

Department of Special Education Doctoral Student Handbook

College of Education
Illinois State University

2023 – 2024

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This handbook is a supplement to the [graduate catalog](#) and Illinois State University's graduate school [procedures](#) for students seeking a doctoral degree in special education from Illinois State University. It is intended to answer questions about enrollment in the doctoral program and to clarify the requirements and procedures that must be followed to earn the degree. Each student should become familiar with the contents prior to meeting with their academic advisor.

For further information, please contact Dr. Yun-Ching Chung, the doctoral program coordinator of the Department of Special Education at Illinois State University (ychung@ilstu.edu or 309-438-2456).

I. The Special Education Doctoral Program

The mission of the Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) program in the Department of Special Education is to prepare expert educators, educational leaders, and/or university faculty to enhance special education services and special educator preparation. Doctoral students complete formal coursework and professional experiences related to teacher preparation, leadership, and research in the field of special education that culminates in the completion of a dissertation. These activities are guided by the student's chosen career path.

Director of Special Education Endorsement

While pursuing their doctoral degree, students may also wish to become endorsed as a Director of Special Education (DOSE) depending on their career goals. There are coursework overlaps (both required and elective) between the doctoral degree requirement and the DOSE endorsement. However, there are additional courses needed to qualify for the DOSE endorsement. Please note that the DOSE program has separate qualifications and a separate admission process. Those interested in this program option should contact Dr. Allison Kroesch, the DOSE Program Coordinator, at amkroes@ilstu.edu. Additional DOSE program details can be found at http://education.illinoisstate.edu/cert_director_sed.

II. The Doctoral Student

Program Planning and Advisement

The doctoral program coordinator will meet with each doctoral student during the student's first semester and will serve as the initial academic advisor. During or soon after the first semester, a new faculty advisor (who must be a SED graduate faculty member) will be assigned to the student based on the student's research interests and career goals. Note that the faculty advisor is not necessarily the student's dissertation chair, as the decision to select a dissertation chair is made before the student takes the comprehensive exam. Each student is responsible for developing a plan of study in consultation with the academic advisor. Students must have a plan of study in place prior to completing 12 credit hours in the program. The plan of study identifies coursework (including electives) and a projected timeline for completing all program requirements. The plan of study should be documented in [the degree audit form](#).

Degree Audit Form

The Department of Special Education's [degree audit form](#) reflects the student's plan of study, and this should be created early in a student's doctoral program. It can be modified throughout the program, although core and specialty courses must be completed before a degree can be awarded. The student must receive a grade of "C" or better in each required course (maintain a GPA in good standing). It must be submitted to the graduate school at the beginning of the semester in which a student intends to graduate. A plan of study is subject to approval by the doctoral program coordinator, department chair, and graduate school director.

Transfer Credits

Students may transfer up to two elective courses and four required courses when applicable. Transferred credits must be graduate-level courses that have **not** been used toward a previous degree and have been taken within the past nine years with a B or higher grade. A transcript must be submitted with [the transfer credit request form](#).

The Role of Your Career Path in Program Activities

The graduate faculty in the Department of Special Education recognizes the need for two broad categories of Ed.D. graduates: those aiming for a faculty role at a university that focuses on teacher preparation and those aiming for an educational leadership role in schools, agencies, or government entities. To support students who aspire to be expert educators, educational leaders, and/or university faculty members, the doctoral program offers different *recommended* paths (see the table on p.4).

For doctoral students who started their program **prior to the fall semester of 2022**, they will complete a traditional dissertation (as the only dissertation option) with additional considerations for their [SED 598a01](#), [SED 598a02](#), and extracurricular activities, based on their career aspirations.

For doctoral students who start their program **in the fall semester of 2022 or later**, they will explore different paths during the program prior to comprehensive exams within their course work. Specifically, two semesters prior to their comprehensive exams, students will complete [a program checkpoint](#). This program checkpoint will assist students with identifying their orientations toward a specific dissertation path (traditional dissertation, journal format dissertation, or dissertation in practice), and to support their completion of comprehensive exams and dissertations.

