



VITERBO

UNIVERSITY

Educational Doctorate Degree (Ed.D.)

Counselor Education and Supervision

Dissertation (Doctoral Project) Overview

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Introduction & CACREP Alignment:

Viterbo University in accordance with the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP; 2016) standards, identifies that the Educational Doctorate Degree extend the knowledge base of the counseling profession. In addition, it prepares students to inform professional practice by generating new knowledge and supports students in disseminating the results of scholarly inquiry. Furthermore, doctoral student's complete dissertation research that focuses on areas relevant to education, practice and/or supervision.

Reference: Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2016). *2016 CACREP accreditation manual*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Dissertation (Doctoral Project) Research Model:

The Viterbo University Educational Doctorate Degree will utilize Boyer's Model (1990), which is a dynamic model of scholarship that emphasizes four pathways:

- The scholarship of discovery – discovering new knowledge
- The scholarship of integration – synthesis of original knowledge for new perspectives
- The scholarship of application – utilizing knowledge to find solutions to problems
- The scholarship of teaching – disseminating knowledge and encouraging others to participate in the process

Reference: Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Research Coursework:

According to the CACREP Standards (2016), students in research coursework develop high levels of competence in conceptualizing, planning, conducting, and interpreting research relevant to the profession of counseling. Furthermore, Research Methodology 1 (COUN712) and Research

Methodology 2 (COUN714) both foster familiarity with the research plan process, in preparation for the dissertation. The Dissertation course (COUN795) is where students formally work toward completion of the dissertation research plan, data collection, results, conclusion, and dissemination (with appropriate director, mentor and committee approvals).

Courses & Signature Assignments	Course Description	Course Outcomes
<p>COUN 710: Professional Counseling Orientation, Trends, and Research</p> <p>Signature Assignment: <i>Practice Brief</i></p>	<p><i>Examines the history, roles, functions, ethics and trends in the field of counseling with special attention to the array of professional journals in counseling, how to read and critique research in the field, and understanding strategies for publishing in counseling journals. Professional preparation standards and credentialing as well as Identification of a research agenda, grant writing targets, and publication pathways will also be explored.</i></p>	<p>Develop skills in conceptualizing, planning, conducting, and interpreting research relevant to the profession of counseling</p> <p>Articulate evidence-based practice in counseling theory and assessment practices</p>
<p>COUN 712: Research Methodology I</p> <p>Signature Assignment: <i>Research Application Assignments</i></p>	<p><i>Focuses on both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies used within the counseling profession, including bivariate and multivariate statistics, grounded theory, case study, narrative, phenomenology, and ethnography.</i></p>	<p>Develop systematic and critical understanding of a complex field of learning and specialized research skills for the advancement of learning and/or for professional practice.</p> <p>Engage in critical reflection, synthesis and evaluation.</p> <p>Identify how to disseminate and promote new insights to peers and the community</p>
<p>COUN 714: Research Methodology II</p> <p>Signature Assignment: <i>Research Proposal I</i></p>	<p><i>An advanced study of psychometric theory and approaches to appraisal of individual and groups within the helping process. Identification of research areas and methodology, the dissertation proposal, support during data collection, and a final dissertation product</i></p>	<p>Differentiate the implications of ethical and legal principles as applied to research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation.</p> <p>Design an original scholarly research project which evaluates existing research and proposes a research design that addresses a specific research question</p>

	<i>including defense will also be addressed</i>	
COUN 770: Advanced Clinical Testing, Measurement, and Appraisal Signature Assignment: <i>Research Proposal II</i>	<i>An advanced study of psychometric theory and approaches to appraisal of individual and groups within the helping process. Identification of research areas and methodology, the dissertation proposal, support during data collection, and a final dissertation product including defense will also be addressed.</i>	<p>Investigate the historical perspectives concerning the nature and meaning of assessment, the purpose of the most widely used tests in assessment, and the statistical/methodological principles necessary for appropriate selection, evaluation, and use of tests.</p> <p>Demonstrate advanced skills in the use of measurement toward understanding human behavior, including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior</p> <p>Critique the ethical issues in the use of testing, including an awareness of bias, prejudice, social, and cultural diversity factors that impact psychological testing.</p> <p>Apply the principles of the diagnostic process, including differential diagnosis, and the use of current diagnostic tools, such as the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).</p>
COUN 795: Dissertation Signature Assignment: <i>Dissertation & Defense</i>	<i>The dissertation is an original and relevant scholarly contribution, designed and conducted under the supervision of a research committee.</i>	<p>Successfully complete the dissertation proposal, submit the proposal to the Graduate School for approval, and be ready for data collection.</p> <p>By the end of the second semester the student will have scheduled their final defense for the research project.</p>

