

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DOCTORAL PROGRAMS
CAPSTONE PROJECT
HANDBOOK
2020-2021

This handbook is a guide to the capstone project for Liberty University School of Education doctoral students. It does not constitute a contract and is subject to change at the discretion of Liberty University School of Education. This version of the capstone handbook supersedes all previous versions.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Doctoral Program and the Capstone Project Process

The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) program in the School of Education (SOE) consists of two primary components: the coursework and the capstone project. The student completes coursework to develop critical thinking skills, writing skills, and knowledge. The purpose of the coursework is to prepare the student to become a doctoral candidate. The doctoral capstone project is the final academic requirement for the Ed.D. program and is designed to evaluate the candidate's capabilities to solve a problem of practice or improve a practice. The capstone project is also referred to as the Educational Report.

1.2 Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about the capstone project process and related policies. The handbook is a guide for the capstone project, including the writing, the proposal defense, and the final defense. In general terms, the roles and responsibilities of the candidate and the faculty mentor are outlined. The Doctoral Support Team is available to assist you with any questions or concerns during the capstone process, and candidates should contact SOEDocPrograms@liberty.edu immediately if they encounter any issues.

2. Academic Policies and Specialized Coursework

There are several academic policies that pertain specifically to the doctoral programs in the SOE. 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 Degree Completion Time Limit

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 Administrative Chair of Doctoral Programs and Research 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 [SOE Policy Appeals Form](#).

Exception: For students admitted with 18 or more hours of credit from an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) program 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 EDUC 887, 888, 889, and 890.

2.3 Course Registration Limits for EDUC 887, EDUC 888, and EDUC 889

Candidates will register for EDUC 887 one time, EDUC 888 one time, and EDUC 889 up to two times before successfully completing the final manuscript of the capstone project. Exceeding the registration limit 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 [SOE 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 faculty

mentor's support of the extension. If the appeal for an extension is approved, the Administrative Chair of Doctoral Programs and Research, in consultation with the Director of Applied Doctoral Research, 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 Requirement

After completion of EDUC 880, students must be continually enrolled in the program until completion of EDUC 890 (Capstone IV). 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 the Administrative Chair of Doctoral Programs and Research in consultation with the Director of Applied Doctoral Research.

2.5 SOE Doctoral Community

The [SOE Doctoral Community](#) is a Canvas site that houses important information about the capstone project process. While this handbook provides a general guide for the capstone project, the SOE Doctoral Community provides more detailed step-by-step information for each milestone in the process.

3. Capstone Faculty Mentor

Candidates will work with one faculty mentor to complete the capstone project. The capstone mentor must hold an earned doctoral degree (Ed.D. or Ph.D.) in an education-related field and be employed by Liberty University. After completion of EDUC 880, candidates will be assigned a faculty mentor to begin working with in EDUC 887. Candidates will work with the same faculty mentor for the remainder of the doctoral program.

4. Registering for Capstone Courses

Once assigned a capstone faculty mentor following EDUC 880, the SOE Doctoral Support Team will submit a registration request for each candidate's first capstone course. Subsequent registrations will also be submitted each semester by the Doctoral Support Team. For any questions related to registering for capstone courses, please contact SOEDocPrograms@liberty.edu.

5. Capstone Project Guidelines

5.1 Capstone Project Topics

The purpose of the capstone project is for candidates to gain practical experience solving a problem of practice or improving a practice at a specific site within their field. Candidates are encouraged to pursue a capstone project that is of personal relevance and significance; however, a candidate needs to ensure that the topic is researchable and that the proposed project is viable. The topic must be related to solving a problem of practice or improving a practice at one specific site. Because the capstone project is site-specific, the results and solution to the problem are not generalizable beyond the site, and the project will not be published or disseminated beyond the site. Often the site will be a K-12 school setting or a university where the candidate is employed, however, it is possible to conduct a capstone project at another similar educational organization or

site when appropriate. Further, ethical concerns must be considered if the researcher has any type of authority over the participants (e.g., teacher, professor, or administrator). Candidates should start considering a possible capstone project problem of practice or practice to improve early in the program. Finally, faith integration within the capstone project 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).