Doctoral students who are interested in pursuing employment in an institute of higher education (IHE)

upon completion of the Ed.D. in special education are encouraged to complete the journal format dissertation. The purpose of this dissertation format is to allow the student to experience the publication process and prepare three manuscripts that are ready to be submitted for publication at the end of their dissertation. Doctoral students who are interested in becoming expert educators or educational leaders upon completion of the Ed.D. in special education are encouraged to complete a Dissertation in Practice (DiP). The purpose of DiP is to allow students to demonstrate growth and better prepare for educational leadership roles as scholarly practitioners. A critical characteristic of DiP is to affect change in the school, district, institution, or community.

The table below lists course-related and extracurricular activities to support competencies required for students to pursue different career aspirations and dissertation options. Students shall take the initiative to inquire about opportunities for collaboration with faculty and pursue the opportunities.

Career aspiration	University faculty	Expert educators and/or Educational leaders
Recommended dissertation option	Journal Format Dissertation or Traditional Dissertation	Dissertation in Practice or Traditional Dissertation
Course-based supports (shared required and elective courses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SED 501: overview different tracks and the CPED framework; interview graduates in different career paths; develop a plan of study with required and recommended extracurricular activities ● SED 540: develop a line of inquiry based on a current issue or a Problem of Practice (PoP) ● SED 515: conduct a review based on their orientations of different tracks with a dissemination plan that involves different audiences ● EAF 415: explore improvement science and Dissertation in Practice (DiP) related to social justice issues and continue to develop inquiry of practice 	
Course-based supports (individualized 598 and elective courses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SED 598a01: experience with teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in different modalities ● SED 598a02: experience with, study design, IRB, data collection, data analysis ● Take additional research methods courses as electives (e.g., SED 520, EAF 515, EAF 510) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SED 598a01: experience with teaching pre-and in-service teachers through different modalities ● SED 598a02: experience with school- or district-based collaborative research ● Take additional content courses as electives (e.g., BE 480, SWK 444, SOC 470, EAF 433, EAF 583, TCH 580)
Extracurricular activities (under mentorship) (* Strongly recommended prior to comps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Co-teach a college course and co-write a syllabus* ● Co-supervise pre-service teachers* ● Experience with IRB under faculty guidance* ● Co-conduct a manuscript review with advisor* ● Develop leadership and self-direction skills, particularly as relates to setting and maintaining a research agenda, within/via a support network ● Experience with grant writing with faculty guidance ● Attend CTLT workshops ● Attend and present at conferences ● Participate in professional organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create and deliver PD to educators via different modalities* ● Develop partnerships with local communities (agencies/organizations)* ● Co-teach with EAF or TCH faculty ● Experience with data collection and data analysis with a method relevant to the student's line of inquiry ● Develop leadership and self-direction skills, particularly as it relates to organizational culture and change ● Participate in regional/national organizations ● Participate in advocacy/policy work ● Attend CPED webinars and engage in the support network
Advising Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practice interview and presentation ● Learn about internal and external service opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore avenues and practice communicating to different audiences (receive advisor feedback on these experiences) ● Learn about organization and community services

Course Requirements

Graduation from the program is determined not only by completing specific courses but also by demonstrating established competencies (as listed in the table above). Each student's plan of study includes: required coursework, elective coursework, and dissertation.

Required Coursework (Core & Specialty Courses = 16 courses & 45 credit hours)

EAF 415 – Qualitative Research
EAF 508 – Applied Educational Research **or** EAF 509 – Research Design in Education
EAF 510 – Research Methodology and Statistics in Education II
SED 501 – Doctoral-Level Scholarship (2 credit hours)
SED 502 – Legal and Policy Issues Affecting Special Education Program Administration
SED 512 – Single Subject Design Research
SED 513 – Program Evaluation in Special Education
SED 514 – Personnel Preparation in Special Education
SED 515 – Seminar in Special Education Research
SED 522 – Grant Writing in Education
SED 540 – Seminar in Contemporary Topics in Special Education
SED 579 – Advanced Technological Applications in Special Education
SED 591 – Doctoral Comprehensive Examination (1 credit hour)
SED 594 – Proposal Development in Special Education
SED 598a01 – Professional Practice in Teacher Preparation
SED 598a02 – Professional Practice in Applied Research

Elective Coursework (6 credit hours of 400 or 500-level coursework – potential options are listed below)

