

La Sierra University
School of Education

2017–2018
Doctoral Capstone Handbook

Description of Doctoral Capstone Option for Ed.D. Students

Students in the Doctor of Education program are required to complete either a traditional dissertation or a doctoral capstone as the culmination of their professional educational experience.

The capstone for the Ed.D. program begins with a research-based experience in which students address an educational problem through an action research project, program development project, or product outcome project, culminating in a written document. The doctoral capstone offers students the ability to connect research to practice and results in a formal written document and presentation summarizing the project in the following parts: the problem, the literature review, the project/intervention and methodology, and the findings, reflections, and conclusions.

Students pursuing the capstone are guided in identifying and selecting a real-world problem in an educational setting and proposing an intervention based on a thorough review of the literature to solve the selected issue. The doctoral capstone may develop into a clinical research project, a school-based project, a program or policy, or some other product outcome depending on the target problem selected in consultation with the student's capstone committee chair.

Prerequisites: Successful completion of the Qualifying Examination and consent of the department chair.

Textbooks

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. (current edition). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Other textbooks as selected in consultation with the committee chair

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will demonstrate ability to

- Conduct credible scholarly research
- Successfully defend his or her capstone research project
- Make professional presentations based on his or her research

Enrollment during the Doctoral Capstone

Students writing a doctoral capstone must register for a total of 12 units of **RSCH 798**, taking a minimum of one unit each in order to obtain access to the university's resources, including advising from the capstone committee chair, advising from other committee members, and the use of library resources. Continuous registration is required until the final capstone document has been accepted.

If the student has been advanced to candidacy, has completed all course requirements, and has registered for 12 units but has not completed the capstone, maintenance of continuous registration is required until the final capstone document has been accepted. This may be accomplished by registering for **SECE 910 (I)** each quarter (excluding summer) until the written document is satisfactorily defended, and the required final edits have been completed and the document accepted. A modest fee accompanies **SECE 910**, but regular tuition is not charged.

Leave of Absence

Occasionally, students may experience personal circumstances that require them to suspend their work in the program for a time. Because of the university's requirement for continuous registration, students must make a formal petition to the department in which they have taken their specialization, requesting a leave of absence. If approved, a leave of absence from the program means that the student may not access any La Sierra University student privileges during this time, including faculty advice on academic work and access to library resources. A leave of absence may last no more than two years.

Academic Honesty

Because scholars communicate, consider ideas, and contrast understandings in writing, it is important to be able to rely on each other in an atmosphere of openness, trust, and clarity. The proper use of citations allows colleagues to double-check their interpretation of someone else's work or to follow up in greater depth if interested in a particular idea. For this reason, academic honesty is of critical importance. It is important to use quotation marks around another person's words and to cite the source of all significant ideas, concepts, paraphrases, and quotations.

The discipline standard is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. A good and convenient online source for information on APA style is <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>. Because academics need to be able to rely on each other's work with confidence, please provide proper attribution of all ideas, paraphrases, and quotations used in your written document. *A purposeful or careless breach of academic integrity will result in penalties* and may include a grade of U for the project or, in some cases, being dropped from the program.

Students are encouraged to submit their capstone document through a recommended online resource for plagiarism checks.

For a complete description of the university's definitions and policies regarding academic honesty and integrity, refer to www.lasierra.edu/integrity.

Introduction

The Purpose of the Doctoral Capstone

The capstone is the culminating experience of a student's doctoral studies, in which the student develops independent and original approaches and applies critical thinking and problem-solving skills to address issues in the field of education. The doctoral capstone explores issues with policy or practice implications, and/or contributes new knowledge or understanding that will help educational personnel or organizations accomplish their mission more effectively.

The Capstone in Relation to the Program of Study

Prior to beginning work on the capstone, students focus primarily on completing courses required for their program of study. Preparing a doctoral capstone and writing the capstone document moves students into a new and unique experience that requires self-discipline, strong organizational skills, the integration of

prior studies, capacity to meet higher demands on research and writing, and the ability to work in close communication with the committee chair over an extended period of time (typically one or two years). The student's internal motivation, commitment, and willingness to persist in the face of challenges are keys to successful and timely completion of the capstone.

