

EDUCATION LEADERSHIP



Student Handbook

- Master of Education, Education Leadership with or without Resident Principal Certification
- Residency Principal's Certificate
- Initial Superintendent Certificate
- Doctor of Education Leadership

Mission

The Woodring College of Education mission statement provides context and purpose for our actions.

Woodring College of Education facilitates life-long learning through exemplary teaching to prepare quality education, health, and human services professionals for democratic citizenship and meaningful careers. As a college that serves the state, nation, and world, we:

- Construct, transform, and convey knowledge by integrating research, theory, and practice;
- Cultivate student growth through extensive community and school engagement in collaboration with exemplary practicing professionals;
- Act with respect for individual differences, including taking a strengths-based view;
- Develop collaborative partnerships that promote the learning and well-being of individuals, families, and the community; and
- Evaluate processes and outcomes to ensure continual program improvements.

Vision

The vision of Woodring College of Education frames our future.

Woodring College of Education fosters community relationships and a culture of learning that advance knowledge, honor diversities, and promote social justice.

For information and advisement regarding Western Washington University programs in Education Leadership, please contact one of the individuals listed below:

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Woodring College of Education

SECTION I: WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

Welcome to the Education Leadership Program at Western Washington University. We are one program Education Leadership with the following components:

- Master of Education degree
- residency principal certificate
- initial superintendent certificate
- Doctor of Education Leadership EdD

Included here is information to (1) assist you in deciding whether Education Leadership is the field you wish to study, (2) get you started in our program, and (3) help you successfully complete program requirements. If you have any questions, feel free to ask!

WWU Education Leadership Mission

The mission of the WWU Education Leadership Program is to prepare exemplary leaders to meet the demands of school and district leadership focused on optimal achievement for all students by:

- ensuring a rich balance of theory and practice;
- supporting candidates throughout the program and their administrative careers;
- providing extensive training in the job search process;
- assisting those seeking administrative positions in their placement;
- developing and sustaining collaborative relationships with school districts in western Washington;
- actively recruiting high-quality candidates;
- actively participating in P-12 and university-level associations;
- continuously demonstrating our commitment to exemplary teaching, scholarship, and service.

Our program is built on [NELP Standards & Washington State Standards for principal & superintendent certifications](#); [WCAEP commons assessments](#); incorporating the [British Columbia School Superintendent's Association competencies for system leadership](#), the [Spirit of Leadership](#)

Degrees & Certificate Programs

The Education Leadership Program prepares P-12 educators for school or district leadership roles in public or private school settings. Our degree and certificate components are field-based, effectively integrate theory and practice, and include an intensive administrative internship. Our mission is to prepare exemplary leaders to meet the demands of school and district leadership focused on optimal achievement for all students.

Beginning Summer 2021, all EDAD courses were approved to be taught remotely. During the pandemic, we switched to teaching these courses remotely synchronous each quarter on the scheduled course times via Canvas. During the academic year, each quarter is 10 weeks with the summer quarter being 6 weeks.

[M. Ed in Education Leadership](#) (45 credits) offered in both British Columbia and the United States

[M. Ed in Education Leadership with Principal Certification](#) (57 credits, 45 course work, 12 internship) offered in Washington.

The Education Leadership program is designed to prepare elementary and secondary school teachers and ESAs to assume leadership roles as principals, vice principals, deans, program and

Revised July 2023

Department of Education Leadership and Inclusive Teaching
Woodring College of Education

department leaders, or instructional technology specialists. The Education Leadership program includes a master's degree option for those who do not hold a master's degree. Principal certification requirements include a year-long internship.

The Education Leadership program is offered on the Bellingham main campus as well as a cohort comprised of the greater Puget Sound area, including lower British Columbia.

Classes are held Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday evenings 5:00 – 8:50 pm during the academic year; during the six-week Summer quarter two days a week, Monday & Wednesday 8:00 am – 1:50 pm.

Internship is one academic school year (three quarters beginning and ending of school year activities), 540-clock hours of which at least one half shall be during school hours when students and staff are present, under the supervision of a mentoring principal.

[Residency Administrator Certificate \(Principal\)](#) (45 credits, 33 course, 12 internship)

Designed for educators who hold a master's degree or are currently enrolled in a master's program. Candidates earn the Washington State residency administrator certificate (principal).

Classes are held Tuesday & Thursday evenings 5:00 – 8:50 pm during the academic year; during the six-week Summer quarter two days a week, Monday & Wednesday 8:00 am – 1:50 pm.

Internship is one academic school year (three quarters beginning and ending of school year activities), 540-clock hours of which at least one half shall be during school hours when students and staff are present, under the supervision of a mentoring principal.

[Initial Administrator Certificate \(Superintendent\)](#) (32 credits)

Designed for aspiring superintendents and other school district leaders, such as assistant superintendents, executive directors, and program managers. Candidates earn the Washington State initial superintendent's certificate.

