

DISSERTATION GUIDE - PHD IN EDUCATION

PREFACE

The dissertation developed at the end of the doctoral program forms part of a personal and professional development strategy. The dissertation defense allows the student-researcher to demonstrate abilities in conceptualization, problem formulation, empirical investigation, and methodological reflection.

The dissertation is the culmination of a professional research experience. It demonstrates the candidate's ability to conceptualize, formulate research problems, conduct empirical investigation, and engage in methodological reflection. Concluded with a defense before an academic jury, the dissertation thus contributes to the advancement of research in the field of educational sciences.

Enrollment is renewed each semester upon approval of a progress report signed by the dissertation supervisor and validated by the Dean. In parallel, a scientific committee monitors the doctoral program and approves the activities recorded in the doctoral student's portfolio, corresponding to 3 credits.

1. Structure and Presentation Standards of the Dissertation

1.1. STRUCTURE

The dissertation is made up of 250 to 300 pages (excluding the list of references and appendices), and it is divided into 6 parts.

- **Introduction** (includes the following points, without numbering them, according to the order the student and dissertation Supervisor deem appropriate):
 - Topic presentation: background, context, ...
 - Problem statement (analyzing studies related to topic and their benefit).
 - Exploratory study confirming the existence of the problem
 - Review of the scientific literature: a brief literature review highlighting the relevance of the topic, its limitations, gaps, or underexplored dimensions in previous research
 - Purpose of study.
 - Main research question and the sub-questions derived from it.
 - Tentative hypotheses or objectives
 - Overview of the methodology.
 - Significance of and rationale of study.
 - Forthcoming dissertation sections and chapters.
- **Framework of the Study**
 - Identification and definition of the various theories and/or concepts related to the research questions.
 - Positioning the study in view of other theories and concepts.
 - Researcher's positioning in relation to theory and the scientific literature

- Defining concepts and terms.
- Extracting hypotheses and/ or research objectives based on the study's framework and relevant previous studies.
- **Research Methodology**
 - Paradigm, approach ,design, and student's research posture
 - Population/ sample /participants: sampling technique
 - Study procedure
 - Operational definitions of the variables/ constructs
 - Data collection tools and procedures
 - Data analysis techniques
 - Ethical considerations
- **Presentation and analysis of Results**
 - Presentation of results, using statistical graphs, visuals, and tables where applicable
 - Synthesis of results related to the problem statement and research questions
 - Verification of hypotheses and/or addressing research questions
- **Discussion and Interpretation of Results**
 - Interpretation of results in relation to relevant theories
 - Discussion of the results in relation to previous relevant studies and linking the results to the statement problem
 - Study limitations
- **Conclusion**
 - Synthesis: problem statement, discussion, and highlights of the most important points.
 - Future suggestions and recommendations

1.2. PRESENTATION NORMS

APA, 7th edition: https://usj.edu.lb/fsedu/archive_pub.php?cat=41

General recommendations: margins; font; line spacing; page numbers; captions and formatting of tables and figures; acronyms and abbreviations; headings and subheadings; scientific writing standards (citations, bibliographic references, etc.).

- Faculty-specific recommendations:
 - Title page: see Appendix B
 - Back cover: dissertation title in French and English; abstract in French and English, each 250 words; keywords in French and English (5 keywords each)
 - Text alignment: justified (aligned left and right)
 - Footer (bottom of page), left-aligned: abbreviation "Fsedu-USJ," regular font, size 11, Calibri

- Header (top of page): extreme left – Dissertation title; extreme right – page number in Arabic numerals, regular font, size 11, Calibri

2. Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal is usually made up of 30 to 35 pages at most. It is usually defended within 2 semesters upon the initial registration in the doctoral program. However, a doctoral candidate who has not defended their Dissertation proposal within three semesters of their initial enrollment is required to suspend their doctoral studies, unless an exemption is granted by the Dean.

The proposal contains the following.

- Provisional title
- Introduction:
 - ✓ The topic
 - ✓ Background information about the topic
 - ✓ Review of the documentary and empirical literature on the topic and problem formulation
 - ✓ Research problem
 - ✓ Purpose of the study
 - ✓ Research questions
- Theoretical framework defining the reference axes related to the research problem
- Tentative hypotheses or objectives
- Research methodology
- List of references following the latest edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) Style
- Dissertation's provisional plan
- Provisional work timeline

The Dissertation project defense takes place after the completion of the 6 credits corresponding to the seminars offered by the Faculty, during the first two semesters following enrollment in the doctoral program.

3. Ethics Committee

Following the defense of the proposal, the student prepares the application file ([\[USJ\] - Site de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth](#)).

Sections to be reviewed carefully: consent documents required for conducting the study, and the introductory paragraph for data collection tools

- Letter addressed to the Research Ethics Committee:
 - A letter signed by the dissertation supervisor
 - Detailed study protocol.
 - Study instruments.
 - Appropriate information and consent form outlining the ethical principles to be respected.
 - Confidentiality commitment letter.
 - Approval from the institutions concerned.

