MEMORANDUM

TO: Specialist Degree Students  
    College of Education

FROM: Damon Andrew, Professor and Dean  
      College of Education

RE: 2020-2021 Degree Program Planning for Specialist students

Welcome to the College of Education!

These materials are designed to assist you in planning the work for your degree, including your academic program of study.

The first thing you are advised to do is become thoroughly familiar with the University Graduate Bulletin. The sections that you should be most concerned with are the portions dealing with Graduate Studies and the College of Education. In addition, consult with your advisor/major professor to obtain information about department policies and requirements and follow the directions for planning your degree program. If you have any questions regarding this information, contact the College of Education (COE) Co-Director for Graduate Studies, Lisa Beverly at lbeverly@fsu.edu or (850) 644-3760.

Deadline dates are online at http://education.fsu.edu/student-resources/student-academic-services-oasis/for-graduate-students and https://registrar.fsu.edu/calendar/. You are advised to check the OASIS and Registrar’s Office websites frequently as deadlines and dates are subject to change.

It must be emphasized that preparing and following a correctly planned degree program is the responsibility of each graduate student. The major professor, committee members, and the others are eager to give all assistance possible, but the responsibility rests with the student.
1. **Major Professor:** At the earliest opportunity, the student should follow the convention of the major department or college to identify the major professor, who will serve as the student’s adviser and supervisor. Designation of the major professor requires the mutual consent of the student, department chair, and professor involved. The major professor must hold Graduate Faculty Status (GFS) or Co-Directive Status.

2. **Supervisory Committee:** A Specialist degree supervisory committee must be designated for all thesis students and may be designated for non-thesis students at the option of the department.

Thesis students and students in academic programs that require a supervisory committee: The supervisory committee should be formed within the first semester. When selecting the members of your supervisory committee, students need the consent of the major professor. The Specialist supervisory committee consists of a minimum of 3 members, two members, including the major professor, must be from the major in which the student will receive a degree. The third member may be from the major department or another department within the college.

The supervisory committee for thesis students must consist of a minimum of three members of the faculty who have Graduate Faculty Status, one of whom is designated the major professor. All additional members of the committee must hold Graduate Faculty Status or (in the case of specialized or non-tenure track faculty) Co-Doctoral or Co-Master’s Directive status.

1. **Program of Study:** A signed program of study must be submitted to The Office of Academic Services and Intern Support (OASIS) by the end of the second semester of enrollment. It is necessary to list the semesters and years courses were taken in chronological order (past to present) to determine that university, department, and college requirements will be met. Program of study templates may be found at [https://education.fsu.edu/student-resources/student-academic-services-oasis/for-graduate-students](https://education.fsu.edu/student-resources/student-academic-services-oasis/for-graduate-students).

It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that all degree requirements are met.

3. **Program Type:** There are two (2) types of Specialist degrees in the College of Education, the coursework track and the thesis track. Coursework track programs typically culminate with a Specialist Comprehensive Exam or Portfolio Defense in the final semester. Thesis-track programs include credited thesis hours and culminate with a thesis defense in the final semester.

4. **Minimum University Semester Hour Degree Requirements.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Track</th>
<th>Thesis Track</th>
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<td>30 graduate level hours total</td>
<td>30 graduate level hours total</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 graduate level hours must be letter grade</td>
<td>18 graduate level hours must be letter grade</td>
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5. **Limitations:**

a) Credit earned more than seven (7) years prior to graduation may not be used toward the degree.

b) Credit earned as a non-degree seeking student does not carry graduate degree credit. However, if approved by a student’s supervisory committee, up to 12 semester hours of non-degree seeking student graduate level credit, graded “B” or better, may be used. It is the
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Student’s responsibility to list such non-degree seeking student credit on the program of study. A maximum of six (6) semester hours of graduate transfer credit may be used towards a graduate degree. Departments will evaluate all transfer credit. It is the student’s responsibility to list such transfer credit on the program of study and to provide an official transcript from the institution(s).

c) Please NOTE: No student may be awarded more than 12 hours of combined non-degree seeking student and/or transfer credit. This means that a student wishing to post six (6) hours of graduate credit, which has not been posted under a previous degree, can be awarded no more than six (6) hours of non-degree seeking student credit.

d) Credit hours for courses graded below “C-” will not apply toward the degree but the hours are computed in the graduate GPA.

e) Undergraduate-level coursework cannot be used to meet the minimum graduate credit hour requirement or the minimum graduate GPA. Coursework taken at the 4000-level is supplemental to degree requirements and does not count in the minimum total hour distribution or graduate GPA calculation.

f) Supervised research credit: maximum 3 semester hours.

g) Supervised teaching credit: maximum 3 semester hours.

6. Teacher Certification: Students seeking teacher certification upon completion of a degree program which provides these requirements must submit an online Graduate Application for Admission to Educator Preparation.

See http://education.fsu.edu/student-resources/student-academic-services-oasis/for-graduate-students for the online application.