5.2 Capstone Project Data Collection

The capstone project is conducted using applied research methods and should consist of three data collection approaches which is called a multimethod approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods must be included. The first approach must be interviews and must include five participant interviews. The second and third approaches may be selected at the candidate's discretion and with the approval of their faculty mentor. Candidates may choose two of the following approaches for a total of three data collection methods (the first being interviews):

- focus group (must conduct one focus group with 5-8 participants)
- surveys (must collect a total of 15 responses)
- document analysis (may include qualitative or quantitative data)
- observations

Any other approach/project will require written approval from the Administrative Chair of Doctoral Programs and Research.

5.3 Required Textbook

Claxton, B. L., & Michael, K. Y., (2020). *Applied Research in Education*. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

5.4 Academic Honesty

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

The capstone project 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.

6. The Prospectus

Leading up to EDUC 880, candidates will begin to develop the capstone project in EDUC 816 and EDUC 850. In EDUC 880, the candidate will continue to develop the prospectus. The Educational Report Template (See Appendix A) is used to develop the prospectus. The Educational Report Checklist is used to ensure that all requirements for the Educational Report have been met (See Appendix B). The prospectus (section one and two) is the first formal document candidates write as part of the capstone process. The prospectus is expected to be foundational to the formal proposal and then ultimately to the capstone project. The primary assignment in EDUC 880 is the prospectus (minus the literature review). To earn a pass on this assignment, the candidate is expected to incorporate all feedback from EDUC 816

and EDUC 850 professors. 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. It is highly recommended that EDUC 880 be taken when the candidate has sufficient time to devote to developing a solid prospectus. Failure to do so could result in not passing EDUC 880, and this course may only be taken twice.

Upon entrance into EDUC 887, all feedback from the EDUC 880 course should be discussed with the faculty mentor. Failure to implement the feedback, especially in regard to design and analysis, will result in significant delays in the capstone project process.

7. Site Permission

While working on developing the approved EDUC 880 prospectus into a full proposal, the candidate should work on obtaining site permission for the study. The candidate will need to secure an official letter from the gatekeeper of the proposed research site. This letter will need to be included in the proposal in the appendix before sending it to the faculty mentor for a formal review.

Note: If a research site requires IRB approval, please visit the IRB website at www.liberty.edu/irb for more information.

8. Milestone One: Capstone Proposal Review

8.1 Develop the Proposal

Upon enrollment in EDUC 887, the candidate is provided access to the EDUC 887 Canvas course that is facilitated by the faculty mentor. Although EDUC 887 is not a typical course, as the primary objective is to fully develop the capstone project proposal, there are required assignments that must be submitted. EDUC 887 is an A-term course (full 16-week semester).

Upon enrollment in EDUC 887, the candidate immediately begins working with his or

her faculty mentor to develop a solid capstone project proposal. The proposal needs to consist of section one of the capstone project outline. The proposal is approximately 25 to 50 pages in length, with a minimum length of 15 pages for the literature review. Although the proposal is normally lengthened as the capstone project progresses, it may not change drastically once it is completed and approved as part of EDUC 887. After the topic has been approved in EDUC 850, candidates may not change the topic without approval from their course instructor. A change in topic and/or research approaches may warrant the need for a candidate to complete additional coursework or retake courses at the discretion of the Director of Applied Doctoral Research.

