LIBERTY
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SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & THE ARTS

DOCTORAL PROGRAMS DISSERTATION HANDBOOK 2020-2021

This handbook is a guide to the dissertation process for Liberty University School of Communication & the Arts doctoral students. It does not constitute a contract and is subject to change at the discretion of Liberty University School of Communication & the Arts. This version of the dissertation handbook supersedes all previous versions.

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Administration and Support Team for Doctoral Programs

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Doctoral Program and the Dissertation Process

The doctoral programs in the School of Communication & the Arts (SCA) consist of two primary components: the coursework and the dissertation. The student completes coursework to develop and hone critical thinking skills, writing skills, and knowledge. The purpose of the coursework is to prepare the student to become a doctoral candidate. The doctoral dissertation is the final academic requirement for the doctoral program and is designed to evaluate the candidate's capabilities as a scholar. It is often more difficult and can often take longer to complete than the coursework.

1.2 Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about the dissertation process and related policies. The handbook is a guide for the dissertation, including the writing, the proposal defense, and the final dissertation. In general terms, the roles and responsibilities of the candidate and the committee are outlined. Because the completed dissertation is a publication of Liberty University (LU) and represents the university, the SCA, and the author, candidates are expected to maintain high standards concerning the content and appearance of their dissertations.

2. Academic Policies and Specialized Coursework

There are several academic policies that pertain specifically to the doctoral programs in the SCA. Some of the policies are dependent on the specific degree completion plan (DCP) the student is working under. More information about these policies is detailed below.

2.1 Time Limit for Completion of the Degree

The maximum time limit for completion of the doctoral program is seven years. Any student who does not complete coursework within the permissible time limit for any reason, including discontinued enrollment, must reapply for admission. If the student wishes to continue in the program at a later date, he or she will need to reapply and, if accepted, will be subject to all requirements for the DCP for the current academic year. A student may reapply to the program only once, and the Online Chair will determine how many additional semesters will be granted. Students who wish to appeal for extra time in the program should submit a formal appeal via the SCA Policy Appeals Form.

Exception: For students admitted with 18 or more hours of credit from an Executive Certificate in Communication or transferring from another doctoral program, the time limit for completion of the doctoral program is five years.

2.2 Number of NP Grades

Students are only allowed one No Pass (NP) grade as part of the doctoral program. Two NPs in any one course will result in removal from the program. This policy applies specifically to COMS 987, 988, 989, and 990.

2.3 Limit for Times Registered for COMS 987, COMS 988 and COMS 989

Candidates are only allowed to register for COMS 987 three times before successful completion of an approved proposal. In addition, candidates have a limit of six times registering for COMS 988 and COMS 989. Exceeding either of the limits will result in removal from the program. If the registration limit is exceeded, students who wish to continue in the program must submit a formal appeal via the SCA Policy Appeals Form in order to request an extension. Each student must

include a full justification of the request and, if applicable, documentation evidencing his or her

chair's support of the extension. If the appeal for an extension is approved, the Online Chair, in consultation with the Dean of the School of Communication & the Arts, will determine the new deadline for program completion. Any student who does not complete coursework within the permissible time limit for any reason, including discontinued enrollment, must reapply for admission. If students wish to continue in the program at a later date, they need to reapply and, if accepted, will be subject to all requirements for the DCP for the current academic year.

2.4 Continuous Enrollment Policy

After completion of COMS 987, students must be continually enrolled in the program until completion of COMS 990 (Dissertation Defense). Continuous enrollment means that the student must be enrolled in at least one course that will count toward completion of the doctoral program per semester (including summer). Failure to maintain continuous enrollment will result in removal from the program. If students wish to continue in the program at a later date, they need to reapply and, if accepted, will be subject to all requirements for the DCP for the current academic year.

Note: Students returning to the program after breaking enrollment for more than one year may be required to complete additional coursework or retake courses at the discretion of Online Chair in consultation with the Dean of the School of Communication & the Arts.

3. The Dissertation Committee

The standard dissertation committee for the doctoral program consists of two members:

(a)   a dissertation chair and (b) a committee member. One of the two, either the chair or committee member, must be an approved methodologist (see note below). Upon entry in the program, students should begin thinking about identifying a potential dissertation chair. Each

candidate should officially secure a dissertation chair and committee members by the conclusion of their coursework.