Each capstone follows a logical organizational structure that becomes clear as the student formulates the inquiry and designs the study to resolve a selected problem. The committee chair guides the student through this process and, when appropriate, solicits the input of the other committee members to ensure that the project is well designed, of significance, and properly reported in the student's written document. While the support of the student's capstone committee is invaluable, it is the student whose initiative, self-discipline, and commitment will see the process through to successful completion.

Doctoral Capstone Research and Written Document

Through the capstone, students demonstrate their ability to clearly define a problem, document their knowledge in a specialized area of study, articulate the related theories and literature relevant to the problem, describe prior attempts to resolve the issue, propose and implement a novel solution, collect data to determine the success of their proposed solution, and reflect on the project and draw conclusions in scholarly ways. The doctorate is awarded to those who have not only completed the required number of units, but who have demonstrated significant skills in conceptualizing, conducting, and defending their project. The capstone at La Sierra University's School of Education, therefore, must meet all of the following criteria:

- **Address a significant issue or problem**

- The doctoral capstone provides a research-based experience in which the student identifies and selects an education problem to be addressed through an action-research project, a clinical research project, program or policy development, or another product outcome project as developed with the capstone committee.
- The capstone is designed to highlight an applied focus. Students are guided in identifying and selecting a problem faced in their education setting, reviewing the research literature related to the issue, and proposing an intervention guided by the literature review to address the selected issue.

- **Demonstrate a theoretical connection and a clear scope of the proposed education project**

- The student must plan the capstone within a theoretical framework and must employ a methodology that will withstand scholarly scrutiny.
- The student, in consultation with the capstone committee chair, may select an education setting and intervention that best fits the nature of the problem and determine the extent to which it has been investigated. The research question should determine the type of project to be used and the venue in which it will be applied.
- Because faculty members hold expertise in different areas, it is the responsibility of the student to consult with those faculty members whose research interests and skills matched his or her projected area of research.

- **Generate original and creative applications**

- In the doctoral capstone, the student demonstrates the ability to integrate theory and research into practice. The student's originality is demonstrated in formulating new research-based approaches to issues identified in the education setting.
- The student's creativity is demonstrated in the conceptualization of the problem, identification of theoretical constructs related to the problem, and the approach chosen for the project.

- **Produce high quality, scholarly work**

- Doctoral capstones that meet La Sierra University's standards for excellence:
 - Address a problem or issue in a way that would make a significant contribution to the field of education.
 - Clearly, logically, and convincingly present the problem (or problems).
 - Are based on theoretical constructs relevant to the problem.
 - Contain a thorough, relevant, and well-organized review of literature; establish a record of how the research questions have been addressed by prior scholars; and note discrepancies and/or deficiencies that still need to be addressed.
 - Include clearly reported findings and outcomes that are analyzed for effectiveness and relevance, demonstrating an understanding of how they relate to the methodology used.
 - Provide evidence that the student employed critical-thinking skills at each step of the process from conception to oral defense and demonstrated depth of knowledge and fluency.

Definitions

Doctoral capstone or capstone: A culminating experience of the Doctor of Education degree consisting of the development and implementation of a problem-solving approach to an education problem, based on theory and research, in which data are collected and outcomes analyzed. The project results in a written document defended at an oral presentation.

Written document or capstone document: A scholarly paper that logically presents an education problem, provides a thorough review of research literature related to that problem, describes the project or intervention and methodology, presents the findings, makes theoretical connections, provides reflections and analyses, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations for further study.

Clinical research: a project in which the candidate investigates a problem or issue in the field.

School-based project: a project in which the candidate applies a new approach to solve a problem within the school setting.

Program development: a project in which the candidate develops a new program in order to address an education need. May include at least a pilot application of the program.

Policy development: a project in which the candidate develops a comprehensive policy in order to address an education problem.