8.2 Proposal Review

The faculty mentor always reviews the candidate's proposal manuscript first. The faculty mentor is responsible for making sure that the candidate's proposal has met every requirement on the capstone project by using the Educational Report Checklist (See Appendix B). The proposal review must also include a permission letter from the gatekeeper of the proposed research site. The proposal may not be submitted for a Director Review without an official permission letter. When the faculty mentor approves the proposal, he or she will email it, along with the permission letter, to SOEDocReview@liberty.edu for a review by the Director of Applied Doctoral Research. A director review can take up to two weeks. *No proposal defense can take place without approval from the Director of Applied Doctoral Research.*

The candidate should expect that the proposal manuscript will go through multiple revisions with the faculty mentor before a proposal is submitted for approval by the Director of Applied Doctoral Research. Candidates should contact SOEDocReview@liberty.edu if two weeks is exceeded or the faculty mentor becomes unresponsive. Once the faculty mentor and Director of

Applied Doctoral Research decide the candidate is ready, the faculty mentor may move forward with scheduling a proposal defense presentation.

9. Milestone Two: Capstone Proposal Defense

Once the proposal has been approved by the Director of Applied Doctoral Research, the capstone mentor will schedule a proposal defense. The formal proposal presentation is facilitated by the capstone mentor and normally takes place via Microsoft Teams. The candidate is responsible for communicating possible dates and times to the faculty mentor for the proposal defense.

The formal proposal presentation and ensuing discussion is normally about 30 to 45 minutes in length. After prayer and preliminary remarks by the faculty mentor, the candidate presents the proposal to the faculty mentor. The proposal defense presentation needs to consist of section one of the Outline of an Educational Report (See Appendix A). The focus of the presentation should be the data collection procedures. The following procedures are recommended for the formal proposal presentation:

- Opening prayer by faculty mentor
- 10-15-minute presentation of PowerPoint by candidate
- Questions and comments from faculty mentor
- The faculty mentor will decide the candidate's readiness to move forward with data collection.
- The faculty mentor will notify the SOE at SOEDocReview@liberty.edu of the outcome of the proposal presentation within 24 hours using the Defense Decision Form (see Appendix C)

A maximum of two proposals may be defended. Failure to gain approval to move

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forward within two successive proposal defenses could result in removal from the program or remediation (e.g., enrollment in additional coursework) before progression in the capstone project process. This decision is made by the Administrative Chair of Doctoral Programs and Research in consultation with the Director of Applied Doctoral Research.

10. Data Collection

After the successful completion of the proposal presentation, the candidate will begin to collect data. Written permission to conduct the capstone project must be obtained from the administration at the intended site (e.g., the superintendent, principal of the participating school, the key gatekeepers at any site, etc.). Include the permission letter in an appendix of the capstone project. A capstone project may not be submitted for a director review, and data may not be collected, without a permission letter. Collecting data without evidence of site permission may result in removal from the program. LU does not require IRB approval for the capstone project because it is site-specific, the results and solution to the problem are not generalizable beyond the site, and the project will not be published or disseminated beyond the site. However, some school systems and organizations outside of LU may have specific requirements in order to use their site for your capstone project. This may require IRB approval.

Any ethical considerations or implications of the capstone project should be discussed in the capstone manuscript. These might include securing the collected data (e.g., locked filing cabinets and password protection for electronic files), usage, influence, confidentiality (e.g., use of participant pseudonyms), and any other potential issues that might arise and how they will be addressed. The information contained in this capstone project is intended to solve a specific problem at a specific location for specific stakeholders and is not generalizable to a broader population. Therefore, this information should not be shared or distributed outside of the site-

specific stakeholders. If you plan to share this project outside of the immediate stakeholders, you must secure LU IRB approval before collecting. Failure to do so may result in removal from the program.

11. Milestone Three: Capstone Project Review

By the time the candidate enrolls in EDUC 889, the candidate will continue to collect and analyze data and should work on the final capstone manuscript. EDUC 889 is an A-term course (full semester) and candidates must enroll continuously, up to two times, until the final capstone project is approved. While in EDUC 889, candidates analyze the data and complete the final write-up before the final defense presentation.