4. Submission of the Manuscript

- Before the dissertation is submitted, the manuscript is screened for plagiarism by the Director of the research laboratory using anti-plagiarism software. A policy governing the use of generative and assisted AI must be respected. Submission will be refused in cases of plagiarism.
- Authorization for the final submission of the dissertation is granted by the dissertation supervisor, who, in a report addressed to the Director of the Research Laboratory in Education, certifies that the dissertation is ready for defense.
- The defense is authorized only if two reviewers submit favorable reports with no reservations. If the reviewers raise comments on the manuscript, the doctoral candidate must address them and make the necessary revisions. Jury members may require the revised manuscript to be reviewed again so that a second favorable report can be issued; otherwise, the defense will not be scheduled.

5. Dissertation Defense

- The President of the jury opens the session.
- The student has 20 minutes to present their PowerPoint presentation about the study without being interrupted.
- The dissertation supervisor, reviewer, and jury chair each present consecutively for 15 minutes, including a question-and-answer session with the candidate.
- The jury members sign the official minutes during the deliberation session.

- **Evaluation Criteria**

The ranks are as such:

Very Distinguished with the jury's felicitation (Unanimous consent)	The topic aligns with the university's vision and aspirations. The document does not need any modifications and ready for publication. The oral presentation is fluent, well-structured, and dynamic.
Very Honorable	The document needs slight modifications before editing.

	The presentation is clear and fairly well organized.
Honorable	The document needs major modifications before editing. The presentation is understandable, but the doctoral candidate largely read from the visual slides, which were very text-heavy.

- After the defense, the candidate submits to the Faculty by email, within a period of no less than 15 days and no more than 3 months from the date of the defense date, two copies of the revised dissertation implementing the comments and any corrections proposed by the members of the jury.

In exceptional cases, the jury can advise the candidate to publish the dissertation. Any authorization to publish has to respect the following.

- Abide by the norms and ethics of the publication process
- Taking the jury's remarks into consideration.
- Adding the following to the published version: "This publication has been written to fulfill the requirements of a PhD study in the following [discipline]; it was defended at [faculty name and university name] on [day, month, year]. The personal opinions represent the author's opinions.
- Depositing a copy of the published dissertation at FSEdu.

Any violation of the above directives is punishable by prosecution.

Annex A

Plagiarism-Free Commitment Letter

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in research is permitted under strict conditions. AI cannot replace personal reflection, critical thinking, methodological rigor, or the scientific originality expected of a doctoral student. Its use must remain transparent, ethical, and carefully supervised.

Permitted Use – With Precautions

- Generate bibliographic references with careful verification (there is a risk of fictitious sources).
- Transcribe interviews or conduct statistical work, provided that AI usage is explicitly mentioned in the research methodology.
- Convert data into graphical representations, such as figures, diagrams, and tables, with precise methodological documentation.

Note:

- Explicitly mention any use of AI in a note at the end of the dissertation.
- For language corrections, use language-correction software to avoid confusion with AI.
- Using AI to write scientific content (introduction, theoretical framework, analyses, interpretation, conclusion) is prohibited.
- The doctoral student remains fully responsible for the integrity, coherence, and scientific accuracy of the text.

Declaration of Non-Plagiarism and AI Usage

I, the undersigned,, declare that I have obtained all necessary legal authorizations for reproducing images, excerpts, figures, and tables. Furthermore, I will provide proper documentation, including in-text citations, and reference all sources used in this dissertation. I confirm that I have complied with the faculty's rules regarding AI usage, clearly explicitly specifying the applications employed and providing justification for their purposes.

Annex B

Title page sample



**UNIVERSITÉ SAINT-JOSEPH
ECOLE DOCTORALE « SCIENCES DE L'HOMME ET DE LA SOCIÉTÉ »**

(Faculty)

(16 pts, bold)

DOCTORATE DISSERTATION

(14 pts, bold)

DISCIPLINE: [XXXX]

(14 pts, gras)

SPECIALTY: [XXXX]

(14 pts, bold)

Topic of dissertation: *(14 pts)*

[Title of Dissertation]

(16 pts, bold)

Presented by *14 pts)*

[NAME and first name(s) of student]

(16 pts, bold)

Supervised by: *(14 pts)*

[NAME and first name(s) of Dissertation Director]

(Title)

(16 pts, bold)

(14 pts for what follows)

Defense [day] [month] [year]

The Jury is composed of:

[first name complete] [surname]	(Title)	President
[first name complete] [surname]	(Title)	Reader
[first name complete] [surname]	(Title)	Reader
[first name complete] [surname]	(Title)	Member
[first name complete] [surname]	(Title)	Dissertation Director

Title and address of unit or laboratory of attachment where the dissertation was prepared
(12 pts, bold)

Annex C
Progress Report of the Dissertation in Education

Academic year 20- 20

ERL

Educational research Laboratory

Last name and first name of the doctoral student : -----

Registration number : -----

Semester: _____

General information	
Institution	Fsedu
Laboratory	Educational Research Laboratory (LRE)
Dissertation title	
Start date	
Scheduled date for filing	
Supervisor	

Research	
Work accomplished during the current semester	
Further steps	
Current steps	
Notes	
Modifications (optional)	
Modification in the initial research protocol:	
Others :	
Research Portfolio	
Conferences:	
Publications :	None
Others :	None

Date :

Date :

Date :

Signature of the doctoral student

Signature of the supervisor

Signature of the Dean