EAF 410 – Research Methodology and Statistics in Education I
EAF 515 – Methods of Qualitative Research in Education
EAF 521 – Moral and Political Foundations of Education
EAF 525 – Cultural Foundations of Education
EAF 526 – Critical Readings in Educational Foundations
SED 445 – Curriculum Development & Modification For Diverse Learners
SED 452 – Behavioral Issues In Autism Spectrum & Related Disorders
SED 448 – Applied Behavior Analysis: Changing Behavior & Learning Environments
SED 449 – Teaching Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities
SED 500 – Independent Study
SED 520 – Seminar in Special Topics in Special Education
SED 598a01 – Professional Practice in Teacher Preparation (Repeat)
SED 598a02 – Professional Practice in Applied Research (Repeat)
TCH 419 – The Study of Bilingual/Bicultural Education
TCH 409 – Student Diversity And Educational Practices
TCH 451 – Recent Research In Science Education
TCH 471 – Social And Cultural Contexts For Language And Literacy
TCH 563 – Critical Issues In Teacher Education

Dissertation (15 credit hours)

SED599 - Dissertation Research

Time Limitations

All work for the doctoral degree, including the dissertation, must be completed within **8 calendar years**, starting with the term that the student is first enrolled. For example, a student whose first term is Fall 2022 would need to complete all requirements by the end of the Summer 2030 term. Although it is not recommended, a student may “sit out” (i.e., not enroll for coursework) for one semester and continue in good standing in the doctoral program. However, if a student is not enrolled for two consecutive semesters, then the student is automatically dismissed from the doctoral program.

Once a student is in the dissertation phase, however, they must be continuously enrolled every semester in SED 599. The student is responsible for complying with continuous enrollment regulations during the dissertation phase (i.e., students must be continuously enrolled for every fall and spring semester following the defense of their dissertation proposal; also, summer enrollment is required if the student is going to graduate at the end of a summer term).

The [Graduate School Policies and Procedures](#) should be consulted for detailed information on time limitations and continuous enrollment. If a student needs extended time to complete the program, they can submit a request to extend time using a form (<https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/forms/>). The best course of action is to maintain enrollment continuously; however, if there is an upcoming semester in which a student is not planning to enroll in coursework, then the student should contact the graduate school (<http://grad.illinoisstate.edu/>) and double-check to make sure that the planned non-enrollment will not affect their status in the doctoral program.

III. Dissertation Committee, Comprehensive Examination, Candidacy, Defenses, and Degree Completion

The Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee will include the following characteristics: (a) the committee will consist of at least three ISU graduate faculty members, including at least **two** SED graduate faculty members; (b) the committee chair and a majority of the committee must be full members of the SED graduate faculty; (c) additional committee members may be faculty members from SED or other departments, colleges, or institutions (e.g., a methodologist from the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations or a content specialist from a related field) at the committee chair's discretion. Proposed committee members who are not members of the Illinois State University graduate faculty must be approved by the University's Director of Graduate Studies. All committee members must have terminal degrees. Dissertation committee members will collectively provide the expertise essential to support the doctoral candidate's dissertation investigation.

The chair of the dissertation committee will be selected by the student. This chair may or may not be the academic advisor with whom the student has worked throughout their doctoral program. The chair is responsible for guiding the comprehensive exam process, directing the dissertation, communicating with other committee members regarding the rules that govern their actions, assisting the student in establishing the timelines which the committee must meet, and assisting the student with filing the required graduate school forms.

The Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to formally admit doctoral students to candidacy for the doctoral degree. Upon passing the comprehensive examination, students are deemed qualified to propose their dissertations, undertake the completion of their dissertations, and subsequently defend their dissertation. The comprehensive examination provides students with an opportunity to integrate knowledge and practice, engage in critical thinking about key issues and concerns facing special education and related disciplines, and/or develop a Problem of Practice. Students also have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to use professional written language (within the APA style) to communicate effectively. Professional editors are not allowed.

Procedures for the comprehensive examination are as follows:

1. A doctoral student may schedule their doctoral comprehensive examination only after completion of at least **43** hours of coursework toward the doctoral degree. Two comprehensive examination evaluation subcommittees comprised of members of the dissertation committee will be formed **at least one month before** the student intends to take the comprehensive examination. If the dissertation committee includes one or more non-SED faculty members, that member's or those members' involvement in the comprehensive examination development and evaluation is optional.

