STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL WORK

I understand that Capella University’s Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01) holds learners accountable for the integrity of work they submit, which includes, but is not limited to, discussion postings, assignments, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation. Learners are expected to understand the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work as specified in the APA Publication Manual, 6th Ed. Serious sanctions can result from violations of any type of the Academic Honesty Policy including dismissal from the university.

I attest that this document represents my own work. Where I have used the ideas of others, I have paraphrased and given credit according to the guidelines of the APA Publication Manual, 6th Ed. Where I have used the words of others, (i.e. direct quotes), I have followed the guidelines for using direct quotes prescribed by the APA Publication Manual, 6th Ed.

I have read, understood, and abided by Capella University’s Academic Honesty Policy (3.01.01). I further understand that Capella University takes plagiarism seriously; regardless of intention, the result is the same.

Learner Name:

Learner ID:

Capella E-mail Address:

Mentor Name:

Date:

**School of Education**

Research Plan: Qualitative

This *Research Plan (RP),* version 2.O, must be completed and reviewed before taking steps to collect data and write the dissertation. In the School of Education, its satisfactory completion satisfies dissertation milestone 5, indicating that the RP proposal has passed the “scientific merit review,” part of the IRB process.

## Specialization Chair’s Approval after Section 1

When you have completed **Section 1 along with initial references in section 8**, send the *RP* to your mentor for review. When your mentor considers it is ready, he or she sends it to Dissertation Support to forward to your specialization Chair. The Chair approves the topic as appropriate within your specialization. You then go on to complete the remaining sections of the RP.

## Do’s and Don’ts

* Do use the correct form! This RP is for QUALITATIVE designs.
* Do prepare your answers in a separate Word document. Editing and revising will be easier.
  + Set **font** formatting to Times New Roman, 11 point, regular style font Do set **paragraph** indentation (“Format” menu) for no indentation, no spacing.
* Do copy/paste items into the **right-hand fields** when they are ready.
* Don’t delete the descriptions in the left column!
* Don’t lock the form. That will stop you from editing and revising within the form.
* Do complete the “Learner Information” (A.) of the first table, and Section 1 first.
* Don’t skip items or sections. If an item does not apply to your study, type “NA” in its field.
* Do read the item descriptions and their respective *Instructions* carefully. Items request very specific information. Be sure you understand what is asked. (Good practice for IRB!)
* Do use primary sources to the greatest extent possible as references. Textbooks are not acceptable as the only references supporting methodological and design choices.
* Do submit a revised *RP* if, after approval, you change your design elements. It may not need a second review, but should be on file before your IRB application is submitted.

**Scientific Merit**  
  
The following criteria will be used to establish scientific merit. The purpose of the review will be to evaluate if the study:

* Advances the scientific knowledge base.
* Makes a contribution to research theory.
* Demonstrates understanding of theories and approaches related to the selected research methodology.

General Instructions

**Complete the following steps to request research plan approval for your dissertation:**

**Topic Approval**

1. Develop topic and methodological approach:

* Talk with your mentor about your ideas for your dissertation topic and a possible methodological approach.
* Collaborate with your mentor to refine your topic into a specific educational research project that will add to the existing literature on your topic.

1. Complete Section 1 of the **RP** form.

* Complete Section 1 addressing the topic and basic methodology and e-mail the form to your mentor for approval. *Follow the instructions carefully.*
* Collaborate with your mentor until you have mentor approval for the topic. After you have received mentor approval for Section 1, your mentor will submit these sections to your specialization chair for topic approval via [dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu).
* The specialization chair will notify you and your mentor of their approval and will send a copy of the approval to [dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu).
* The SMR team will also review and provide high-level feedback of your RP, which will be communicated to you and your mentor.