7. Specialist students must register for and successfully complete either the Specialist Comprehensive Exam, Specialist Portfolio Defense, or Specialist Thesis Defense in order to graduate, if a capstone/comprehensive requirement is included in the degree program.

8. Thesis Defense: (See Thesis Track Final Term Checklist)

9. Graduation: Apply online to graduate at http://registrar.fsu.edu/graduation/checklist prior to the application deadline of the semester in which graduation is planned. Students must apply to graduate even if they do not intend to participate in the Commencement Ceremony. Notify the COE Graduate Co-Director if you cannot complete the degree requirements during the semester in which you have applied. If you intend to participate in Commencement exercises, arrange for cap and gown through the University Bookstore: http://registrar.fsu.edu/graduation/cap_gown/.

For instructions on applying online to graduate, follow the How to Apply to Graduate steps.

Please note: Participation in Commencement exercises is not a guarantee of degree conferral.

10. Time Limit for Specialist Degree Completion: The work for the Specialist degree must be completed within seven years from the time the student first registers for graduate credit. Any graduate work transferred from another institution must have commenced not more than seven years prior to completion of the degree for the credits to be applicable to the Specialist degree. If the Specialist degree is not completed within seven years from the time the student first registers for graduate credit, and the
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program and/or Department Chair does not choose to approve an Extension of Time (EOT), then the student may no longer be enrolled in that program or at Florida State University.

If an Extension of Time (EOT) is supported by the major professor(s), then the University Time Extension Request form must be completed and submitted for approvals. Forms can be found on The Graduate School website https://gradschool.fsu.edu/forms.

11. See the appropriate Final Term Checklist (course-track or thesis-track) for further information.
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COURSE TRACK (non-thesis)
FINAL TERM CHECKLIST

See https://registrar.fsu.edu/calendar/ for current semester deadlines.

Graduation
1. Apply online for graduation at http://registrar.fsu.edu/graduation/checklist prior to the application deadline of the semester in which graduation is planned. Notify the COE Graduate Co-Director if you cannot complete the degree requirements during the semester in which you have applied.

   For instructions on applying online to graduate, follow the How to Apply to Graduate steps.

2. If you intend to participate in the Commencement Ceremony, arrange for cap and gown through the University Bookstore: http://registrar.fsu.edu/graduation/cap_gown/.

3. Ensure that you have submitted a Program of Study to OASIS, signed by all required committee members. An accurate program of study must be on file in OASIS to be eligible for degree conferral.

4. Register for your Specialist Comprehensive Exam or Portfolio Defense before the end of the first week of the semester. If you registered for the exam/defense in a previous semester and received an incomplete ("I") grade, you must drop the previous exam course and register for it again in the term in which you complete the requirement.

5. If you have changed major from a Doctoral degree to a Specialist degree, please see the Graduate Co-Director to discuss requirements. You will need to submit a new Specialist program of study.

Specialist Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Defense
1. At the beginning of the semester, speak with your major professor regarding completion of your Specialist Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Defense.

2. Prepare a Specialist Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Defense Results Form to be signed by your committee. The form can be found at http://education.fsu.edu/student-resources/student-academic-services-oasis/for-graduate-students.

After the Specialist Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Defense
Specialist Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Results Form must be submitted to the Graduate Director.

Please keep a copy of any document you submit to your department or OASIS.
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THESIS TRACK
FINAL TERM CHECKLIST

Please note that this checklist is for all thesis track EDS programs and MS/EDS programs (Career Counseling, Mental Health Counseling, School Psychology and School Counseling). All students in the thesis track must complete the Graduate School Manuscript Clearance process.

See [https://registrar.fsu.edu/calendar/](https://registrar.fsu.edu/calendar/) for current semester deadlines.

Graduation

1. Apply online to graduate at [http://registrar.fsu.edu/graduation/checklist](http://registrar.fsu.edu/graduation/checklist) prior to the application deadline of the semester in which graduation is planned. Notify the COE Graduate Co-Director if you cannot complete the degree requirements during the semester in which you have applied.

   For instructions on applying online to graduate, follow the [How to Apply to Graduate](#) steps.

2. If you intend to participate in graduation, arrange for your cap and gown through the University Bookstore: [http://registrar.fsu.edu/graduation/cap_gown/](http://registrar.fsu.edu/graduation/cap_gown/).

3. Ensure that you have submitted an accurate Program of Study to OASIS, signed by all of your committee members and the department chair. An accurate program of study must be on file in OASIS to be eligible for degree conferral.


5. Ensure that you have a minimum six (6) Specialist Thesis hours during your semesters of graduate study.

6. Register for your Specialist Thesis Defense before the end of the first week of the semester. If you registered for Specialist Thesis Defense in a previous semester and received an incomplete (“I”) grade, you must drop the previous course and register for it again in the term in which you complete the requirement.

7. After completion of the required coursework and six credit hours of Thesis, Specialist students must be enrolled for a minimum of three credit hours per semester (of which at least two must be thesis hours) until completion of the degree.