Student and Faculty Responsibilities

Qualifying Examination

During the last quarter of coursework, students who have maintained a 3.50 GPA must schedule their qualifying examination. This comprehensive examination calls for a demonstration of mastery in the specialized field of study and serves as an indicator of fluency in the discipline, analytical and writing skills, and ability to reference and apply key theories and research to practice. The qualifying examination provides the School of Education with important evidence that the student is prepared to advance to the capstone with a reasonable probability of success.

Faculty Expectations and Commitment

Approximately 1.8% of the adult population of the United States holds a doctorate (U.S. Census data on educational attainment, 2016). According to the Council of Graduate Schools, the national completion rate for doctoral degrees is about 57% (Sowell, Zhang, Redd, & King, 2008).

These statistics reflect the rigor of doctoral-level work. The faculty of the School of Education expects that students will finish successfully and in a timely manner. The doctoral degree signifies that one is a disciplined thinker, a self-regulated learner, and a thought leader in a specialized academic field and community. Therefore, the faculty will not generally pursue and urge students regarding continued progress with writing and research. While respecting students' self-direction, motivation, and accountability, faculty members are committed to providing scholarly support and responding to student questions and requests for review of drafts in a timely and helpful manner within the scope of the school's philosophy, policies, and procedures. Recognizing that the capstone process is complex and often includes various difficulties or unplanned delays, faculty members commit to helping the student to minimize and mitigate both.

Student Responsibilities

The following outlines students' responsibilities throughout the capstone process:

1. The student must request capstone committee members and submit the proposed list to the department chair and then to the dean of the School of Education for approval. Students are encouraged to talk with faculty members about their ideas, but the composition of the student's capstone committee is not finalized until the dean's office approves the committee request.
2. The student may *not* begin implementing the doctoral capstone until the proposal has received formal approval from the capstone committee and from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB).
3. All chapters of the doctoral capstone written document must be completed, including writing and editing, by the beginning of exam week in winter quarter of the year in which the student plans to graduate. No capstone completed after winter quarter will be considered for oral defense in time for the June graduation, nor during the summer term.
4. Doctoral capstone defenses must be completed prior to May 1 of the year in which the student plans to graduate. As there are *no exceptions*; the student is strongly encouraged to include a "contingency buffer" into the timeline. It is important to recognize that the doctoral capstone is a process that progresses at its own pace and that external events (e.g., birthdays, weddings, impending loss of family or friends, vacations, expected graduation year) may not be used to rush the process.

Tips for Success

Successful completion of the capstone depends upon the collaboration between the student and his/her committee, and even more specifically, between the student and the committee chair. Regular visits, calls, or emails with one's committee chair have been cited by doctoral students as key to completion, regardless of the amount of progress made between scheduled contacts with the chair. Meeting with the chair once or twice a month is recommended.

Completing the Doctoral Capstone: Step-by-Step

To ensure a successful capstone experience for all students, the university has established a step-by-step process. Each successive element depends on the one prior. Please proceed in the following sequence:

1. Satisfactorily complete courses required for one's program.
2. Successfully complete the qualifying examination and be recommended to candidacy by the department.
3. Request a doctoral capstone committee:
 - Students should know the general outlines of the problem and proposed solution as they solicit a committee chair and select committee members.
 - The capstone committee chair must be a regular (not adjunct) faculty member in the School of Education and must be approved by the chair of the student's department.
 - Students collaborate with their proposed chair in identifying other potential committee members. Generally, a capstone committee consists of three members including the chair. The student may invite someone to serve as a committee member who is not a faculty member in the School of Education but is academically qualified to support the research.
 - Students submit the proposed committee list to the chair's office. The form for this request appears in the appendix of this Handbook and online at http://lasierra.edu/fileadmin/documents/education/education/files/Student_Request_for_Capstone_Committee.pdf
 - Although the student may have preliminary conversations with potential committee members, the dean's office officially requests members to serve on the committee based on the written request and is responsible for the final approval of the committee.
4. Work only with your the capstone committee chair until the chair determines that the proposal is ready to be reviewed by the other committee members.
5. Make a formal presentation of the doctoral capstone proposal (generally considered to be an early draft of the first three chapters of the written document, specifically, the chapters introducing the purpose of the study, providing the literature review, and outlining the specific approach or methodology) to the capstone committee and obtain a vote of approval to proceed with the project.