**Milestones 3 and 4**

1. Complete Remaining **RP** Sections.

* After your specialization chair approves the topic and basic methodology, and the SMR team has provided high-level feedback about your research plan, continue to collaborate with your mentor to plan the details of your methodological approach, incorporating feedback from the SMR team.
* Once you and your mentor have agreed on clear plans for the details of the methodology, complete the remainder of the RP form and submit the completed RP form to your mentor for approval.
* Expect that you will go through several revisions. Collaborate with your mentor until you have their approval of your RP plan.
* After you have a polished version, you and your mentor should both review the Research Plan criteria for each section, to ensure you have provided the requisite information to demonstrate you have met each of the scientific merit criteria.
* Upon completion of Milestone 3, SOE will assign two readers to complete your committee.

4. After your mentor has approved your RP (Milestone 3), s/he will forward your RP to your Committee for their approval (Milestone 4).

* After you have obtained mentor (Milestone 3) AND committee (Milestone 4) approvals of the completed **RP** form, your mentor will submit the completed RP via [dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu) to have your form reviewed for Scientific Merit.
* Mentor and committee approval does not guarantee research plan approval. Each review is independent and serves to ensure your research plan demonstrates research competency.

**Milestone 5**

1. (a). **RP** form in review: The scientific merit reviewer will review each item to determine whether you have met each of the criteria. You must meet all the criteria to obtain reviewer approval. The reviewer will designate your RP as one of the following:

* Approved
* Deferred for minor or major revisions
* Not approved
* Not ready for review
* Other

1. (b). If the RP has been *deferred:*

* The SMR reviewer will provide feedback on any criteria that you have not met.
* You are required to make the necessary revisions and obtain approval for the revisions from your mentor.
* Once you have mentor approval for your revisions, your mentor will submit your **RP** for a second review.
* You will be notified if your RP has been approved, deferred for major or minor revisions, or not approved.
* Up to **three** attempts to obtain research plan approval are allowed. Researchers, mentors, and reviewers should make every possible attempt to resolve issues before the RP is failed for the third time. If a researcher does not pass the scientific merit review on the third attempt, then the case will be referred to the research specialists in the School of Education for review, evaluation, and intervention.
* While you await approval of your RP, you should be working to complete your IRB application and supporting documents.
* Once you have gained Research Plan approval (Milestone 5), you are ready to submit your IRB application and supporting documents for review by the IRB team.

**Milestone 6**

1. Submit the Approved RP to the IRB:

* Once you obtain research plan approval, write your **IRB application** and accompanying materials.
* Consult the Research and Scholarship area within iGuide for IRB forms and detailed process directions.
* You are required to obtain research plan approval before you may receive IRB approval. Obtaining research plan approval does not guarantee that IRB approval will follow.

**Milestone 7**

7. Complete the Research Plan Conference call:

* Once you have gained approval by the IRB, you are ready to schedule your Proposed Research Conference Call. You may not proceed to data collection until you have completed this set.
* Work with your mentor and committee to set a date for the conference call.
* Upon successful completion of the Proposed Research Conference Call, your mentor will complete the corresponding Milestone Report and you are ready for data collection.