Note: One member of the committee, either the chair or committee member, MUST be a Liberty SCA certified research methodologist. Liberty SCA certified research methodologists are trained researchers in quantitative, qualitative, and/or applied research. They have demonstrated an established record of research, evidenced by their professional contributions to the field of education through peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations. They have experience in chairing and sitting as a committee member on numerous dissertation committees. Before being invited to serve as a Liberty SCA certified research methodologist, the methodologist's coursework, dissertation, publications, presentations, and teaching ability are considered.

3.1 Chair and Committee Selection (Committee Member Form)

Candidates will be given access to the Dissertation Pairing Tool once they reach 21 credits completed. <u>Either the chair or the committee member must be a Liberty SCA certified research methodologist.</u> Candidates should first reach out to prospective chairs one at a time. A mass email must never be sent to multiple faculty members. When contacting potential chairs and committee members, the candidate needs to organize and provide a complete methods chapter for a dissertation or a complete prospectus. Candidates who need assistance selecting a prospective chair can email SCADissertation@liberty.edu with an attached dissertation prospectus or methods chapter, as well as the names of any chairs already contacted, and the Doctoral Support Team will assist them in the committee search process.

When the chair and candidate identify a willing committee member, the candidate will complete the [Dissertation Pairing Tool.](#) All committee requests must be approved by the Doctoral Support Team. The Committee Member Form will be reviewed and candidates will be notified whether or not their chair and committee member selections are approved.

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Note: Once a chair and committee member are approved, changes to the committee will only be considered when there are extenuating circumstances. Under these circumstances, the candidate should contact the Doctoral Support Team at SCADissertation@liberty.edu to seek approval for a change in committee. The Doctoral Support Team is available to assist you with any questions or concerns during the dissertation process, and candidates should contact SCADissertation@liberty.edu immediately if they encounter any issues, such as concerns with committee members.

4. Dissertation Guidelines

4.1 Dissertation Research Topics

Students should start considering dissertation topics upon entry to the program. When opportunities exist, students should research the topic of interest in the form of literature reviews and related papers for doctoral coursework. **It is important to note that a research topic is not the same as a research study.** A topic is general in nature, whereas a research study is very narrow in focus with defined methods to answer a particular question(s).

Candidates are encouraged to pursue dissertation topics that are of personal relevance and significance; however, a candidate needs to ensure that the topic is researchable. It is wise to avoid topics that are overly ambiguous, challenging, and esoteric. Further, it is never ethical to conduct research where the researcher has any type of authority over the participants (e.g., teacher, professor, or administrator) if the data cannot be collected anonymously. Ideally, the research topic should be within the expertise and research interests of the potential dissertation chair. To become familiar with the SCA faculty and their research interests, candidates are encouraged to dialogue with faculty throughout their coursework, as well as look through the Chair/Committee Member search list.

Faith integration within the dissertation is acceptable where appropriate. If a faith perspective is included, it should be well-integrated throughout the manuscript (not included as an afterthought or simply tacked on).

4.2 Dissertation Research Designs

Dissertations may consist of various research designs; however, all research studies for the purpose of a doctoral dissertation should include a rigorous production of scholarly knowledge. Ph.D. candidates will choose either a quantitative or qualitative method. Candidates may choose

from among the following designs:

- For quantitative studies, standard research designs that a candidate may choose include true experiments (rarely done in education), quasi-experiments, causal-comparative designs, and correlational studies;

- for qualitative research, a candidate may choose to utilize phenomenological, grounded theory, case study, historical, and ethnographic designs; and

If a candidate wishes to use an alternate design, he or she will need to provide a rationale and seek approval from the Chair of Doctoral Programs and Research.

4.3 Recommended Textbooks

It is highly recommended that candidates retain their textbooks from their previous research and methods courses. These include:

Quantitative Textbooks.

Warner, R. (2013). *Applied statistics: From bivariate through multivariate techniques* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction* (8th Ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Green, S. B., & Salkind N. J. (2013). *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and Understanding Data* (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Qualitative Textbooks.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Schwandt, T. (2007). *The Sage dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA:

Sage Publications.

Applied Research Textbook.

Bickman, L., & Rog, D. (Eds.). (2009). *The Sage handbook of applied social research* (2nd ed.).

Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

4.4 Academic Honesty

Honesty and integrity are highly valued at LU and in the SCA. The same principles and expectations of academic honesty and integrity in coursework are true for the dissertation. The [Liberty University Code of Honor](#) details specific definitions, penalties, and processes of reporting. The presence of plagiarism, including structural plagiarism, within any dissertation manuscript or document may result in dismissal from the program, failing the dissertation course, and/or implementation of an intervention plan. The dissertation chair, the committee, and the SCA administration decide the final consequences of academic dishonesty.

The dissertation needs to be an original work of the candidate, and the reuse of previous research (e.g., master's theses, publications) is not acceptable. All previous work needs to be cited according to current American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines, and the APA manual's section on self-plagiarism should be reviewed. Properly crediting another individual's work is also an ethical imperative.

5. The Prospectus

In COMS 987, the candidate develops a complete research prospectus. The prospectus, comprised of Chapters One, Two, and Three of the dissertation, is the first formal document candidates write as part of the dissertation process. The prospectus is expected to be foundational to the formal proposal and then ultimately to the dissertation manuscript. All other

elements of the first three chapters of a dissertation are present. The prospectus is typically from 30 to 50 pages long, with a literature review (Chapter Two) of at least 30 pages.

The primary assignments in COMS 987 are the prospectus and the proposal defense. When submitting the manuscript for review, candidates must use correct APA formatting and grammar and ensure the research design and analysis sections include scholarly research text references. Failure to do so could result in not passing COMS 987.

Upon entrance into COMS 987, failure to implement the feedback from the chair and committee member, especially in regard to research design and analysis, will result in significant delays in the dissertation process.

6. Proposal

6.1 Develop the Proposal

After successful completion of the Dissertation Pairing Tool, the candidate will be enrolled in the first three hours of COMS 987 in his or her chair's section. Although COMS 987 is not a typical course, as the primary objective is to fully develop and defend the dissertation proposal, there are weekly progress quizzes, monthly Discussion Board updates, and manuscript submissions. COMS 987 is an A term course (full semester) and candidates must enroll continuously.

Upon enrollment in COMS 987, the candidate immediately begins working with his or her committee to develop a solid dissertation proposal. The proposal needs to consist, at a minimum, of the following: *Title Page*, *Abstract*, *Table of Contents, Chapter One: Introduction*, *Chapter Two: Literature Review, Chapter Three: Methods, References,* and *Appendices* with instruments, participant letters, and Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications. The proposal is approximately 50-70 pages in length, with a minimum length of 30 pages for the literature

review (Chapter Two). Although the proposal is normally lengthened as it is transformed into the first three chapters of the full dissertation, it may not change drastically once it is completed and approved as part of COMS 987. A change in topic and/or design may warrant the need for a candidate to complete additional coursework or retake courses at the discretion of the Online Chair.

6.2 Proposal Review: Milestone One

The committee chair always reviews the proposal manuscript first. When the chair is satisfied with the proposal and has given approval, the chair disseminates the proposal manuscript to the committee member for feedback. Committee member reviews can take up to two weeks. Whichever member of the committee is serving as the methodologist will provide feedback on the manuscript, with a specific focus on the proposed research methods. Once the committee is satisfied with the proposal, the chair will send it to SCADissertationRev@liberty.edu for a review by the Online Chair.
. A director review can take up to two weeks. *No proposal defense can take place without approval from the Online Chair.*

The candidate should expect that the proposal manuscript will go through multiple revisions before a proposal is approved for a proposal defense. Candidates should contact the Dissertation Coordinator if two weeks is exceeded or the committee chair becomes unresponsive. The committee chair should contact the Dissertation Coordinator if the committee member is not responsive. Once the chair and the committee member decide the candidate is ready for a proposal defense and the proposal has passed the Online Chair review, the candidate may move forward with scheduling a proposal defense.

6.3 The Proposal Defense

Once the candidate incorporates and addresses all feedback from the chair, committee member, and director, the candidate discusses with the chair his or her readiness for the proposal defense and schedules a time for the defense. At this stage of the process, the committee chair will submit the candidate's manuscript to SafeAssign, the university's plagiarism detection software, via the COMS 987 prospectus submission link in Blackboard. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to review the results from this submission.

The formal proposal defense normally takes place via the university's e-conferencing system (WebEx or Microsoft Teams) or by phone conference. The candidate is responsible for identifying dates and times convenient for the chair and committee member. The chair is responsible for facilitating the proposal defense via WebEx or Teams.