6. Obtain approval for conducting the proposed research from the Institutional Review Board as needed.
<https://lasierra.edu/irb/>
7. Begin implementation of the project and collect of data on the results. Many projects will use a comparison of pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments.
8. Work with capstone committee and chair to complete the capstone. The chair will determine when each part of the capstone document is ready to send to the committee members for their feedback and evaluation.
9. Submit the completed capstone document to the committee prior to the end of winter quarter, as free as possible of grammatical and style errors, compliant with the APA publication manual. Make recommended revisions in consultation with the chair, who will obtain the committee's approval for defense of the capstone. The committee chair will coordinate the scheduling of the defense.
10. To qualify for participation in June graduation exercises, the student must satisfactorily defend the capstone prior to May 1.
11. Make any revisions required by the committee after the oral defense. Once completed, the student sends the finished capstone document to the committee chair for approval. Once all changes have been made and the document is ready, the committee chair submits it to the dean's administrative assistant. The dean's administrative assistant forwards the document to the editor, who will check that APA formatting has been followed correctly throughout the document, and the document is free of grammatical and style errors. Students should keep in mind that the editor works with multiple candidates, and editing is time consuming and tedious work that cannot be rushed. Students who defend earlier in the timeline are more likely to obtain a shorter turnaround time on their final copy.
12. Submit the revised, completed, and approved final copy of the capstone document to the dean's office by May 31 in order to participate in the June commencement ceremony.

Guidelines and Information for the Capstone Process

Doctoral Capstone Topic and Committee

Capstone Topic

Early in the doctoral program, students should be thinking about educational problems that interest them, keeping a list of ideas as they are suggested in or inspired by class discussions and readings. Students are encouraged to talk informally with professors and peruse dissertations and doctoral capstone documents available in the library collections and online through the library databases. Pay special attention to the recommendations for further study, which are found near the end of dissertations and capstone documents based on needs in the K–12 or higher education settings. Ask professors about their scholarly interests, and discuss ideas for potential topics with several faculty members and other educational professionals to help in the selection of a topic and a committee. The selected topic must be useful to the student and of interest to a faculty member willing to serve as the committee chair.

Final selection or definition of the topic will not occur until the coursework is nearly completed. Students must consider such factors as the relationship of the topic to their field of specialized study and practical feasibility of the study. It is important to select a topic related to an area of academic strength in which the student can conduct the project responsibly. Finally, ensure that adequate La Sierra University resources are available to support the project, such as faculty with expertise to give guidance, library holdings (or access to relevant documents and databases), and connections with venues in which the project can be implemented.

Capstone Committee

The capstone committee chair, selected in consultation with the department chair, is the first member of the committee. The responsibility for assigning a chair ultimately rests with the dean, but students may seek out and request a chair who is willing to work with them and is interested in their topic. This chair must be a faculty member within the School of Education and typically holds appointment in the student's department of specialization. Students work with the committee chair to create a list of the potential members of the committee, including the external committee member.

The capstone committee chair carries the primary responsibility for guiding students through their doctoral capstone and is the person with whom they work most closely. The first requirement for a committee chair is familiarity with the content of the student's potential topic. Additionally, a strong and mutually respectful working relationship with the committee chair is of utmost importance.

The capstone committee membership usually consists of three members, including the chair. The School of Education recommends inclusion of one committee member from outside the School of Education whose scholarship and experience will provide appropriate support during the project and the writing of the capstone document. The external committee member may be a member of the La Sierra University faculty or a qualified individual who is not employed by La Sierra University.

When the potential committee members have been identified in consultation with the chair, students must submit a completed and signed Student Request for Capstone Committee form to the department chair. The department chair, after approval is granted, forwards it to the dean's office for final approval of the committee. The form may be obtained at:

http://lasierra.edu/fileadmin/documents/education/education/files/Student_Request_for_Capstone_Committee.pdf

The responsibilities of the doctoral capstone committee chair are to:

- provide guidance for the capstone proposal,
- serve as chair during capstone committee meetings,
- assist the student in preparation for the proposal presentation,
- supervise satisfactory completion of the capstone,
- coordinate communication with the committee,
- assist the student in preparation for the capstone oral defense, and
- act as chairperson of the oral defense.