Researchers, please insert your answers directly into the expandable boxes that have been provided!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A. Learner and Program Information(to be completed by Researcher) | |
| Researcher Name |  |
| Researcher E-mail |  |
| Researcher ID Number |  |
| Mentor Name |  |
| Mentor E-mail |  |
| Specialization |  |
| Spec Chair E-mail |  |
| Committee Member | (assigned by SOE) |
| Committee Member | (assigned by SOE) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Section 1. Research Problem, Significance, Question(s), Title: Qualitative | |
| * 1. Proposed Dissertation Title   (Usually a statement based on the research question--short and to the point.) |  |
| 1.2 Research Topic  Describe the specific topic to be studied in a paragraph. (Be certain that the research question relates to the topic.) |  |
| 1.3 Research Problem  Write a brief statement that fully describes the problem being addressed. Present this in one sentence or no more than one clear concise paragraph. |  |
| 1.4 Research Purpose  Write a brief statement that fully describes the intent of the study or the reason for conducting the study. Present this in one sentence or no more than one clear concise paragraph. |  |
| 1.5 Research Question(s)  (What do you really want to know? The rest of this form derives from and should constantly be guided by your research question. Always consider your research question in addressing all following components of this design form.) | List the central research question and any sub-questions that the proposed study will address.  A well written properly formed research question will contain the following characteristics:   * Clearly identifies the phenomenon to be investigated. * Specifies the nature of the investigation (a description, etc.) if qualitative. * Uses key words associated with the specific methodology, such as “experience,” “process,” “describes,” etc., if qualitative. These words suggest the nature of the methodology for answering the question. * Clearly specifies the sample. * Is in the form of a grammatically correct English question, ending in a question mark. |
| **1.6 Literature Review Section**  Provide a brief overview of the conceptual framework upon which your study is based. Identify the seminal research and theories that inform your study. Discuss the topics and themes that you will use to organize your literature review. Attach the most current list of references with the Research Plan. |  |
| **1.7 Need for the Study**  Describe the need for the study. Provide a rationale or need for studying a particular issue or phenomenon. Describe how the study is relevant to your specialization area. |  |
| **1.8 Methodology**  Describe the qualitative methodology and research model you propose to use; e.g., Merriam for a basic qualitative study, Yin for a case study, or Moustakas for a phenomenological study.  Briefly identify the method(s) will you use to collect the data, such as: semi-structured interviews, open-ended conversational interviews, journaling, letters, pictures, observations, field notes, focus groups. |  |

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| B. Specialization Chair Approval Title / Topic Approval **(To be completed by Specialization Chair when Topic is Approved)** | |
| **Mentor Approval:**  My submission of the topic section to the specialization chair/school reviewer indicates my approval of the mentee’s topic and basic methodology. I have worked with my mentee to fully polish PART 1 before submitting for topic approval. Chairs ( or Specialization Reviewers) Please insert your electronic signature to certify that topic and title are appropriate to your specialization and return to [dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu). | Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Specialization Reviewer:** Please review the sections on dissertation topic and basic methodology. Are the dissertation title, topic and basic methodology appropriate for the field of education and the specialization area? Please comment if not approved. Insert your electronic signature and date. Return to mentor.  \_\_\_\_\_YES or \_\_\_\_ NO  Reviewer Comments:  **Specialization Topic Approval**  Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**DISSERTATION RESEARCHERS: STOP!!!**

**Forward completed Section 1 plus your references gathered so far to your Mentor for review and for Specialization Chairs’ Approval. (Work on your full Literature Review while waiting for topic approval)**

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| Section 2. Advancing Scientific Knowledge | |
| ***DISSERTATION RESEARCHERS: Do not complete remaining sections until the mentor and the Specialization chair have approved the first four items by inserting their signatures.***  Your study should advance the scientific knowledge base in your field by meeting one or more of these four criteria:   1. The study should address something that is not known or has not been studied before. 2. The study should be new or different from other studies in some way. 3. The study should extend prior research on the topic in some way. 4. The study should fill a gap in the existing literature.   Specifically describe how your research will advance scientific knowledge on your topic by answering all of these questions. Include in-text citations as needed. | |
| **2.1 Advancing Scientific Knowledge**  Demonstrate how the study (a) will advance the scientific knowledge base; (b) is grounded in the field of education; and (c) addresses something that is not known, something that is new or different from prior research, something that extends prior research, or something that fills a gap in the existing literature. Describe precisely how your study will add to the existing body of literature on your topic. It can be a small step forward in a line of current research but it must add to the body of scientific knowledge in your specialization area and on the topic. | To respond to this question you will need to:  Provide a paragraph that describes the background for your study and how your research question relates to the background of the study.   1. Then, in a second paragraph discuss previous research and demonstrate exactly how your study (answering research question) will advance the scientific knowledge base on this topic. Include in-text citations and place the references in the reference section. |
| **2.2 Theoretical Implications**  Describe any theoretical implications that the proposed study may have for understanding the phenomena to be investigated. For example, will the study generate new substantive theory, provide a description of the lived experiences of the participants, illuminate a process or practice, or provide a description of a cultural phenomenon? |  |
| **2.3 Practical Implications**  Describe any practical implications that may result from your research. Specifically, describe any implications the research may have for understanding phenomena for practitioners, the population being studied, or a particular type of work, educational, community, stakeholders or other setting. |  |
| **Review of Section 2. Advancing Scientific Knowledge**  Does the study advance scientific knowledge in the field and the specialization area by meeting one or more of these four criteria?  Does the study address something that is not known or has not been studied before?  Is this study new or different from other studies in some way?  Does the study extend prior research on the topic in some way?  Does the study fill a gap in the existing literature?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO  **Reviewer Comments:** | |