11.1 Develop Final Capstone Project

Under the guidance of the faculty mentor, the candidate refines sections One and Two and writes sections Three and Four. The faculty mentor may advise the candidate to seek an outside editor to assist with revising or formatting the manuscript. The candidate and the faculty mentor are responsible for making sure that the candidate's final manuscript has met every requirement on the Educational Report Checklist (see Appendix B). The candidate should expect that the capstone manuscript will go through multiple revisions with the faculty mentor before a final manuscript is submitted for approval by the Director of Applied Doctoral Research. The capstone project outline is provided in the SOE Doctoral Community in Canvas (see Appendix A).

11.2 Submit the Capstone Project Manuscript for a Professional Edit

The final defense may not be scheduled until the faculty mentor and Director of Applied Doctoral Research have reviewed the capstone project and each granted approval for a final defense. During the final revision process, a professional edit of the manuscript may be required. The professional edit should be performed prior to submission for a final director

review. Candidates may use any professional editor.

11.3 Capstone Project Review

When the faculty mentor approves the final capstone project, he or she will send it to SOEDocReview@liberty.edu for a review by the Director of Applied Doctoral Research. A director review can take up to two weeks. *No capstone project defense may take place without approval from the Director of Applied Doctoral Research.*

12. Milestone Four: Capstone Project Defense

Once the capstone project is approved by the faculty mentor and the Director of Applied Doctoral Research, the faculty mentor will schedule a time for the final defense presentation. The candidate is responsible for communicating possible dates and times to the faculty mentor for the final defense. The defense date must be scheduled and the defense successfully completed at least four weeks prior to the last day of the semester term, which is Week 12 of the A-term (specific deadline dates for each semester are noted in the SOE Doctoral Community in Canvas). At this point, the candidate should also submit the capstone project to the Manuscript Turnitin Submission Assignment in EDUC 889 in Canvas.

12.1 Preparing for the Capstone Project Defense

The candidate prepares a 15-20-minute presentation of his or her capstone project for the final defense; a visual presentation (e.g., PowerPoint) is required. The presentation should be sent to the faculty mentor in advance. 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 presentation runs smoothly. Microsoft Teams must be used, and the faculty mentor is responsible for setting up the Teams meeting.

The capstone project defense takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. The only people who must attend the defense are the candidate and the faculty mentor. It is optional to invite key stakeholders and/or community partners from the capstone project site who may wish to attend the presentation. The following procedures are recommended:

- Opening prayer by faculty mentor
- 15-20 minute presentation by candidate
- Questions and comments from the faculty mentor
- Final remarks

After prayer and preliminary remarks by the faculty mentor, the candidate presents the capstone project PowerPoint presentation. The presentation needs to include the following: an overview of the study's purpose and significance (both practical and empirical), the research questions, the methods, the analysis, the findings, and the solution to the problem. The visual presentation (e.g., PowerPoint) should be used as an aid. Reading from the presentation or script is not acceptable. Following the presentation, the faculty mentor and optional invited stakeholders and/or community partners may ask questions.

Once the candidate has successfully defended his or her final capstone project, the faculty mentor will notify the Doctoral Support Team at SOEDocReview@liberty.edu. The notification must include the following three items:

1. Final approved manuscript
2. Faculty Mentor approved Turnitin Report
3. The Defense Decision Form (see Appendix C)

Once the capstone project is successfully defended and the SOE receives the three items noted above, candidates will be enrolled in EDUC 890, which is a zero-credit hour course that is added

to the final semester.

Using the Defense Decision Form (see Appendix C) for guidance, the faculty mentor will make one of the following decisions and inform the candidate:

- PASS: Approved with minor or no further revisions
- PASS: Provisionally approved with major revisions
- NO PASS: Not approved with recommendations to revise or rewrite

If the faculty mentor makes one of the first two decisions, the faculty mentor delineates the required steps and specifies a timeline for completion (usually within 7 days). It should be noted that, at the discretion of the faculty mentor and dependent upon the number of revisions that need to be made, the faculty mentor may require that the candidate have his or her manuscript professionally edited again. A maximum of two capstone project defenses may be completed. Failure to successfully defend the capstone project within two attempts will result in removal from the program.