Classes held three weekends per quarter with the exception of Summer quarter (Friday evenings, all-day Saturday)

[Education Leadership, EdD](#) (87 credits: 32 credits/Superintendent curriculum; 55 credits/Doctoral curriculum)

Western's Doctor of Education Program (EdD) is designed for aspiring superintendents and district leaders, including assistant superintendents, executive directors, and others in district-level leadership positions. Candidates who have either earned the Washington State Initial Superintendent's Certificate, or who are currently in the WWU program, may apply for candidacy for the EdD program. This four-year program is comprised of two parts. The first two years of the program include 6 courses (32 credits) delivered using a variety of modalities built to accommodate educational professionals, and a two-year internship resulting in a Washington State Superintendent's Credential. The next two years of the program moving into candidacy will be six courses that include two research institutes (40 quarter credits), plus a research sequence culminating in the dissertation (15 quarter credits).

Revised July 2023

Department of Education Leadership and Inclusive Teaching
Woodring College of Education

Classes held three weekends per quarter (Friday evenings, all-day Saturday). Summer quarter courses will be held the first full week after the fourth of July for one week.

Activate your Universal Account

Upon admission to the program, you will receive information on how to set up your new [universal account](#) which give you access to myWestern, Web4U, your Western Washington University email, Canvas, and more. Your WWU email is the official means of communication for any correspondence with faculty, staff, and departments. Students are also responsible for all information sent to them via the University assigned account, including attachments. **This policy ([POL U7100.02](#)) requires that all communication is done from students WWU email account.**

Once you have set up your universal account, you can [forward your WWU account to another email address](#) that you check regularly, if you prefer. If you need additional assistance, please contact [Academic Technology & User Services](#) (ATUS) via email (helpdesk@wwu.edu) or telephone (360.650.3333). Make sure you have your Western ID # or W#. Students who choose to forward messages from their WWU email account to another account are still responsible for all the information (including attachments) that are sent to the WWU email account. WWU expects that such communications will be received and read in a timely fashion.

Email is a form of professional communication. You will want to frame all emails in a thoughtful manner. Remember that communication through email can often have a negative tone because the reader cannot hear the author's inflection or see body language. Because of this, it is best to think carefully about how the message sounds and is likely to be received.

Please include your Western ID# (W#) in your email communication with staff and other departments.

Admission & Registration via Web4U

Web4U is located on the WWU homepage through myWestern. Web4U is accessible by current and former students with login credentials. Current students can register for classes, pay their tuition, check final grades, etc.

If you are a matriculated student (i.e., have been formally admitted to the university), you may register for courses via Web4 Students – click on the “myWestern” link at the top of the page, login, select Web4U, and follow instructions. You will receive a quarterly registration email informing you that registration is open for the upcoming quarter and which courses are offered that quarter. Registration is completed through Web4U by entering the CRN (Course Reference Number) for each course. Be sure to refer to the email each quarter for the courses to register for.

Please contact the program manager if an "override" approval is required.

What is considered full-time enrollment?

The Graduate School defines full-time enrollment as 8 or more credits per quarter. However, for purposes of certain kinds of financial aid, or certain kinds of on-campus student employment, the definition is 10 credits because of state or other regulations. You should contact your lending agency for specific information.

Remember that all students must complete a Graduate Plan of Study on [Degree Works](#) during their first quarter of study; the Graduate School will place a “hold” on future registrations until the Plan is completed.

University Policies

All university policies are in the official catalog. These include Use of WWU email as the official means of communication, prerequisites, student standing, graduation, major evaluations, withdrawal, grades, grade reporting, Academic Honesty Policy, Academic Grievance Policy, etc. See the [University Academic Policies](#) page for more information.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Western Washington University students are responsible for reading, understanding, and following the policy and procedures regarding academic dishonesty as set forth in the [WWU Academic Dishonesty Policy](#).

Disability Access Center

We welcome students with disabilities to our programs as they often have a unique understanding of student abilities, and the difficulties that children with disabilities may encounter in the school system. ADA and Section 504 require that programs make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities to meet program requirements.

In order to access these supports, college students with disabilities must go through the Disability Access Center (DAC). You can find contact information at <http://disability.wvu.edu>

Library Services

The [Western Libraries](#) offers many services and resources to students, including [Hacherl Research & Writing Studio](#), [The Learning Commons](#), access to many databases, interlibrary loan services, research assistance by phone or e-mail, and [Western CEDAR](#) (Contributing to Education through Digital Access to Research).

Immunization (COVID & Measles) Clearance

Western has a commitment to the health and safety of all members of our campus community and has a policy requiring proof of [COVID Vaccination Status](#) as well as [Measles Immunizations](#) the [Student Health Center](#). **All students, including those who are taking 100% of their courses remotely must meet Western Washington University's COVID Vaccine and Measles Immunity Requirement. A hold on registration will be imposed until the appropriate records are provided to the Student Health Center.**

Course Evaluation & Program Assessment

- Instructor/course evaluations are completed by students each quarter
- These evaluations are conducted anonymously and are electronic.
- The Graduate School is required to complete a review every 5 years to assess and evaluate the program.
- Staff and faculty meet monthly to perform regular “check-ins” and evaluate and assess the program

Financial Aid & University or Woodring Scholarships

Information and application forms for [Financial Aid and Scholarships](#) and [Woodring College of Education](#) Scholarships for Graduate Students.

