

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**

Doctoral Dissertation Research  
EDUC 999.001 (Variable Credit)

**Guidelines**

All students must satisfactorily complete a doctoral dissertation.

A Ph.D. in Education dissertation culminates doctoral study. Such a work must clearly demonstrate Ph.D. in Education candidates' abilities to apply principles of education to education-related problems in a chosen area of specialization. It must integrate knowledge of various disciplines with knowledge of relevant educational practice and theory. The dissertation must also make a significant contribution to existing knowledge or practice in education.

To be acceptable, a Ph.D. in Education dissertation must:

1. Address a clearly identified major societal or educational need or address a major educational issue as derived from the testimony of experts, analysis of research, projection of trends, and other accepted sources;
2. Have potential implications for education beyond local school audiences, clients, or settings;
3. Be unique -- it should not be a repetition of something that already exists or that has been accomplished in a student's earlier study;
4. Be scholarly -- it should be grounded in critically evaluated research and theory presented in a form consistent with the highest standards of organization and writing or other appropriate form of communication;
5. Be clearly in the field of education;
6. Have a conceptual, analytical component;
7. Furnish tangible evidence that the student is able to produce new knowledge or a new product for use in educational practice in a school, industrial, or governmental setting; and
8. Demonstrate that the student has improved or can improve the "state of the art" in educational practice, as opposed to only producing or adding to educational theory.

A Ph.D. in Education dissertation must be original, new work and not replicated research or work completed prior to entering the Ph.D. in Education Program or undertaken while in the program. It must also meet the standards of doctoral level scholarship and research. If a dissertation expands on some prior research or work of a student, it must go significantly beyond that research or work and must do so in a manner appropriate to doctoral level research.

It is the responsibility of a student's doctoral dissertation committee to ensure that a dissertation does not duplicate previous work by the student. In those instances where there appears to be duplication or where a dissertation or a proposed dissertation does not meet the stated standards

of a doctoral dissertation, the Ph.D. in Education Committee shall determine the acceptability of the proposed dissertation and the final dissertation. Any GMU faculty member may request such action, in writing, by the Ph.D. in Education Committee. The Committee will act only after consultation with the faculty and student involved and after any other inquiry it deems appropriate.

### **University Policies and Resources for Students**

- **Honor Code:** Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/> ].
- **Computer Use:** Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- **Email:** Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account ([masonlive.gmu.edu](mailto:masonlive.gmu.edu)).
- **Counseling Services:** The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- **Exceptional Needs:** Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- **Distractions:** Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- **Writing Support:** The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- **Professional Dispositions:** Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.
- **Core Values Commitment:** The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and

social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.  
<http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]