

## Guidelines for Article-Based Dissertations and Capstone Projects

1. An article-based dissertation or capstone project should be comprised of a minimum of three articles. The articles should form a cohesive body of work that supports a theme or themes that are expressed clearly in the introduction of the dissertation or capstone project (Chapter 1). The need for three or more articles (as opposed to just two) should be clear and approved by the dissertation or capstone committee at the proposal defense. Unlike some dissertation proposals that are three chapters, the chair of the dissertation or capstone project should work with the student or students on the format of the proposal. The articles themselves should be written after the proposal defense.
2. Students should decide as early as possible, in concert with their dissertation or capstone project chair, whether to pursue an article-based dissertation or project format. However, they may switch from one format to the other at any time provided that their dissertation committee approves the change.
3. Students must secure all copyright permissions before finalizing the proposal and formatting the dissertation or capstone project. Students are encouraged to examine the copyright peculiarities of any journal they submit an article to prior to completion of the dissertation or capstone project. Based on specific journal copyright rules the publication of an article in a journal prior to the acceptance of the final dissertation or capstone project by the committee may exclude the article from being a part of their dissertation or capstone project. All of these issues should be considered early on in the process. The student should make sure that this entire process is compliant with the School of Education dissertation format guidelines (see [EdD. Directions for Student-Managed Submission of Dissertation](#))
4. At least one of the articles should be based on data that are analyzed by the student. If one of the articles is conceptual in nature, or based on a synthesis of the literature, it must be connected to the theme or themes of the dissertation or capstone without overlapping heavily with the contents of either article. The student's dissertation or capstone committee will determine whether the extent of any overlap is excessive. A certain amount of overlap is acceptable, but guidance from the dissertation or capstone committee will be critical on this point. For example, portions of the literature review may need to be cited in the various articles because it delineates the entire historical background of the study's focal topic. Redundancy can be carefully reduced by citing one's own work; however, self-plagiarism - reusing one's own previously written work or data in a 'new' written product without letting the reader know that this material has appeared elsewhere - is prohibited.
5. Students must be the sole author of all articles. In the case of capstone projects that involve teams, students need to be a first author on at least one or more articles. They must also be responsible for co-authoring the balance of the remaining articles comprising the capstone project. The distribution of authorship with fellow students will be determined in consultation with the capstone committee. As first authors,

students are responsible for taking the lead on the development and articulation of a concept or idea for research, development of a proposal to pursue this idea, development of a research design, conducting research and analysis, writing major portions of a manuscript, designing an intervention or assessment (if relevant), and interpreting results. Co-authors must be identified at the student's proposal defense. The article and the role of the student co-authors must be presented and approved by all members of the capstone committee. The capstone committee must approve any changes in student co-authorship.

6. The dissertation or capstone must include an abstract that synthesizes the articles, as well as an introduction (e.g. Chapter 1) and a conclusion (e.g. Chapter 5). The introduction should function as the cord that weaves the various manuscripts together and describes, for the reader, their 'collective meaning' and 'combined contribution' to the field. It should include:
  - a. A definition or statement of the problem
  - b. The importance of the problem, i.e., why it is worth researching, why it matters to the field of education
  - c. The theoretical foundation(s) supporting the problem/issue.
  - d. An overview of the important literature (overview, because each article will have its own unique literature review)
  - e. The overarching research question(s)
  - f. The methodologies to be used to answer those questions

The conclusion will briefly summarize the dissertation or capstone's major findings, limitations, discussion, and recommendations. The student will also present and discuss linkages (i.e., similarities and differences) between the separate manuscripts that are included in the dissertation or capstone project, striving as much as possible to present the document as representative of a coherent body of work. The conclusion chapter 'ties' everything together and helps the reader see how the various manuscripts, taken together, make a contribution to the knowledge base regarding the problem. The conclusion chapter should present/discuss research imperatives, or knowledge gaps, not visible when each manuscript is considered individually and should articulate an agenda for future research on the issues addressed in the dissertation or capstone project.

7. The proposal and final defense of the dissertation or capstone project is expected to parallel that of a traditional dissertation. The article-based dissertation or capstone project alters the format, but not the content, expected in the dissertation or capstone research.
8. As with any other dissertation or capstone project, students must submit their manuscripts at least 2-3 weeks prior to the defense for a preliminary review.