

Dissertation Requirement

The doctoral dissertation will typically be one of two types:

a) A written document that accounts for a solid grounding in theoretical aspects of the study, a description and justification of data collection tools and methods, a reporting of data collected, and an analysis of the data. In many cases the research will be contextually situated; for example, the study may revolve around demographic variables that impact student retention in an online middle school. In other cases the focus will be on basic research, for example, looking at the effect of multimedia on transfer in problem-solving skills.

b) A written document that provides a rich, detailed description of a design or developmental process (ex., see Reeves, Herrington, & Oliver, 2004). The field of educational technology is particularly conducive to this type of work as it allows a student to become deeply familiar with learner needs and characteristics, requires him or her to carefully consider design elements, engage in multiple cycles of formative feedback, plan at least small scale implementation of the product, and conduct a summative evaluation report.

The format of the dissertation will vary somewhat, but will either be a series of chapters, or it may be a series of smaller studies, each ready for submission to a peer-reviewed journal, combined into a collection of chapters on a related theme (such as is the practice by many engineering and science disciplines).

As required by existing policy of the Graduate College, each student will be under the continuous guidance of a supervisory committee. The committee consists of 3-5 members of the graduate faculty appointed to the committee by the Graduate College based on recommendations from the Department of Educational Technology. The chair of the supervisory committee is the primary mentor for the student and must have previously chaired or co-chaired at least one other doctoral supervisory committee - either at Boise State University or elsewhere. If the chair is working with a less experienced co-chair, then her or his additional obligation will be to provide mentoring with regard to the process. To serve as co-chair, the committee member must have served as a member of at least one other doctoral supervisory committee. There will be no requirement to serve as a committee member other than appointment to the graduate faculty by the Graduate College.

Dissertation work will be facilitated just as any class or thesis work is currently - regular virtual meetings with professors and/or peers through technology tools that allow for asynchronous or synchronous communication. The department is in the process of creating policy that will help faculty resolve any issues that might be problematic (likely to be modeled on the carefully planned model by Northern Illinois University that emphasizes dispositions).