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| **Section 3. Contributions to the Field** | |
| Your study should make a contribution to your field based on the approach used to conduct the research:  A. Basic Qualitative Research that explores education related experiences, how participants make sense and ascribe meaning to those experiences or illuminates educational processes or practices.  B. Case Study - The study should develop an educational lesson to be learned.  C. Grounded theory - The study should generate new educational theory or an emergent theory.  D. Phenomenology - The study should yield a description of the lived experience of the participants.  .  E. Ethnography – The study should produce a description of some educational  dimensions of a culture.  F. Other (e.g., action research, narrative analysis, analysis of secondary qualitative data, critical research, or other SOE acceptable qualitative research methods.)  Describe how your study is grounded in and/or adds to knowledge in the field. |  |
| **Review of Section 3. Contributions to the Field**  Does the Research make a contribution to the field based on the approach used to conduct the research?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO  **Reviewer Comments:** | |

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| Section 4. Methodology Details | |
| **4.1 Purpose of the Study**  Describe the purpose of the study.  Why are you doing it? (The answer must be grounded in the literature in what has been done--hasn’t been done or needs to be done.)  How will the methods to be used actually answer the research question? |  |
| **Review of 4.1 Purpose of the Study**  Is the purpose of the study clearly stated?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO Reviewer comments: | |
| **4.2 Research Methodology**  The qualitative methodologies accepted for education are ethnography, case study, grounded theory, phenomenology, basic qualitative research or other. Describe the qualitative methodology (for example phenomenology) and research model you propose to use, supported and referenced by primary sources. Describe in detail the method(s) will you use to collect the data, such as: open-ended conversational interviews, journaling, letters, pictures, observations, field notes, focus groups – focus groups are only used for ethnography and generic qualitative research.  Briefly describe how the study will be conducted. (Describe how you are going to carry out the study.) |  |
| **Review of 4.2 Research Methodology**  Does the research design proposed seem appropriate for the research question? Is the research design clearly and accurately described? Can the design answer the research proposed sample, design and analysis?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO Researcher Comments: | |
| **4.3 Population and Sample to Selection of the Research Site**  Describe the characteristics of the larger population from which the sample (study participants) will be drawn. Next describe the sample that will participate in the study and the sample size. Justify the sample size with support from the literature.  Note:  In qualitative research, the setting of the study is selected because the purpose of the study and the research questions can best be answered in that setting particular setting.  Qualitative research makes use of what is known as purposive sampling. That is, the study will take place in a carefully selected setting and using participants that have been chosen for specific reasons or characteristics. For example, the setting may be representative of the phenomenon or problem for study (what is typically found), or one where the phenomenon exists in the extreme (making it easier to identify critical concepts, variables or themes). The setting may represent a critical event where the phenomenon may suddenly emerge. However, the site is not randomly selected as is frequently done in quantitative research. (The learner may want to locate and review resources on “purposive sampling” in qualitative research.) |  |
| **Review of 4.3 Population and Sample to Selection of the Research Site**  Are the population and the sample adequately and accurately described? Is the sample size appropriate?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ No  **Reviewer Comments** | |
| **4.4 Sampling Procedures to Selection of Participants**  Describe how you plan to select the sample. Be sure to list the name of the specific sampling strategy you will use. Describe each of the steps from recruitment through contact and screening to consenting to participate in the study.  Note:  What criteria will you use to select the participants for your study? What is the process you will use to select them? How many participants do you intend to include in the study and why? |  |
| **Review of 4.4 Sampling Procedures to Selection of Participants**  Is participant involvement and participant selection fully described and appropriate for the study?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO Reviewer Comments: | |
| **4.5 Data Collection Procedures**  Describe where and how will you get the data and describe the exact procedure(s) that will be used to collect the data. This is a step-by-step description of exactly how the research will be conducted. This should read like a recipe for the data collection procedures to be followed in your study. Be sure to include all the necessary details so that someone else will be able to clearly understand how you will obtain your data. |  |