Revised July 2023

Department of Education Leadership and Inclusive Teaching
Woodring College of Education

Continuous Enrollment & Leave of Absence

Once admitted to the University, if you do not register for at least one course per quarter during the academic year, you will need to reapply to the Graduate School. If you need to stop out of the program for a quarter during the academic year (excluding summer quarter) you can register for the continuous enrollment course (cost is currently \$50.00) which will maintain your active status. This will be waived for those students who are granted an official leave of absence through the Graduate School Dean. Instances of incapacitating injury or illness, personal emergency, military orders, or other extenuating circumstances. Contact the [Graduate School](#) for the information.

Incomplete (K) Grades

Students who cannot complete a course and receive permission from their instructor may be assigned an incomplete (K) grade in accordance with the regulations outlined in the Academic Policies section of the university catalog. This must be completed prior to the due date for grade submissions.

Breaks in Enrollment (Returning Graduate Student Application)

Students who fail to maintain Continuous Enrollment or receive approval for a Leave of Absence must complete and submit the Returning Graduate Student Application (Cost is currently \$100) in order to return to the program. Readmission to the program after an unofficial leave is not guaranteed. You should notify us before you need to either take a break from the program or re-enroll for course work.

Five-Year Limit

Graduate degree programs at Western must be completed within five years of the quarter in which you were admitted to the program. The quarter(s) you are not enrolled or stopped out still count towards the five-year limit on degree completion. Please note that all student computer accounts, access to computer labs, library privileges and any other technology services will be purged and deleted at the end of this five-year period.

Tuition and Fees

The Student Business Office is responsible for the financial administration of all student billing related to tuition and fees, and the processing of refunds as well as providing support and advice to students to aid in understanding their student account with the university. To contact the Student Business Office call (360) 650-3470 or email sbo@wwu.edu.

Waiver Students

If you work for the State of Washington, you may be eligible for tuition waiver for the MEd & Principal Certification only. Eligible employees of the State of Washington may can use the [Washington State Employee Tuition Waiver](#) to take courses on the Bellingham campus only during the academic year on a space available basis. Be sure to read the guidelines on the tuition waiver form to assess your edibility and understand how many credits each quarter you are allowed with your waiver. Students must submit their waiver form (signed by their supervisor) at least two weeks before each quarter to Carola McGowan. Tuition waiver students cannot register for courses until the second day of each quarter; you will need to coordinate with the faculty member to let them know you cannot register to gain access to the course information.

Program Policies

Each course syllabus will be reviewed at the first-class meeting and will include information on grading, attendance, professional standards for behavior and communication.

Application for Degree and paying a non-refundable graduation fee. This triggers a final credit and requirement check by the Education Leadership Program office and the Graduate School. Note: A student must be Advanced to Candidacy before submitting the Application for Degree. If

When final requirements have been met, your "Recommendation for Degree" will be initiated and completed by the Education Leadership Program office and forwarded to the Graduate School for processing. This recommendation form is due two weeks prior to the end of your final quarter. Any incomplete grade(s) from previous quarters must be cleared prior to your Recommendation for Degree.

Commencement

A commencement ceremony is held twice yearly (June & December) and is coordinated with the Registrar's Office; if you have completed the MEd or EdD curriculum, the program manager will notify you when it is time to complete your request to graduate esign forms. You will receive an email after the first week of your final quarter with instructions on how to register for commencement.

Transfer Credits

Coursework taken prior to formal admission to an Education Leadership program will be reviewed and evaluated, upon request at a monthly Team meeting. Once the review has been completed, the information will be entered into your student record. The Graduate School limits each student to 12 credits, graded B, 3.0 or better.

Appendix A: EdD Dissertation Handbook

DISSERTATION HANDBOOK

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (Ed.D.) PROGRAM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LEADERSHIP & INCLUSIVE TEACHING

This handbook is a guide to the dissertation process for Western Washington University Education Leadership doctoral students. It does not constitute a contract and is subject to change at the discretion of the WWU Department of Education Leadership. This version of the dissertation handbook supersedes any previous versions.

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Western Washington University

516 High Street

Bellingham, WA 98225-9087

Introduction

Introduction to the Doctoral Journey and Dissertation Process

This handbook sets forth the requirements for the preparation and submission of the dissertation for the Doctoral Program in Education Leadership at Western Washington University (WWU). The doctoral journey consists of 5 primary components: a) the coursework, (b) the formal proposal, (c) the proposal defense (chapters 1-3), (d) the dissertation and, (e) the final oral defense of the dissertation.

The student completes coursework to develop further their critical thinking skills, analytical writing skills, and knowledge of education leadership and organizations in order to understand and address current critical issues in education. All doctoral coursework is critical to the student's development of their dissertation.