These evaluation subcommittee committees will, in consultation with the student, recommend two comprehensive projects based on the student's chosen dissertation option. The comprehensive examination evaluation committee as a whole will approve the type and scope of the assigned comprehensive examination projects.

1a. If planning to complete a **Traditional Dissertation**: One comprehension exam project will focus on foundational knowledge in the field or a particular research method, allowing the student to

demonstrate foundational knowledge, competence, and skills. The other comprehension exam project will address the student's specialty area, allowing the student to demonstrate knowledge, competence, and skills in their specialty area. Examples of projects include, but are not limited to: a written exam, a program evaluation, a grant proposal, a literature review, a scholarly paper addressing concepts or issues in the field, a manuscript appropriate for submission to a peer-reviewed journal, an action research project, or an extension of a prior project (e.g., SED 598a02, if deemed appropriate by the committee). Taken together, the two projects are intended to provide a comprehensive demonstration of the student's breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding in both foundational and specialty areas. Depending on the student's interests and experience, their foundational and specialty projects may be refined and become Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of their dissertation.

1b. If planning to complete the **Journal Format Dissertation**: One comprehension exam project will be Chapter 1 of the dissertation, which provides an overview and rationales of the three papers (Chapters 2, 3, and 4), including background (overview of the topic/problem and the student's future line of research), a conceptual framework and related research (How will the three papers address the gaps in the literature? How do these three papers connect to each other?), research questions for each paper, and overview of proposed methods and journal/publication outlets for each paper. The other comprehension exam project will address foundational knowledge or specialty areas, as determined by the committee, based on the student's experience and future line of research.

1c. If planning to complete the **Dissertation in Practice**: One comprehension exam project will be an analysis of the Problem of Practice (PoP) to be addressed in the dissertation, including an overview (background and significance), a conceptual framework that reflects theory and practice with a brief literature review and a context for the PoP (What is the gap in practice? What is being experienced in my context and other related contexts), a statement of the PoP, and proposed methods (with consideration of laboratories of practice). The other comprehension exam project will reflect the journey of the student becoming a scholarly practitioner who engages in the process of inquiry as practice or/and address communicating their PoP to multiple audiences. Together, these two projects allow the student to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions as a candidate for a professional doctorate in education.

2. The comprehensive examination evaluation committee will establish a timeline for the completion and submission of the projects. Unless otherwise specified, students will have **three months** to complete the two projects, which includes two weeks to ask questions. All university policies and procedures related to academic integrity will apply. For more information, please see the [Student Code of Conduct](#).
3. If four committee members participate in the comprehensive examination process, each two-member evaluation subcommittee will evaluate one project report in the assigned area. If only three committee members participate in the comprehensive examination process, the dissertation committee chair will evaluate both projects, and the other two committee members will each evaluate one project.
4. Subcommittee members will independently evaluate a project and will have the option of discussing their evaluations to reach a consensus on a summative rating: pass, fail, or needs revision. If a two-member subcommittee has a split decision on the status of a comprehensive project, then a third dissertation committee member will be asked to independently evaluate the project and cast the

deciding vote. The dissertation committee chairperson should summarize feedback from all evaluations and provide this summary to the student within two weeks of the student's submission during the fall and spring semesters.

