I. Prerequisites: Permission of major professor.

II. Course Description:
A doctoral dissertation is required for partial fulfillment of the degree. This reflects an original, scholarly contribution to the research literature relevant to school psychology and child and family issues. Students will work closely with the chair of their supervisory committee to formulate dissertation ideas. Students will register for this course a minimum of three times.

Required of every candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy with emphasis in a school psychology degree, the dissertation is a significant contribution of research/scholarship that reflects the beliefs undergirding the degree program as scholar-practitioner, responsible and disciplined inquiry in the candidate's major area of study, and an authentic contribution to the body of literature in School Psychology. The format of the Dissertation must be acceptable to the Graduate School (Thesis Guide, a manual describing the "Procedure for the Preparation of Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertations," is available in the University Bookstore).

Intended learning Outcomes/Goals/Objectives (Program/Student Learning Outcomes):
The mission of the College of Education is to prepare competent, successful, caring, and enthusiastic professionals dedicated to responsible service, leadership, and continued professional and intellectual development.

The goals of this course are closely aligned to those of the College of Education (COE), which is to prepare competent, successful, caring and enthusiastic professionals dedicated to responsible
service, leadership, and continued professional and intellectual development. As a preliminary step in this process the knowledge obtained in this course will enable candidates to develop the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for admission into the COE Teacher Certification Program.

The Doctor of Philosophy program in School Psychology at Stephen F. Austin State University is dedicated to producing ethical, responsible, and competent school psychologists who employ scientific knowledge and methods of problem solving. The program’s philosophy of education holds that one learns best by engaging in practice. The mission of our program is to apply behavioral science knowledge and methods to the assessment and treatment of learning, behavior, and psychosocial problems in regular and special education populations in the public schools.

- Familiarity with the university and American Psychological Association standards, policies and requirements associated with thesis and dissertation development (http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/108.asp);
- Completion of all tasks that will result in the submission of the Dissertation Proposal Approval Form (http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/documents/thesisapproval.pdf);
- Understand the psychological-emotional-behavioral adjustments involved in the development and writing of theses and dissertations; and
- Successful completion of five-chapter Dissertation.

**Program Learning Outcomes:**
The following lists the program learning outcomes addressed in this course as identified in the course matrix for your degree program:

- Familiarity with various models of successful dissertations in the field of psychology;
- Enhancing critical thinking skills in review and critique of literature;
- Enhancing research skills;
- Enhancing technical writing skills;
- Developing specialty in knowledge and application within the field of study;
- Enhancing ability to make effective use of feedback in scholarship activity;
- Knowledge of the process of publication.

**III. Course Assignments, Activities, Instructional Strategies, use of Technology:**

1. The Dissertation should be prepared in a format that is consistent with the APA style and format. Dissertation Guide specifications should be used for margins, etc.
2. Review of the university and APA guidelines for Dissertation: Chapter 1 (Problem); Chapter 2 (Literature Review); Chapter 3 (Methodology); Chapter 4 (Results); Chapter 5 (Discussion).
3. Documentation of completion and 80% passing score on the online Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training (http://www.citiprogram.org/) on the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs website. The date of the passing score/documentation should occur within the semester of enrollment in EPS 589.
4. Review of selected successful Dissertation Exams with critiques that address the issue of diversity within the body of knowledge.
5. Identification of a content area with designated Dissertation chair that will guide the review of the literature.
6. Selection of the Dissertation Committee. The student must submit verification of Dissertation Committee paperwork completed and signed by each member: three (3) program faculty members, one (1) non-program, department faculty member, and one (1) non-department faculty member.
7. Comprehensive review of the literature that results in an overview of the literature that establishes a clearly defined rationale for the study leading to the development of a focused research question.
8. The development of a problem-based, research question.
9. Submission of the IRB application and attending to requested revisions.
10. Data Collection and analyses (Chapter 4).
11. Developing a comprehensive and coherent discussion section (Chapter 5)
12. Completion of all five chapters and successful defense of dissertation during the Oral Examination.
13. Attending to committee members’ feedback and timely submission of the final manuscript to the Committee members and Graduate Office.