The capstone of the doctoral program is the dissertation and the final oral defense. However, prior to this major event, students must satisfactorily complete the formal research proposal and the oral defense of the research proposal to achieve candidacy. The achievement of candidacy allows the student to move forward to seek approval of their research from the Institutional Review Board (IRB); this approval is the antecedent to beginning research. The formal research proposal is the first formal document students write as part of the dissertation process. The capstone event, the doctoral dissertation and the oral defense of the dissertation, is designed to demonstrate and evaluate the student's capabilities as a scholar and researcher in education leadership.

Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is two-fold: to clarify the steps leading to the development of the dissertation, and to enumerate the steps of the dissertation process itself.

Guided by the student's Chair, it is the student's responsibility to prepare the dissertation in accordance with the instructions in this handbook. Students should consult the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), henceforth referred in this handbook as the *APA Manual*.

The dissertation will allow the student to demonstrate advanced written communication skills, reflecting clarity of expression, grammatical precision, and effective organization. Ed.D. faculty recommend the student retain a professional editor to assist with final editing of the dissertation.

While the successful completion of a dissertation is essential for earning an Ed.D., it is only one of the requirements. It is the student's responsibility to understand and satisfy all of the requirements of the doctoral program and of the University. Ultimately, the student remains responsible for the quality, integrity, and outcome of their doctoral work.

Dissertation Research Topic

Based on superintendent certification and Ed.D. coursework, as well as career experiences, the student may have strong areas of interest that may be developed into a dissertation project. Converting an area of interest into a researchable project is often the most daunting step in the dissertation process. It is imperative that the student seek the advice of qualified individuals who share similar research interests to ensure that the research is manageable in scope and possible to complete within the time frame of the doctoral program.

The student should not simply choose a topic because it is convenient or because it is an issue being addressed in the workplace. The student should avoid conducting research that only examines their place of work in order to avoid researcher bias. Further, it is never ethical to conduct research where one has any type of authority over the participants and participants may believe that participation is not volitional.

While students are encouraged to pursue dissertation topics that are of personal relevance and significance, the department reserves the right to determine whether a student's proposed area of study is sufficiently relevant to the vision and mission of the doctoral program. It is recommended that a student select a topic that is workable, is appropriate to the doctoral program, makes an original contribution to the field of education, and has the potential to fill a "gap" in research.

The Dissertation Research Proposal

The process of developing a dissertation proposal begins in the first courses required in the program, EDAD 652: Qualitative Research, and EDAD 654: Quantitative Research. The content and sequence of these two classes allow the student to explore research ideas and methodologies. Upon completion of Qualitative Research and Quantitative Research, the student will be assigned a dissertation chair, who will guide the student in identifying a dissertation topic, followed by development of the research proposal.

The research proposal is foundational to the dissertation manuscript. Its purpose is to describe the research topic, critically explore the multiple perspectives in the literature, and present a discussion of the appropriate methodology to conduct the inquiry. The proposal demonstrates that the student has a command of both the topic area and the methodologies to be employed in conducting the research project.

The proposal includes a title page, an abstract, an introduction, review of the literature, proposed methodology, and reference pages. It is critical to remember that the chapters in the proposal are sequential and aligned with each other. Using the current edition of the *APA Manual*, the key elements of the proposal are essentially the first three chapters of your work outlined in detail under the Dissertation Sequence portion of this handbook.

Evaluation of the Dissertation Research Proposal

The formal dissertation proposal is the first formal document a student writes as part of the dissertation. The Dissertation Chair will work with the student to refine the dissertation proposal and may seek input from committee members. Failure of the student to implement feedback may result in significant delays in the dissertation process.

Once the student has satisfactorily drafted the proposal, the Dissertation Chair will convene a meeting (with the student and committee members) to hold an oral discussion to examine the student's ability to:

- Define the topic and discuss pertinent information of the topic
- Discuss the rationale for the chosen research design
- Discuss the participants, as well as the selection process
- Discuss the initial data collection instrument(s)
- Discuss how the instrument(s) will address the research question(s)
- Discuss potential limitations as well as strategies to minimize their impact

The committee will make suggestions for refinement of the research topic, research questions, design, and data collection tools. If the committee determines that the student has met the standard for proceeding, the committee members will signify this by signing the Application for Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree in Education Leadership form.

If the committee, after assessing the proposal, determines that the student is not adequately prepared to complete the study, the student is required to revise and resubmit the dissertation proposal.

Criteria and Standards for Evaluating Dissertation Proposal

Definition of Issue	Proposal makes a convincing argument, including using multiple perspectives, to explain the significance of the topic to the school, district, or profession.	Description of issue is, at times, vague, unsupported, and either very limited in scope or too broad to be reasonably researchable. One perspective dominates. The significance of the topic to the school, district, or profession is not clear.
Review of Literature	Literature is well chosen to explore the issue and present multiple perspectives that articulate and define the significance of the issue.	Literature use is evident, but is limited in the scope or perspectives or fails to establish the significance of the issue.
Research Design	The design is aligned with the topic proposed and the type and sources of data to be collected.	Design does not address all significant areas of the issue or attempts to do too much. Methodology and/or data collection instruments may not be appropriate for the topic proposed.
Plan for Completion	A realistic timeline for completion of data collection, analysis, and completion of the dissertation is provided.	The timeline is either unrealistic in terms of time or resources required; or no timeline is included.
Committee Decision	May continue with research/data collection leading to completion of dissertation.	Must revise and resubmit proposal.