The responsibilities of the committee members are to:

- provide additional advisement to the student and/or act as the capstone committee chair in the absence of the chair,

- read and critique the capstone proposal and participate in committee deliberations during consideration of the proposal,
- read capstone document drafts and respond in a timely manner to the student with feedback,
- participate in questions and dialogue during the oral defense, and
- participate in the committee deliberations at the defense.

The Proposal

The doctoral capstone proposal is designed to demonstrate the purpose and organization of the student's project. The proposal gives the committee enough information to determine whether the identified problem and the planned procedures will be appropriate.

The proposal serves as a type of "contract" between the student and the capstone committee that, once formally approved by the capstone committee and the IRB (as needed), constitutes approval that the project may be implemented and data may be collected. However, because it is impossible to predict the unexpected turns that research can, and often does, take, students should expect modest changes to their capstone as it proceeds. The goal is to complete a written document that represents the student and the School of Education with excellence.

Proposal Development

Research methods courses help students understand various methodologies and assist them with the process of writing a formal proposal. While these classes guide students through the first stages of the proposal, final capstone proposal approval is the committee's responsibility.

Proposal Format and Content

Students are expected to use the most recent editions of the *School of Education Capstone Handbook* and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. If necessary, students may be asked to use the paid services of a professional editor prior to the completion of their written document; careful and thorough work at all stages will reduce the cost of the editorial services prior to graduation.

The proposal consists of the first two or three chapters of the capstone document, including the problem, the literature review, and the proposed methodology.

Preparation of the Proposal

The proposal enables the committee to evaluate the significance of the research problem and the approach to resolving the issue presented. The committee's approval signals that the student is ready to proceed with the capstone and report the outcomes in a written document.

Committee Involvement

During the preparation of the proposal, students should establish an effective working relationship with their capstone committee chair. All drafts must be submitted first to the committee chair for evaluation and comment. Once the committee chair has given approval, the drafts may be shared with the other committee members, who are expected to copy any written responses to both the student and the committee chair. Students are expected to maintain this process throughout the writing of the capstone document.

Once the committee chair and members have evaluated the proposal, students then request the committee chair to schedule a proposal presentation with the committee, where formal consideration occurs.

Students must submit their doctoral capstone proposal to each committee member. In the proposal meeting, the committee discusses the proposal, questions the student regarding any areas needing clarification, and identifies needed revisions. The committee then considers a vote of approval for the proposal.

Institutional Research Board (IRB)

Students collecting data from human subjects as part of their capstone must submit a proposal of research to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval.

Detailed information is available from the office of the chair of the Institutional Research Board (IRB). A report from the IRB should be attached to the approved proposal. <https://lasierra.edu/irb/>. Students should consult with their committee chair and the chair of the IRB regarding any questions or details.

Only after receiving IRB approval of the proposal may students collect data for the capstone as needed.

The Doctoral Capstone Document

A well-produced capstone document will demonstrate students' familiarity with the literature pertinent to the topic and demonstrate their competence to summarize research and present a logically organized and readable account of the project with its findings, conclusions, and implications.

Working with the Committee

The capstone committee chair carries the primary responsibility for guiding the process and holds the prerogative of deciding when a draft copy is, or is not, ready for examination by the other members of the committee.

It is generally advisable not to begin a new chapter of the document until all questions on the previous section have been resolved.

Students should plan to pace their submissions to committee chairs and members and give them enough time to read and respond to material thoughtfully.