6.4 Defend the Proposal: Milestone Two

The formal dissertation proposal defense is normally about 60 minutes in length. After prayer and preliminary remarks by the chair, the candidate presents the proposal. The proposal needs to include the following: a description of the study's purpose and significance, the research question(s) and hypothesis(es) (if quantitative), and the methods (including the plans for the research design and analysis). The following procedures are recommended for the formal proposal defense:

- Introductions and welcome (chair)

- Opening prayer (chair)

- 10 minute presentation with PowerPoint on qualifying question (candidate)

- 10 minute presentation with PowerPoint on proposal defense (candidate)

- 20 minutes Questions and comments from committee

- 10 minutes Dismissal of candidate for committee deliberation

- Chair will contact the candidate with the committee decision and any required revisions

- Chair will notify the SCA at SCADissertationRev@liberty.edu of the outcome of the proposal defense within 24 hours

A maximum of two proposals may be defended. Failure to successfully defend within two successive proposal defenses could result in removal from the program or remediation (e.g., enrollment in additional coursework) before progression in the dissertation process. This decision is made by the Online Chair in consultation with the Online Dean of the School of Communication & the Arts.

7. IRB

7.1 Submit IRB Application(s)

After completion of a successful proposal defense, beginning in COMS 988 a IRB review and approval is needed before any participants may be recruited or data may be collected. IRB is a federally mandated body established to ensure ethical treatment of human subjects. Within 10 business days of the approved proposal defense, the candidate must submit his or her IRB application, ancillary material, and documentation of site permission(s) to his or her chair for an initial review and approval. The chair is responsible to ensure

(a) candidates use the most current application retrieved directly from the LU IRB website

(b) all applicable items are fully addressed and free from spelling or grammar errors, and

(c) that correct templates provided by the IRB are used (e.g., the informed consent). Once the chair has reviewed and approved the IRB application (by completing the signature page of the application), the candidate will submit

the IRB application and all other related documents to irb@liberty.edu for review. The chair MUST be copied on all communication with the IRB.

Candidates must submit documentation of institutional permission from each research site to the IRB prior to receiving IRB approval. If study procedures involve colleges or universities, IRB approval from those institutions will need to be obtained as directed by the specific institution's IRB. Permission from the research site may be sought prior to submitting the LU IRB application, but candidates must not begin recruiting participants until after receiving full IRB approval. If a candidate is unable to gain permission from the research site prior to submitting an application for IRB approval, LU IRB will review the rest of the application and issue a conditional approval letter to assist in obtaining needed site permission. Then once the candidate provides the applicable site permission documentation to the LU IRB, the IRB will change the conditional approval to a full approval, and the candidate may begin his or her research.

If the study will include faculty, students, or staff from *a single* department or group within LU, the candidate must obtain permission from the appropriate supervisor (e.g., Dean, Department Chair, Coach) and submit a signed letter or date/time stamped email to LU's IRB to verify approval to use students from that department or group. The candidate may submit the application without having obtained this permission; however, the IRB will not approve the study until proof of permission has been received. If the study will include faculty, students, or staff from *multiple* departments or groups within LU (e.g., all sophomores, LUO), the IRB will seek administrative approval on the candidate's behalf. Candidates should NOT contact the Provost's office directly.

Liberty University researchers planning to conduct survey research limited to LU students, faculty, and/or staff are required to use Qualtrics. Qualtrics is Liberty University's approved web-

based survey software tool. It allows the user to construct and distribute complex surveys and provide statistical reports based on the results. For studies that will involve survey research with LU students, faculty, and or/staff please contact SCADissertation@liberty.edu for information about Qualtrics.

7.2 Receive IRB Approval: Milestone Three

Although most IRB applications for educational research do not require full reviews, the IRB will make that decision. Candidates should refer to approval timeframes on the LU IRB website. Modifications to the application should be expected. Candidates should take care to thoroughly review the LU IRB website and incorporate all of the methodologist's feedback to avoid delays.

Execution of research **CANNOT** begin prior to receiving IRB approval. If data are collected or accessed prior to obtaining all necessary and full IRB approvals, the candidate will be removed from the program. Once IRB approval is obtained, the candidate must forward the IRB approval letter only, which includes the IRB approval number, to the Doctoral Support Team at SCADissertationRev@liberty.edu.