Submission of Human Subjects to the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Students wishing to conduct research involving human subjects are required to receive approval to conduct human subjects research from the Western Washington University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

IRB procedures protect the rights and welfare of research subjects and assure their informed consent to research procedures and assurance of ethical treatment of participants in research projects. Research that involves human subjects must be preceded by approval from the WWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the candidate may proceed to data collection.

After the successful completion of the proposal, the student will work with the dissertation chair to begin the IRB process. Under the direction of the dissertation chair, the student will complete the University's IRB application.

Upon completing of the University's application, the student will then work with the WWU IRB Coordinator to ensure the application and supporting documents are complete. Once approved by the IRB Coordinator, the student will submit their completed application and all supporting documents for review to the WWU IRB. If data from human subjects are collected or accessed prior to obtaining all necessary IRB approval, that data will be deemed invalid.

Advancement to Candidacy

A doctoral candidate is a student in good standing who has been deemed ready to start a dissertation study. Advancement to candidacy is based on the student completing all coursework and successfully defending their proposal.

The Dissertation Committee

The doctoral student benefits greatly from the input and support of faculty members; the dissertation is a process not to be completed in isolation. The Chair will be assigned to the candidate based on the nature of the dissertation proposed and the methodology anticipated. The candidate will select a second committee member from the Ed.D. faculty (Dr. Tim Bruce, Dr. Don Larsen, Dr. Wayne Robertson). The candidate will identify two or three additional committee members. Each of these committee members must have an earned doctoral degree; furthermore, committee members should have evident expertise in education leadership and/or in some aspect of academia that will support the candidate's dissertation goals.

Dissertation committee members constitute a range of expertise pertinent to the student's topic under study and the methodology likely to be employed. Committee members advise the candidate throughout the process in areas appropriate to their expertise and interests. Members will also comment on written materials developed and presented by the candidate. Committee members are also responsible for evaluating and approving both the dissertation proposal and the completed dissertation work.

The candidate should consult with their Chair in identifying and selecting committee members.

The Dissertation: Sequence of the Manuscript

Dissertations may consist of various research designs; however, all research projects for the purpose of a dissertation should give evidence of rigorous development and production of knowledge.

Dissertation Overview

- **Title Page:** The title page includes the title of the manuscript, the author, the university, and the date completed.
- **Abstract:** The abstract provides a brief (250 words or less), comprehensive summary of the contents of the dissertation manuscript. The abstract includes an indication of the aim of the study, the method used and type of data collected, the main findings reached, and the implications of these findings.

- **Dedication/Acknowledgements Page:** The acknowledgements page gives credit for external support received throughout the dissertation process by recognizing the contribution of committee members and others who have guided and influenced the writing and completion of the dissertation. It is a brief section that should express personal thanks to the individuals who have assisted in the research work and the production of the dissertation. (However, do not breach confidentiality by identifying the subjects of your research.) A dedication, if included, should be brief and placed on a separate page preceding the acknowledgment page or at the end of the acknowledgment section on a separate page.
- **Table of Contents:** The table of contents lists, in order of appearance, the various chapters and subsections of the manuscript along with corresponding page numbers. The table of contents should include the acknowledgement, list of tables, list of figures, chapter titles, references, and appendix or appendices.
- **List of Tables:** The list of tables enumerates, in order of appearance, all tables and the corresponding page(s) of each table.
- **List of Figures:** The list of figures identifies, in order of appearance, figures and the corresponding page(s) of each figure.
- **Chapters:** The chapter numbers should be written as Roman numerals (e.g., Chapter I). The entire chapter title should be capitalized and centered. Titles longer than one line should be single-spaced; all contents of the chapters should follow the most recent edition of the APA manual.
- **Appendix or Appendices:** This section is reserved for supporting documents that are too large or too cumbersome to be placed in the body of the dissertation.
- **References:** This section is reserved for materials cited in the manuscript

Development of the Dissertation Manuscript

The dissertation proposal, when successfully defended, comprises the first three chapters of the dissertation. Reflecting recommendations of the committee, modifications and additions may result from the candidate's presentation of the proposal. In the final dissertation, the proposal's literature review may be updated to reflect the ongoing nature of scouring the available literature. Care should be taken to ensure that proper grammatical tenses are used: Future tense in the proposal (Chapters I-III); past tense in all five chapters in the final dissertation.

The following information presents an outline of the dissertation content:

Chapter I: Introduction

The purpose of the introduction chapter is to provide the framework for the dissertation. This chapter creates interest, articulates the problem that necessitates the research, identifies the importance of the research, and briefly introduces the research using a statement of purpose and research questions that guide the study. To avoid redundancies, attention must be given to the repetition of information.

