failure to maintain acceptable program enrollment, excluding an approved break term or leave of absence.
- Conduct issues or academic integrity violations, as outlined in the University code of conduct policy.
- Issues around quality or capacity, discussed by the dissertation committee and dean of doctoral studies.

Any doctoral candidate suspended from their program may appeal for reinstatement, at a later date, to the same program in which they were enrolled. A suspended candidate requesting program readmission must submit a written letter of appeal for program reinstatement at least 60 days before the start of the term in which the candidate proposes readmission. The letter of appeal must specify in detail the reasons and rationale for returning to their program work. The appeal must be directed to the appropriate program chair, who will then present the appeal to the Doctoral Studies Appeal Committee for consideration. The appeals committee will consist of the appropriate program chair, the university registrar or their designee, and the doctoral studies dean or their designee. **The decision of the appeals committee is final.**

Doctoral Dismissal

Following an earlier suspension, or directly for certain infractions, a doctoral candidate may be dismissed from a Franklin University doctoral program for any of the reasons below:

- Failure to maintain adequate academic status or progress, following an earlier suspension and readmission.
- Receipt of additional no credit grades in dissertation courses, following an earlier suspension and readmission.
- Failure to maintain acceptable program enrollment, following an earlier suspension and readmission.

- Failure to meet required program expectations, following an earlier suspension and readmission.
- A second failure on a dissertation defense.
- A third failure to obtain IRB authorization to begin data collection, after an earlier suspension.
- Issues around quality or capacity, discussed by the committee and dean of doctoral studies.
- Conduct issues or academic integrity violations.

Doctoral dismissals are recommended by the doctoral studies program chair and determined by the dean of doctoral studies and relevant university representatives. **The decision of the dismissal committee is final.**

DISSERTATION PROCESS

The candidacy stage of the dissertation process is the time for the candidate to put in motion the entire knowledge accumulated during coursework. The doctoral candidate is responsible to design, conduct, and analyze a research study in the traditional dissertation, or a practical training or implementation for a dissertation in practice. Unlike coursework, there are no firm deadlines during candidacy. The expectation is that the candidate drives the entire dissertation process with support from the committee, but the candidate is the one who owns the stage.

Dissertation Committee

Each dissertation committee has a committee chair, a methodologist, and a subject matter expert. The candidate and the chair are a close pair and meet frequently without the entire committee. During the design stage at the beginning of the process, as well as during data collection and analysis, the candidate may work closely with the methodologist. The subject matter expert often receives complete drafts for review. Each committee has its own inner dynamics. Candidates often find themselves navigating their committees and figuring out how

to best approach them. This process guarantees growth of the candidate and their ability to navigate and convince committee members of the merits of their dissertation.

Responsibilities of the Committee Chair

- Directs the candidate's expectations and performance.
- Schedules and controls the committee's meetings.
- Engages the methodologist early and as needed along the way.
- Works with the candidate on "draft" pieces until they are satisfactory to share with the entire committee.
- Coordinates the committee's feedback throughout the dissertation process.
- Closely reviews the candidate's IRB submission.
- Ensures the quality of the IRB protocol and certifies it.
- Enters the grade for DISS 9100 every semester.
- Maintains the DISS 9100 shell to include all the drafts, feedback, and checkmarks once pieces are completed.
- Moderates the defense.

Responsibilities of the Methodologist

- Engages with the candidate from the beginning of candidacy to design the study.
- Remains available during the data collection and data analysis process.
- Oversees chapters 3 and 4 of the dissertation.
- Provides feedback on the entire dissertation.

Responsibilities of the Subject Matter Expert

- Guides the candidate on the subject area.
- Offers critical feedback on the synthesis and integration of the relevant literature.
- Provides feedback on the entire dissertation.

Responsibilities of the Doctoral Candidate

- Expand the knowledge of their disciplinary field by pursuing a unique problem or question worthy of scholarly research.
- Ensure that the research study aligns with the program outcomes.
- Maintain scholarly integrity and practice responsible conduct of research.
- Keep frequent communication with the dissertation chair and committee members.
- Be proactive and make dissertation writing and research progress each semester.
- Understand constructive feedback and address issues identified by the dissertation committee.
- Discusses with the committee chair the deadlines and information on the graduation and defense.
- Complete the entire study within the 7-year limit from the moment of enrolling in a doctoral program.