13. Graduation

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 complete and defend the capstone project.

Appendix A: Outline of an Educational Report (Capstone Project)

Section One

TITLE

Prepared for:

Presented by:

Date:

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REFERENCES

APPENDIX

Appendix B: Educational Report Checklist (Capstone Project)

Complete every checklist requirement in Section One below to ensure that your capstone project meets all of the requirements for a proposal defense. Complete every checklist requirement in Section Two below to ensure that your capstone project meets all of the requirements for a final defense.

Checklist for Format

- All in-text citations are in correct current APA format.
- Most in-text citations are from scholarly sources published within the last 5 years
- All references are in correct current APA format.
- There are no spelling or grammar errors.
- The headings are in correct current APA format.
- The permission request email and the approval response email are in the appendix.
- The paper is saved as: Lastname_Firstname_Proposal *or* Final_Date Example:
Campbell_Karen_Proposal_7-8-20

Section One

Checklist for the Cover Page

- Does the cover page include a title that is derived from the research question?
- Does the cover page include “Prepared for” information, including the site name and address?
- Does the cover page include the “Presented by” information, including the full name of the researcher?
- Does the cover page include the date the report was completed or presented?

Checklist for a Table of Contents

- Does the Table of Contents include the following headings in this order?
- Executive Summary
- About the Investigator
- Permission to Conduct Research
- Introduction

- Literature Review
- Procedures
- Findings
- Recommendations
- References
- Appendices

Checklist for the Executive Summary

- Does the Executive Summary include the problem of the study?
- Does the Executive Summary include the purpose of the research?
- Does the Executive Summary include the setting?
- Does the Executive Summary include the rationale for the study?
- Does the Executive Summary include the central research question?
- Does the Executive Summary include procedures?
- Does the Executive Summary include the recommendations?
- The Executive Summary is approximately one page (no longer).
- The Executive Summary does not include quotes.
- The Executive Summary is in paragraph format.
- The Executive Summary is written in past tense.

Checklist for About the Investigator

- Does the About the Investigator section include the researcher's name?
- Does the About the Investigator section include the researcher's professional credentials?
- Does the About the Investigator section include a clear description of the researcher's relationship to the educational site?
- Does the About the Investigator section include biases?
- Does the About the Investigator section include a professional headshot portrait?
- The About the Investigator section is written in paragraph format.
- The About the Investigator section is written in present and/or past tense.

Checklist for Permission to Conduct the Research

- Does the Permission to Conduct research section include the name of the gatekeeper(s) and their position (principal, superintendent, etc.)?
- Does the Permission to Conduct research section include a reference to the appendix where the written permission letter is located? (For example: See Appendix A).
- The Permission to Conduct the Research section is written in narrative paragraph format.
- The Permission to Conduct the Research section is written in past tense.

Checklist for Ethical Considerations

- Does the Ethical Considerations section include a description of ethical treatment of participants specific to your study?
- Does the Ethical Considerations section include solicitation of participants procedures?
- Does the Ethical Considerations section include a brief description of the specific participants (teachers, administrators, etc.)?
- Does the Ethical Considerations section include data protection strategies (i.e., pseudonyms)?
- Does the Ethical Considerations section include storage of data strategies?
- Does the Ethical Considerations section include IRB permission, if applicable?
- The Ethical Considerations section is written in paragraph format.
- The Ethical Considerations section is written in past tense.

Checklist for the Organizational Profile

- Does the Organizational Profile include the educational site?
- Does the Organizational Profile include whether the organization is public or private?
- Does the Organizational Profile include the geographic location?
- Does the Organizational Profile include the mission statement?
- Does the Organizational Profile include demographic information?
- Does the Organizational Profile include a description of the faculty and/or staff?
- Does the Organizational Profile include a description of programs and services, if applicable?
- The Organizational Profile is written in paragraph format.
- The Organizational Profile is written in past tense.