Doctoral Capstone Document—Recommended Format

The following content is normally expected in a capstone document. The items for inclusion and the location of the items within sections may vary. An example follows:

Front Matter

- Title page
- Research committee
- Permission statement
- Abstract
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- Dedication (optional)

Table of contents
List of tables, figures, and illustrations

Chapter 1 Purpose and Organization

Introduction and background of the project
Statement of the problem
Purpose of the study/significance of study
Theoretical foundation
Research questions
Limitations and delimitations
Assumptions and definition of terms
Organization of the document

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

Broad historical literature on the topic
Theoretical lens and related theoretical literature
Literature (comprehensive) related to the topic
Specific literature related to the current study
Summary

Chapter 3 Description leading to the project or article

Description of the specific approach
Contribution of the project to the need
Participants and setting
Data collection procedures if any
Ethical considerations as needed
Data analysis procedures as needed
Summary

Chapter 4 The project

Introduction
The project description and actual content
Results of the project
Summary

Chapter 5 Conclusions

Conclusions drawn from the study, relating the findings to theoretical constructs
Reflective critique and analysis of the process used
Implications which could affect further studies
Recommendations for further studies and policy issues

End Matter

Reference and notes
Appendices

Defending the Doctoral Capstone

The doctoral capstone oral defense is a required component of the graduate program of study. Once the capstone document is completed in proper form and style, the committee confers before giving final approval for an oral defense of the capstone. Students are required to attend a preparatory meeting with their committee chair prior to the defense. A “mock (or practice) defense” is strongly recommended in order to identify problems with presentation and timing.

The defense has two purposes. The first is to evaluate whether the student understands and can present the relevant literature, project questions, methodology, findings and implications of the capstone to an audience of scholars and professionals and respond fluently to questions related to the research. The second purpose is to evaluate the student’s ability to clearly and convincingly communicate the results of the project to a broad group of interested faculty and students. The oral presentation and examination should be a stimulating academic experience.

Satisfactorily passing the defense is separate from satisfactorily completing the written document. Both are necessary for earning the degree.

Final Steps

1. Submit Completed Written Document to Committee

In order to complete the process for a June graduation, students must submit to their committee a copy of the capstone document and abstract, complete in every respect, including all chapters completely edited with all appendices, references, charts, and tables numbered and complete, *prior to the end of winter quarter*.

2. Submit Abstract

Included with this completed copy must be an abstract of no more than 350 words. This length limitation is a constraint imposed by University Microfilms, Inc., which is accepted by U.S. universities and colleges for dissemination of research and project reports. It is an absolute limit.

The abstract submitted for publication is printed on the student’s oral defense program. This is the only written document that many attendees see. Be sure that the abstract is well written in scholarly language and accurately represents the most important points of the project/study.

3. Obtain Committee Approval

The committee meets to determine when the capstone is ready to defend. If the capstone document is approved for defense, the committee chair confers with the dean’s office to set a defense date.

4. Schedule the Oral Defense

The dean’s office set the date for the oral defense. The School of Education reserves the right to schedule defenses according to time and faculty availability. The dean’s office sends out the notifications of the defense to the campus.

5. Plan for the Oral Defense

Students are strongly encouraged to attend other dissertation and capstone defenses in advance of their own, so that they are familiar with the atmosphere, components, and nature of the oral defense.

Students should plan their presentations well in advance. This is the students' opportunity to demonstrate to the academic community the importance and meaning of their doctoral capstone. The degree of familiarity with the contents of the study must be thorough enough to summarize the literature, present the problem, defend the method, explain the project, and satisfactorily describe and explain the results. Students should prepare to articulate clearly how their conclusions and recommendations are based on their findings.

Helpful Tips:

Meet with the committee chair for an orientation to the defense procedures. Review the defense presentation with the committee chair and use the chair's input to improve the planned presentation.

Prepare well-designed visuals to accent or emphasize selected points in the presentation. Visuals should be meaningful, support the major themes of the presentation, and be easily readable for all present (do not cram many points on each slide in small font).