IV. Evaluation and Assessments (Grading)
Prior to initiating the Comprehensive Oral Dissertation Defense the Written Comprehensive Assessment must be completed, scored, and approved by the Dissertation Director and one other member of the candidate’s dissertation committee (see attached rubric).

V. Dates
Please see the attached document for Deadlines per semester for submitting documentation and defending. [https://www.sfasu.edu/coeadvising/documents/fy22-deadlines.pdf](https://www.sfasu.edu/coeadvising/documents/fy22-deadlines.pdf)

VI. TEXT AND MATERIALS
Required Texts:

VII. Course Evaluations:
Part of the academic culture and student responsibility is to engage in the course evaluation process, which provides faculty members with opportunity to receive students’ feedback about points of strengths and areas for improvement. Near the conclusion of each semester, students in the Perkins College of Education electronically evaluate courses taken within the PCOE.
Evaluation data is used for a variety of important purposes including: 1. Course and program improvement, planning, and accreditation; 2. Instruction evaluation purposes; and 3. Making decisions on faculty tenure, promotion, pay, and retention. As you evaluate this course, please be thoughtful, thorough, and accurate in completing the evaluation. The PCOE faculty body is committed to excellence in teaching and continued improvement. Therefore, your response is critical!

In the Perkins College of Education, the course evaluation process has been simplified and is completed electronically through MySFA. The instructor will be able to view the names of students who complete the survey, all ratings and comments are confidential and anonymous, and will not be available to the instructor until after final grades are posted.

VIII. Student Ethics and Other Policy Information:
Attendance: Regularly scheduled face-to-face contact and submission of completed required paperwork as determined by Dissertation Chair/Instructor are required. Enrolled students should have no less than bi-weekly contact with the Dissertation Chair during the semester of enrollment. This contact may be direct meeting during office hours, e-mail communication, providing update, or telephone communication.

Once again, it is critical that students MUST commit to continuous enrollment in Dissertation and dissertation credits once enrollment is started, including each summer session. This is university policy that is required of all graduate and doctoral-level students. Students who fail to do so will be considered as ‘not in good standing’. In such cases where it is un-avoidable, students are encouraged to submit a letter of request for a leave of absence that indicates an anticipated date of re-enrollment when use of university resources will once again resume.

Students with Disabilities
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university polity on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade
on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which the WH is assigned, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

According to the specifications indicated above, where indicated, a grade of WH will serve as a holding grade until the final grade is assigned about submission of the manuscript and a successful Oral Defense in the presentation of a committee of faculty.

Continuous enrollment is required and grades of WH shall be assigned each semester until a faculty committee-approved oral defense is completed.

During the semester of the approved oral defense, the instructor of record shall complete the grade change form to change the WH to the letter grade that reflects the quality of the final written product and the oral defense.

**Acceptable Student Behavior**

Graduate student behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.
IX. Other Relevant Course Information:
The dissertation should be an independent and original study. That does not mean it must treat a subject never before considered but rather that it should treat the subject in an original way. The dissertation is derived from original research — i.e., laboratory, field or library — and must be prepared under the guidance of a dissertation chair and advisory committee. The dissertation must be acceptable in both content and expression and must be presented in a format consistent with the discipline as defined by the program and the advisory committee.

Dissertation Advisory Committee

The initial step in establishing an advisory committee is to select a dissertation chair who must be a member of the doctoral student’s degree program and/or department. Next, with the advice of this person, a dissertation topic should be selected as soon as possible. Following completion of these two steps, the balance of the committee can be formed.

The committee is to be composed of four total members: a chair, at least two other members, and one member outside of the program, with all holding graduate faculty membership at SFA.

Dissertation Proposal

Under the supervision of the dissertation chair, a graduate student prepares a dissertation proposal that is then:

1. submitted to the advisory committee for approval, where each committee member must sign the proposal approval form
2. the proposal and form are submitted to the academic unit head, who will advance the submission to the academic dean
3. and lastly, the proposal approval form, with the proposal attached, is then advanced to the dean of the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

The proposal must be submitted no later than the semester prior to the semester of intended graduation.

