



## COE Dissertation Proposal and Defense Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to doctoral students, faculty, and staff regarding procedures for dissertation Proposal and Defense meetings, which can occur remotely or in person. This document is updated as needed by the College of Education. Students should visit the Academic Calendar posted on the University's Registration and Academic Services website for specific deadlines for forms.

### Proposal and Dissertation Guidelines and Forms

Please review the doctoral procedures and guidelines so you are aware of the various requirements of doctoral students prior to and during the proposal and defense process. Guidelines can be found in the [COE Doctoral Program Requirements and Procedures](#) document.

Notes for Students:

Students must be registered in the semester they are proposing or defending their dissertation.

#### Tips for Initiating and Completing DocuSign Forms

- Do NOT Copy and paste Email addresses. DocuSign does not recognize copied/pasted email addresses.
- Students should initiate forms using their Lehigh email address (e.g., [abc213@lehigh.edu](mailto:abc213@lehigh.edu)). Alias or personal (non-Lehigh) email is not recognized by DocuSign.
- Students should use their committee members' full name and Lehigh email address (e.g., [drx123@lehigh.edu](mailto:drx123@lehigh.edu)) (no alias or personal email, e.g., [Charles.Xavier@lehigh.edu](mailto:Charles.Xavier@lehigh.edu)). Non-Lehigh email addresses can be used for committee members who are not Lehigh faculty.
- Students are encouraged to check on the progress of their DocuSign to ensure timely completion of forms.
- Students should communicate to their committee members to check their SPAM/Junk Mail folders for DocuSign notifications.

### PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

#### 1. Organizing the Dissertation Committee/Revising the Dissertation Committee

The **student** should select and consult with their **Dissertation Chair** on the composition of the Dissertation Committee as per the [requirements and procedures document](#). This form should be submitted through DocuSign at least two weeks before your proposal meeting.

- The Student will initiate the [Doctoral \(Special\) Committee Approval form](#) through DocuSign. If necessary, please attach the CV of a Committee Member not affiliated with Lehigh University.
- **Committee Chair or Co-Chair** reviews the listed Committee Members and checks for CV of outside Committee Member (if applicable) and approves/signs the Doctoral (Special) Committee Approval form

first in DocuSign. The form then moves on to the Department Chair and Dean for consideration/approval signatures in DocuSign.

- CHANGES to the committee will require the **Student** to initiate the [Doctoral \(Special\) Committee Approval form](#), indicating a revised committee. Please check “Revised Committee” box.

## 2. Prior to Dissertation Proposal Meeting

- The **Dissertation Chair** will get approval from each committee member through email, no fewer than 5 business days prior to the dissertation proposal meeting, in order to proceed with the proposal meeting.
- The **Dissertation Chair** will communicate approval of all committee members through an email to the Program Coordinator, all committee members, and the student.

**The subject heading of the email should read: Student Name-Scheduling of Dissertation Proposal Meeting**

Dear **Program Coordinator, Committee Members, and Student,**

I am writing to confirm that **Student Name's (LIN: 81234567)** committee approves moving forward with his/her/their dissertation proposal meeting. I have scheduled the proposal meeting for **time on date**. The zoom link is: **xxxxx**  
Sincerely,

**Dr. X**

- The **Dissertation Chair** will schedule a Zoom conference, face-to-face meeting, or hybrid meeting (in the event that the student or committee members cannot attend physically). The face-to-face meeting will occur in a room at Lehigh University, with students excused to allow for private committee deliberations that occur after the formal presentation. There should be breakout rooms and share screen options available for Zoom or hybrid meetings. The proposal meeting will have an open session and a closed session. The open session will include the Student, Committee members, and Guests. The closed session will move non-committee members to one breakout room. Committee members will be in another breakout room which will provide them an opportunity to make their deliberations privately. Instructions for Zoom breakout sessions can be found [here](#). The Chair should consult [Best Practices for holding secure Zoom meetings](#).
- **Students** should prepare to deliver the Oral Presentation via Zoom or face/face, with shared Powerpoint presentation if necessary. Students may consult the following webpage for information on how to use the Zoom platform: <https://its.lehigh.edu/services/explanation/zoom>.