Research Proposal

The concise document that proposes a research or practical study is called a research proposal. This document, generally under 20 double-spaced pages, includes a brief summary of the key literature, an introduction to the research problem, and a thorough description of the methodology and recruitment process. In a nutshell, this is a detailed plan of what the study is about; what research question is being addressed; what hypotheses are being tested, if applicable; how the study will be conducted; how participants will be recruited; what the sampling method and the sampling size are; what instruments of data collection will be used; and what measures are taken against reliability and validity issues. The proposal needs to show the candidate's ownership of, and preparation for, the research. It includes well thought-out details and preparation for the actual work. This work is one of the most important writing pieces in the dissertation journey. The candidate makes the case for the study they are pursuing, gets the entire committee to agree on the details of the proposal, and makes a formal public defense about the proposed research.

Franklin University has two dissertation research proposal templates for candidates to use: one for qualitative studies and one for quantitative studies. All proposals should follow the template generally, though candidates and their committees can adjust parts that may not relate to the specific study or add parts that are more relevant. The dissertation research proposal template can be found on the Resources page of the Office of Academic Scholarship (OAS) website:

<https://www.franklin.edu/about-us/policy-information/office-academic-scholarship/resources>.

Proposal Presentation

The proposal presentation is an opportunity to get in front of a public audience and discuss the merits of the proposed study. The candidate has already received formal written approval from the entire committee and is ready to face the public audience and discuss the details of the research study. *There is no pass or fail of the proposal presentation.* This is an opportunity for the candidate to receive additional feedback from the committee members and from a larger audience. During the presentation, new questions or ideas may arise that need to be addressed. Both the candidate and the committee can utilize the proposal presentation to reconsider every detail of the research study. Once the candidate and the committee set up a date and time for the presentation, the committee chair creates a meeting link on the DISS 9100 course (Zoom) and contacts dissertations@franklin.edu to distribute the invitation. This invite link needs to be sent to dissertations@franklin.edu at least two weeks prior to the presentation's scheduled date.

Research Topics and Study Components

While Franklin University supports committee autonomy and independent intellectual inquiry, the University holds high standards of excellence and will not allow some studies and dissertations to move forward if they contain components that do not meet these standards. The following are some examples of issues that are not permitted in dissertation work:

Research Topic

- A systematic review of literature as the dissertation work. Students can instead conduct a meta-analysis or a meta-synthesis.
- A quantitative study that is too large and broad to be feasible and conducted within the doctoral studies timeframe of seven (7) years from enrollment.
- A qualitative or quantitative study that is not adding any new information/knowledge to theory or practice.

Research Design

- A quantitative study with two variables.
- A qualitative or quantitative study with an insufficient sample size.
 - Appropriate sample sizes vary from study to study. In quantitative work, these are decided based on hypothesis testing. In qualitative work, sample sizes are determined by the difficulty of the topic, the vulnerability of the participants, and other specific details of the study. In both cases, appropriate sample sizes need to be substantial to produce findings, and students should be able to justify those numbers.
- A qualitative study that simply reports the findings but does not analyze or synthesize them into meaningful themes and/or sub-themes.

Dissertation Document

- An annotated bibliography as the literature review chapter. The literature review needs to be a synthesis of the literature.
- Copying and pasting text or data from interviews as the findings chapter. Chapter 4 - Findings needs to be a chapter organized by themes and sub-themes for qualitative work and by hypothesis testing for quantitative work.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

All doctoral candidates must submit their studies to the IRB prior to starting any data collection. Franklin University's IRB website should be your starting point to learn about human subjects research and the steps required to secure IRB approval prior to collecting data for your study. The website contains information about Cayuse, CITI training, IRB application procedures, policies and guidance documents, and other useful information. See www.franklin.edu/irb.

Franklin University uses Cayuse for IRB study submissions and protocol management. Doctoral candidates are added to Cayuse once enrolled in DISS 9100 and ready to begin the IRB process. Please refer to the IRB website for information on accessing and using Cayuse.

CITI Training

Anyone who conducts human subjects research at Franklin University must complete training before any research activities commence and before submitting a research protocol to the IRB for review. The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) provides an online training course to satisfy this requirement and must be completed by all faculty, staff, and students involved in human subjects research. CITI educational courses help researchers to understand their obligations to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects in research.

Take the following steps to complete your CITI training:

1. Log on to the CITI homepage: www.citiprogram.org and click on the Register link. You will register with Franklin University. Be sure to use your Franklin University email address.
2. Franklin learners and faculty must complete the **Social and Behavioral Research (SBE)** course. Additional elective courses are available but not required to conduct human subjects research at the University. The SBE course will take a few hours to complete, but you are not required to complete all modules in one sitting.