Rehearse the oral presentation to determine its length and evaluate how it sounds. The presentation should run **30–45 minutes** and should include the following points:

- **Introduction**
Describe the problem. Indicate the student's relationship to the problem and the development of his or her interest in that problem.
- **Statement of the problem**
Provide an overview of the literature basis for understanding the current state of the problem. Refer to the theorists and theoretical construct(s) are related to the study.
- **Presentation of the capstone**
Present the capstone project. Indicate the methodology for addressing the problem and explain the choice of method. Discuss any limitations and strategies used to overcome those limitations.
- **Study findings**
Provide a summary of results that indicate the degree to which the methodology was/is effective. Do not provide all the data; select the most significant and/or most interesting findings for the presentation.
- **Study conclusions**
Provide meaning for the results. State ideas about what the project contributes to the field of education and how the results are related to the theoretical basis for the study. Suggest recommendations for schools, districts, and other researchers. Indicate what the student's intended role will be in disseminating this information.

6. Present the Oral Defense

It is important to keep in mind that passing the oral defense is not a routine matter. Unacceptable performance will mean, at minimum, a delay of one quarter before a reexamination can occur. Prepare carefully.

Note the voted policy regarding attendees: Participation and observation of the oral defense is limited to La Sierra University faculty members, La Sierra University graduate students, and individuals with relevant professional or scholarly interest as agreed upon by the committee chair. Up to two family members may attend the defense with the permission of the dean. Recording devices are prohibited at the defense.

Normally, two hours are scheduled for the oral defense in order to provide the examining committee evidence of the student's ability to defend his or her study and the project. Committee members bring written questions based on their review and reading. As the examination progresses, other questions usually emerge.

The following typifies the sequence and times for the oral defense:

- a) **Dean's welcome and prayer** (*2 minutes*): The dean welcomes the assembled group and opens with prayer.
- b) **Introduction** (*5 minutes*): The committee chair introduces participants and explains the event's procedures.
- c) **Candidate presentation** (*Typically 25–30 minutes*): The candidate presents the capstone, results, and conclusions to the committee and other attendees.
- d) **Questions** (*30–45 minutes*): The questioning phase of the defense is moderated by the committee chair. The first round of questions consists of questions from the capstone committee. The second round of questions consists of follow-up questions from the capstone committee. The remaining attendees, beginning with other School of Education faculty members, are then invited to question the candidate. The committee chair moderates all rounds of questioning.
- e) **Executive session**: Once the questioning is finished, the committee chair invites the candidate and attendees who are not members of the capstone committee to leave the room, and the capstone committee meets in executive session. (If needed, the candidate may be asked to remain with the committee.) During the executive session, the committee takes a vote on the candidate's success in defending the capstone and written document.

Regarding the oral defense, the committee has the following three options:

- Approve the defense
- Reject the defense with opportunity for another defense
- Reject the defense with no option for a further defense

Regarding the capstone document, the committee will choose from one of the following four options:

- Approve the document as presented
- Approve the document subject to minor revisions
- Approve the document subject to major revisions
- Reject the capstone presented

7. After the Defense

A successful defense generally results in requiring the student to make certain minor adjustments in the capstone document. Students should plan to make these revisions as soon as possible to allow for the remaining review and approvals by the committee and the editor.

Submission to Dean's Administrative Assistant

Following a successful defense, the final completed capstone document must be approved by the committee. Once that occurs, the student must submit a final copy, properly formatted and on final copy paper, to the dean's administrative assistant. The dean's secretary sends the capstone document to the School of Education editor to ensure compliance with form and style guidelines. If the capstone document contains minor errors, the student is notified and expected to make the corrections. If substantive form and style errors are perceived, the editor has the option to return the document to the student (via the dean's secretary) unread, and it will be the student's responsibility to re-submit a revision.

8. Graduation

The following specified deadlines apply to those wishing to participate in the June graduation. These are absolute deadlines. Plan accordingly.

- a) The last day for oral defenses in spring quarter is **April 30**.
- b) The last date for submission of final completed copy of capstone document to the deans' office is **May 31**.
- c) There are no exceptions. There are no mitigating circumstances.

Appendices

(available at the Forms and Handbooks section of the School of Education Website)

1. School of Education Standards for Written Work
2. Sample Title Page
3. Sample Abstract Page
4. Sample Table of Contents
5. Sample List of Tables and Figures
6. Sample Approval Form
7. Sample Permission to Copy Form
8. Sample Agenda for Capstone Approval
9. Student Request for Capstone Committee
10. Sample Oral Defense Program