8. The Dissertation

8.1 Execute the Research and Develop Dissertation Manuscript

After IRB approval is given and all necessary consents (adults) and/or assents (minors) are given from participants, the candidate executes his or her research, including data collection

and analysis. Each candidate should note that depending on his or her level of comfort, ability, and competence with the chosen quantitative, qualitative analysis, or applied research, he or she may seek an outside consultant. However, the candidate is held responsible to know, to understand, and to answer for ethical behavior, procedures, accuracy, interpretation, and integrity of the research design and analysis.

Under the guidance of the committee chair, the candidate refines Chapters One through Three and writes Chapters Four and Five. The committee chair may advise the candidate to seek guidance from the committee member (if applicable) on specific aspects or may require that the candidate seek an outside editor.

8.2 Dissertation Review: Milestone Four

The chair always reviews the dissertation manuscript first. When the chair is satisfied with the dissertation and has given approval, the chair disseminates the manuscript to the committee member for feedback. Committee member reviews can take up to two weeks. Whichever member of the committee is serving as the methodologist will provide feedback on the manuscript, with a specific focus on the research methods. Once the committee is satisfied with the dissertation, the committee chair will send it to SCADissertationRev@liberty.edu for a review by the Online Chair. A director review can take up to two weeks. *No dissertation defense can take place without approval the Online Chair*.

8.3 Submit the Dissertation Manuscript for a Professional Edit

The final defense cannot be scheduled until the chair, committee member, and Online Chair have reviewed the dissertation and each granted approval for a final defense. During

the final revision process, a professional edit of the manuscript is required. The professional edit can be performed prior to or after the defense at the discretion of the dissertation chair and/or committee member based on the quality of the manuscript. This requirement may include a full edit or may simply be an APA edit. Candidates may use any professional editor.

8.4 Schedule a Dissertation Defense (Register for COMS990)

Ultimately, the chair and committee member, with approval from the Online Chair, decide when the manuscript is approved for defense. In the rare instance where the chair and committee member may disagree about the candidate's readiness for the defense, the Online Chair may make the final decision.

Once the dissertation manuscript is approved by the committee and Online Chair, the candidate and chair will schedule a time for the defense. The candidate is responsible for identifying dates and times convenient for the committee and for providing a list of dates and times to the chair. The defense date must be scheduled and the defense successfully completed at least four weeks prior to the last day of the semester.

Once a date and time are established, the candidate is also responsible for preparing and forwarding the Dissertation Announcement Template and SafeAssign report of the manuscript to the Doctoral Support Team at SCADissertationRev@liberty.edu (including the chair in the CC line) to schedule the defense. The candidate should submit the dissertation manuscript to SafeAssign in COMS 989. The chair should review the SafeAssign report to ensure it is acceptable before the candidate submits the Dissertation Announcement Template.

The doctoral support staff will post the defense time and date in the Dissertation Defense Calendar. The dissertation support staff also e-mails an Outlook appointment to the candidate, chair, and committee member. Once this Outlook appointment is sent, the date and time of the defense is considered to be officially set. The chair is responsible for informing each committee member of the date, time, and procedures of the defense. The chair is also responsible for scheduling and facilitating the WebEx or Teams meeting for the defense.

When the defense date and time are finalized, the candidate will be moved from COMS 989 to COMS 990 by the Doctoral Support Team. **Please note that a candidate may not enroll in COMS 990 without a confirmed dissertation defense date by all parties involved.** Candidates should remain enrolled in COMS 989 until a final defense is scheduled with the SCA.

8.5 Pre-defense

One to two weeks prior to the defense, the chair may schedule and conduct a pre-defense phone call or e-conferencing session to finalize the defense details and complete a practice defense. This is a good opportunity to make sure WebEx or Teams works well for the candidate and committee members before the final defense date. At the chair's discretion, the pre-defense conference may include only the chair and candidate.