| **Review of 4.5 Data Collection Procedures**  Does the researcher describe in detail the procedure to be followed in a step-by- step way so that it is completely clear how the research will be conducted? Is the data collection appropriate for the proposed study?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO Reviewer Comments: | |
| **4.6 Guiding Interview Questions**  Describe the interview method will you use and how you will conduct the interviews. List the guiding interview questions to be used to guide the semi-structured qualitative interviews with the participants. Provide a rationale for how and why you are using the interview technique you will use to address the primary research question. Be sure to discuss the results of any field test with content experts that was conducted as a part of the process of developing the final version of the guiding interview questions. |  |
| **Review of 4.6 Guiding Interview Questions**  Are the guiding questions appropriate to be used to facilitate the interviews? Are the guiding questions appropriate given the research question and the proposed methodology and model to be used in this proposed study?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO Reviewer Comments: | |
| **4.7 Other Data Collection Procedures**  For those studies in which alternative data will be collected and used such as: archival data, pre-recorded data, sent or unsent letters, journaling, poems, passages from literature, descriptive essences, objects or images, etc., describe the methods you will use to collect and analyze this alternative data. Provide a rationale for how and why you are using this alternative data.  If you use observations for data collection:    What will be your role in the setting?  How will you record your observations? Provide an observation protocol or guide that reflects the behaviors that you plan to observe. |  |
| **Review of 4.7 Other Data Collection Procedures**  For studies in which alternative data will be collected, did the researcher describe the alternative data that will be used, describe the methods that will be used to collect the data, analyze the data and provide a rationale for how and why the alternative data will be used?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO Reviewer Comments: | |
| **4.8 Proposed Data Analyses**  Provide a step-by-step description of the procedures to be used to conduct the data analysis. Support this process by identification and reference to primary descriptive sources. Check that the data analysis process is consistent with the accepted analytical steps for the specific qualitative methodology chosen to conduct this study. If you plan to use Qualitative data analysis software, list the software you will use and describe how it will be used. |  |
| **Review of 4.8 Proposed Data Analyses**  Is the data analysis that is proposed appropriate? Is there alignment between the research questions, proposed methodology, type or types of data to be collected and proposed data analysis? Is the language used to describe the type of design and data analysis plans consistent throughout?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO Reviewer Comments: | |
| **4.9 Role of the Researcher**  Provide a description of the researcher’s pre-understandings, preconceptions and biases about the topic and about how the researcher will set them aside?  If doing observational data collection, explain your role as either a participant observer, observer, or fully immersed. |  |
| **Review of 4.9 Role of the Researcher**  Does the researcher describe the process by which he/she will identify and set aside pre-understandings, pre-conceived ideas and biases that could interfere with conducting the proposed study?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO Reviewer Comments: | |
| **4.10 Credibility, Dependability and Transferability**  Present a strategy to ensure credibility, dependability, and transferability in the proposed study. Because the researcher is the primary instrument of research in qualitative studies, describe how you will establish credibility for the research. Describe the training and experience you have in regards to your methods for collecting and for analyzing your data. Credibility refers to confidence in the accuracy of the data as reported as well as a systematic and thorough interpretation by the researcher.  Credibility involves carrying out the study in a way that enhances the believability of the findings of the data over time and over conditions. Credibility is assessed by how well you demonstrate your understanding of your research methodology and how well you apply the methodology to data collection and data analysis. Credibility is assessed by how well you demonstrate your understanding of your research methodology and how well you apply the methodology to data collection and data analysis. Describe how you will demonstrate your expertise in regards to your research design. Transferability is demonstrated by showing that the sample fairly represents the target population, as well as by showing that the sample participants have the knowledge, experience, or expertise necessary to provide information that the discipline or field and the target population would find meaningful in regard to the topic. Dependability is demonstrated by providing clear, detailed, and sequential descriptions of all procedures and methods, such that another researcher could repeat each of them faithfully. |  |
| **Review of 4.10 Credibility, Dependability and Transferability**  **Does the researcher present a strategy to ensure credibility, dependability and transferability in the proposed study?**  **\_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO** Reviewer Comments: | |