## 3. After the Dissertation Proposal Meeting

- The **Dissertation Chair** will send an email to the Program Coordinator, Committee Members, and the Executive Assistant to the Dean indicating the results of the Dissertation Proposal meeting. Please complete the email template below.

The subject heading of the email should read: **Student Name Dissertation Proposal Signatures**

Dear **Program Coordinator, Executive Assistant to the Dean, and Committee Members,**

On behalf of **COMMITTEE MEMBER 1; COMMITTEE MEMBER 2; COMMITTEE MEMBER 3,** I write this email to confirm that **Student Name (LIN: 81234567)** successfully proposed **his/her/their** dissertation on **date**. Please accept this email as confirmation that **he/she/they** have passed **his/her/their** proposal and have made all revisions requested to **his/her/their** dissertation proposal. I approve **his/her/their** advancement to doctoral candidacy. I am copying all committee members as indication of our approval. I have attached the first three chapters of the Dissertation.

Sincerely,

Dr. X

- The **Student** will initiate the following forms found on the [College of Education doctoral information](#) page using DocuSign.
  - (1) [Program of Study Form](#) (this form must be signed first, then attached to (2) below)
  - (2) [Application for Admission to Candidacy](#) with these attachments uploaded in DocuSign
    - [Signed Program of Study Form](#)
    - Abstract
    - Title page
  - (3) Students should address all incompletes with their instructors and check their transcripts in Banner for proper grades.
- The **Executive Assistant to the Dean** will send the two forms above, letter to student from Dean (Candidacy Letter), Candidacy Confirmation Checklist, Doctoral (Special) Committee Approval Form, Title Page, and the Abstract of Proposal, to Registration and Academic Services copying the Dissertation Chair and Program Coordinator. After the student is sent the Letter from the Dean (Candidacy Letter) and supporting documents, the Executive Assistant to the Dean will populate the RAS Candidacy folders.

## **DISSERTATION DEFENSE GUIDELINES**

Students must receive approval from the University IRB before they begin collection of any data involving human subjects. Students should work with their Dissertation Chair on drafts, submitting their final draft for their Committee's approval to move to Defense.

### **1. Prior to Final Dissertation Defense Meeting**

- At least ten business days prior to the dissertation defense, the **Dissertation Chair** must get the dissertation draft approved from each committee member through an email to proceed to defense. The draft should be completed to such an extent that any revisions suggested by the examination be editorial in nature and not constitute any substantial changes. It is the responsibility of the special committee to withhold approval of the draft until these conditions are met. Please note the Dissertation Draft submission deadline in the semester of graduation required by the [Academic Calendar](#).
- Upon committee approval, the **student** will initiate the [Dissertation Draft Approval form](#) through DocuSign for signatures of committee members, prior to the deadline as mentioned above. A copy of the abstract and title page should be attached to DocuSign.

- Permission to proceed to defense will be demonstrated through an email sent from the **Dissertation Chair** to the Program Coordinator, Executive Assistant to the Dean, all committee members, and the student indicating that all committee members are in agreement that the oral defense may proceed.

**The subject heading of the email should read: Student Name - Scheduling of Dissertation Defense Meeting**

Dear Program Coordinator, Executive Assistant to the Dean, Committee Members, and Student,

I am writing to confirm that Student Name's (LIN: 81234567) committee approves moving forward with his/her/their dissertation defense. I have scheduled the defense meeting for date and time, location (if face to face), and/or zoom link: ADD ZOOM LINK HERE. Their dissertation draft, title page, and abstract are attached to this email as separate documents.

Sincerely,

Dr. X

- The **Dissertation Chair** will schedule a Zoom conference, face-to-face meeting, or hybrid meeting (in the event the student and/or committee member cannot attend physically). The face-to-face defense meeting will occur in a room at Lehigh University, with the student excused after the formal presentation so that committee members can deliberate. In the case of Zoom or hybrid meetings, there should be breakout rooms and share screen options available. The defense meeting will have an open session and a closed session. The open session will include the Student, Committee members, and Guests. The closed session will move non-committee members to one breakout room. Committee members will be in another breakout room which will provide them an opportunity to make their deliberations privately. Instructions for Zoom breakout sessions can be found [here](#). The Chair should consult [Best Practices for holding secure Zoom meetings](#).
- After the Dissertation Draft is approved by the committee, the student will receive an email from the **Executive Assistant to the Dean** with instructions for the submission of the dissertation packet and ProQuest Dissertation Guidelines. Feedback regarding formatting will be provided by the Executive Assistant. Students should make changes to the format, but documentation of changes is not needed for the defense to occur.
- At least ten days prior to the oral defense, the **Program Coordinator** will prepare and submit an Oral Defense Memo for the Department Chair and Dean's signature through DocuSign, copying the Executive Assistant to the Dean.
- At least five working days prior to the oral defense, the **Program Coordinator** will notify the Dean of Education, the faculty of the Education and Human Services Department, and Program students through an email announcement. The abstract, the date/time, and zoom link should be included in the email.