A well-crafted introduction establishes a clear relationship among the background, literature, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research. To do so, the introduction contains several subsections as listed below:

- **Introduction**—The introductory section provides the rationale for the study as a whole and provides a brief overview of the current problem that the research study addresses.
- **Background**—This section presents the student’s area of inquiry by laying out what is known about the issue from the published literature. The background section contains a summary of the most relevant literature to provide the historical (e.g., how the problem has evolved over time), the social (e.g., demographic or cultural contexts), and theoretical (e.g., important variables, the theoretical concepts, and the principles underpinning the research) contexts for the research problem. The candidate should effectively link and relate the background of the study to the proposed research.

Questions that may be addressed in this section may include but are not limited to: What is the problem and why it is of interest? Who is affected by the problem? What research has been done to investigate or address the problem? How will the proposed research extend or refine the existing knowledge in the area under study? Who will benefit from or use the proposed research?

- **Problem Statement**—The problem statement defines the issue that exists in the literature, theory, or practice that leads to a need for the study.

In a few paragraphs, the problem statement clearly summarizes the context for the study and the main problem the study seeks to address. It usually identifies the general problem, the specific problem, the focus of the research, and the population sample. Without being redundant, the problem statement draws from the background section to show that the proposed research is significant and relevant to the field.

- **Purpose Statement**—The purpose statement clearly and succinctly states the focus and intentions of the proposed research and should follow the problem statement. The statement usually begins with “The purpose of this study is” It foreshadows the research questions and and/or hypothesis(es).

Note: Although brief in nature, both the problem statement and the purpose statement are two very important aspects of the manuscript. These statements support the importance of the study and identify the goal of the research. All ensuing aspects of the dissertation support and further expand upon the problem and purpose statements.

- **Significance of the Study**—The significance of the study section may be included in the purpose statement or be contained in its own section and includes a brief description of how/why the study is important. It contains a description of the contribution that the study makes to the knowledge base or discipline (e.g., How does the current study relate to other studies that are similar or that investigate the same issue?). All assertions in this section need to be well supported by the literature.

- **Research Questions**—The proposed research question(s) need to be derived from the problem and purpose statements. A typical dissertation contains two to five research questions, with each question listed on a separate line. Research questions for a qualitative study avoid “yes” or “no” answers. A well-formulated research question does the following:
 - Asks about the relationship between two or more variables
 - Is stated clearly in the form of a question
 - Is testable (i.e. possible to collect data to answer the question)
 - Does not pose an ethical or moral problem for implementation
 - Is specific and restricted in scope (i.e. The aim is not to solve the world’s problem)
 - Identifies exactly what is to be solved
- **Definitions**—Terms pertinent to the study should be defined and supported throughout this section by the literature.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Chapter II is often the longest chapter of the dissertation and presents an overview of the context of the literature in which the research is founded. This chapter places the present study in the context of previous research and presents the hypothesis and/or research questions in relationship to these previous findings. The literature review also locates the study in the relevant field of inquiry and helps set a framework for the research.

In addition, the literature review section provides a tight synthesis (not a summary) of the existing knowledge on this topic and links this existing knowledge to the proposed study. Its purpose is also to provide a context for the research and to demonstrate the importance based on the problem demonstrated via the literature, as well as the gap in the literature. Care should be given to avoid redundancy of information from the previous chapter.

The subheadings for Chapter II are comprised of at least four sections: (a) the introduction, (b) a theoretical or conceptual framework section, (c) the related literature section, and (d) a summary.

- **Introduction**—The introduction should provide a general explanation and overview of the chapter with links to the purpose of the study.
- **Related Literature**—The literature review is the argument for the significance of the study. It communicates what has been examined on the topic, what has not been examined or how understanding on the topic is still developing, and how this study can specifically address gaps in the existing literature. This section also grounds the proposed study in the relevant work that has been done in the field, and gives a clear sense of the candidate’s theoretical approach to the phenomena that inspire the proposed study.
- **Summary**—Chapter II should end with a focused summary of what currently is known, what is not known, and how the study can address gaps in the existing knowledge.

Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of the methodology chapter is to present the procedures, research design, and analysis for the research study. In this chapter, the candidate provides the reader with the details of what occurred during the execution of research. (**Note:** in the formal proposal, future tense will be used to describe how the research will be conducted.) Descriptions in this chapter should be comprehensive and in sufficient detail as to permit the replication of the study. The methodology chapter contains the following sections:

- **Introduction and Purpose of the Study**—The introduction may begin with a brief statement of the nature and purpose of the study and may concisely describe the contents and organization to the chapter.
- **Research Design**—The chosen research design(s) should be consistent with the research questions. In the design section, the methodology and research design are defined using the proper design descriptions in support of the rationale. The rationale for why the design is most appropriate for the study addresses the purpose of the design, when is it used, and why is it the most appropriate choice for the present study. The rationale also needs to be supported by research literature. The research literature helps establish why the current study relies (or will rely) on the design chosen. The design of the study describes the way in which the study was (or will be) carried out.
- **Theoretical Framework**—The theoretical framework gives a clear sense of the candidate’s theoretical approach to the phenomenon that inspires the study and provides a detailed discussion of the theories utilized to analyze the data collected.
 - The section consists of a description of the theory, the origination and major theorist(s), and how the theory has advanced or informed the literature on the topic.
 - This section also includes a discussion of how the study may contribute to the enhancement of such theories, new angles, or perspectives on the issue under study.
- **Research Questions**—This section articulates the same questions as found in Chapter I.
- **Participants**—In the participant section, the population, the sample size, the type of sample, the sampling procedures (e.g., convenience sampling, purposeful sampling, etc.), and the sample characteristics will be explained. The sample selection procedures (who, what, when, where, how) need to be explained in enough detail for the study to be replicated. The actual sample size and the sample size desired for the chosen research design and analysis need to be specified. Participants of the study are also described in detail, and should include a description of the demographic information. The candidate should also include an in-depth discussion of how the sample was identified, why the sampling strategy was appropriate, and how the study was introduced to the sample, including gaining participants’ consent.
- **Setting**—The setting of the study is described (e.g., school system, school, testing location, etc.) in this section. Real names for people, schools, and school districts should never be used. Use pseudonyms for people and descriptors to maintain confidentiality.

- **Instrumentation**—In the instrumentation section, the instruments that are used to measure each variable will be identified. The instruments may be interviews, tests, surveys, questionnaires, observational protocols, or other measurements. A description of each instrument must include its content, origin, and appropriateness. In quantitative studies, scoring information for the composite and subscales, if applicable, needs to be included (e.g., range of possible scores and interpretation of scores); in addition, the validity and reliability statistics should be cited. For qualitative studies, the following may be useful: “The [qualitative] researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis . . .” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15).
- **Procedures/Data Collection**—In the procedures section, the details necessary to replicate the study are detailed. This includes, but is not limited to, selecting participants for the study, conducting a pilot study, administration of the procedures, gathering the data, and recording procedures. The procedures should be described in a chronological, step-by-step format. All material related to procedures should be included in an appendix.
- **Data Analysis**—In the data analysis section, the type of data analysis is identified and a concise rationale for the type of analysis is provided. In a qualitative study, the candidate will address coding, identification of themes, and validity, as well as member checking, triangulation, and other measures that may be applicable. In quantitative studies, the chosen statistical procedures should be consistent with the research questions, hypotheses, and type of data collected and answer, Why is the chosen analysis the most appropriate choice to test the hypothesis? In addition, the candidate must discuss the statistical procedure for each hypothesis, thus organizing this section according to the research hypotheses.
- **Limitations of the Study**—Discussion of the study limitations in context of the threats to internal or external validity, as well as steps taken to limit the threat and how the limitations influenced the study.
- **Subject Positioning**—Discuss the role, the position, and factors influencing the researcher in relation to the population and the topic.

Chapter IV: Results/Outcomes

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of the data. The introductory section makes clear why this study was worth doing. The chapter should begin with a brief restatement of the study purpose, along with a brief discussion of the chapter content. This chapter should be organized by:

- A discussion of the results of the findings for each research question, and,
- A summary of the findings.

With quantitative data, the evidence comes in the form of summary statistics, graphs, tables, and probability tests and is presented in the order in which the research questions and hypotheses were stated. With qualitative data, the candidate provides a clear sense of the common themes that emerged from the research, the extent to which variation was found between respondents or observations, and examples to illustrate and justify the points.

The key point is that the data presented in both quantitative and qualitative research must provide a convincing case that what you said happened in the study actually occurred. Interpretation of results is given in Chapter Five.

Chapter V: Discussion/Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter V provides the candidate an opportunity to discuss the findings of their research and tie together all the disparate threads of the study. It is also important to contextualize the findings of the dissertation in the literature. Chapter V consists of four sections:

- Summary of the findings along with a restatement of the specific questions the study set out to examine
- A discussion of the findings in relation to each research question, as well as the implications of these findings, in light of the relevant literature and theory.
- Implications for practice and recommendations for changes or improvement in policy or practice.
- Implications for future research and/or suggestions for further research.

References

All references cited within the text must be listed in accordance with the most recent edition of the *APA Manual*. This section includes only works cited in the dissertation.

Appendices

Appendices contain supplementary or illustrative material or explanatory data too lengthy to be included in the text or not immediately essential to the reader's understanding of the text. If numerous types of artifacts are included as appendices, each type should have a section labeled as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc. Materials that document important components of the dissertation should also be included.

Professional Editing

During the final revision process and prior to the defense, it is recommended that the candidate obtain a professional edit of the manuscript. This may include a full edit, or may be limited to ascertaining alignment with APA requirements.

Dissertation Oral Defense

The oral defense of the dissertation has several purposes. The defense is a presentation of a student's research findings and conclusions to the dissertation committee for review, comment, and eventual approval. It is also an opportunity for the greater University and Pre-K-12 communities to learn about the research and attendant findings. Lastly, members of the University faculty and Pre-K-12 community are afforded time to interact with the candidate/researcher.

Ultimately, the dissertation Chair, with recommendation from the committee members, decides when the manuscript is ready for defense. Once the candidate has completed the research process and has had the final version of the dissertation reviewed by committee members, the student, working with the dissertation Chair, shall submit a Scheduling of the Oral Defense of the Dissertation form requesting a date for the final defense.

