ORAL EXAMINATION OF THE PhD DISSERTATION PROPOSAL
FOR 2018-2019
Revised July 2018

Dear PhD Student:

Congratulations upon completing your Comprehensive Exam/Qualifying Exam and reaching the final stage of the requirements for the PhD degree. The administration of the Warner School is committed to supporting your completion of the oral examination of your dissertation proposal.

Below is a summary of the key procedures required for the dissertation proposal examination at the Warner School. Claire Urbanowicz in the Office of Student Services (LeChase Hall 248) will be glad to answer questions about these procedures. You can contact her at 585.273.2927 or curbanowicz@warner.rochester.edu.

Although you will be working with Claire, it is important to understand that the Office of the University Dean of Graduate Studies (585.275.9093) oversees and coordinates the work for the PhD degree in all graduate schools of the University.

The key procedures have been organized in sequence—with checklists—to make it easier for you to complete all of the steps required. Each of the major sets of instructions is printed separately for your convenience. They are as follows:

- Format and Preparation of the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation (page 2)
- Human Subjects Review (page 3)
- Before Initiating the Dissertation Proposal Exam (page 4)
- Initiating the Dissertation Proposal Exam (page 5)
- Appointment of Reader/Independent Chair, Approval of Proposal, and Scheduling of Exam (page 6)
- Conduct of the Proposal Examination (page 7)
- Reporting Results of the Examination and Admission to Candidacy (page 8)
- FORM A (at end of document)
- FORM C (at end of document)
FORMAT AND PREPARATION OF THE DISSERTATION
PROPOSAL AND DISSERTATION

As a PhD student, you must adhere to the University’s document on regulations regarding the preparation of the dissertation, Formatting the Thesis and Preparing for Final Defense. This document was prepared by the Office of the University Dean of Graduate Studies. It is available at http://www.rochester.edu/Theses/.

Warner students are responsible ONLY for adherence to the following portions of the manual:

- Formatting your Thesis, page 3 – bottom of page 4
- The Order of Thesis Contents, bottom of page 4 – top of page 8
- Format of Title Page, page 9
- EXAMPLE OF Table of Contents, pages 10-11
- EXAMPLE OF Biographical Sketch, page 12
- EXAMPLE OF Contributors and Funding Sources, page 13
- EXAMPLE OF List of Tables, page 14

The remaining portions of the manual do not pertain to Warner students. If you have questions regarding this, please contact Claire Urbanowicz at 585.273.2927 or at curbanowicz@warner.rochester.edu.

IMPORTANT
The style manual that must be used by Warner School students is that of the American Psychological Association (APA). However, please understand that the APA style manual does not supersede Formatting the Thesis and Preparing for Final Defense.
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

You, as Investigator, are ultimately responsible for the safe and ethical conduct of your research. The University’s Research Subjects Review Board (RSRB) is intended to assist you, as Investigator, in this responsibility. Investigators who are planning a study involving human subjects must prepare an application package that includes a Protocol (Study Design), Information Letters and/or Consent Forms, Study Measures, and Institutional Approval Letters, and then submit that application electronically via the RSRB website. All documents must be uploaded and submitted electronically through the ROSS online system. The University’s RSRB must assess proposals involving human subjects, to ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place for the protection of the rights and welfare of human research subjects.

The process for obtaining approval for research involving human subjects and the procedure for submitting an on-line application can be found at the link below:

https://www.warner.rochester.edu/files/studentservices/forms/humansubj.pdf

The Warner School has an internal review process that provides guidance in preparing these materials prior to RSRB review. Training for this submittal process is required by the Warner School and held on the last Friday of most months of the year. You and your dissertation sponsor must complete an Evaluation For Scientific Merit For Dissertations And Other Student-Led Studies Involving Human Subjects (FORM C, at end of this document), and then submit that form to Constance Flahive, Warner School of Education (LeChase Hall 254). Procedural questions can be directed to Connie at 585.276.4781 or at cflahive@warner.rochester.edu.

Students often must make revisions to the dissertation proposal after passing the dissertation proposal examination, and therefore you are encouraged to discuss with your dissertation sponsor the exact time to undertake the RSRB process.
BEFORE INITIATING THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL EXAM