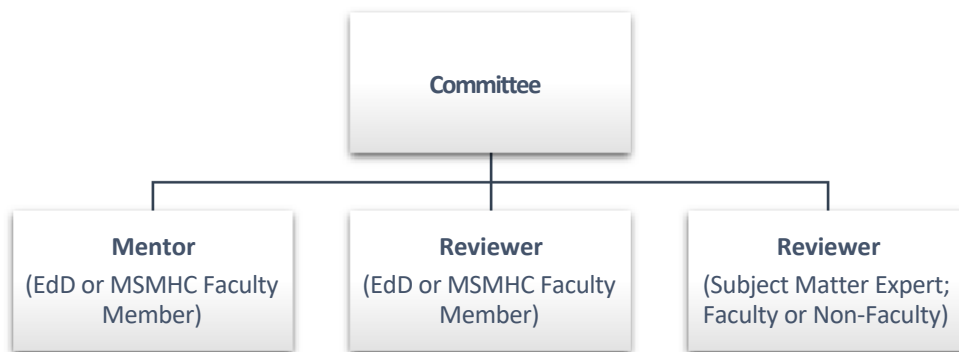
Overview of Dissertation (Doctoral Project):

The Ed. D. dissertation is required for graduation from the program and each student will have a committee through the process. According to the CACREP Standards (2016), students in doctoral level programs must have an approved doctoral committee and work with said committee to develop and complete the program of study. The dissertation process consists of three stages. Students should expect to go through several revisions at each stage prior to obtaining approvals. When approvals are sought, the committee may approve as written, approve with revisions or deny.

The first stage includes topic and committee identification, ethics training and a formulation of the research plan proposal. This part of the process cumulates with the dissertation proposal

meeting with your full committee. The second stage is centered on the institutional review board (IRB) approval, data collection, and writing chapter's one through three (introduction, review of literature and methods). The third stage is dissemination and consists of data collection and writing of the results (chapter 4) and the discussion (chapter 5). Dissemination includes the submission and approval process of the full manuscript to the committee and the public oral defense process. Once the dissertation is complete, a dissertation defense will be scheduled. Faculty require two weeks (10 working days) to read the dissertation prior to a defense date. Upon successful completion of the defense the student is responsible for editing and depositing the manuscript into the library.

Committee Structure:



Mentor/Committee Chair:

- Serves as the primary point of contact and are a faculty member of either the Ed. D. or MSMHC programs; mentor selection shall be decided upon by the program director, in collaboration with the student

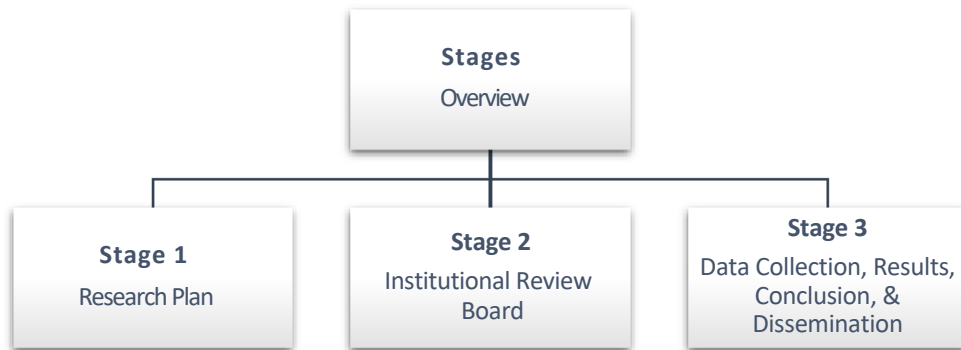
Reviewer/Committee Member:

- Designated by the program director, in collaboration with the mentor and student; and is a faculty member of either the Ed. D. or MSMHC programs

Reviewer/Committee Member:

- Shall have subject matter expertise related to the proposed topic (either faculty or non-faculty) and shall be designated by the program director, in collaboration with the mentor and student.

Dissertation (Doctoral Project) Process:



Stage 1 - Research Plan:



Topic Identification (Utilize Research Plan Form) & Committee Selection

- Review literature and refine your topic
- Obtain topic approval from the program director
- In collaboration with the program director, student will identify a mentor
- In collaboration with the program director and mentor, student will identify committee members
- The full committee (1 mentor, 2 committee members) must align with criteria and be approved by the program director (approval notification will come in the form of an email)

Ethics Training Completion

- Submit a PDF copy of the CITI certificate to your mentor

Research Plan Proposal & Approval

- Outline Chapters 1 – 3 (Introduction, Literature Review & Methodology)
- Obtain research plan approval (outline of chapters 1 – 3) from

mentor *Dissertation Proposal Meeting*.