5. If the student does not pass one or both written projects, they will not schedule the oral doctoral comprehensive examination defense. For comprehensive projects that are determined to "need revision," a remediation plan for revision and resubmission of one or both of the project reports will be developed by the evaluation subcommittee(s). If a student is provided the opportunity to resubmit one or both projects, the student will have one month per project to complete the requirements of the remediation/revision plan. This month includes one week to ask questions to the committee members. **Only one revision per project is allowed.** If the student does not pass both written comprehensive project reports upon the second written submission (with the support of the remediation plan), the student will be dismissed from the doctoral program.
6. Upon successful completion of the two written comprehensive projects, the doctoral student will schedule an oral doctoral comprehensive examination defense. The format of this meeting resembles that of a dissertation defense. To demonstrate the ability to articulate a summary of their work, the student will give a brief presentation (10-15 minutes) on each completed project. This presentation will be followed by a question and answer session with the full evaluation committee. Members of the evaluation committee will vote for either (a) pass, (b) fail, or (c) needs revision. If the doctoral student passes, the committee completes the [Comps Oral Defense Outcome form](#) and submits the signed form to the doctoral coordinator. In cases of "needs revision," a remediation plan for the oral doctoral comprehensive examination defense will be developed. If a student is provided with another opportunity to pass the oral doctoral comprehensive examination defense, the student will have one month to schedule a new defense date. When the student passes the oral doctoral comprehensive examination defense, the committee will work with the student to establish a plan for the dissertation proposal (i.e., Chapters 1-3 for Traditional dissertation, Chapter. I with paper outlines for Journal Format Dissertation, and Chapter 1-2 or Chapter. 1-3 for four-chapter or five-chapter Dissertation in Practice, respectively). If the student does not pass the oral doctoral comprehensive examination Defense on the second attempt, the student will be dismissed from the doctoral program.
7. When a doctoral student has successfully completed the written and the oral components of the doctoral comprehensive examination, they enter candidacy status and may enroll in SED 594, Dissertation Proposal Writing. If a student does not successfully complete the written and oral components of the doctoral comprehensive examination after the one allowed written revision or after a second scheduled oral examination meeting, the student will be dismissed from the doctoral program.

The Doctoral Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation provides an opportunity for the candidate to conduct original research and to make a contribution to the field of special education by addressing a gap in the literature or a gap in practice. The candidate must register for at least 15 semester hours of dissertation credit (SED 599) to meet graduation requirements. The dissertation must follow a [traditional](#) or [a journal format](#) found on the [graduate school website](#) (with dissertation templates). A Dissertation in Practice will align with the graduate school's guidelines for a traditional format. In conducting the dissertation study, the candidate is expected to obtain original data and to interpret these data in the light of previous work in the field and applications in the school and community. All dissertations will follow the American Psychological Association (APA) style

in the 2020 Publication Manual (7th edition).

For **Traditional Dissertation**: The candidate is expected to write and submit a final dissertation that includes five chapters: a statement of the problem (Chapter 1), a review of the literature (Chapter 2), a methodology section (Chapter 3), a results section (Chapter 4), and a discussion section (Chapter 5).

For **Journal Format Dissertation**: The candidate is expected to write and submit a final dissertation that includes four chapters, an introduction (Chapter 1), a manuscript to be submitted to a peer-reviewed research journal (Chapter 2), a manuscript to be submitted to a peer-reviewed practitioner journal (Chapter 3), and a manuscript to be submitted to a peer-reviewed research OR practitioner journal (Chapter 4).

For **Dissertation in Practice**: The candidate is expected to write and submit a final dissertation that includes four or five chapters. A four-chapter Dissertation in Practice will include a Problem of Practice with contextualized literature (Chapter 1), a methodology section (Chapter 2), a results section (Chapter 3), and a discussion section on impacts and recommendations for changes (Chapter 4). A five-chapter Dissertation in Practice will include a Problem of Practice (Chapter 1), a review of the literature (Chapter 2), a methodology section (Chapter 3), a results section (Chapter 4), and a conclusion section with action/products for change (Chapter 5).

Dissertation Proposal Defense

The dissertation proposal defense focuses on the presentation of a proposed study to the dissertation committee. The dissertation itself may not begin until all members of the dissertation committee have signed the [Proposal Approval Form](#) after having agreed that the topic is worthy of pursuit and that the student's proposed methodology is adequate. The student will also submit the signed proposal approval form to grad school and the doctoral program coordinator.

The candidate, with advisement from the chair of the dissertation committee, will schedule the proposal defense. The candidate will be expected to submit a written proposal to the committee for review at least two weeks prior to the scheduled proposal defense. At the proposal defense, the candidate should be prepared to provide an overview of the proposed study in a 15-20 minute presentation and to answer questions related to the study. The committee can decide to (a) pass, (b) fail, or (c) defer a decision when evaluating a candidate's dissertation proposal defense. A candidate may begin dissertation research only after receiving committee approval (i.e., unanimous approval) and IRB approval. A candidate shall **not** register for more than 6 hours of dissertation coursework (e.g., SED 599) until they have successfully completed the dissertation proposal defense.