Checklist for Introduction to the Problem

- Does the Introduction to the Problem begin with the problem statement?
- Does the Introduction to the Problem include supporting evidence (statistics, facts)?
- Does the Introduction to the Problem include what was done in the past to solve the problem?
- Does the Introduction to the Problem include what is currently being done to solve the problem?
- The Introduction is written in paragraph format.
- The Introduction to the Problem is written in past tense.

Checklist for Significance of the Problem

- Does the Significance of the Problem include a description of the practical contributions the project makes to the stakeholders and organization?
- Does the Significance of the Problem include how the research could improve educational conditions for the community at large?
- Does the Significance of the Problem include citations to support assertions?
- The Significance of the Problem is written in paragraph format.
- The Significance of the Problem is written in past tense.

Checklist for Purpose Statement

- Does the Purpose Statement section follow the template for the purpose statement?
- Does the Purpose Statement section include the data collection approaches?
- Does the Purpose Statement section include details related to each approach (participants, documents, artifacts, etc.)?
- The Purpose Statement is written in paragraph format.
- The Purpose Statement is written in past tense.

Checklist for the Central Research Question

- Is the Central Research Question derived from the problem and purpose statements?
- Does the Central Research Question follow one of the two formats provided in the Central Research Question section of this textbook?

Checklist for the Definitions

- Do the Definitions include all terms relevant to the study?
- Are the Definitions defined using the literature and not a dictionary?
- Are the definitions cited?
- Are definitions presented in list format?

Checklist for the Literature Review

- The Literature Review begins with an Overview.
- The Overview is followed by the Narrative Review.
- The Narrative Review presents justification for the rationale for the study.
- The Literature Review is not presented as a collection of citations from multiple journal articles.
- The Literature Review is presented as a synthesis of the literature.
- The Literature Review demonstrates a clear connection between prior research and the proposed research.
- The historical context of the problem of practice is clearly presented.
- A critical analysis of the literature is evident.
- The cause of the problem, as identified in the literature, is presented (if known).
- Prior solutions are presented.
- Solutions to the problem found in the literature are presented.
- Most journal articles (approximately 80%) are less than 5 years since publication.
- The Literature Review is focused on solving the problem.
- The authors' voice is heard throughout the literature review.
- Each paragraph begins with a topic sentence.
- The Literature Review is written concisely.

Checklist for the Interview Procedures

- Does the Interview Procedures include the type of interview (structures, unstructured, semi-structured) and its justification?
- Does the Interview Procedures include sampling type (purposeful sampling, snowball, etc.)?

- Does the Interview Procedures identify the participants?
- Does the Interview Procedures identify the rationale for participant selection?
- Does the Interview Procedures include how the interviews were conducted (face-to-face, phone, etc.)?
- Does the Interview Procedures briefly explain data analysis procedures?
- Does the Interview Procedures include number of interview questions?
- Does the Interview Procedures include the Interview Questions and their rationale (the majority of questions should be cited using the literature)?
- The Interview Procedures is written in paragraph format.
- The Interview Procedures is written in past tense.

Checklist for the Survey Procedures

- Does the Survey Procedures include the type of survey (Likert scale, multiple choice, true/false, etc.) and its justification?
- Does the Survey Procedures include sampling type (purposeful sampling, snowball, etc.)?
- Does the Survey Procedures identify the participants?
- Does the Survey Procedures identify the rationale for participant selection?
- Does the Survey Procedures include how the survey was conducted?
- Does the Survey Procedures briefly explain data analysis procedures?
- Does the Survey Procedures include number of survey questions?
- Does the Survey Procedures include the survey questions and their rationale (the majority of questions should be cited using the literature)?
- The Survey Procedures is written in paragraph format.
- The Survey Procedures is written in past tense.

Checklist for the Documents Procedures

- Does the Documents Procedures section include the type of document?
- Does the Documents Procedures section identify the rationale for using the documents?
- Does the Documents Procedures section include how the documents were obtained?
- Does the Documents Procedures section briefly explain how data were analyzed?
- The Documents Procedures section is written in paragraph format.

