Note: The Horace H. Rackham Graduate School is making their forms for forming dissertation committees, advancing to candidacy, etc. available on their website. If you view Rackham's forms and download them, please refer to them for information purposes only. Access to these forms via their website does not change the current School of Education approval process for graduate students in Educational Studies (ES) or the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education (CSHPE). All Rackham forms are to be processed through the School of Education Office of Student Affairs, 1225 SEB.

This document as well as the internal (School of Education) documents and forms mentioned in this document are available in print format from the Office of Student Affairs, Room 1225 SEB. Questions about these procedures should be addressed to Joan McCoy (jemccoy@umich.edu) or 734.764.7563.

It is recommended that all doctoral students periodically review the Doctoral Students sections of the Rackham website (www.rackham.umich.edu/current_students/doctoral_students/) as you engage in the dissertation process. Of particular interest is the section titled Tools and Information.

There are other resources on this page that may be of interest to you. If you have any questions about these or other resources, contact the Office of Academic Records and Dissertations, 0120 Rackham, via email (OARD.questions@umich.edu) or 734.763.0171.

Note: If you have not achieved candidacy, contact the Office of Student Affairs regarding the process. You may form your dissertation committee as a precandidate. However, you should be a candidate at least one term prior to the defense of your dissertation.

A. SELECTING DISSERTATION CHAIR AND DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. The student should obtain the School of Education's internal document: Guidelines for Forming a School of Education Dissertation Committee www.soe.umich.edu/files/Guidelines_diss_committee.pdf.

   The student should also refer to the Rackham website for their guidelines: www.rackham.umich.edu/dissertation_information/. View the section titled Dissertation Committees.

2. The student consults with a potential dissertation chair and discusses the research topic. The potential chair will expect the student to define the problem clearly and to demonstrate the necessary analytic and communication skills to complete the project successfully.

3. The student consults with the dissertation chair about possible committee members. All potential members of the committee must sign the School of Education's internal form, Request for Approval of Dissertation Committee. Access this form via: www.soe.umich.edu/files/Diss_Comm_Approval_Form.pdf. The student is responsible for submitting this form and a one-page statement about the dissertation topic. Be sure to include the tentative title of the dissertation.

4. The Office of Student Affairs will obtain approval of the School of Education and Rackham.

5. Rackham notifies the student when the dissertation committee has been approved.

Note: If you need to revise your dissertation committee, the student is responsible for obtaining the School of Education's internal form, Request for Revision of Dissertation Committee (www.soe.umich.edu/files/diss_comm_revision_approval.pdf), and submitting it to the Office of Student Affairs when you have obtained the signatures of all committee members. The Office of Student Affairs will obtain approval of the School of Education and Rackham.

B. DEVELOPING AND APPROVING THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

The student and chair refine the research problem and prepare a full proposal in consultation with the dissertation committee. This consultation may include one or more meetings of the committee to review the research problem, potential research designs, and working procedures for the committee. The complete proposal should include problem statement, its significance, literature review, research design, method of analysis, and expected results. When the proposal is ready for approval, a dissertation committee meeting is scheduled to approve the proposal. All committee members will sign the School of Education’s internal form, Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Approval Form (www.soe.umich.edu/files/Doct_Diss_Proposal_Approval_Form.pdf). The student is responsible for submitting this form to the Office of Student Affairs when the proposal has been approved.
School of Education dissertation research using human subjects requires approval from the university’s Institutional Review Board. Their contact information is 540 East Liberty, Suite 202, 734.936.0933, irbhsbs@umich.edu. For additional general information and application forms view their website: www.irb.umich.edu.

C. PROGRESS OF DISSERTATION

1. When all approvals and reviews are complete, the student may begin researching and writing the dissertation. The student will work closely with the dissertation chair and committee to assure that the dissertation is completed according to the standards of the School of Education and Rackham. The student may not proceed to any major step in the process without the knowledge and approval of the dissertation committee chair.

2. While researching and writing the dissertation, the student is expected to maintain contact with the dissertation committee. Under normal circumstances, the student may expect the chair and committee members (when appropriate) to comment on materials within three weeks. The student should consider and respond to all queries from all committee members. The student or the chair may request a meeting of the committee to resolve any differences among faculty members, to make sure the student is interpreting all members correctly, and to engage in collegial interchange about the research problem.