The dissertation proposal oral exam process cannot begin until—

- the Comprehensive Exam/Qualifying Exam has been passed.
- Claire Urbanowicz in the Office of Student Services has been notified of your comp exam/qualifying exam pass. See FORM A of this document; your signature is required.
- the required credit hours of coursework for the PhD degree have been completed.
- all required credit hours of coursework for the PhD degree have received grades—however, grades for ED 595, “PhD Research,” may be submitted by your dissertation sponsor prior to registration of the final dissertation.
- all University and Warner School debts have been paid (contact the University Office of the Bursar at 585.275.3931).
- your registration is current and has been maintained continuously from the semester of matriculation.
- your dissertation committee has been approved (see Formation of the PhD Dissertation Committee, available on the Warner website).
- If you have a “long-distance” committee member who is unable to attend the proposal exam, you, your sponsor, and your “long-distance” committee member must decide upon the use of either SKYPE or other technology for your proposal exam. Your decision must be indicated on FORM A of this document when that form is submitted to Claire Urbanowicz.
- The dissertation sponsor of a PhD student living more than 200 miles from the U of R campus has the discretion to allow that student to “defend” the proposal via SKYPE (or other technology) rather than in person. Other situations in which the student wishes to “defend” the proposal via SKYPE (or other technology) are left to the discretion of the Associate Dean.
INITIATING THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL EXAM

Your dissertation committee members must approve your proposal and agree it is ready for oral examination. They do this by adding their signatures to FORM A (attached at end of this document), or by sending their approvals via e-mail to curbanowicz@warner.rochester.edu.

Then, email or deliver the following to Claire Urbanowicz in LeChase Hall 248:

- FORM A (attached at end of this document). Claire will obtain the approval of the Associate Dean.

- A copy of the proposal. (See page 2 of this document and use the dissertation cover page format.)
APPOINTMENT OF READER/INDEPENDENT CHAIR, APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL, AND SCHEDULING OF EXAM

Following submission of all required materials (see page 5) to Claire Urbanowicz in the Office of Student Services—

☐ The Warner School’s Associate Dean appoints a Reader/Independent Chair for your dissertation proposal. The function of the Reader/Independent Chair is (1) to determine if the proposal is ready for examination and (2) to conduct the proposal examination itself.

☐ Claire Urbanowicz contacts you to announce the Reader/Independent Chair, and to give you days, dates, and times when the Reader/Independent Chair is available to conduct the proposal examination.

☐ It is now your responsibility to take the Reader/Independent Chair’s availability and arrange one examination day, date, and two-hour block of time with your committee members (not with the Reader/Independent Chair), and to contact Claire Urbanowicz with this information as soon as you and your committee have agreed upon a day, date, and time. Please remember that proposal exams cannot be scheduled on Tuesdays, from 1:30 – 3pm.

☐ The Reader/Independent Chair has three (3) weeks to read your proposal, prepare written comments, and present those comments (either by e-mail or in hard-copy format) to Claire Urbanowicz in the Office of Student Services. The three-week period may be extended during particular times of the academic year, e.g., at the end of both Fall and Spring semesters and during Summer sessions.

☐ If the comments indicate that there are fundamental problems with your proposal, and if the Associate Dean concurs with this assessment, then revisions to the proposal must be made and two hard copies of the revised proposal and one electronic copy must be resubmitted to Claire Urbanowicz in the Office of Student Services. The Associate Dean will resubmit the revised proposal to the Reader/Independent chair for his/her approval. The exam must then be rescheduled.

☐ If the original comments submitted by the Reader/Independent Chair indicate that your dissertation proposal is ready to be examined (or when the Reader/Independent Chair has approved the required revisions—see item immediately above), Claire Urbanowicz notifies both you and your sponsor that the proposal is ready for examination, and the comments are then distributed to both you and your committee members.

☐ The Office of Student Services confirms the examination day, date, time, and announces the location in a memorandum that is issued to you, committee members, and the Reader/Independent Chair.

☐ You must provide each member of your dissertation committee (not the Reader/Independent Chair) with a clean copy of the dissertation proposal that will be examined. This means that if the proposal has been revised on instructions from the Reader/Independent Chair and the revisions subsequently approved by the Reader/Independent Chair, copies of this revised proposal must be provided to each member of your committee. It is imperative that each member of your committee has an identical copy of your proposal, i.e., a copy identical to the final copy submitted to Claire Urbanowicz in the Office of Student Services, whether the original proposal or the revised proposal. Your committee members may prefer electronic copies of your proposal, but you must make certain that electronic copies and/or hard copies are identical.
CONDUCT OF THE PROPOSAL EXAMINATION

- The purposes of the oral examination of the proposal are to determine (a) the significance of your proposal, (b) the adequacy of your research plan, (c) the availability of needed resources to conduct your research, and (d) your competence to pursue the proposed dissertation.

- Attendance at the exam is limited to the following:
  (a) the student
  (b) the dissertation committee
  (c) faculty the Reader/Independent Chair
  (d) faculty members and other persons—with the approval of the Warner School Associate Dean, the sponsor, the Reader/Independent Chair, and the student

- Procedures for conducting your exam are at the discretion of the Reader/Independent Chair and your dissertation committee. These procedures are usually agreed upon immediately preceding the examination. You will be asked to leave the room while the procedures are being discussed.