|  |
| --- |
| Section 5. References |
| Provide references for all citations in APA style. Submit your reference list below. |
|  |
| **Review of Section 5 References**  Has the Researcher presented appropriate citations and references in APA style?    \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO  **Reviewer Comments** |
| **Review of Scholarly Writing**  Does the Researcher communicate in a scholarly, professional manner that is consistent with the expectations of academia and of the field of education?  \_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_ NO  **Reviewer Comments:** |

**Learner: Stop here and submit to your Mentor for final approval. Continue working on your final literature review while you wait for Research Plan approval.**

**Mentor: This form must be approved by all committee members prior to submission for Research Plan review. Please send completed and approved RP to** [**dissertation@capella.edu**](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu) **for Research Plan review.**

Directions for Reviewers

Please indicate your decision for this review in the correct place (First Review, Second Review, Third Review) and insert your electronic signature and the date below. If the Research Plan has a Final Status of “Approved” “Not approved”, or other please be sure to indicate this Research Plan Review status below as well. Return your completed form with substantive comments to [dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Research Plan Information (to be completed by Reviewer only) | | |
| **Reviewer Name:** | | |
|  | **Date** | **Decision** |
| First Review | Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date Deferred \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Reviewer Signature:** | Rationale for Deferment (see comments on form)  Minor Revisions  Major Revisions  Not ready for review  Conference call needed with mentor and mentee |
| Second Review (if needed) | Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date Deferred \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Reviewer Signature:** | Rationale for Deferment (see comments on form)  Minor Revisions  Major Revisions  Not ready for review  Conference call needed with mentor and mentee |
| Third Review (if needed) | Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date Deferred \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Reviewer Signature:** | Rationale for Deferment (see comments on form)  Minor Revisions  Major Revisions  Not ready for review  Conference call needed with mentor and mentee |
| Sent to Research Chair for Review and Consultation (if needed) | Date: | Research Chair Process Review Outcome (see attachments if needed) |
| Conference Call Notes (if applicable): | Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date Deferred \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Rationale for Deferment (see comments on form):  Minor Revisions  Major Revisions |
| FINAL RESEARCH PLAN STATUS | Approved  Not Approved | **Reviewer Signature:** ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Date Approved:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

Further Reviewer Comments

This section is not part of determining Research Plan approval. This is an optional space for the Research Plan Reviewer to make note of any practical or ethical concerns. Reviewers are not expected to comment on these issues but they can make comments or recommendations if they believe these may be helpful. It is recommended that mentors and researchers carefully consider any comments made here as it may help flag issues or problems that need to be addressed before the researcher moves forward or before the study is submitted for ethical review which will be conducted by the IRB.

Optional Reviewer Comments:

This has been a Scientific Merit Review. Obtaining Scientific Merit approval does not mean you will obtain IRB approval.

Once you have obtained scientific merit approval move forward to write your dissertation proposal. It should be easy because the methodology section of the Research Plan corresponds directly to the sections included in the School of Education’s Dissertation Chapter 3 Guide.

If a researcher does not pass the scientific merit review on the 3rd attempt, then the case will be referred to the **Research Specialist in the School of Education and/or the** Research Chair for review, evaluation and intervention. Mentees, mentors and reviewers should make every attempt possible to resolve issues before the SMR is failed on a 3rd attempt.