

Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology & Special Education
School & Applied Child Psychology (SACP) Program

UBC SACP Ph.D. Dissertation Research Sequence

In order to help facilitate dissertation and research progress to ensure reaching doctoral candidacy in a timely manner, a number of steps to help move you to a successful proposal defence have been added to the Ph.D. program.

As doctoral students in a Ph.D. program with a scientist-practitioner focus, you should be actively engaged in research activities throughout your program along with your course and clinical training activities. Research activities should include not only your own dissertation research but also, engagement in research activities such as lab or research teams, research projects with your supervisor(s) or others in the department or other places at UBC, referred presentations at professional conferences, manuscripts submitted for publication, editorial work, and the submission of proposal for funding on your own or with faculty.

Your doctoral dissertation research is a critical component of your Ph.D. program. To ensure timely program completion it is important to begin exploring the topic for your dissertation research early in your Ph.D. program. Doing so will help in making decisions about research courses, papers and projects for classes, and other activities you may become involved both in and outside of the classroom.

Year One: Term 1 SSHRC Application

If do not enter the program with federal (SSHRC, CIHR, NSERC) funding, you will be expected to submit a proposal early in the winter term (typically September of each year) each year until you receive SSHRC funding. This is a useful first step in exploring ideas for your dissertation research. This requires you connect with your research supervisor early in the term or even before you begin your Ph.D. program you start your program to discuss your research ideas.

Research Topic Planning

You should be meeting with your research supervisor regularly during your first term. Supervisors have different ways of approaching supervision. Talk with them about your needs as a student and their expectations as a supervisor. By December 15 you will submit a short (approximately 2 page) summary of your dissertation progress and plan for moving forward to your research supervisor. You should use the First Year Dissertation Update form (attached) in summarizing your work. Students will also share their research ideas with each other and other program faculty during one of the Ph.D. student meetings during the year.

Year One: Term 2

You should meet with your supervisor no later than January 15 to discuss your progress on you research plan (if you have not done so sooner). A copy of your First Year Dissertation Update Form, including notes from the discussion with your supervisor and signatures from you and your supervisor should be placed in your file with the SACP program assistant immediately following your meeting.

In Winter Term 2 you will continue to work with your supervisor to develop a Dissertation Prospectus. A prospectus is a short road map for the proposed dissertation. It is intended to get you thinking about your project early enough to ensure completion in a timely fashion. You will submit



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your Dissertation Prospectus to your supervisor by May 30 and discuss it with your supervisor by June 30. At the June meeting you should begin exploration of members for your research supervisory committee and clarify plans for any additional coursework or experiences in Year 2 to help ensure the successful development of the dissertation proposal and ultimately successful completion of the dissertation. The prospectus may change as your work to your dissertation proposal but it should serve as a strong plan to move forward.

Your dissertation prospectus (due May 30th) should be approximately 8 to 10 pages in length and be organized as follows:

- I. Working Title
- II. Brief Literature Highlights
- III. Statement of the Problem and/or Rational or Need for the Study
- IV. Purpose Statement
- V. Proposed/Preliminary Research Questions
- VI. Considerations for Methodology
 - Potential Approach or Method
 - Potential Sample/Participants
 - Potential Measures or Approaches to Data Collection
 - Potential Approaches to Data Analysis
- VII. Selected References
- VIII. Possible Committee Members
- IX. Timelines and Plans for Moving Forward to Dissertation Proposal

Once the document has been reviewed and discussed with your supervisor, a signed copy should be placed in your department file.

Year 2

Developing your Research Proposal

By year 2 you should have a good sense of the direction for your dissertation. You will continue to work on your literature review. You will work with your supervisor to finalize a research supervisory committee. You should complete any additional research coursework you may need to support your dissertation research. You can complete your proposal at any point you are ready. Ideally this will be completed by the summer of year 2. At the very latest it must be completed by November 1st of Year 3.