- At the conclusion of the exam, you will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates and votes in camera to recommend “pass” or “fail.” The Reader/Independent Chair does not have a vote, but records both the committee’s recommendations and committee members’ comments on the report form provided by the Office of Student Services. The Reader/Independent Chair adds his/her own comments, if desired. (These comments may include observations regarding the conduct of the exam by the committee; compliments to the student; inadequacies of the study; comments on the student’s responses during the exam; and any recommendations for the student to follow, including a possible revision of the proposal or the conduct of the research.)

- You then will be asked to return to the examination room to learn the outcome of the exam and the comments of your committee members. The Reader/Independent Chair is responsible for reading these comments.

- For cases in which there is not unanimous approval by the dissertation committee, the final decision rests with the Associate Dean.

- In the case of a student failing the examination, re-examination will be allowed unless the dissertation committee, with the concurrence of the Associate Dean, rules that no re-examination will be allowed.
REPORTING RESULTS OF THE EXAMINATION AND ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

- After the examination, the Reader/Independent Chair sends his/her report, which includes the committee’s recommendations, to the Warner School Office of Student Services. Both you and your dissertation committee members will receive a copy of the Reader/Independent Chair’s report.

- Upon confirmation that you have passed the proposal examination, you are advanced to candidacy for the PhD degree. You then proceed with the dissertation, guided by your committee.

  (If the committee stipulates “pass, contingent upon required revisions,” it is the responsibility of the dissertation sponsor to write a letter to the Associate Dean, with a copy to the Office of Student Services, stating if and when the revisions have been completed. The student will then be advanced to candidacy for the PhD degree. The student proceeds with the dissertation, guided by the committee.)

- The document that details instructions and requirements for the final defense of the dissertation, *Registration and Final Defense of the PhD Dissertation*, is available on the Warner website.

Attachments:  
FORM A (Committee Approval and Sign-Off for the PhD Dissertation Proposal and Abstract)  
FORM C (Evaluation For Scientific Merit For Dissertations And Other Student-Led Studies Involving Human Subjects)
FORM A
COMMITTEE APPROVAL AND SIGN-OFF
FOR THE PhD DISSERTATION PROPOSAL AND ABSTRACT

I approve the dissertation proposal and abstract of ____________________________ (student’s name), and agree that this proposal and abstract are ready for examination. In lieu of signatures, committee members may send their approvals via e-mail to curbanowicz@warner.rochester.edu.

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The Office of Student Services has received notification that my Comprehensive/Qualifying Exam has been passed.

________________________________________
Student’s Signature

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Request use of SKYPE for proposal exam.

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Request other technology for proposal exam.

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Request neither SKYPE nor other technology. All committee members will be present for proposal exam.

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Claire Urbanowicz in Warner’s Office of Student Services will obtain the approval below.

_________  _____________  ____________
Approved:  Associate Dean  Date

June 2018
FORM C

EVALUATION FOR SCIENTIFIC MERIT
FOR DISSERTATIONS AND OTHER STUDENT-LED STUDIES INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

This form to be submitted to Constance Flahive at the Warner School of Education

In accordance with Federal guidelines, the University has established a system of ethical review boards (RSRB) to review research projects involving human subjects, including dissertation studies. Prior to submitting a dissertation, pilot study or other research project protocol to RSRB for approval, the student’s sponsor must first attest to the “scientific merit” of the proposed study and review the protocol to be sure it clearly reflects the research design as indicated below.

To be completed by Doctoral Candidate/Student:

Candidate Name: __________________________________________

Sponsor’s Name: ____________________________________________________

Proposal Title:  ______________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

Minimal Risk#: _________________ Expiration Date: ______________________

To be completed by Dissertation Sponsor/Faculty Supervisor:

Please use the following criteria as evidence of scientific merit:

☐ This research uses procedures consistent with sound research design.
☐ The investigator is qualified and has the time and resources to conduct the research.
☐ The research method is sufficiently sound to reasonably expect that the research question will be answered.
☐ The knowledge expected to result from this study is sufficiently important/needed.
☐ The data monitoring plan is appropriate to safeguard the rights and welfare of subjects.
☐ The use of healthy volunteers or vulnerable subjects, if any, is appropriate.
☐ Any Conflict of Interest issues have been addressed according to University Policy.

I attest that I have reviewed the protocol for scientific merit as described above and believe that this protocol meets the criteria.

Sponsor’s Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________

This form to be submitted to Constance Flahive at the Warner School, in 254 LeChase Hall.