Any research proposal that uses human participants, laboratory animals or hazardous materials must be accompanied by a memorandum of approval from the chair of the appropriate university committee. These committees are as follows:

- the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

Registration for Dissertation

A graduate student preparing a dissertation enrolls first in the appropriate dissertation course. Following the initial enrollment in dissertation and until the dissertation defense is held, a student must continue to register each semester during which the resources of the university (faculty, library, laboratories, etc.) are utilized for the dissertation research.
Until the dissertation is completed, a grade of WH (withheld) is given for each section of dissertation in which the student was enrolled. When the final copy of the dissertation has been approved and signed by the advisory committee, it is the responsibility of the dissertation chair to submit grades for all dissertation courses.

Exceptions to continuous enrollment may be made in select cases. These exceptions must be approved by the dissertation chair, academic unit head, college dean and dean of Graduate Studies.

**Supervision of Dissertation Research and Writing**

The graduate student conducts the dissertation research and writes the dissertation under the supervision of the dissertation chair and the dissertation committee.

**Dissertation Defense - Dissertation Draft**

A dissertation draft may serve as the basis for the dissertation defense. The dissertation draft must meet the following requirements:

- Must be mechanically correct
- Figures, plates and tables must be in final form, but photographs may be high-quality reproductions
- Must be approved for content by all members of the committee

The graduate student must include a draft of the dissertation when filing the application for the dissertation defense with the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

**Dissertation Defense**

The application for dissertation defense form must be submitted with the draft of the dissertation and follow the same procedures as described above for the dissertation proposal. The application form must be filed in the Office of Research and Graduate Studies at least one week before the defense and no later than four weeks before the day of commencement. The academic unit and college may require earlier submission than the dates provided by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. (See Important Dates.)

A copy of the final dissertation draft must be in the hands of each member of the dissertation examination committee and one electronic copy to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies at least one week prior to the examination.

The dissertation defense is held at a time and place agreed upon by the graduate student and all members of the committee. If the committee requires changes or additions to the dissertation more extensive than just improvements in language, punctuation, format or illustrations, approval of the dissertation may be delayed until each committee member has a chance to examine a new draft with incorporated changes.

**Report of Dissertation Defense**
Following the defense, the dissertation chair or student obtains all required signatures and submits the report for dissertation examination form to the unit head, who will move the report through the chain of approvals to the dean of Graduate Studies.

**Final Corrections, Approval and Signatures**

Following the dissertation examination, all changes and corrections required by the dissertation committee and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies must be incorporated into the final draft. The graduate student or the dissertation chair then submits the revised dissertation to ORGS via email for approval. The final product must be uploaded into ScholarWorks.

It is the graduate student's responsibility to check the dissertation guide for proper arrangements and page numbering on each dissertation.

**Final Manuscript Preparation**

The final manuscript is the document signed by the dissertation committee and the dean of Graduate Studies and is subsequently bound, placed in the library and uploaded to ScholarWorks. Therefore, the manuscript must be of the highest possible quality with respect to content and presentation.

The student bears the primary responsibility for quality but must realize that each member of the dissertation committee also bears responsibility and is not obligated to sign the manuscript until satisfied with the overall quality of the dissertation.

Before making copies of the manuscript, the student should thoroughly proofread all pages of the dissertation to make sure all mechanical specifications have been met. Failure to meet one or more specifications could result in the manuscript being returned for correction, thereby causing the expenditure of additional time and money that could otherwise be avoided.

**Mechanical Specifications**

Form contains a template for spacing, margins, headings and page number locations.

**Parts of the Dissertation**

The dissertation should be arranged as follows:

1. **Flyleaf** - a blank page for protection in binding
2. **Title page** - conventional page showing essential bibliographical information
3. **Signature page** - a formal record of approval
4. **Abstract** - An abstract is required by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. It should be comprised of a brief, concise description of the problem, methods of approach, salient results obtained, and conclusions and their significance. The abstract will be published in Thesis/Dissertation Abstracts and therefore will largely determine who utilizes the dissertation in the future.
5. **Acknowledgements** - optional

6. **Table of contents** - a paginated guide or outline listing primary, secondary and tertiary headings

7. **List of figures** - a paginated listing of all figure captions as they appear with the figures they accompany; used only when dissertation contains figures

8. **List of tables** - format same as table of contents; used only when dissertation contains tables

9. **Text** - the main body of the dissertation

10. **References** - depending on the style used, also may be labeled References, References Cited, or Literature Cited; format must be consistent with style followed throughout the dissertation

11. **Appendix** - optional

12. **Vita** - a brief, autobiographical sketch emphasizing the student's educational and professional experience; dissertation typist and style manual are identified at the bottom of the page.