8.6 Preparing for the Defense

The candidate is responsible for emailing the final copy of the dissertation manuscript to the committee approximately two weeks prior to the dissertation defense. The candidate prepares a 15-20 minute presentation of his or her dissertation for the defense; a visual presentation (e.g., PowerPoint) is required. The presentation should be sent to the committee at least one week prior to the defense. The candidate should check with the committee to see if

they would like to receive a printed copy of the dissertation at least one week prior to the final defense. Candidates are required to use a webcam, have reliable internet and phone connections, be in professional dress, be in a professional location, and have technological support on hand, if needed, to ensure the defense runs smoothly. WebEx or Teams must be used for distance defenses, and the chair is responsible for setting up the WebEx or Teams meeting. Only the candidate is required to share video through WebEx or Teams during the defense.

8.7 Defend the Dissertation: Milestone Five

The dissertation defense takes approximately one hour to complete. The only people who should attend a defense are the candidate, the dissertation committee, LU faculty members, and SCA doctoral students. The following procedures are recommended:

- Introductions and welcome

- Opening prayer by chair and introduction of the committee and candidate

- 15-20 minute presentation by candidate

- Questions and comments from the committee

- Questions and comments from the SCA Faculty

- Dismissal of candidate for committee deliberation

- Re-connection with candidate for decision and discussion of revisions, as applicable

- Final remarks

After prayer and preliminary remarks by the chair, the candidate gives the defense presentation. The presentation needs to include the following: an overview of the study's purpose and significance (both practical and empirical), the methods, the analysis, the results,

limitations, discussion of the findings, and suggestions for future research. The presentation should be used as an aid. Reading from the presentation or script is not acceptable and may result in an unsuccessful defense. Following the defense presentation, the committee members will ask questions. Following questions and discussion, all individuals not on the committee, including the candidate, will disconnect to provide the committee the opportunity to discuss the defense. Using the Dissertation Defense Decision Form for guidance, the committee will make a decision. The candidate is invited to reconnect, and the chair will inform the candidate of the outcome. The committee makes one of the following decisions:

- Approved with no revisions or minor revisions

- Provisionally approved with major revisions

- Not approved with recommendation to revise dissertation or write a new dissertation

If the committee makes one of the first two decisions, the chair delineates the required steps and specifies a timeline for completion (usually 7-15 days). It should be noted that, at the discretion of the chair and dependent upon the number of revisions that need to be made, the chair may require that that candidate have his or her manuscript professionally edited again.

A maximum of two dissertation defenses may be completed. Failure to defend successfully within two defenses will result in removal from the program. Within 24 hours of the defense, the chair should send the Dissertation Defense Decision Form (which includes a final grade) to SCADissertationRev@liberty.edu so that the Doctoral Support Team can post the final grade in COMS 990.

9. Publication and Graduation

Upon approval from the chair, the candidate follows the Jerry Falwell Library (JFL)

submission guidelines for publication. These guidelines must be strictly followed and can be accessed at the following webpage: Theses and Dissertation Publishing Guidelines. Candidates should note that the final grade for COMS 990 cannot be posted without the JFL confirmation e-mail evidencing that the dissertation is accepted. This email must be forwarded to SCADissertationRev@liberty.edu by the last day of the term in order to receive a final grade for COMS 990. The dissertation should be submitted to the JFL *no later than one week before the end of the term* as it may take one to two weeks to receive the confirmation e-mail from the JFL.

As a reminder, the candidate must complete requirements and paperwork necessary for graduation and should plan to attend the hooding ceremony and graduation exercises in May. Graduation information can be found on the Registrar's website. Application for graduation should be completed no later than the beginning of the term in which the candidate intends to defend the dissertation.

Appendix A: Dissertation Committee Qualifications and Responsibilities

The Chair

Qualifications

- LU faculty member or approved chair from the School of Communication & the Arts

- Must hold an earned doctorate degree from a regionally accredited university. This normally means a Ph.D. in a communication-related field.

Responsibilities

- Provides mentorship to doctoral candidates through the dissertation process as outlined in the Dissertation Handbook, from the development of the proposal to the final publishing of the dissertation. This includes providing timely and thorough feedback. All feedback on manuscripts, unless otherwise communicated to the candidate, should be provided within a two to four-week timeframe.

- Provides feedback on doctoral candidate's skills and provides necessary referrals for additional support.

- Ensures that the proposal and the dissertation manuscript comply with all university criteria and are acceptable scholarly works, including conformity to content, structure, format, style, and ethical guidelines.

- Ensures frequent communication with candidate and consultation with committee member.

- Communicates with the committee member frequently and welcomes his or her suggestions for the candidate's manuscript.

