

Doctor of Education (EdD) Organizational Improvement Plan Proposal Guide

All Doctor of Education (EdD) in Educational Leadership students who have chosen to complete an Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP)/School Improvement Plan (SIP) will design an OIP proposal to the satisfaction of the Faculty of Education. The proposal serves as the Qualifying Examination.

This document contains information about

- **Research Proposal Overview**
- **Submission Guidelines**
- **Proposal Assessment Criteria**
- **Research Proposal Checklist**
- **Steps for Submission**

The Scholar-Practitioner OIP in an Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

There are three key drivers of organizational improvement: *organizational knowledge, contextual knowledge, and leadership knowledge*. Knowledge of the organization offers a deep understanding the nature of the organization itself (organizational culture, symbols, politics, power, structure, strategies, structures, etc.). Knowledge of the context provides an understanding of the external factors that influence and shape the organization. Knowledge of leadership understands the current state but provides a vision for a future state of the organization that improves a situation for social and organizational actors, and inspires and guides positive and significant change for the organization.

The OIP capstone is a practical yet theory- and research-informed plan that aims to address and find solutions for a particular problem of practice through leading change within in the organization. Grounded in the values espoused by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), the OIP is culminating research-informed document that provides evidence-based pathways to address organizational problems and, more broadly, serve the public and/or social good.

The study of the problem of practice that is foundational to the OIP will necessitate multiple lines of inquiry. Solutions to the problem should reflect positive change and be measurable. The OIP draws upon established theories, research, and extant data; it addresses important problems of practice (PoPs) using secondary (i.e. existing) data and research. Organizational improvement, particularly from an educational leadership perspective, aims to advance social outcomes through measuring change. In the EdD program, the OIP is scholarly work that primarily benefit the organization and surrounding community, in which the academic/scholarly community is located.

While the OIP proposal is highly structured, it is also not prescriptive. Creativity and choice play a role in OIP development and implementation for different organizations, contexts, and leaders.

Note: Generalizing information and data anonymization techniques (so that the organization and individuals cannot be identified) are required for the final OIP.

The Three-Chapter OIP Model

The OIP capstone that you will be developing is intended to simulate real OIP/SIP used in organizations, but also include elements that reflect doctoral level requirements that may not be reflected in some of the OIP/SIP models that you are familiar with. There are also elements generally expected in an OIP/SIP that cannot be included in your project. For example, an OIP/SIP requires that the change agent confer with many colleagues and draw from extensive internal data. However, you will not be applying for ethical approval, and so you will not be permitted to interview with colleagues or draw from internal organizational data. As such, the proposal is a hypothetical plan. To approximate the process of drafting your OIP/SIP as much as possible, you will instead explain how you will collaborate with colleagues, and you will rely on other forms of data to situate and substantiate your problem within its organizational context.

The attached outline for the Three Chapter Model is one attempt embed theory, research, and practice knowledge and skills (i.e., critical thinking, technical writing) into the OIP. More information about the model is available on the OIP Chapter Breakdown document.

The OIP Proposal

The OIP proposal is highly structured, but it is not intended to be prescriptive or to extinguish creativity. Creativity and choice plays a significant role in OIP development and implementation for different organizations, contexts, and leaders.

The OIP proposal is a 15-20 page document that outlines and anticipates the content of the full OIP plan (see discussion above). The primary purpose of the proposal is to chart a plan of action for your OIP capstone. The research proposal aims to accomplish a number of learning outcomes, which include:

- Identifying a relevant problem of practice (POP) in a particular organizational context;
- Describing the complex contextual that underlie and surround an organizational POP;
- outlining a vision for change and some of the barriers to achieving that change;
- Demonstrating an understanding of appropriate application of theory, research, frameworks and tools to assess, monitor, and evaluate change;
- Modeling ethical behaviours consistent with academic integrity and the responsible conduct of research;
- Acknowledging the limitations of the OIP, but defend it within the limitations of its scope.

The OIP proposal showcases each candidate's work that exhibits his or her acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes that inform his/her program of OIP research.

The proposal will be graded (Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Not Pass) by an evaluation committee that has been selected by the Faculty of Education. **Candidates will submit their final research proposals electronically through the OIP Submission site (in OWL) before the deadline of April 24, 2016.** (More information about how to submit appears later in this document).

The research proposal should adhere to the latest APA style guidelines. Even with appendices, the proposal should be organized and submitted as a single organized file (see detailed rubric for assessed components and criteria). Use the checklist on the final page of this document prior to submission.