- Obtain research plan approval (outline of chapters 1 – 3) from full committee.

Dissertation Plan Proposal Meeting: Students will organize a meeting of their committee and formally propose their dissertation topic and their written dissertation plan. This meeting includes rationale for the project, back ground information, research questions and the proposed methodology. The committee will provide comments and suggestions for improvements to the proposed project prior to moving forward to the IRB application process. The committee at this point may make three decisions. A. Approval to move forward, B. Approval with required changes to be made prior to gaining submission of the project to IRB, and C. Ask for significant changes that require the student to resubmit their proposal and reschedule a new dissertation proposal meeting.

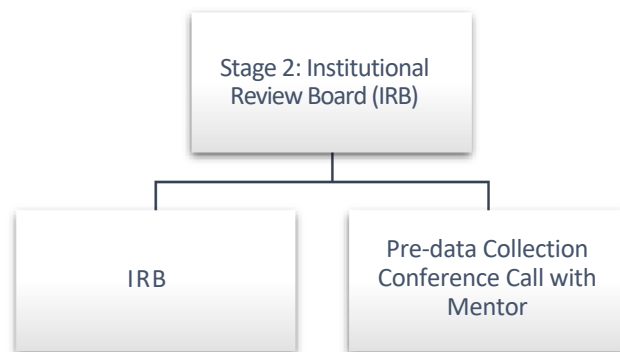
- This approval is a signal for the student to move forward. The committee members reserve the right to evaluate the dissertation and recommended changes after reviewing the full written document. Approval at this stage indicates that the faculty agrees for you to move forward to write the first three chapters of your dissertation and submit your study for IRB consideration.
- Approval of the research plan does not guarantee IRB approval
- Obtain approval of the written dissertation chapters 1-3 from your dissertation mentor. The material in your chapters should conform to the approved research plan. Any changes made to the content or methodology needs mentor approval. Significant changes in topic or methodology at this point may require you to gain a secondary plan approval from your full committee.

Chapters 1 – 3 (Introduction, Review of Literature, & Methods)

- Complete the writing of chapters 1-3 of the dissertation as outlined within your dissertation plan.

- Provide draft copies of your first three chapters to your Dissertation Mentor in order to allow time for polishing and creating a professionally written document for your dissertation defense.

Stage 2 - Institutional Review Board (IRB):



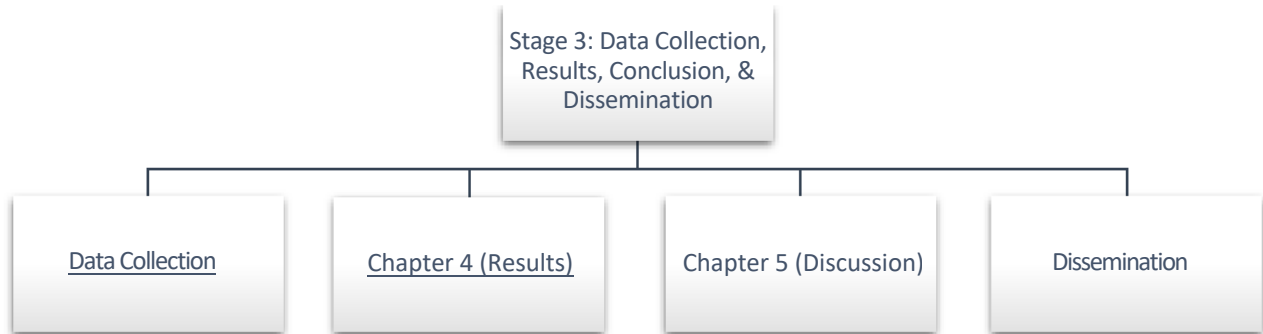
IRB

- Create corresponding IRB documents prior to submission to IRB
- Obtain approval of corresponding IRB documents from mentor
- Obtain approval from IRB. Place this approval in an appendix of your

dissertation. Pre-data Collection Conference Call with Mentor

- Student will verify that chapters 1 – 3 are consistent with any recommendations and modifications made during the IRB process

Stage 3 - Data Collection, Results, Conclusion and Dissemination:



Data Collection

- Have approval from IRB and complete pre-data collection conference call with mentor
- Collect data

Chapter 4 (Results)

