



College of Education
Learning Design and Leadership

*Exam-Dissertation Sequence:
An Introduction*

In This Session

- **Sequence Overview**
- **Pacing**
- **Learning Materials and Resources**
- **Support**
- **Review Cycles**
- **Logistics (Registration) and Process**

General Field
EPOL 586

Special Field
EPOL 587

Theory &
Methodology
EPOL 588

Preliminary Exam
EPOL 591

Data Collection,
Analysis, and
Draft Dissertation
EPOL 599

Final Dissertation
and Defense
EPOL 599

Purpose of the EDS

This six-step sequence includes a series of seminars and milestones that lead to four examinations and the design and writing of a traditionally, five-chapter dissertation, that is a rigorous, scholarly contribution to research in a field of interest.



Differences between the Regular Courses and the EDS

Exam-Dissertation Seq.

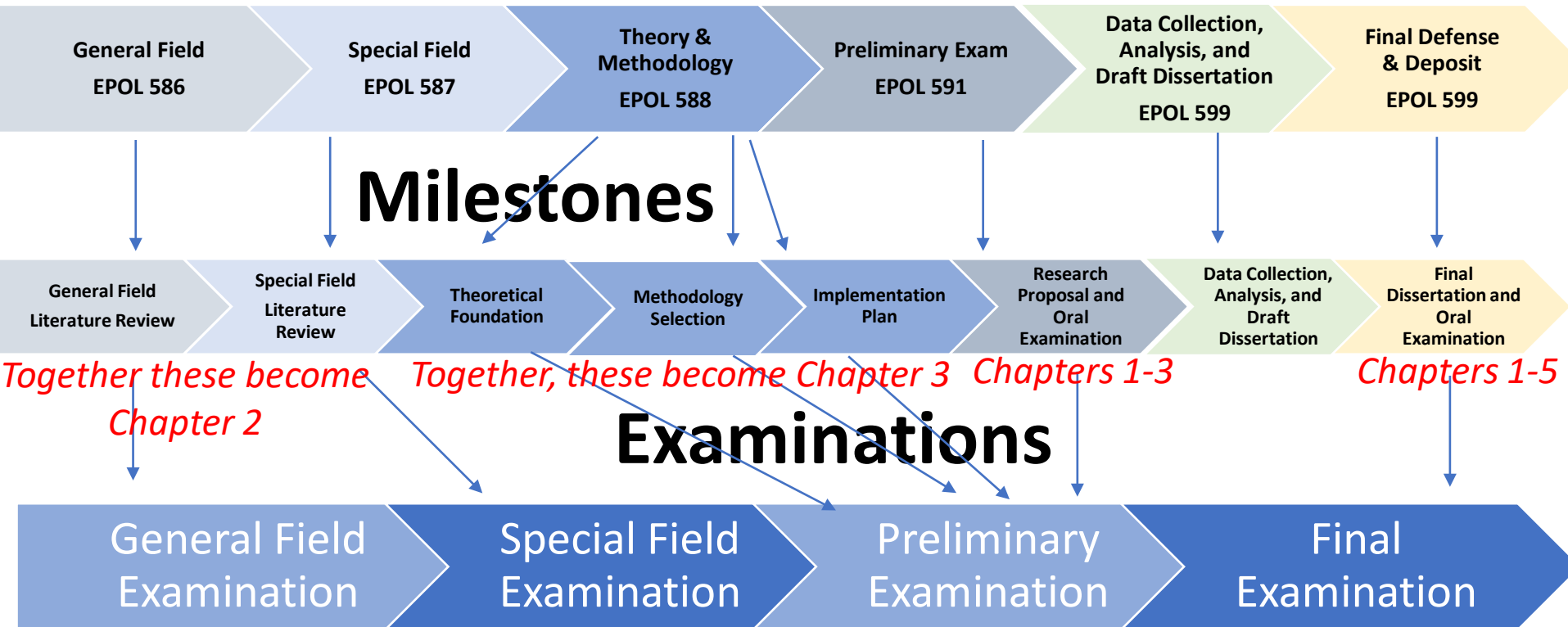
- Very self-directed, with support and scaffolding
- Focus is on quality, not quantity; Analytics aren't used
- While term start/end dates are set by the University, actual "work" Start and End dates are set by the student
- Weekly Group Advising Sessions and individual advising sessions upon request
- One Learning Module for all 6 "courses"
- Students initiate their own works in Scholar, but notify one ready to submit
- Curated and Open Peer Reviews that may be assigned at any time
- Works must be revised until approved
- Pass/Fail grades