D. RACKHAM DISSERTATION RESOURCES FOR Formatting AND DEADLINES, ETC.


2. It is important for students to be aware of the dissertation deadline dates. These are set by Rackham for each term. Refer to the following Rackham website for Doctoral Degree Deadlines: rackham.helpserve.com/index.php?_m=knowledgebase&_a=viewarticle&kbarticleid=73&nav=0.2

Note: When scheduling your defense, you should schedule the defense before the end of the term. The grace period is intended to be used for completing final degree requirements, not the defense of the dissertation. However, the website mentioned above provides information on the approval process to follow in case you need to defend your dissertation after that last day of exams in a term.

E. SCHOOL OF EDUCATION PRE-ORAL MEETING WITH DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

When completion of the final draft is near, the student and dissertation chair will schedule a pre-oral/last data committee meeting to review the draft. The student will provide each member with a copy of the final draft at least three weeks before the meeting. At this meeting, any concerns or questions about the research, methodology, data, or presentation will be discussed and revisions (if needed) will be outlined. The committee will then meet in executive session to satisfy itself that the student is ready to present an oral defense and will agree specifically on what, if any, changes are to be made before the defense. If satisfied that the dissertation is ready to be defended, all dissertation committee members will sign the School of Education’s internal form, Authorization of Dissertation for Rackham Pre-Dissertation Defense Meeting and Oral Defense (www.soe.umich.edu/files/Auth_of_Diss_for_Rackham_Pre-Diss_Def_Mtg_and_Oral_Defense.pdf) indicating that the student is ready for the Rackham Pre-Dissertation Defense Meeting and the oral defense. The student is responsible for submitting this form to the Office of Student Affairs, Room 1225 SEB.

F. SCHEDULING A ROOM OR A-V FOR THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION PRE-ORAL MEETING, RACKHAM PRE- AND POST- DISSERTATION DEFENSE MEETINGS, AND ORAL DEFENSE

1. The student is responsible for scheduling the School of Education Pre-Oral Meeting, Rackham Pre-Dissertation Defense Meeting, oral defense, and Rackham Post-Dissertation Defense Meeting.

2. Rackham requires the Pre-Dissertation Defense Meeting to be scheduled at least 10 working days in advance of the oral defense. You must enter provide a defense date when scheduling the Pre-Dissertation Defense Meeting. Below is the link to register for the Rackham Pre-Dissertation Defense Meeting; view the section titled Before the Oral Defense: http://rackham.helpserve.com/index.php?_m=knowledgebase&_a=viewarticle&kbarticleid=71&nav=0.2

3. The student is responsible for scheduling a room in the School of Education for the pre-oral meeting and oral defense. The Brownlee Room is the preferred room for dissertation defenses. Other rooms available in the School for a defense are the Tribute Room, the Deans’ Conference Room, or a classroom. Please try to reserve a room at least 4 weeks prior to the scheduled defense.

As of October 2010, information about available meeting rooms with description and capacities is in the process of being gathered. Once the information is available, you will be able to view it on the SOE website (www.soe.umich.edu/meeting_classroom_descriptions/).
4. To request a meeting room in the School of Education, the student should fill out the electronic Meeting and Classroom Reservations request form (www.soe.umich.edu/meeting_classroom_reservations/). Questions regarding the room request process may be directed to the School of Education Facilities Office, 1002 SEB, 734.615.2534 or soe.facilities@umich.edu.

5. To request A-V services for your SOE pre-oral meeting or oral defense, submit the electronic request form: www.soe.umich.edu/departments_services/services/a-v_requests/.

6. The oral defense of the dissertation is a public event open to all interested students, faculty, and staff. To notify the School of Education community of your defense, please submit this event for our events calendar (www.soe.umich.edu/news_events/submit_an_event). Under Event Title, please include the title of your dissertation. You can provide a short dissertation description and the names of your dissertation committee chair/co-chairs in the "Description" section. The form will also ask for the date, time and location.

   At the oral defense, the student will be expected to present a brief summary of the dissertation and should be prepared to answer a variety of questions (general and specific) about the study. Discussion may cover major findings, plans for further research, ideas for publication, implications of the study, etc. The dissertation chair conducts the oral defense and explains the ground rules. Normally, time will be provided for faculty and students in attendance to participate in the discussion.

7. After the oral defense is successfully completed, the dissertation committee members will sign the appropriate Rackham approval forms. If there are minor revisions or changes to be made, the dissertation chair and student will meet to arrange for these. The student is responsible for scheduling the Rackham Post-Dissertation Defense Meeting and meeting Rackham’s final deadlines and requirements. The completion of the dissertation and the public defense formally marks the graduate student’s full entrance into the scholarly community. Below is the link to register for the Rackham Post-Dissertation Defense Meeting; view the section titled After the Oral Defense: http://rackham.helpserve.com/index.php?_m=knowledgebase&_a=viewarticle&kbarticleid=71&nav=0,2