There are some variations of the format of the dissertation proposal. You should work with your research supervisor to develop a proposal plan that fits with their approach, the methodology you are using for your research, and G+PS guidelines <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/dissertation-thesis-preparation>. The dissertation proposal typically has 3 sections or chapters and while the length of the document and format varies they typically range from 15 to 30 pages depending on the approach taken and supervisor preferences. A sample organization might look like this:

- I. Introduction
- II. Review of the Literature
- III. Methodology (the components of this chapter in particular will vary with the approach taken but typically include at minimum the following)
 - Purpose Statement

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- Research Questions
 - Methods or Design
 - Procedures
 - Participants
 - Recruitment
 - Measures or approaches to Data Collection
 - Ethical Considerations
 - Data Analysis
- IV. References
- V. Appendices (including samples of measures, questionnaires, interview guides, etc)

While you may complete your proposal at any point in the first to 2.5 years of your program the timeline proposed here helps ensure you will complete your dissertation proposal and reach candidacy by November 1st of Year 3. However, ideally this will be completed by the end of the summer of year 2. Approval of your dissertation proposal is required to meet doctoral candidacy. Note however that you must also have successfully completed all required coursework and your comprehensive examination <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/managing-your-program/advancement-candidacy>

Years 3 & 4

The dissertation research focus in Years 3 and 4 of your program should be on obtaining ethics and other research approvals to conduct your research, conducting your dissertation research, writing up your final dissertation research, and the final oral examination of your research. It is typical for students to have your proposal defended by November 1st of Year 3. If you are planning to complete internship in Year 4 you must apply for internship through APPIC in the fall of Year 3 and reach candidacy by November 1st.

Following approval of your proposal you will obtain ethics approval (<https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/behavioural-research-ethics>) and then begin your research. Timelines at this point will vary depending on the nature of your research. You should work closely with your supervisory committee in developing and monitoring your dissertation plan and timelines. You are strongly encouraged to complete, at minimum, your data collection and data analysis before you begin internship. Some students may want to complete their final oral examination prior to or during internship. Depending on the nature of your research you may elect for additional time in Year 4 to focus on dissertation and final oral examination completion and complete your internship in Year 5. Every effort should still be made to complete your dissertation proposal by November 1st of Year 3. You are strongly encouraged to complete your PhD degree by the end of Year 4 or 5 year (including dissertation and internship). Information final dissertation formatting and the final oral examination is found at <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/final-dissertation-thesis-submission> and <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/final-doctoral-exam/final-oral-defence>.



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SACP Ph.D. Student Term 1 Dissertation Update Form

By December 15 of your first term in the program Ph.D. students are required to submit a short summary (approximately 2 pages) of your dissertation progress to your research supervisor (copy to your SACP advisor if this person is different). You should meet with your research supervisor no later than January 15 to review your progress and proposed plan for moving forward with your dissertation prospectus in the Winter 2 term (submitted by May 30). A copy of this update and approved plan should be signed by the student and their research supervisor (advisor if a research supervisor has not been identified) and submitted to the SACP program assistant (with copy for the student and supervisor) within one week of the review meeting. Submitting this form is a shared responsibility of the student and supervisor to ensure this occurs on time. Your summary can take any form that works for and is helpful for you and your supervisor. However in preparing this summary, respond, at minimum, to the following questions:

- What research activities have you engaged in during the Winter 1 term to facilitate your dissertation progress?
- What is the general area you anticipate for study in your dissertation research?
- What is your plan for the Winter 2 to help facilitate your completing a dissertation prospectus by May 30th? (this might include discussion of plan for readings, research meetings, coursework, workshops, timelines)

After your meeting, attach the Dissertation Update Summary to this completed form.

Student Name: _____

Date of meeting to discuss Dissertation Update Form: _____

Any additional comments resulting from the meeting:

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor/Advisor Signature: _____

Date: _____



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SACP Ph.D. Student Term 2 Dissertation Prospectus Form

You will submit your Dissertation Prospectus to your supervisor by May 30 and discuss it with your supervisor by June 30. At the June meeting you should begin exploration of members for your research supervisory committee and clarify plans for any additional coursework or experiences in Year 2 to help ensure the successful development of the dissertation proposal and ultimately successful and timely completion of the dissertation. The prospectus may change as your work to your dissertation proposal but it should serve as a strong plan to move forward. Your dissertation prospectus (approximately 8 to 10 pages in length) should be attached to this form. Respond to the following areas in your prospectus:

- I. Working Title
- II. Brief Literature Highlights
- III. Statement of the Problem and/or Rational or Need for the Study
- IV. Purpose Statement
- V. Proposed/Preliminary Research Questions
- VI. Considerations for Methodology
 - Potential Approach or Method
 - Potential Sample/Participants
 - Potential Measures or Approaches to Data Collection
 - Potential Approaches to Data Analysis
- VII. Selected References/Bibliography
- VIII. Possible Committee Members
- IX. Timelines and Plans for Moving Forward to Dissertation Proposal

Once the prospectus has been reviewed and discussed with your supervisor, a signed copy of this form along with the prospectus attached should be placed in your department file within one month of your meeting.

Student Name: _____ Date of meeting: _____

Any additional comments resulting from the meeting:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____