For questions concerning the mechanical content or presentation format of the dissertation not addressed in this guide, consult the Office of Research and Graduate Studies before proceeding.

- **Important Dates**
  - **Dissertations**

**Resources for Graduate Students and Faculty**

[FORMS AND DOCUMENTS](#)
[GRADUATE BULLETINS](#)
[Scholarworks](#)

**Contact**

**Office of Research and Graduate Studies**
936.468.6606
Fax: 936.468.7369

Graduate Studies: [gschool@sfasu.edu](mailto:gschool@sfasu.edu)
Grants and Sponsored Programs: [grants@sfasu.edu](mailto:grants@sfasu.edu)
# Manuscript Grading Rubrics

*Name:*

## Technical requirements /10

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<th>Below Expectations (1)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (3)</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (5)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Usage</strong></td>
<td>1. Inappropriately chooses lay terminology when technical terminology is appropriate. 2. Uses technical terminology incorrectly.</td>
<td>1. Generally makes the appropriate choice of lay language or technical language. 2. Uses technical terminology correctly.</td>
<td>1. Technical language or lay language is appropriately selected. 2. Usage is precise, appropriate, parsimonious and enlightening.</td>
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<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
<td>1. Grammatical errors substantially detract from the communication.</td>
<td>1. Grammatical errors are minimal and do not detract from the communication.</td>
<td>1. The document is free of grammatical errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>1. Spelling, punctuation, or format errors are abundant.</td>
<td>1. Minimal spelling, punctuation, or format errors.</td>
<td>1. No spelling, punctuation, or format errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>1. Inappropriate references.</td>
<td>1. Citations are appropriate, although not ideally matched</td>
<td>1. Citations are appropriate to the content of the paper in breadth, depth,</td>
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</table>
2. Many errors in the form of citations in either the body or the reference section. 
3. Many references in the body not cited in the reference section and vice versa.

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<th>Content/Focus</th>
<th>Below Expectations (1)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (3)</th>
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<td>Sources of ideas</td>
<td>1. Sources of ideas are inadequately documented.</td>
<td>1. Sources of ideas are mostly documented, some inferences needed.</td>
<td>1. Sources of ideas clearly documented for further research.</td>
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<td>2. No evidence of purpose or direction. Unclear theme.</td>
<td>2. Purpose and direction discernable. Theme is clear and partially limited.</td>
<td>2. Clear purpose and direction. Theme captures readers attention and sustains the paper.</td>
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<td>3. Tables, figures and Appendices are not used correctly.</td>
<td>3. Tables and figures and Appendices are used correctly but are not explained in text</td>
<td>3. Tables and figures and Appendices are used correctly</td>
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<td>4. Ideas are not coherent in all the sections.</td>
<td>4. Ideas are coherent but are not related to the hypotheses, results and conclusions.</td>
<td>4. Ideas are coherent and are related to important areas of the study.</td>
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<td>5. There is no link between the sections of the manuscript</td>
<td>5. There is a link between the sections of the manuscript but there is limited</td>
<td>5. There is a link between the sections of the manuscript and explanation about this link.</td>
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<td>Tables and figures</td>
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<td>Appendices</td>
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**Interest/Communication/Creativity /10**

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<th>Reasoning</th>
<th>Below Expectations (1)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (3)</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (5)</th>
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</table>
|           | 1. Presentation is illogical, disordered.  
2. Inferences are unsupported by evidence.  
3. Ideas are presented without attention to synthesis. | 1. Logical, orderly presentation is apparent.  
2. Inferences are supported by evidence.  
3. Effort is made to synthesize ideas from different sources. | 1. The writing is logical, orderly, internally consistent, and well developed. Elegant.  
2. Inferences are well supported by evidence.  
3. Ideas are well synthesized, following an established outline. |