The written dissertation proposal will vary based on the student's dissertation option. The dissertation committee as a whole will approve the type and scope of the proposal.

For **Traditional Dissertation**: The candidate will submit a dissertation proposal that includes an introduction and a statement of the problem, a literature review, and a methodology section (each of which corresponds to a chapter in a dissertation) to the committee.

For **Journal Format Dissertation**: The candidate will submit a dissertation proposal that includes a revised Chapter 1 based on the committee's feedback during comprehensive exams and detailed outlines for each paper (Chapters 2-4), which include a complete draft of the methods section and timelines for the

three manuscripts to be submitted for publication. Based on the student's skills and needs, the committee will decide the combination and the type of three peer-reviewed manuscripts, which will consist of at least one peer-reviewed research journal article and at least one peer-reviewed practitioner article.

For **Dissertation in Practice**: The candidate will submit a dissertation proposal that includes a revised Chapter 1 based on feedback during comprehensive exams, a literature review, and a method section, each of which may correspond to a chapter in a Dissertation in Practice. That is, a literature review may be part of Chapter 1 or Chapter 2 based on the selected format (four or five chapters of Dissertation in Practice)

The Final Dissertation Defense

The final dissertation defense focuses on the dissertation study. The candidate will work closely with their dissertation chair for feedback and guidance while collecting data and writing the remaining chapters of the dissertation. The candidate and their dissertation chair will determine [the timeline for graduation](#). At the beginning of the graduation semester, the candidate will submit their [degree audit form](#) to the doctoral coordinator for review and apply for Ed.D. Degree graduation.

With the approval from the chair, the candidate of the dissertation committee will schedule the final dissertation defense meeting, submit the [Right to Defend form](#) to the graduate school (including setting up a ProQuest account and uploading the current dissertation draft) and submit the final dissertation draft to their dissertation committee at least **two weeks** prior to the final dissertation defense. Candidates can only defend their dissertations when they have been issued an approved *Right to Defend* form.

During the two-week period, the candidate is encouraged to [conduct an optional format check](#) with the graduate school. A copy of the dissertation should also be available to all Department of Special Education faculty members for a 10-day review and comment period; however, only dissertation committee members will have the opportunity to participate in the final approval decision.

At the final dissertation defense (a public meeting), the doctoral candidate will provide an overview of the study and findings in a 15-20 minute presentation and will answer questions related to the study, first from committee members and then from audience members. The dissertation committee can decide to (a) pass, (b) fail, or (c) defer a decision when evaluating a candidate's final dissertation defense. Traditionally, the committee arrives at a unanimous decision. However, it is within the realm of possibility that a student could pass the final defense when they receives a "pass" from the majority of the committee members.

A successful *Final Dissertation Defense* is evidenced by committee members signing the [Outcome of Defense Form](#). The candidate must deposit all items required by the graduate school on or before the date specified in the current graduate school calendar for [final submission](#). Once the student addresses final changes required by their dissertation committee and corrects errors identified by the graduate school, a final electronic copy of the dissertation must be uploaded through [ProQuest](#).

Application for the Doctoral Degree

The candidate must file an online application for graduation with the graduate school office at the beginning of the semester in which they intends to graduate. At this time, the candidate must also pay the required fees. Candidates should refer to the [graduate school website](#) for deadline dates regarding filing the doctoral dissertation with the graduate school for format check, scheduling the final dissertation defense, and filing the final approved dissertation. Candidates should also notify their chairperson of their intent to be hooded at graduation.

