

Education Doctorate Policy Document

Completion of the Dissertation-in-Practice

Degree Requirement¹

The Dissertation-in-Practice (DiP) is intended to bridge the gap between scholarship and practice. It provides evidence-based pathways to address field-specific challenges and more broadly, serves the public and/or social good.

General elements of the Dissertation-in-Practice include an applied objective, a focus of understanding, advanced critical reflection, and analysis of, and potentially changes to practice and policy, and connections to existing research and theory; a Dissertation-in-Practice may also advocate for and include designing a proposed plan for change in practice, such as organizational change to address a problem in practice within an educational setting. The Dissertation-in-Practice in the Education Doctorate requires secondary research only. Primary research requiring a research ethics board approval is not normally supported in this professional doctorate.

1 – The Dissertation-in-Practice in Fall/Winter Courses/Year 3

Year 3 is the summative year, during which rigorous course-based processes provide students with the close guidance of course-based graduate faculty advisors. Throughout the writing process, students receive extensive small group and one-on-one support and guidance from their course instructors. Sections are split into smaller subsections of about 8 students. The faculty to student ratio is maintained in the summer term of Year 3 to ensure ongoing support during this final term. The Dissertation-in-Practice is completed in-course during Fall-Winter of Year 3 of the program.

Instructors of the [Fall/Winter Courses Year 3 courses \(such as Course 8 in the Educational Leadership Field – EDUC 9733, EDUC 9778, EDUC 9757\)](#) provide a grade for the course and feedback on the Dissertation-in-Practice. A common rubric is used to provide feedback on the Dissertation-in-Practice and the draft Dissertation-in-Practice must be assessed at a minimum of a pass conditional upon revisions to pass the

¹ This policy document s developed from senate-approved text regarding the EdD DiP. See this [link](#) to the original version in the April 21, 2023, Agenda. Slight adjustments to wording in the original text are indicated in blue.

course. Additionally, a student must successfully complete this course with a minimum grade of 75% to proceed to the Summer Term.

2 – Dissertation-in-Practice Assessment and Evaluation Course (9714) Year 3 Summer, Final Term

During the Summer Term of Year 3, the students enroll in Course 9714 - Dissertation-in-Practice Assessment and Evaluation (0.5 credit; the final course). Dissertation-in-Practice Assessment and Evaluation is offered in Term 9 (Year 3, Summer) as a 0.5 credit course. This course focuses on the final development and assessment of the EdD Dissertation-in-Practice. The course prepares students for the completion of a public lecture and final examination of the EdD Dissertation-in-Practice. Course 9714 provides course structure for the evaluation of the Dissertation-in-Practice.

2.1 – Course 9714 Instruction

This course has a team approach by the instructors. Each instructor leads one of the small sections, providing direct support to students as they progress to completion. Each instructor also serves as an “evaluator” of a Dissertation-in-Practice for a student in another section, allowing for an arms-length review. The assignment of the evaluators is coordinated by the Graduate Programs Office in Education, in consultation with the instructors.

2.1.1 – Course 9714 - Course Facilitators

Each instructor leads one of the small sections, providing direct support to students as they progress to completion.

2.1.2 – Dissertation-in-Practice Evaluator

Each instructor also serves as an “evaluator” of a Dissertation-in-Practice for a student in another section, allowing for an arms-length review. The instructor evaluates the Dissertation-in-Practice based on the Dissertation-in-Practice Assessment and Evaluation criteria as outlined below. The assignment of the evaluators is coordinated by the Graduate Programs Office in Education, in consultation with the instructors.

2.2 – Public Lecture

Course 9714 includes a Public Lecture, which provides an opportunity for students to present their work in an open forum setting to peers, scholars, practitioners, policy makers, or other community stakeholders, and/or invited guests.

3 – Evaluation of the Dissertation-in-Practice

The Dissertation-in-Practice is assessed or evaluated at least twice, first in Term 8 and then in Course 9714 in Term 9. After a course instructor supports students in Term 8 and provides feedback on the Dissertation-in-Practice and another course instructor supports students in Term 9, the Dissertation-in-Practice is evaluated by one of the Course 9714 instructors in Term 9. A Course 9714 instructor evaluates the DiP based on the DiP Assessment and Evaluation criteria as outlined below.

There are three possible outcomes that may be considered.

- 1. Pass** – This indicates that the Dissertation-in-Practice is acceptable as it stands. Minor changes may be made before final submission. Examples of such changes might include minor typographical, grammatical, or formatting errors. Normally such changes should be completed within 1-2 weeks.
- 2. Pass conditional upon revisions** to Dissertation-in-Practice – This indicates that required revisions must be reviewed and approved by the examiner prior to passing and final submission for publication in Scholarship@Western.

Examples of required revisions may include extensive typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation; the need for clarification or addition of content to meet requisite scholarly standards; some additions, deletions or editing of text; further analysis, or discussion of some data. Normally, such revisions should be completed within 4 weeks after the examination. One set of revisions is permitted.

- 3. Unacceptable** – This indicates that the Dissertation-in-Practice cannot be submitted as it stands and would require extensive revision to reach the acceptable standard. A Dissertation-in-Practice found unacceptable proceeds to the Resubmission Hearing Process as outlined by the Program.

A Dissertation-in-Practice deemed unacceptable may contain, for example, faulty conceptualization, inappropriate or faulty use of research methodology,

misinterpretation or misuse of data, neglect of relevant material, illogical argument, unfounded conclusions, seriously flawed writing and presentation, and failure to engage the scholarly context.

4 – Course 9714 Grading

Passing of Course 9714 is dependent upon an evaluation of the Dissertation-in-Practice as Pass or Pass Conditional Upon Revisions.

5 – Resubmission Hearing Process

A student whose Dissertation-in-Practice is found unacceptable during course 9714 can submit to the Resubmission Hearing Committee, which

- Oversees the resubmission hearing process.
- Provides a recommendation within four weeks.
- Is chaired by the Associate Dean or designate and includes the Field Academic Coordinator(s), and the faculty member who evaluated the Dissertation-in-Practice. Note the student does not attend the committee meeting.
- Reviews the Dissertation-in-Practice and suggested revisions during the last two weeks of Term 9 (last two weeks of August).
- Reviews the documents on the Dissertation-in-Practice which are provided to them by the student and the faculty/staff. These documents are currently submitted in the course's OWL site or the Dissertation-in-Practice Scholarship@Western repository at the end of Term 8 and during Term 9 respectively by the:
 - Term 8 Instructor (i.e., the course outline, the Dissertation-in-Practice rubric, the written feedback on the student's Dissertation-in-Practice from Term 8),
 - Student (i.e., the DiP submitted for evaluation in Term 9, the Dissertation-in-Practice Action Plan submitted in Term 9), and
 - DiP Evaluator (i.e., the Dissertation-in-Practice Report).
- Makes recommendations on whether to uphold the unacceptable evaluation, recommendations for revisions, including recommendations for enrolment for additional term(s) of Course 9714.
- Completes the resubmission process and notifies the student of the results, normally within 4 weeks of starting the review.
- Provides the student with written notification of the decision and the changes suggested by the committee.
- Ensures the Course 9714 instructor's report in the repository is updated with an appendix of the committee's written decision.
- Ensures that the Program requests a Dissertation-in-Practice re-evaluation for the re-submitted Dissertation-in-Practice.

Normally, the same examiner assesses the re-submitted Dissertation-in-Practice. A student may submit to the Resubmission Hearing Committee twice.