Regular Courses

- Combination of flipped classroom and self-directed
- Start and end dates are set by the University
- Weekly "student update" synchronous sessions
- One Learning Module per course
- Learning Modules have "weekly updates"
- Students are sent a Work Request with a deadline
- Randomized and Anonymous Peer Reviews
- Peer Reviews are at the same time for all students
- Works may be sent back; minor feedback provided
- Analytics are used
- Letter grades

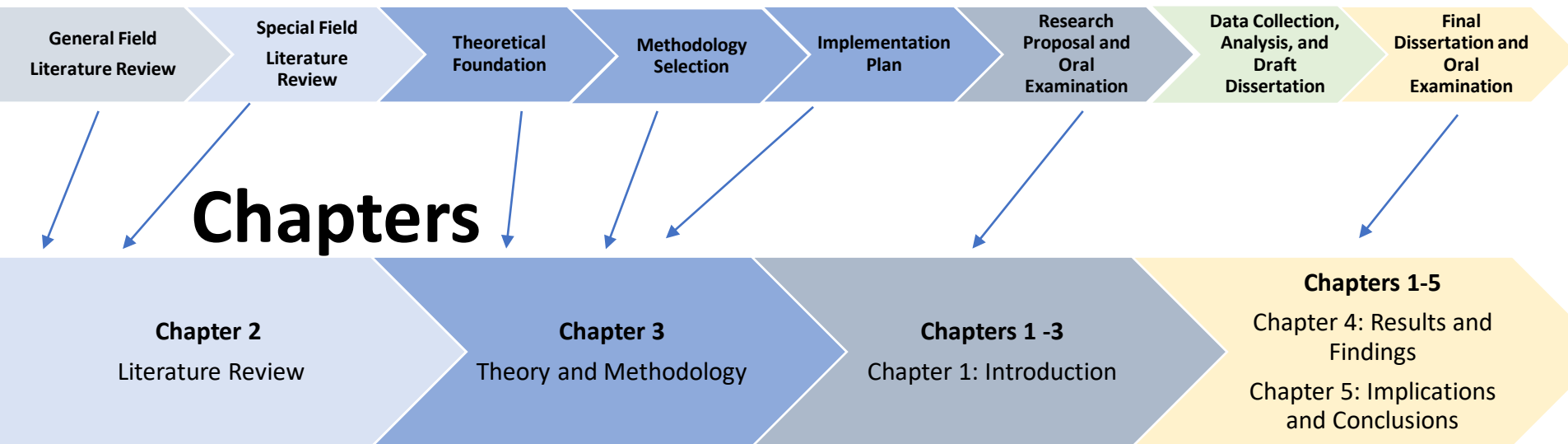
Seminars, Milestones, and Examinations

Seminars



Milestones and Chapters

Milestones

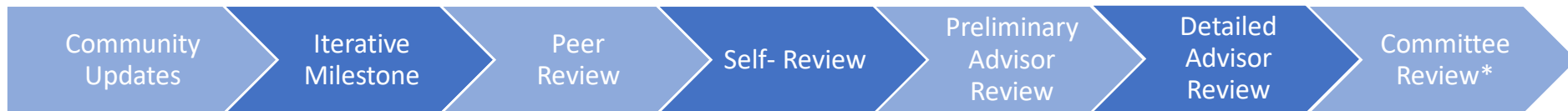


Final Dissertation Structure

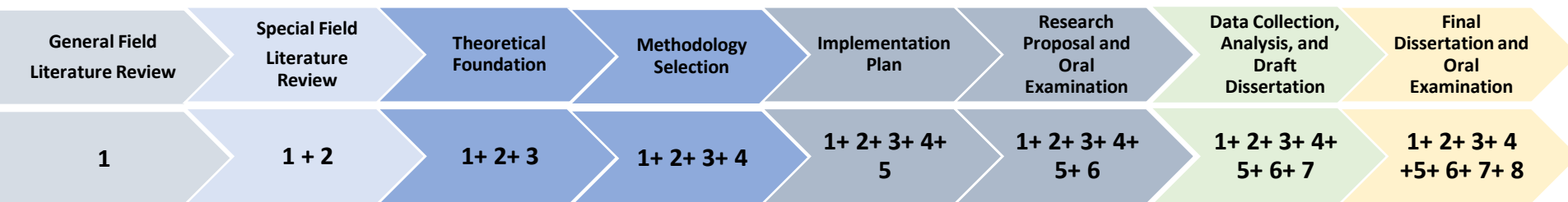


Iterative and Cumulative

Iterative: Revise after each review cycle, maintain detailed change notes



Cumulative: After each revision, add the next milestone to maintain a cumulative work





Always submit the latest and greatest of all previous milestones

See full [EDS Process PDF](#) on our web site

Support and Resources

Support and Resources

- Group and Individual Advising Sessions
- Peer mentoring, collaborative learning, and reflective practices
 - *don't limit yourself on who you connect with; don't limit peer reviews to written feedback only*
- Workshops and Writing Retreats *Writing retreat attendees receive immediate feedback on anything submitted during the retreat*
- Web site and learning materials *The admin updates have several links – please review them*
- EDS Progress Report/Tracker
- Library Resources
 - View the videos and reach out to Nancy O'Brien, the Education librarian
- Thesis Office Resources
- Writer's Workshops

Learning Materials and Job Aids

*******Navigating the Exam-Dissertation Sequence*******
Review this page as you work on each step in the EDS

Process

- [Dissertation section of the LDL Web site](#)
- Periodic Emails from the Dissertation Advisor
- [Happening Now page with the latest events](#)