To learn more about Franklin's requirements, refer to the CITI page on the IRB website. There you will find additional details about keeping your training current.

Use this link to learn more about CITI: <https://www.franklin.edu/about-us/policy-information/office-academic-scholarship/institutional-review-board-irb/citi>

Data Collection

Doctoral candidates start their data collection after they receive an IRB approval or determination letter. Some studies are based on original data collection, while others are based on secondary data or data already available from various sources. Original data collection can be qualitative or quantitative, and depending on the instrument that students utilize to collect information, the original data collection can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. Qualitative data collection tends to take more time and effort than quantitative data collection. Secondary data collection can be qualitative or quantitative. Common sources of finding secondary data are research universities, governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, private businesses, and certain sites dedicated to storing datasets. The candidate works closely with the methodologist during the data collection process. There are often unknowns, questions, and new circumstances that emerge during this time.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the period after data collection is complete, where the candidate works to analyze, organize, code, and interpret information. Normally longer for qualitative studies than quantitative ones, this is often a time of great discoveries, insights, and rewards for candidates and their committees. It is important to allow sufficient time for the data analysis stage, as it makes the dissertation work come together. Everything else before data analysis is preparation for it. Consider the entire dissertation as a research or practical study that is attempting to answer the research question. The literature review is information around the topic and justification for conducting the study. Then we attempt to answer the research question by planning out a methodology of how we are going to answer this question. We follow up on our

work and during data analysis, we attempt to answer the research question we started with. This is where the findings emerge, and where there is considerable thought about interpretations of those findings. Candidates work closely with their methodologists and their chairs during data analysis.

Dissertation Defense

After the written dissertation is approved by the entire dissertation committee, the candidate and the committee work together to schedule a time and date for the defense. Franklin University has specific timeline procedures for when a student can defend within a given semester, so please check with the doctoral studies coordinator regarding a given semester. Candidates apply for graduation at the beginning of the semester in which they intend to defend. The last day to hold a defense is approximately four (4) weeks prior to the end of the semester. Committee chairs fill out a Defense Request form for the candidate, which can be found at [Defense Request](#)

The committee chair is the moderator of the dissertation defense. Once the invitation for the defense is ready, the committee chair sends it to dissertations@franklin.edu so it can be forwarded to the general public. The Zoom link needs to be created in the DISS 9100 course shell so doctoral studies has access to the recording.

Checklist after the Dissertation Defense

Successful completion of the dissertation defense can be with or without edits to the dissertation document. If the dissertation requires any changes, these need to be addressed and approved by the entire committee before the steps below are completed. These steps assume a positive outcome on the defense and approval of edits, if applicable.

- Complete DISS 9400 Reflection Survey on Canvas.

- Email two (2) complete drafts of your dissertation to dissertations@franklin.edu – one (1) draft saved as an accessible PDF file and one (1) draft saved as an accessible Word file. Accessible files must conform to guidelines detailed in the Accessibility Requirements.
- Close out your IRB protocol. Once approved and closed, you will receive a notification email from Cayuse confirming the closure of your study. Forward that confirmation email to dissertations@franklin.edu.
 - Tip: Closing your IRB protocol is the same process as any other submission you open in Cayuse. Log in to Cayuse and pull up your study. You will see a blue rectangle in the upper right corner of the screen that says ‘New Submission’. Click on that and select ‘Closure’. Make sure you pull up your study once you are in your dashboard, otherwise you will not find the ‘New Submission’ option.
- Once the signature page is completed, it will be attached to your entire dissertation and you will receive a copy via email. Your three committee members, program chair, and dean of doctoral studies all sign this page.
- Follow the OhioLink publication steps that were emailed to you to publish your dissertation. You will receive a confirmation from OhioLink when this has been completed successfully. Please forward the confirmation to dissertations@franklin.edu.

DISSERTATION WRITING AND PUBLICATION

Writing the Dissertation

Franklin University follows the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. All dissertations must adhere to Franklin’s dissertation template and conform to the style, format, and accessibility standards specified in the document titled “A Guide to Submitting Your Dissertation”.

Franklin’s dissertation template and “A Guide to Submitting Your Dissertation” can be found on the Resources page of the Office of Academic Scholarship (OAS) website:

<https://www.franklin.edu/about-us/policy-information/office-academic-scholarship/resources>.

Publishing Your Dissertation

All dissertations completed at Franklin University must be published according to the requirements set forth in “A Guide to Submitting Your Dissertation”, which can be found on the Resources page of the Office of Academic Scholarship (OAS) website:

<https://www.franklin.edu/about-us/policy-information/office-academic-scholarship/resources>.