   Register for at least two (2) hours of Specialist thesis credit in your semester of graduation. This is a requirement even if you registered/completed your thesis defense in a prior semester.

Specialist Thesis Defense

1. At the beginning of the semester, talk with your major professor and schedule the date of your thesis defense. You must defend your thesis no later than the final [deadline](#) date set by The Graduate School.
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2. At least two weeks prior to the date of the examination, the student will submit an announcement of the thesis title, date, and place of the examination to The Graduate School. The announcement must be submitted electronically on The Graduate School's Manuscript Clearance Portal and will be posted on the Defense Calendar on The Graduate School's website. Electronic submission instructions can be found on The Graduate School's website under Thesis, Treatise, and Dissertation.

3. Submit a final copy of your thesis to each committee member and the department chair two weeks prior to the defense.

Thesis Defense: The defense of the thesis will be oral. Responsibility for suggesting the time, designating the place, and presiding at the defense rests with the major professor. It is recommended that students defend no later than the eighth week of classes in the semester of intent to graduate. Students must meet all manuscript and online forms deadlines set by The Graduate School in the semester of graduation.

Academic courtesy requires that the final draft of the thesis be submitted to each member of the supervisory committee at least two weeks before the date of the oral examination. At the same time, the thesis should be submitted electronically to the University manuscript clearance advisor in The Graduate School so that the clearance advisor can provide the student with a critique of the manuscript with respect to The Graduate School's formatting requirements.

The supervisory committee, the chair of the major department, and such other members of the faculty as may be appointed by the academic dean will conduct the examination. All members of the graduate faculty are invited to attend. At least two weeks prior to the date of the examination, the student will submit an announcement of the thesis title, date, and place of the examination to The Graduate School. The announcement must be submitted electronically on The Graduate School's Manuscript Clearance Portal and will be posted on the Defense Calendar on The Graduate School's website. Electronic submission instructions can be found on The Graduate School's website under Thesis, Treatise, and Dissertation.

All committee members and the student must attend the entire defense in real time, either by being physically present or participating via distance technology. Individual departments may impose stricter requirements on physical attendance, e.g. all members must be physically present. Departments and other degree-granting programs must publicize their policy on defense attendance in their Graduate Student Handbook and in the relevant section of the Graduate Bulletin. If exceptional emergency circumstances, e.g. medical or other emergency situations, prevent the participation of a committee member, then it may be necessary to arrange for an additional appropriately qualified colleague to attend the defense. A minimum of three members with Graduate Faculty Status must participate.

The oral examining committee will certify the results of the examination: passed, failed, or to be reexamined. The report of results following a re-examination must indicate the student either passed or failed. To receive a passing grade, the written thesis must be in the final form or require only minor revisions at the time of the defense. A grade of PASS for the defense of thesis requires at least a majority approval of the committee. Individual departments may impose stricter requirements for what constitutes a grade of PASS. Departments and other degree-granting programs must publicize
their policy on this issue in their Graduate Student Handbook and in the relevant section of the Graduate Bulletin. If the student passes, each member must sign the online Manuscript Signature Form to substantiate the results of the defense. The degree cannot be awarded until the required forms have been completed on The Graduate School’s Manuscript Clearance Portal and the final version of the manuscript has been submitted to and approved by the Manuscript Clearance Advisor.

After approval by the oral examining committee and completion of the Final Content Approval Form by their major professor(s), the student should electronically submit the final content-approved version of the thesis to the Manuscript Clearance Advisor. Electronic submission instructions can be found on The Graduate School’s website under Thesis, Treatise and Dissertation. The post-defense, final content-approved version of the thesis must be submitted to the Manuscript Clearance Advisor in The Graduate School within sixty days after the defense date or by the semester deadline (whichever is earliest). If the appropriate deadline is missed, the student must be re-examined. Consult the Registration Guide for the manuscript submission and forms deadline dates.

After Thesis Defense
Please remember it takes time for each of the following steps to be completed. Do not wait until the last few days prior to a deadline to submit your requirements. Faculty and Manuscript Clearance staff are quite busy and may not be able to meet immediate needs.

1. The student should electronically submit the final content-approved version of the thesis to the Manuscript Clearance Advisor via the ProQuest ETD Administrator. Electronic submission instructions can be found on The Graduate School's website under Thesis, Treatise, and Dissertation. This must be completed by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern U.S.) on the published deadline for the last day for submission of final defended, content-approved thesis, dissertation or treatise and required forms.

2. Submit all other online forms to the Manuscript Clearance Advisor, via the Manuscript Clearance Portal on the published deadline for the last day for submission of the post-defense, content-approved thesis, dissertation or treatise and required forms. Absolutely no exceptions will be given. It is the student's responsibility ensure that all required forms and documents are submitted to The Graduate School.

3. Students are required to complete the entire clearance process of the final manuscript within 60 days of the successful defense date, or you will have to re-defend. No exceptions will be made for this policy. It is encouraged that you make contact with the Manuscript Clearance Advisor early in the semester that you intend to defend so that any problems in the manuscript format can be corrected.


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