- The Documents Procedures section is written in past tense.

Section Two

Checklist for the Interview Findings

- Does the Interview Findings include the type of interview?
- Does the Interview Findings include a brief overview of the procedures?
- Does the Interview Findings include a Description of Participants?
- Does the Interview Findings include Interview Results in the form of tables to include coding, quotations, and frequency word counts?
- Does the Interview Findings include a discussion of the findings and interpretation?
- Does the Interview Findings include a discussion of themes with supporting evidence?
- The Interview Findings is written in paragraph format.
- The Interview Findings is written in past tense.

Checklist for the Survey Findings

- Does the Survey Findings include the type of scale?
- Does the Survey Findings include a brief overview of the procedures?
- Does the Survey Findings include a Description of Participants?
- Does the Survey Findings include Survey Results in the form of tables?
- Does the Survey Findings include a discussion of the findings and interpretation?
- Does the Survey Findings include a discussion of themes with supporting evidence?
- The Survey Findings is written in paragraph format.
- The Survey Findings is written in past tense.

Checklist for the Documents Findings

- Does the Document Findings section include the type of documents analyzed?
- Does the Document Findings section include a brief overview of the procedures?
- Does the Document Findings section include results in the form of tables and figures?
- Does the Document Findings section include an interpretation of the data?

- Does the Document Findings section include a discussion of themes with supporting evidence?
- The Document Findings section is written in paragraph format.
- The Document Findings section is written in past tense.

Checklist for the Recommendations

- Does the Recommendations section include the Purpose of the study?
- Does the Recommendations section include the central research question?
- Does the Recommendations section list specific recommendations numerically?
- Does the Recommendations section discuss each recommendation separately using headings?
- Does the Recommendations section include justification for each recommendation based on the literature review and data collected?
- Does the Recommendations section include the implications (pros and cons)?

Checklist for the Roles and Responsibilities

- Does the Roles and Responsibilities section include each recommendation under its own heading?
- Does the Roles and Responsibilities section describe the roles and responsibilities of each person needed to accomplish the recommendation?
- Does the Roles and Responsibilities section include possible personnel implications (hiring, training, certifications)?
- Does the Roles and Responsibilities section describe specific responsibilities assigned to each role?

Checklist for the Resources Needed

- Does the Resources section include a heading for each of the recommendations?
- Does the Resources section include enough detail to account for all resources?
- Does the Resources section include numerical values, if applicable?

Checklist for the Timeline

- Does the Timeline include a timeline for each recommendation in table format?

- Does the Timeline include the date and action for completing each item?
- Does the Timeline include enough detail that the recommendation could be implemented effectively?

Checklist for the Summary

- Does the Summary include the goal of the study?
- Does the Summary include the data collection methods used?
- Does the Summary include one or two take-aways from the Implications section?
- Does the Summary include the recommendations to solve the problem or improve the practice?

Appendix C: Defense Decision Form

Defense Decision Form

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Faculty Member: Email this completed form to SOEDocReview@liberty.edu within 24-hours of the defense.

Highlight one:

Dissertation Proposal Defense

Dissertation Final Defense

Capstone Proposal Defense

Capstone Final Defense

Student Information	
Candidate Name	
Project Title	
Date of Defense	
Committee Information	
Chair/Mentor	
Committee member (Dissertation Only)	
Committee member (Dissertation Only)	

Highlight one:

PASS: Approved with minor or no further revisions

PASS: Provisionally approved with major revisions

NO PASS: Not approved with recommendations to revise or rewrite

Explain decision (as applicable):

Presentation of Capstone Project Rubric (Highlight the appropriate score for each category based on the candidate's presentation during the final presentation.)