- [EDS Process PDF](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Before you start the EDS](#)
- [Work Submission Guidelines](#)
- [Google Tracker](#)

Content

- [EDS Learning Module](#)
- [LDL Exam-Dissertation Sequence Community](#)
- [Literature Review Guidance](#)
- [Alumni's preliminary exam and final deposit manuscripts and presentation slides](#)
- [Rubric](#) for each milestone
- Dissertation Structure

Individual and Group Advising

- Pre Exam-Dissertation Sequence Individual 15-minute Advising Session with Dissertation Advisor (*required at least one term prior to starting the EDS*) and send link to a previous literature review)
- Weekly Monday Night (US CT) Group Sessions
 - 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. CT: Rotating Workshop Topics, Peer Presentations, etc. *Sign up on the Google Tracker to present, ask questions, etc.*
 - 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. CT: Self-directed Breakout Rooms by Stage
 - 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. CT: Group Advising discussions with Dr. Kalantzis, Dr. Cope, and peers
 - 8:30 to 9:00 p.m. CT: Peer-led open discussion
- Tuesday Group Sessions (not every Tuesday)
 - 9 a.m. CT – rotates between workshops, group advising, committee presentations, etc.
- Individual Advising Sessions, as needed
 - Individual advising sessions with Dr. Kalantzis are scheduled as ZOOM sessions on Tuesdays *Coordinate with Dr. Francis if you need to meet with Dr. Kalantzis*
 - Individual advising sessions with Dr. Francis can be scheduled in advance or short notice

Exam-Dissertation Sequence Advisors

Dissertation Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Mary Kalantzis

- **Not necessarily your assigned faculty advisor**
- Dr. Mary Kalantzis for all LDL students
- Provides guidance during group and individual advising sessions
- Fourth Committee Member
- Provides detailed feedback on examination milestones*
- Approves to proceed to each examination