- Analyze and store data in accordance with agreed upon measures outlined in the research plan process and IRB.
- Create chapter 4 (Results)
- Obtain approval of chapter 4 from

mentor *Chapter 5 (Discussion)*

- Create chapter 5 (Discussion)
- Obtain approval of chapter 5 from mentor

Dissemination and Dissertation Defense Meeting

- Submit dissertation manuscript to full committee for review (include cover page, copyright page, acknowledgements, table of contents, abstract, keywords, chapters 1 – 5, references and appendix) and obtain approval. See the Structure and Components of a Doctoral Dissertation section below. Faculty require at least 10 working days to read your dissertation.
- Submit abstract to program director and request scheduling of public defense
- **Dissertation Defense Meeting** – Students are expected to have prepared a professional presentation and discussion about their dissertation findings. This meeting is public and open to the Viterbo community. After the defense the committee will have three

choices available: A. Approval of the Dissertation, B. Approval with required changes, and C. Ask for significant changes that require the student to resubmit their dissertation and reschedule a new dissertation proposal meeting.

- Obtain final approval and sign the approval sheet from program director and full committee following defense. The student is expected to have 3 copies of this document prepared in hard copy for signatures during the dissertation meeting.
- Make any suggested edits to the dissertation based upon dissertation committee feedback. Consult with dissertation mentor about this process.
- Submit to Viterbo Library for repository process
- The candidate is then approved for graduation if all coursework and other academic obligations are satisfied

The structure and components of a Dissertation (Doctoral Project)

The structure and format for the Dissertation in Ed.D. Counselor Education and Supervision at Viterbo University is outlined below. Students are also strongly encouraged to use the Viterbo University Dissertation Template.

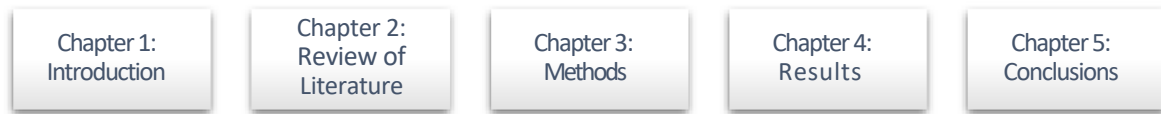
Each dissertation will have the following components.

1. Title Page and the Committee Approval Page
2. Copyright (this is provided by Viterbo University)
3. Abstract
4. Dedication (optional)
5. Acknowledgements (optional)
6. Table of Contents
7. List of Tables and Figures
8. Chapter 1 Introduction
9. Chapter 2: Review of the Literature
10. Chapter 3: Methods
11. Chapter 4: Results

12. Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

13. References

14. Appendixes (one of which must be an IRB approval page)



Below you will find a helpful resource of suggested areas to cover within each chapter of your dissertation. Keep in mind that these are suggestions and each dissertation is unique and may need additional subheadings.

Chapter 1 - Introduction:

- Statement of the problem (succinct overview of why this particular project is needed)
- Theoretical or conceptual framework (brief summary of theory or previous research for the phenomenon of interest)
- Statement of purpose (explicitly states what the study is about)
- Research questions (pose questions and/or hypotheses)
- Significance of the study (established by theory or previous research; significance for scholars and/or practitioners)
- Definition of terms and operationalized constructs (necessary technical

terms) Chapter 2 - Review of Literature:

- Literature review - discusses what is known and unknown (including major findings and relevant methodological issues).
- Include an outline for the full literature review.
- Rationale (review implications for the project under

investigation) Chapter 3 - Method:

- Tactfully introduce research questions (include research questions - same as in chapter 1)

- Study design (describe each step of the project in detail along with appropriate citations)
- Study context (setting) and Intervention (if applicable, for a particular intervention or treatment)
- Participants (specify plan for recruitment or inducements)
- Data sources (tools for measurement or interview protocols)
- Data collection (means to gather data)
- Data analysis (describe process)
- Assumptions and limitations
- Ethical considerations

Chapter 4 - Results:

- Demographic information
- Factual reporting of the project results (organized around the research questions)
- Tables and figures can summarize information (additional details in the appendix)

Chapter 5 - Conclusions:

- Interpretation of data
- Integrate theory and research (from chapters 1 & 2; additional information as needed)
- Recommendations for future research
- Summarize importance of the findings and implications for counseling field
- Implications for clinical practice, counselor education and/or supervision
- Conclusion paragraph

References:

- All references should conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition.

Appendixes:

- All dissertations are required to have the IRB approval page or the worksheet that states your study was exempt from an IRB review process.
- Suggested information to place in your appendixes are permissions to use developed instruments and measurements, your demographic survey questions, participant

consent forms or statements, interview questions, open-ended questions, intervention protocols, and other information that allows for your study to be replicated. Be mindful that you are not allowed to place copy righted instruments, measures, or materials within your dissertation.