Defense Procedure

The Chair establishes the specific outline of the student presentation to the dissertation committee. The Chair of the dissertation committee leads the defense meeting in which the candidate presents and defends the dissertation in the presence of the members of the dissertation committee, faculty, and other individuals who choose to attend. After the Chair introduces the committee members and the doctoral candidate, the candidate will provide an overview of the research, which highlights significant aspects of the work. Generally this includes a summary of each chapter in the dissertation. The defense includes a description of the study's purpose and significance, the research questions, the methods used (research design and analysis), findings and conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future studies.

Following the candidate's presentation, the committee members may ask questions. Once the candidate has addressed committee members' questions, other faculty members and guests will be provided an opportunity to ask questions. Following this discussion, the Chair will ask the audience and the candidate to exit the room to provide the committee opportunity to discuss the candidate's defense performance. Using the Dissertation Rubric as a guide, the committee will make a decision. When committee deliberations have been completed, the Chair invites only the candidate to return, whereupon the committee shares its decision and comments. The Chair will inform the student of the committee's decision. The committee makes one of the following decisions:

Criteria and Standards for Evaluating Dissertation Oral Defense

Action	Criteria
Approved with no further or minor revisions	<p>The Oral Defense is satisfactory and the manuscript is accepted as submitted with copy editing revisions to be completed.</p> <p>The Dissertation Committee members sign two forms: Satisfactory Completion of Oral Defense form, and; Graduation Application for the Degree of Doctor of Education, Education Leadership Form.</p> <p>At the Oral Defense, Dissertation Committee members may also sign the title page of the dissertation.</p>
Provisionally approved with major revisions	<p>The Oral Defense is satisfactory, but the manuscript requires substantive revisions.</p> <p>The committee members withhold signatures on all forms and the title page until changes have been made that satisfy the concerns of all members.</p>
Not approved with recommendations to revise dissertation or write a new dissertation	<p>The Oral Defense is judged to be unsatisfactory.</p> <p>The decision may be reached because the dissertation is judged to be acceptable but the student fails to present it satisfactorily or because the dissertation itself is unacceptable.</p> <p>Committee members do not sign any forms or the title page.</p> <p>Another Oral Defense will be scheduled when the Chair deems the student is prepared and the manuscript ready; committee members agree that the required remediation has been accomplished.</p>

If the committee makes the decision for “provisional approval” or “not approved,” the Chair articulates the required steps for revisions and specifies a timeline for completion. It should be noted, at the discretion of the Chair and dependent on the number of revisions to be made, the candidate is encouraged have the manuscript professionally re-edited.

Unanimous agreement of the Dissertation Committee is required for approval of the dissertation and recommendation that the Ed.D. degree be conferred. When the committee and Chair have approved the final document, including changes from the defense, members of the dissertation committee then sign the candidate’s signature page.

Publication

Students will be guided in preparing their dissertation for E-filing, university publication, and copyright of their work following the dissertation defense.

Academic Honesty

All Western Washington University students have an obligation to fulfill their responsibilities as members of an academic community. Academic integrity is demanded; moreover, academic dishonesty at Western is a serious infraction dealt with severely. No student shall claim as his or her own the achievements, work, or arguments of others, nor shall he or she be a party to such claims. It is the instructor's responsibility to confront a student and to take appropriate action if such academic dishonesty has occurred. See [Appendix D: Academic Honesty Policy & Procedure](#) of the catalog for examples, procedures, and methods of appeal and [Ensuring Academic Honesty](#) for appeal rules and timeline.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting as one's own—in whole or in part—the argument, language, creations, conclusions, or scientific data of another without explicit acknowledgement. See the Library's [Plagiarism Policies & Guidelines](#) for examples and citation guides. See [Appendix D: Academic Honesty Policy & Procedure](#) of the catalog for examples, procedures, and methods of appeal and [Ensuring Academic Honesty](#) for appeal rules and timeline.

Ethical Computing

Students are also responsible for knowing and adhering to WWU's standards for ethical computing. Refer to these web sites: (1) [Policy for Responsible Computing](#) (2) [Ethical Conduct: User Agreement for WWU Network and Computer Resources](#)

Appendix A: Title Page

Making Sense of the Writing Process:

A Qualitative Study of Best Practices in Developing the Dissertation

A dissertation submitted
to the Faculty of the Department
of Education Leadership & Inclusive Teaching
of Western Washington University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

by

Svenja Viking

May 2023

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Appendix B: Signature Page

Making Sense of the Writing Process:

A Qualitative Study of Best Practices in Developing the Dissertation

I certify that I have read this manuscript and that, in my judgment, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education:

Committee Chair

May 2023

Committee Member

May 2023

Committee Member

May 2023

Appendix C: Front Matter Pages

YOUR TITLE HERE

By

Your Name

Accepted in Partial Completion
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chair, Dr. Dissertation Chair Name

Dr. Committee Member Name

Dr. Committee Member Name

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Dr. David L. Patrick, Dean

Doctoral Dissertation

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Signature

Date

Your Title Here

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Your Name
Month Year