The OIP proposal components include:

1. **A title page and table of contents** (as per APA style)
2. **An abstract** (between 100 and 250 words) that simply and briefly introduces the proposal, with focus on key information regarding the OIP
3. **An OIP proposal** providing in-depth analyses of the key factors and/or relationships germane to a problem of practice that will form the basis for the OIP. The proposal should be no longer than 5000 words (12 point Times Roman font, double-spaced), exclusive of references. It should contain
 - a. A proposed leadership problem of practice that articulates a gap between current and future (or desired) organizational state, which is situated within broad cultural and organizational contexts (e.g. vision, mission, values, goals);
 - b. Perspectives on the POP: frame the POP using organizational theories, academic literature, relevant data, and other analysis tools (e.g. the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental (PESTE) analysis;
 - c. A vision for change in the organization: how does this vision for change fit with the current organizational vision (and practices);
 - d. Possible theories and tools for identifying change readiness, framing the change process, and diagnosing and analyzing problems;
 - e. A short explanation of appropriate approaches for leading the change process, tool(s) for measuring change; and preliminary options to address the POP, including maintaining the status quo;
 - f. Limitations and/or constraints of the proposal.

All citations and references should be in APA format (references are excluded from page number requirements).

Changes above will affect the assessment criteria below

Submission Guidelines

Students will submit their proposals electronically as a *single* DOC or DOCX file through the **EdD OIP Proposal Submission Site** in OWL. Search for the site in OWL, or visit this permanent link (candidates will need to sign in to the OWL site to access this link), and submit the file through the Assignments tab:

Title your *single* research portfolio file: **LASTNAME-OIPProposal2016**

The proposal must be completed and submitted in one term. Although students may discuss their proposals with anyone, they should be largely independent undertakings. Students may request an extension to the Associate Dean, Graduate Programs, under extenuating or compassionate grounds only. *Please contact the Graduate Programs Office immediately if you require accommodations.*

The research proposal is read by two readers, as identified by the Faculty. Each reader will independently determine whether the student's paper receives a "Pass" or "Not Pass," then will notify the Graduate Programs Office within *four weeks* after the final submission deadline. Readers may provide additional feedback. The Graduate Programs Office will contact the student by Western email with the results of the evaluation. Documentation confirming the evaluation will be sent by Western email from the Graduate Programs Office to students, and *must be returned immediately by email as an indication of confirmation.*

If there is a disagreement regarding the proposal grade that cannot be resolved, then an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Education (who has no conflict of interest regarding the student) will provide a third and final grade for the proposal.

A student's proposal that satisfies all proposal assessment criteria will receive a "Pass" grade. Based on the recommendations of the readers, a student may be required to make revisions to the proposal *before* it receives a Pass grade (which may result in a delay beyond the four-week time frame for returning the graded proposal).

A student's proposal that does not satisfy all proposal assessment criteria will not receive a "Pass" grade. In this case, the student shall be given a second opportunity to resubmit their revised material within *four weeks* of the original examination submission deadline. The revised proposal will be re-read by the same readers.

If, after reading the revised proposal, the readers do not both assign a "Pass," the student will be required to withdraw from the program. If the readers both assign a "Pass," the student may proceed in the program to complete degree requirements.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Graduate Programs Office.

Proposal Assessment Criteria

Below is a general rubric for the evaluation of research proposal submissions. Readers will provide each candidate with a summary that describes the proposal's strengths and areas for further development. In some cases, revisions must be made before the proposal will be given a "Pass" by readers.

- Proposals that are given a "Pass" meet all or most the Satisfactory items.
- Proposals that are given a "Not Pass" meet few or none of the Satisfactory items.