TO: **College of Education Staff and Faculty, Students:**

The College of Education has scheduled the final oral examination of **NAME OF STUDENT** for the degree of **TYPE OF DOCTORAL DEGREE** in **PROGRAM**. The examination is to be held on **DATE AND TIME** in the **location** and Zoom link if applicable. If you wish to attend, please send an email requesting the passcode.

The title of the dissertation is **XXXXXXXXXX**.

The abstract, title page, and committee announcement are attached.

## 2. After the Dissertation Defense Meeting

- Students and the Dissertation Chair should be aware that the University requires a complete dissertation packet to be submitted by the last day of class each semester. The deadline is established by the [academic calendar](#) to ensure that there is enough time to process all paperwork before commencement and hooding ceremonies.
- Students will need to ensure that they have adequate time between the defense meeting and the final submission of the dissertation packet to RAS to:
  - (1) satisfactorily respond to all suggested edits from dissertation committee members;
  - (2) have their dissertation approved for formatting by the Executive Assistant to the Dean; and
  - (3) complete all necessary paperwork.
  - (4) proper upload of dissertation to ProQuest.
- The **student** will initiate the following forms found on the [College of Education doctoral information](#) page and [RAS website](#) using DocuSign.
  - (1) [Report on Doctoral Dissertation Defense](#) - students initiate immediately after the defense.
  - (2) [Dissertation Signature Sheet](#) - student submits after revisions are made to the dissertation following the defense.

## 3. Submission of Dissertation Packet

- Once all changes recommended by the dissertation committee have been made, the student will email a Microsoft Word version of the final dissertation to the Executive Assistant to the Dean at [mad415@lehigh.edu](mailto:mad415@lehigh.edu).
- The student should submit the following paperwork to the Executive Assistant to the Dean which will be forwarded to RAS:
  - a. Title Page
  - b. Abstract
  - c. Bursar Fee paid through [Marketplace](#). Email receipt to Executive Assistant to the Dean
  - d. [Open Access Permission Form](#)
  - e. Completed "[Commencement Program Information](#)" Form
  - f. Certificate of Completion, which is produced after completion of the Survey of Earned Doctorate at (<https://sed-ncses.org>)

## 4. After Submission of Final Dissertation and Paperwork

- The **Executive Assistant to the Dean** will verify that the Dissertation adheres to Dissertation Guidelines located at: [http://coe.lehigh.edu/sites/coe.lehigh.edu/files/documents/dissertation\\_guidelines.pdf](http://coe.lehigh.edu/sites/coe.lehigh.edu/files/documents/dissertation_guidelines.pdf).
- The **Executive Assistant to the Dean** will send an email to the student indicating approval (or necessary edits) of the Dissertation. This final review may take 5 business days.

- The **student** will then upload their final dissertation onto the following website:  
<http://www.etdadmin.com/lehigh/>
- The **Executive Assistant to the Dean** will locate the dissertation on the ProQuest website and start the “ProQuest checklist” certifying compliance on all steps of the dissertation process. An email will automatically be sent to the student from the ProQuest ETD Administration site as to whether the dissertation is accepted or changes need to be made.
- Once the dissertation is accepted on ProQuest, the **Executive Assistant to the Dean** will create a clearance letter to the Vice Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The dissertation and supporting documents will be sent to the student, RAS, the Dissertation Committee Chair, and the Program Coordinator.
- The **Executive Assistant to the Dean** will add the students' clearance documents in the RAS Clearance Drive.
- The **Executive Assistant to the Dean** will enter all Dissertation Committee members and Dissertation information into Banner.