Doctoral Student
Key Information

Qualifying Exams

• The Qualifying Exam is given to all Doctoral students during their last semester of coursework. Two formats are offered, College Wide and Program Specific. The College Wide test takes 3 consecutive days to complete. The exam days are scheduled by the Graduate Support Office. The Program Specific exam(s) are arranged by the department. The Major Professor can advise students as to which type of test is most suitable. A Doctoral student has 2 opportunities to take and pass the exam. Students must pass the exam to qualify to apply for Candidacy status.
Qualifying Exam

- College of Education Application for Doctoral Qualifying Examination should be signed by both the student and the Major Professor/Co-Major Professor and turned into the Graduate Support office, EDU 320, by the posted deadline.
- For students opting to take the College wide exam, applications submitted after the stated deadline will be cleared to take the exam on a space available basis.
- All students taking the Qualifying Exam must have a current approved Planned Program of Study on file with the Graduate Support Office.
- In order to be cleared to take the Qualifying exam the student must be enrolled for a minimum of 2 graduate hours.
- All course work on the Planned Program should be completed or you should be taking your final semester of course work.
- If all course work is already completed student should be enrolled for Directed Research.
- The students Planned Program will be checked against their transcript and if it is determined that items are missing, the student and the Major-Professor will be notified via e-mail.
- If cleared to take the exam, the student will receive a clearance letter along with the Doctoral Qualifying Exam Instruction Sheet.
Candidacy

• If the student successfully passes the Qualifying Exam, the Major professor will submit the Verification of Doctoral Qualifying Exam Results form and the Admission to Candidacy Application signed by the entire committee to the Graduate Support Office, EDU 320 by the advertised deadline date.

• The Candidacy Applications are reviewed by the Graduate Support team, approved by the Associate Dean, and then sent to the USF Office of Graduate Studies for final processing. If the Candidacy Application is approved, the student will receive confirmation from the USF Office of Graduate Studies and the COEDU Graduate Support Office.

• When the student applies for Candidacy they must be registered for a minimum of 2 graduate hours.

• Once the student has been admitted to candidacy they can begin registering for dissertation hours as required by their program.
Proposal Defense

• The purpose of the proposal defense is to elicit professional input and insight related to the research problem and proposed method of inquiry. It is highly recommended that a proposal pre-defense be held, at which time the Doctoral Committee can discuss with the candidate any major changes necessary before the proposal is ready for the formal defense.

• The date, time, and place of the formal proposal defense should be decided at the pre-defense meeting.
Proposal Deadlines

- The candidate should provide each committee member a copy of the proposal at least 2 weeks prior to the pre-defense or 4 weeks prior to the formal defense (if a pre-defense is not held) to provide the committee members time to read and react to the proposal before it is scheduled for a formal defense.

- The signed request for proposal defense form, along with 2 copies of the proposal must be turned into the Graduate Support Office (EDU 320) no less than 3 weeks before the proposal defense date.

- **NOTE:** The student may not defend their dissertation in the same semester or within 3 calendar months of the date on which they successfully defend their proposal.
Final Dissertation

• After the proposal is approved, the candidate will meet periodically with the Major Professor and other members of the doctoral supervisory committee, as needed, to review the conduct and progress of the study. The dissertation must be completed consistent with the format specified in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition).

• While the student is in candidacy they are required to take a minimum of 2 dissertation hours each semester until they graduate including the semester in which the final oral examination is held and the semester in which the final copies of the dissertation are submitted to, and officially accepted by the USF Office of Graduate Studies.

• It is suggested that candidates begin the necessary paperwork and the scheduling of oral defense dates and ETD required Submission the beginning of the semester in which they plan to defend their final Dissertation/Thesis.
Final Dissertation Deadlines

• It is highly recommended that a pre-defense meeting be held, at which time the Doctoral Committee can discuss any major changes necessary before the dissertation is ready for the formal oral defense. The date, time, and place of the final oral defense should be decided at the pre-defense meeting.

• Candidates should distribute a draft of the final dissertation to their committee members at least 2 weeks prior to securing the committee member’s signatures on the request for Final Oral Defense form.

• Candidates must submit the signed request for Final Dissertation Defense along with 2 copies of their dissertation, and a completed but not signed Successful Defense form and Certificate of Approval form, no less than 2 weeks before the scheduled final defense date to the COEDU Graduate Support Office (EDU 320).

• It is highly recommended that candidates defend no later than two weeks before the USF Office of Graduate Studies deadline for ETD submission.
Ed.S. Project/Thesis

• Education Specialist (Ed.S.) Students are required to plan and successfully complete an individual project or thesis. The purpose of the thesis/project is to provide an opportunity for the student to apply knowledge gained in the program to the resolution of significant needs arising from professional practice.

• The Ed.S. thesis/project varies with the individual interests and professional responsibilities of each student. Check with your Major-Professor to determine which one you should complete, a project or thesis.
Ed.S. Project/Thesis Deadlines

- **Ed.S. Oral Proposal Defense** – The purpose of the proposal defense is to elicit professional input and insight from the Supervisory Committee relative to the identified problem and how the project will address it. Copies of the proposal to be defended orally will be distributed to the members of the Ed.S. Committee at least 2 weeks prior to the proposal defense. The Major Professor will schedule and chair the proposal defense.

- **Note:** Students may not defend their proposal and their final project/thesis within the same semester or within 3 calendar months of the date they successfully defend their proposal.

- **Final Oral Examination of the Thesis/Project** – When the Ed.S. Supervisory Committee has inspected the final draft of the thesis or project and finds it suitable for a formal defense, the Major Professor will schedule a defense date suitable to all members of the Supervisory Committee and the student. The Committee and the student will meet for an oral defense of the thesis/project. The defense will be chaired by the Major Professor. After the oral defense and approval of the thesis or project by the Supervisory Committee, the Education Specialist Thesis (or Project) Certificate of Approval form and the Record of Ed.S. Project form will be completed, as appropriate and submitted to the COEDU Graduate Support Office (EDU 320).
ETD Submission

- ETD (Electronic Thesis and Dissertation)
- The USF Office of Graduate Studies provides the semester deadlines for ETD Submission. Detailed information regarding the steps for ETD submission are on the USF Office of Graduate Studies ETD website: http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD-res-main.php.
- The final approved thesis or dissertation and all required forms and surveys must be submitted by the deadline. *Students that miss the final submission deadline will not be approved to graduate and will need to defer to the next semester.*
ETD Submission Forms

• Doctoral Students:
  – Signed Certificate of Approval
  – All surveys required by USF Office of Graduate Studies
  – First page of Plagiarism check report
  – Dissertation Submitted to ProQuest

• Specialist Students:
  – Signed Certificate of Approval
  – All surveys required by USF Office of Graduate Studies
  – Thesis/Project submitted to ProQuest
IRB (Internal Review Board)

• All students who plan to conduct or participate in a research study/project are required to complete training in the Protection of Human Subjects and obtain IRB approval prior to the start of the study and must file a copy of their Certificate of Completion (of an approved program) with USF’s Division of Research Compliance. As a doctoral student who has now entered candidacy and is about to embark on the conduct of your dissertation research you are required to complete the required training if your proposed research will involve participation of human subjects.

• Completion of the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) program in the Protection of Human Research Participants is available on-line at web site http://cme.nci.nih.gov/ and will meet the USF Requirement for the year. Save and Print the Certificate of Completion.

• When you submit your request for proposal defense, bring a copy of your IRB Certificate of Completion with you to the COEDU Graduate Support Office.

• **NOTE**: Your certificate of completion must be current for the year in which you file your application for IRB approval.