- Uses all dissertation technologies as outlined in the Dissertation Handbook. Completes

Blackboard responsibilities as outlined in the dissertation handbook.

- Completes necessary forms and rubrics as outlined in the dissertation handbook.

- Makes proposal and dissertation defense arrangements.

- If the chair is the methodologist on the committee, he or she will also be directly responsible for ensuring that the highest standards are met regarding research methods, design, procedures, and analysis (primarily Chapters Three and Four of the dissertation).

Committee Member

Qualifications

- Approved School of Communication & the Arts *committee member*.

- Must hold an earned doctorate degree from a regionally accredited university. This normally means a Ph.D. in a communication-related field.

Responsibilities

- Provides mentorship to doctoral candidate through the dissertation process as outlined in the Dissertation Handbook, from the development of the prospectus to the final publishing of the dissertation. This includes providing timely and thorough feedback.

- Works collaboratively with the committee chair to guide the candidate in the dissertation process. All feedback on manuscripts, unless otherwise communicated to the candidate, should be provided within a two-week timeframe.

- If the committee member is the methodologist on the committee, he or she will also be directly responsible for ensuring that the highest standards are met regarding research methods, design, procedures, and analysis (primarily Chapters Three and Four of the dissertation).

Appendix C: Dissertation Approval Process

Below is a visual representation of the dissertation approval process showing the order of major milestones and flow of the overall process.

Dissertation Approval Process
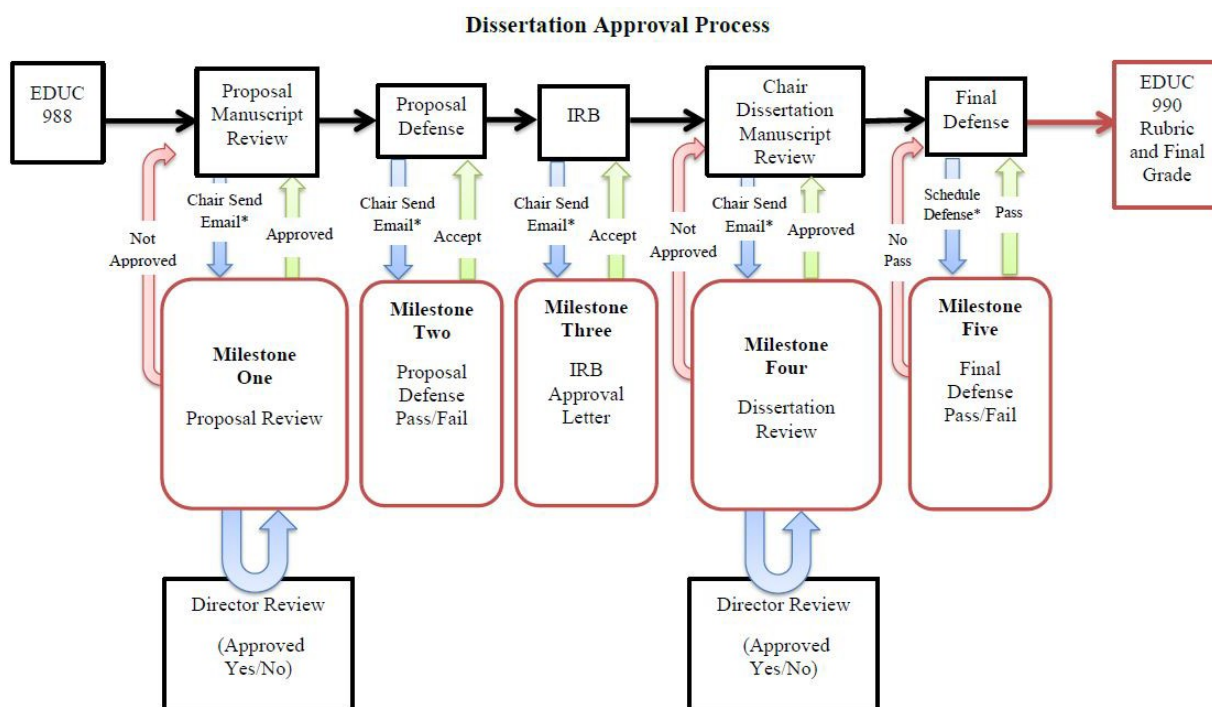
*Send email to SOEDissertationRev@liberty.edu

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