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<th>Communication</th>
<th>Below Expectations (1)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (3)</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (5)</th>
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|              | 1. Word choice is inappropriate. Informal, stilted, arcane, or idiosyncratic.  
2. Incoherent organization fails to lead to the intended conclusion.  
3. Lack of awareness of readers perspective.  
4. Poorly formed sentences and paragraphs. | 1. Word choice is acceptable for the intended audience.  
2. Generally good although obvious organization.  
3. Shows awareness of readers perspective.  
4. Sentences and paragraphs relate to each other, though connections are occasionally remote or obscure. | 1. Words are well chosen. Scholarly expository style  
2. Organization is so excellent as to be unnoticed.  
3. Appreciation of readers perspective is obvious.  
4. Writing is flowing and easy to follow.  
5. Limited quotations and paraphrasing well |

**explanation about this link.**
paragraphs, with many awkward passages.
5. Heavy reliance on quotations or paraphrasing.

supported with occasional quotations, paraphrasing.

integrated with original writing.

### Professionalism Assessment Instrument

For each observation, please complete the professionalism assessment instrument below by marking the appropriate box in each row.

Candidate Name:________________ Committee Member:__________________________

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Does Not Meet</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates punctuality and professional attendance</td>
<td>Shows dedication by arriving early and staying late as needed</td>
<td>Has regular attendance and contact</td>
<td>Excessive absences and late arrivals/early departures</td>
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<td>Works positively with committee members and other professionals</td>
<td>Open and responsive to recommendations for revision and suggestions</td>
<td>Follows through on recommendations for revision and suggestions</td>
<td>Rejects or ignore recommendations for revision and suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presents self professionally and appropriately</td>
<td>Always presents professionally</td>
<td>Most of the times presents professionally, but is sometimes inappropriate</td>
<td>Seldom presents professionals</td>
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<td>Respects others; participates in discussion; values other perspectives</td>
<td>Participates in collaboration</td>
<td>Does not participate and may have a negative attitude</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstrates collaboration with committee members</strong></td>
<td>Takes initiative and asks for feedback</td>
<td>Assignments are on time and meet minimum standards</td>
<td>Products are late or incomplete</td>
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<td><strong>Is organized and prepared meetings</strong></td>
<td>Consistently maintains confidentiality and respects the research process in standards</td>
<td>Maintains confidentiality and respects and responds positively to feedback for correction</td>
<td>Engages in gossip; derides requirements and standards</td>
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<td><strong>Interacts ethically in the research process</strong></td>
<td>Set an example for correct grammar</td>
<td>Understands limitations in grammar and general writing; seeking support</td>
<td>Shows no awareness of written communication limitations and expects others to correct</td>
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<td><strong>Uses appropriate language in and writing skills</strong></td>
<td>Models tolerance and acceptance by anticipating multiple perspectives and associated implications</td>
<td>Listens makes needed modifications as directed</td>
<td>Dismisses feedback; does not address viewpoints that are not congruent with personal viewpoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Models openness to multiple perspectives</strong></td>
<td>Maintains high engagement and interest in presenting materials</td>
<td>Is interested and interesting in teaching and learning</td>
<td>Shows little to no efficacy in organization and presentation of materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shows enthusiasm an interest in expertise</strong></td>
<td>Consistently uses computers and appropriately</td>
<td>Adheres to university guidelines</td>
<td>Abuses or does not use technology appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uses technology appropriately</strong></td>
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**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY**
**APPLICATION FOR DISSERTATION EXAMINATION**

Name_____________________________________ Date ___________________
Graduate Major School Psychology          Degree Sought: Doctorate of Philosophy

Title of Dissertation:

This will certify that the above-named student has been approved to be examined over the above titled exhibition.

Date requested for the exam: _______________

Time: _________________________          Bldg. and Room: _______________

Signature of:

____________________________________________________________________

Dissertation Director          Signature          Date Approved

____________________________________________________________________

Committee Member          Signature          Date Approved

____________________________________________________________________

Committee Member          Signature          Date Approved

____________________________________________________________________

Graduate School Representative          Signature          Date Approved