	Advanced (3 pts)	Proficient (2 pts)	Developing (1 pt)
Literature Review	The presentation includes a complete representation of related research along with a complete written literature review to support and justify the research.	The presentation includes a complete representation of related research along with a complete written literature review to support and justify the research.	The presented literature review may be unclear or non-existent, and the written literature review does not fully justify the research.
Theoretical Framework (if applicable)	The presentation and the written literature review include a complete theoretical framework to fully support the research question(s). If not applicable, give full points.	The presentation and the written literature review include a theoretical framework to support the research question(s).	There is a brief or non-existent mention of the theoretical framework during the presentation and/or the literature review.
Methodology	The presentation and methodology sections are written in correct format and includes clear, understandable and justified questions and objectives.	The presentation and methodology section include use of proper format, and appropriate questions and objectives.	The presentation and methodology section do not include proper formatting and/or does not include clear questions and objectives.

Presentation of Capstone Project Rubric (Highlight the appropriate score for each category based on the candidate's presentation during the final presentation.)

	Advanced (3 pts)	Proficient (2 pts)	Developing (1 pt)
Data Collection	The candidate thoroughly and clearly articulates the approaches and related data collection procedures.	The candidate clearly describes the approaches and the data collection procedures.	The candidate mentions approaches and data collection procedures but does not clearly.
Data Analysis	The candidate clearly evaluates, synthesizes, and interprets educational research through presentation of data and findings.	The candidate evaluates and interprets educational research through presentation of data and findings.	The candidate does not clearly present findings and data analysis.
Communication: Presentation	The candidate is poised during the presentation, and clearly and fluently demonstrates effective communication in writing, while speaking, and while listening to others.	The candidate demonstrates poised and effective communication in writing, and while speaking during the presentation.	The candidate lacks poise and does not present information clearly and effectively.

Written Capstone Manuscript Rubric (Highlight the appropriate score for each category based on the quality of the final capstone manuscript.)

	Advanced (3 pts)	Proficient (2 pts)	Developing (1 pt)
Introduction	Candidate clearly articulates the nature of a research topic, including the relevant literature.	Candidate articulates the nature of a research topic, including the relevant literature.	Candidate is unable to articulate the nature of a research topic in an understandable fashion.
Review of Literature	The candidate includes a complete representation of related research along with a complete written literature review to support and justify the research.	The candidate includes a representation of related research along with a written literature review to justify the research.	The literature review may be unclear or non-existent, and the written literature review does not fully justify the research.
Methods/ Approach	The methodology section is written in correct format and includes clear, understandable and justified questions, and objectives.	The methodology section is written in correct format and includes understandable and justified questions, and objectives.	The methodology section does not include proper formatting and/or does not include clear question and objectives.
Results/ Outcomes	The candidate clearly evaluates, synthesizes, and interprets educational	The candidate evaluates and interprets educational research through	The candidate does not clearly present findings and data analysis.

Written Capstone Manuscript Rubric (Highlight the appropriate score for each category based on the quality of the final capstone manuscript.)

	Advanced (3 pts)	Proficient (2 pts)	Developing (1 pt)
	research through presentation of data and findings.	presentation of data and findings.	
Discussion and Summary	The candidate demonstrates complete ability to conduct and interpret a study through discussion of the findings and results to conduct an independent research investigation that helps to solve the problem of practice.	The candidate demonstrates ability to conduct and interpret a study that may help to solve the problem of practice.	The candidate fails to demonstrate the ability to conduct and interpret a study and discuss the results.
Writing Quality	The candidate utilizes skills in writing and other forms of communication that are consistent with professional expectations at the doctoral level, including proper use of formatting.	The candidate utilizes skills in writing and other forms of communication that are appropriate, including proper use of formatting.	The candidate does not demonstrate skills in writing and use of proper formatting for completion of a capstone project.

Disposition Rubric					
In your work with the doctoral candidate, has he or she displayed the following dispositions?	Strongly Agree (4 pts)	Agree (3 pts)	Neither Agree or Disagree (2 pts)	Disagree (1 pt)	Strongly Disagree (0 pt)
Social Responsibility					
Commitment / Work Ethic					
Reflection					
Integrity					
Professionalism					