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Kara Francis

- First point of contact for anything related to the EDS
- Responsible for all logistics, including seminar request forms
- Maintains frequent communication with EDS students
- Provides guidance during workshops & individual advising sessions
- Provides preliminary advisor review on all milestones

Faculty Advisor

*Dr. Bill Cope, Dr. Mary Kalantzis, or other
College of Education faculty member*

Serves as:


- Examiner*
- Committee Chair
- Research Supervisor for IRB forms
- Signs most forms, *(co-advisor can sign LOA and some forms)*
- Approves final dissertation for deposit

Examiners and Committee Members

Examiners

Examiners and committee members are determined in time for examination and posted on your EDS Progress Report

1. Dr. Bill Cope
2. Assigned by the department (*faculty advisor if advisor is not Dr. Cope or Dr. Kalantzis*)
3. Identified by the student or assigned by the department



If you have a request for a committee member, please share that with the Dissertation Advisor. You are encouraged to reach out to that faculty member to request their involvement

Committee Members

1. Dr. Bill Cope
2. Examiner #2 (*faculty advisor if advisor is not Dr. Cope or Dr. Kalantzis*)
3. Examiner #3 (*occasional exceptions where this may not be one of the examiners*)
4. Dr. Mary Kalantzis

One external committee is permitted, but must be approved by the Graduate College

Process

Timing – Pace Yourself

Work ahead if you can – start reading and get organized

- The overall process will take you approximately 2 ½ to 3 years
- You can start attending the group advising sessions anytime
- You do not need to be registered in order to participate in the EDS, but you will eventually register for the required courses
- Be sure to complete the Admin Updates with a prefix of 0 before the term starts
- Seek advisor input early and often to ensure you are on the right track
 - *Following the Work Submission and Review Guidelines will lead to more timely advancement of your milestones*
- Be prepared for certain milestones to take more than 8 weeks
 - *a full semester per milestone is more realistic*
- Be prepared for revisions after you submit for pre-peer and post-peer review
 - *this is all meant to be a process and not “one and done”*
- Incompletes are assigned until the requirements are completed
 - *You will not be able to register for the next course in the sequence until you demonstrate reasonable progress with your current milestone*

Final Dissertation Timing

A Final Draft of your full dissertation is due before the start of the semester you want to graduate

- The Graduate College deadlines are much sooner than the end of the semester
- Reviewing a full dissertation takes a lot of time both due to the length of the manuscript and the rigor of the work.
- Your committee also needs time to review the work after it has been approved by your dissertation supervisor
- Proofread your work. And have someone else proofread it. The quality of your drafts will influence the review process. It may be necessary to hire a copy editor.
- Anticipate multiple review cycles at this stage

FORMS FORMS FORMS

- The EDS Progress Report is how we keep track of who is actually working on the EDS, and which stage they are in
- Forms are the student's responsibility
- Follow the ~~Forms~~ page and the Overview PDF
 - Ensure you fill out the right form at the right time
 - Seminars = Examinations (these are two different forms)
- You can only register for one EDS course at a time to avoid multiple incompletes
- Complete an LOA if not registering in the Spring and Fall; not required for summer

You don't need to wait until you are registered or the first day of the term to begin participating

Consider officially registering once you are close to completing a milestone rather than when you are ready to start the milestone

Work Submission and Review Process

- Main menu item under the EDS menu of our website and linked from many other places
- Outlines standard requirements for each submission
- Word document vs. Scholar version
- Structure
- Steps to create, duplicate, and/or submit your work

*Following the Work Submission and Review process
will lead to more timely feedback*