IV. To-do list For SED Doctoral Students

Item	Description
1	Contact doctoral program coordinator for initial advisement on coursework
2	Meet with the program coordinator and develop a plan of study (degree audit form)
3	Identify a faculty advisor and participate in extracurricular activities under the mentorship of the advisor
4	Complete the Ed.D. program checkpoint at least two semester prior to taking comprehensive exam
5	Complete 43 hours of coursework and maintain a GPA in good standing (each required course must be a grade of "C" or better)
6	Identify a dissertation chair to assist with forming a dissertation committee
7	Establish a Dissertation Committee and receive comprehensive examination projects
8	Pass written and oral Comprehensive Examinations. Submit the signed documentation of Outcome for Oral Comprehensive Examination form to the SED doctoral program coordinator. Congratulations! You are now All But Dissertation (ABD)!
9	Submit dissertation proposal to dissertation committee at least two weeks prior to proposal defense.
10	Pass dissertation proposal defense. Get approval signatures on Proposal Approval Form. Submit the form to the graduate school.
11	Submit dissertation research protocol to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and obtain approval.
12	Collect data, conduct data analysis, and write a dissertation (Keep going!)
13	Submit Degree Audit form at beginning of graduation semester and apply (online) for graduation
14	Submit dissertation to dissertation committee at least two weeks prior to the Final Dissertation Defense. Format check by the graduate school may be conducted during these two weeks. Students must have a Right to Defend form from the graduate school before they can conduct the Final Dissertation Defense. The Right to Defend form is issued only upon successful format check.
15	Pass Final Dissertation Defense. Obtain signatures from faculty on the Outcome of Defense Form.
16	CELEBRATE at graduation! You will be formally "hooded" at the Commencement ceremony by your dissertation chairperson.

V. The Graduate Faculty of the Department of Special Education 2023-2024

Faculty members in the Department of Special Education who have graduate faculty status are listed below. Graduate faculty status is conferred upon Illinois State University faculty members who have met relevant criteria related to tenure-track status and scholarly productivity. There are two types of graduate faculty status (i.e., full and associate). Faculty members who are full members can serve as chairs and members of dissertation committees, while faculty members who are associated members can serve as members of dissertation committees. Additionally, doctoral students should contact one of the following faculty members for supervision when enrolling in professional practice experiences (i.e., SED 598a01 or SED 598a02). Faculty member profiles can be found on the College of Education/Special Education Department webpage.

NAME	PHONE	OFFICE	EMAIL
Ballard, Sarah	309-438-5189	DeGarmo Hall 512	slballa@ilstu.edu
Blum, Craig	309-438-2165	DeGarmo Hall 528	cblum@ilstu.edu
Causarano, Antonio	309-438-7875	DeGarmo Hall 543	arcausa@ilstu.edu
Chung, Yun-Ching	309-438-2456	DeGarmo Hall 516	ychung@ilstu.edu
Courtad, Carrie Anna	309-438-7524	DeGarmo Hall 525	cacourt@ilstu.edu
Cuenca-Carlino, Yojanna	309-438-8981	DeGarmo Hall 533D	ycuenca@ilstu.edu
Ely, Mindy	309-438-2460	DeGarmo Hall 533C	msely@ilstu.edu
Fisher, Kim	309-438-2630	DeGarmo Hall 527	kcwolow@ilstu.edu
Gardiner-Walsh, Stephanie	309-438-2837	DeGarmo Hall 542	sgardi@ilstu.edu
Gilhuber, Christina	309-438-8575	DeGarmo Hall 511	csgihu@ilstu.edu
Kang, Jeongae	309-438-7836	DeGarmo Hall 515	jkang16@ilstu.edu
Kroesch, Allison	309-438-5993	DeGarmo Hall 522	amkroes@ilstu.edu
McGraw, Melissa	309-438-8956	DeGarmo Hall 526	mlmcgr3@ilstu.edu
Peeples, Katherine	309-438-5509	DeGarmo Hall 523	knpeep1@ilstu.edu
Shaheen, Natalie	309-438-8986	DeGarmo Hall 540	nlshahe@ilstu.edu
Shelden, Debbie	309-438-5661	DeGarmo Hall 513	dlsheld@ilstu.edu
Snodgrass, Melinda	309-438-2350	DeGarmo Hall 514	mrsnodg@ilstu.edu
Zablocki, Mark	309-438-8957	DeGarmo Hall 524	mszablo@ilstu.edu

VI. Forms

Entry into the various stages of the doctoral program are marked by documenting approval on a variety of forms. All forms associated with university approval are on the graduate school's website (<https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/forms/>), including the degree audit form, proposal approval form, right to defend form, and outcome of dissertation defense form. Please see below for departmental forms.

- [Outcome for oral comprehension exam form](#)
- [Proposed plan for independent study/professional practice](#) (for SED 500, 598a01, SED 598a02)
- [Transfer credit request form](#)