Accessibility Requirement

To ensure digital accessibility of dissertations, Franklin University requires that dissertations submitted to the OhioLINK ETD meet the following requirements:

- The dissertation is submitted as a PDF file and includes full text. Full text means that the file includes a text layer which can be read by screen readers, as opposed to a PDF which is just an image-based PDF file.
- The PDF accessibility permission flag is checked.
- The text language of the PDF is specified.
- Figures and images include alternate text.
- The PDF document properties include the title, author, keywords, and subject.
- At least one heading level is included in the text and the document has appropriate headings.
- If color is used, it must not be the only means of conveying information and the text contrast of colors must not trigger a hard to read text contrast error.

Importance of Writing

Writing lies at the heart of any student’s doctoral work. While coursework, exams, and the dissertation will lend students considerable new knowledge in their research area, the progress

a student makes across these stages will also develop and demand sound academic writing and research skills.

To help students develop these skills, the doctoral writing program positions students to:

- Discover what distinguishes “good” writing in their field.
- Uncover and practice the habits that make writers successful.
- Draw on a range of resources to develop writing skills and habits throughout the degree process.

Just as a student’s understanding of “good” writing is continually shaped by the authors they read and the professors who mentor them, the writing program’s philosophy of good writing is informed by a range of stakeholders: students, writing faculty, faculty in other disciplines, partners at other institutions, and writing studies researchers.

In doctoral programs, good writing is characterized by five features:

1. **Sound Reasoning:** Good writing advances a coherent, well-evidenced line of reasoning that makes a novel contribution to the student’s field. Just what makes a line of reasoning “well-evidenced” or what distinguishes a “contribution” may vary across fields.
2. **Reader Engagement:** Good writing anticipates what expectations and values readers bring to the text in order to inform or to persuade this audience.
3. **Genre Awareness:** Good writing realizes the conventions of the given type of text. The literature review, for example, has features that distinguish it from the research paper or article abstract.
4. **Stylistic Savvy:** Good writing generates from language that is clear, cogent, and concise. It also conforms to the seventh edition of the American Psychological Association style manual.
5. **Scholarly Citations:** Good writing incorporates inclusion of relevant scholarly sources to support the material.

Developing these qualities takes significant time, and this work will extend over the course of an academic's career. Writing is an exciting, complex activity that will intrigue, surprise, challenge, and reward students throughout their doctoral journeys.

Embargo Policies

Franklin University generally does not allow publication embargoes on dissertations unless justified on a case-by-case basis. To request an embargo, note the following:

- Any embargo request must be submitted to the Office of Academic Scholarship at oas@franklin.edu.
- If the embargo request is approved by the Office of Academic Scholarship, it will notify the graduate, the dissertation committee, and the Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) administrator, who will post it as approved through the embargo request in both the OhioLINK ETD Center and Franklin University Scholarly Exchange (FUSE).
- The maximum time allowed for an approved embargo is one year.

Changes to Dissertation After Publication

Franklin University does not permit changes to published dissertations except for the following situations:

- For **minor typographical errors**, the University will permit the student to submit a correction on a separate errata sheet which must identify the original dissertation, the location and nature of the error, and the correction. The errata form must be submitted to the Office of Academic Scholarship at oas@franklin.edu.
- If the Office of Academic Scholarship approves the correction, it will notify the dissertation committee of the correction and provide the errata to the Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) administrator, who will post it as an additional file alongside the dissertation in the OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) Center and Franklin University Scholarly Exchange (FUSE).

- For cases of copyright infringement, or where a dissertation contains identifiable information about a study participant, the Office of Academic Scholarship may review the dissertation and determine whether the dissertation should be removed or edited.

APPENDIX

Committee Profiles Listings

<https://www.franklin.edu/committee-listing>

Request a Committee Change

<https://forms.office.com/r/y4b2mysD11>

Request a Third Attempt for the Comprehensive Exam

<https://forms.office.com/r/7r9PzUFUpq>

IRB Website

<https://www.franklin.edu/irb>

Library Support

<https://www.franklin.edu/learning-commons/tutoring-workshops>

Office of Academic Scholarship (OAS) Website

Here you can find templates for the dissertation and research proposal, the dissertation roadmap, a video library on qualitative and quantitative methods, guidelines on publishing the dissertation, and several useful articles about the dissertation process.

<https://www.franklin.edu/oas>

CONTACT INFORMATION



doctoralstudies@franklin.edu



www.franklin.edu



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