Milestone Submission Process

Follow the Instructions on the Website

Community
Updates

Iterative
Milestone

Peer
Review

Self- Review

Preliminary
Advisor
Review

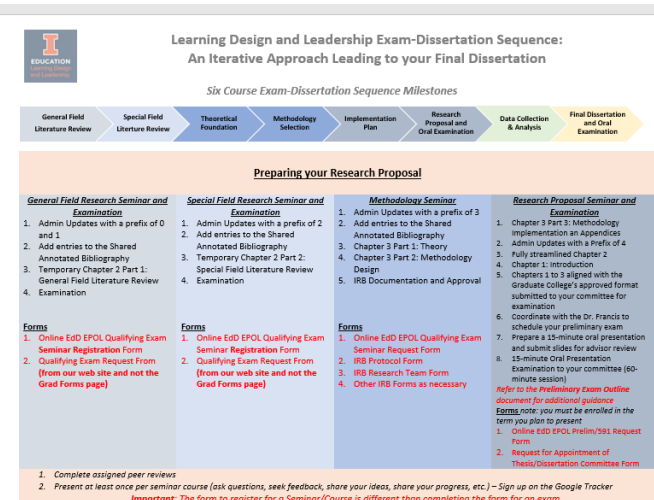
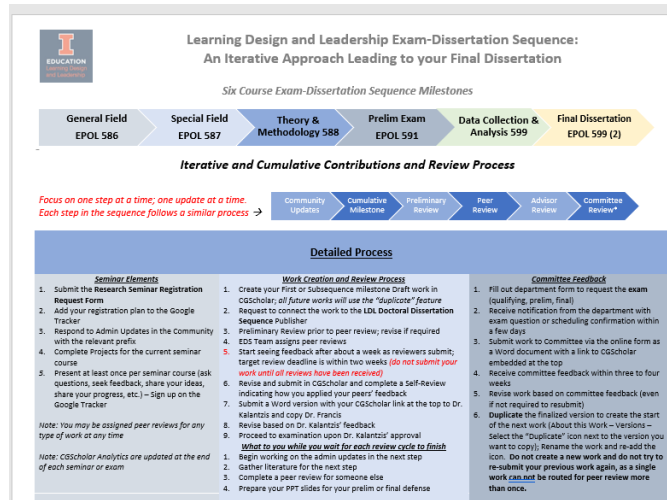
Detailed
Advisor
Review

Committee
Review*

See full [EDS Process PDF](#)
on our web site

*Create milestones in
CGScholar for peer review

*Create milestones in
Word to attach to the
work in Scholar that are
also used for advisor and
committee review



Each work should be a cumulative version of the previously completed milestones

Small Group Peer Communities

*Three reviewers who stay with the author for the duration of their dissertation**

Peer Stage

A reviewer who is at a similar stage

Peer Topic

A reviewer who has a similar research topic from any stage

Peer Advisor

A reviewer who is further along in the sequence or an alumni

Extended Peer Learning Community

Additional collaboration with all peers from the exam-dissertation sequence

Small Group Peer Communities

- Review the same work as it evolves; saves time
- Not focused on a specific volume of reviews, but rather the usefulness of the review based on stage or topic (but the target is 3 reviews per milestone)
- The Peer Topic reviewer may be ahead or behind in the sequence, or maybe has not even started the sequence
- The focus of the review will differ based on the purpose or person reviewing
- Feedback may be content, structure, and/or process related depending on the role of the reviewer
- Each type of reviewer provides connection either through similar stage, similar topic, or advanced progress

Getting Started

EDS Prework – you can do this now

- **Getting Started page on our web site**

<https://ldlprogram.web.illinois.edu/dissertation/planning>

- **EDS Prework page on our web site**

<https://ldlprogram.web.illinois.edu/dissertation/courses/prework/>

- **Our Google Tracker and EDS Progress Report**

- Be sure to follow the instructions to link your Illinois account

- **General Field Onboarding & Literature Review Workshops**

- Refer to the Happening Now page for upcoming dates

You don't need to wait until you are registered or the first day of the term to begin participating

While you are waiting for the EDS Onboarding Session to Begin

1. Begin exploring the EDS section of the website, starting with the Getting Started Checklist:

<https://ldlprogram.web.illinois.edu/dissertation/planning/>

2. Fill out or update your EDS Progress Report (link is on the getting started checklist)

3. Ponder your tentative research question and post that to the chat