	Satisfactory (Pass)	Unsatisfactory (Not Pass)
Content (Title page, Table of Contents)	Proposal includes all components, which are sufficiently organized and explained; portfolio title page and table of contents are well structured, easy to follow, and address the task.	Information randomly presented or lacks coherent structure; did not include all components required for the proposal, or components are not presented in a clear and logical order.
Structure and Organization	Clear and reasonable. Easy to follow. Transitions are clear.	Unclear and difficult to follow. Transitions are missing or ineffective.
Introduction: Organizational History	Organizational history is clear and concise. Information and data are anonymized, but made relevant to other organizations.	Elements are poorly formed, ambiguous, or not logically connected to description of the organization.
Problem of Practice	Articulates a specific, significant problem of practice in its organizational context. Clear, concise, description of the organization in the context of the Problem of Practice (PoP). The PoP is relevant to educational leadership.	Problem of Practice (PoP) is identified, but problem is too broad or too narrow, fails to establish the importance of the problem in its organizational context, or fails to consider a PoP relevant to educational leadership. Review considers topics in ways that are too broad or too narrow.
Perspectives on the problem	Articulates clear and succinct situation of the problem within broader social context, including historical and/or current overview of the problem. Identifies need for change, and frames problem sufficiently using key organizational theories, models, and frameworks, as well as academic and grey literature, relevant data and PESTE analysis. Questions arising from lines of inquiry and potential causes are articulated.	Theories and concepts referenced have an unclear or poorly argued connection to the POP. Perspectives identified do not reflect a deep engagement with the theories and concepts presented in the readings, and a justification of the perspectives taken (or not taken). Unclear or ambiguous lines of thought. Relevant theory, research, and data mis-applied or absent.
Vision for Change	Identify a vision for change that incorporates themes of leadership, organization, and context; articulates the gap between present and future state, and is aligned with the organizational overall vision, given one's own leadership position.	This vision for change is unclear or not feasible given current organizational vision and practices, and leadership position.
Change Readiness	Considers the gap analysis, and selects and uses available tools to assess change readiness	Fails to identify the level of change readiness of the organization, or uses change readiness tools incorrectly
Theory for framing change	Clear description of the relevant theories for framing organizational change, including key assumptions, as well as the nature or type of organizational change.	Framework is over-general, lacks logical progression, and/or fails to feature relevant theoretical and/or conceptual issues.
Tools for diagnosing and analyzing problems	Examines history of the organization as it relates to the problem, considering external environment as well as the gap that exists between current org state and vision. Employ organizational change frameworks or tools that can be used to diagnosis/analyze organizational problems.	Insufficient overview of the tools provided, or minimal and insufficient explanation of why these tools were selected, why they are best suited for the OIP, and how they compare to what is missing.
Identify	Potential solutions to address the	Potential solutions are not fully, clearly, and

preliminary solutions	organizational problems are clearly presented, including the option of maintaining the status quo. Analysis considers what needs to change, new goals, recommendation actions and resource needs (i.e., time, human, fiscal, technological).	fairly presented. Analysis fails to consider what needs to change and what new goals are identified. Plan fails to consider relative impact of solutions.
Tools for measuring and communicating change	Identify preliminary tools that will be used to measure and track change, gauge progress and assess change. Uses appropriate tools to develop a strategy to communicate clearly and persuasively the change path to relevant audiences.	Insufficient overview of the tools provided, or minimal and insufficient explanation of why these tools were selected, why they are best suited for the OIP, and how they compare to what is missing.
Proposal limitations	Articulates possible implementation issues and how these will be addressed within the scope of the project.	Implementation issues are not fully addressed. Scope of the project not considered.
Manuscript: APA, Writing Quality and Composition	Writing contains a range of sentence structures with few errors. Good use of appropriate vocabulary. Correct spelling and punctuation throughout. Demonstrates a proficient understanding of AP formatting. Within the word limit.	Writing contains errors that interfere with meaning. Grammatical errors are frequent, making understanding difficult. Limited vocabulary, or words used incorrectly. Document not formatted in APA style. Dramatically over or under the word limit.

Research Proposal Checklist and Steps for Submission

Use this checklist to ensure that the proposal contains all components prior submission to the Graduate Programs Office via the OWL site on or before **11:50pm EST, April 24, 2016**. Contact the Graduate Programs Office with queries.

What/Item	How/Details	Included (Y/N)
Title Page	Title of OIP proposal; name; date; supervisor's name	
Table of Contents	Indicates all items within research proposal	
Proposal Abstract	Less than 1 page double-spaced	
OIP Proposal	5000 words maximum; pages double-spaced; 12pt font (Times Roman); latest APA style	
Appendix	If applicable	
<i>Single file</i>	Doc or docx file format only	
<i>Pagination</i>	Sequential (pagination may start with Table of Contents)	
<i>Document name</i>	LASTNAME-OIPProposal2016	

How to Submit:

1. Click this link:
2. Click on **Assignments** (tab on left)

3. Click on **Add** (by your name) --> find **Upload File** (in drop down menu)
4. Click **Choose File** to upload your research portfolio file
5. Click **Save**

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