



Dissertation Handbook

Prepared by Dissertation Department

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INTRODUCTION

The Dissertation Handbook is to be used as a guide and resource for all doctoral candidates pursuing a doctorate degree through Westcliff University. As a requirement for graduation, doctoral candidates must complete and successfully defend a dissertation. The standards of quality and expectation are outlined in this handbook in tandem with pertinent information related to the process, responsibilities held by the doctoral candidate, and ways in which the university offers support throughout the process. All doctoral candidates maintain responsibility for understanding this document and adhering to the specifications outlined.

Purpose of the Dissertation

The dissertation evidences the culmination of knowledge, research expertise, and scholarly contribution that is required of all candidates pursuing a doctoral degree at Westcliff University. The completion of a dissertation should provide each candidate with an expert understanding of a specific aspect of the field they wish to pursue, experience conducting an original research project, an understanding of current literature published in relation to the associated field, and an opportunity to contribute to the field of study. A doctoral dissertation should make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge it addresses and expand existing knowledge in a way that demonstrates that the author understands and is capable of original research.

A dissertation requires consistent revision and analysis throughout the process. The Dissertation Committee will provide constructive feedback and verification that the work presented meets the standards and rigor synonymous with a doctoral degree. It is the responsibility of the doctoral candidate to intentionally pursue quality and engage professionally and critically throughout the process of evaluating their work when considering the feedback they receive.

Ethics and Standards

The dissertation must evidence ethical conduct of research and originality. The doctoral candidate holds responsibility for ensuring the work is free from plagiarism, including improper citation, and that the research has been conducted ethically.

Doctoral candidates are responsible for ensuring that copyright holder rights are respected and maintained appropriately throughout the entirety of the dissertation. No use of survey, exercise, test, nor any similar tool may be used without explicit written author permission. All work referenced in the text of the dissertation must be appropriately cited and articulated. Doctoral candidates must be diligent in determining the amount of material that is allowed to be quoted without violating copyright standards.

Doctoral candidates are responsible for adhering to the strictest of ethical standards when working with human participants and must adhere to all standards of practice stipulated by the Westcliff University Institutional Review Board.

Acceptable Types of Research

A dissertation is to comprise original research at Westcliff University. This dissertation is indicative of high academic integrity and rigor, congruent with doctorate level research. The following are acceptable types of research, though this list is not exhaustive.

Quantitative and qualitative research are the primary methods. Mixed methods may be acceptable with approval from the dissertation chair. A comprehensive literature review is not acceptable.

Dissertation Policies

Time to Completion

It should be noted that all students are required to complete their educational program in no longer than 200% of the published length of the program as stated in the enrollment agreement (see [student catalog](#)). It should be noted that this includes the completion of all dissertation work in doctoral programs.

[WU Policy on Instrument Validation](#)

[WU Similarity Policy for Dissertations](#)

Involved Departments

Dissertation Department

The Dissertation Department reinforces the process of the dissertation across colleges. The department connects candidates with dissertation chairs and committee members and facilitates the paperwork required for a doctoral candidate to successfully complete the dissertation.

Contact: dissertationdept@westcliff.edu

Doctoral Program College

The College that facilitates the candidate's program maintains responsibility for verifying quality, rigor, and standards of dissertation work.

Contact: College Program Chair or Dean

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The dissertation committee consists of three qualified faculty of Westcliff University, a dissertation chair and two committee members. The dissertation committee is collectively responsible for providing doctoral candidates with the guidance, direction, and the critical feedback required to complete a dissertation to the standards of Westcliff University. The two committee members, under the guidance of the dissertation chair, must ensure that the candidate's dissertation meets the proper standard before submitting it to the college for defense approval.

Dissertation Chair

The dissertation chair acts as the primary manager of the dissertation committee. The chair will possess subject matter and general methodology expertise to guide the candidate throughout the dissertation process.

Selection

Doctoral candidates are able to select their top two choices for a dissertation chair. The university will assess fit, availability, and chair's preferences prior to making a connection with a candidate in the session prior to the dissertation start date. Should the suggested chairs not be available, the dissertation coordinator will match candidates with a dedicated chair based on the content of the prospectus submitted.

All doctoral candidates submit a request for a dissertation chair in their final research course of the program. The link to the form that funnels this request to the Dissertation Department is found through GAP. Candidates will receive an email receipt of confirmation, and the submission will be kept on file until the session prior to beginning of dissertation coursework. At that time, the Dissertation Coordinator will notify the candidate of the chair connection.

Responsibilities

The dissertation chair maintains responsibility for an accurate understanding of current Westcliff University dissertation processes, policies, and procedures. The chair will help the candidate prepare for each milestone in the dissertation process and maintain communication with committee members. The chair will evaluate dissertations on the merit of candidate work, reinforcing scholarly quality of all dissertation work.

Requirements

Dissertation chairs must have a terminal degree, be an active Westcliff University faculty member in good standing, and complete the Westcliff University dissertation chair and committee training.

Committee Members

The dissertation committee members share responsibility in ensuring that doctoral candidates produce high-quality scholarship evidenced in research design, data analysis, and written explanation of findings.

Selection

The university will connect doctoral candidates with committee members in the second dissertation course, as candidates finalize the draft of the proposal.

Responsibilities

The committee members will provide guidance on research design, methodology, analysis methods, and any areas of concern through written, asynchronous feedback. Committee members will attend the Preliminary and Final Defense and approve of performance in the defenses prior to the doctoral candidate moving forward.

Requirements

Committee members must be Westcliff University faculty members and have completed all associated training for the position. Experts that are not Westcliff University faculty may not act as committee members. However, should you acquire approval, external faculty specializing in your subject matter may be individually contacted to provide insight and may attend your Final Defense as a participant.

*****Important Note:*** *Dissertation chairs, committee members, and doctoral writing specialists do not offer nor maintain responsibility for the copy-editing of the dissertation. To ensure publishable mechanics, the doctoral candidate must contact an external editor.*

Connection and Communication

Upon initial connection with the dissertation chair, the candidate and the chair will develop a plan for communication and preferred day/time to meet on a weekly basis. For any problems that arise, the doctoral candidate may contact the program chair associated with the program of study.

The doctoral candidate and dissertation chair must connect and communicate consistently throughout the Dissertation Block. All feedback and communication must be sent through and

stored on the Dissertation Block GAP course. This will maintain an accurate record of all communication and the content of messages sent and received. Both the doctoral candidate and dissertation chair must adhere to the Westcliff University policy stipulated in the Student Catalog and Faculty Handbook where responses to inquiries are provided within 48 hours. Communication must remain professional, respectful, focused, and timely.

Changes to Members of the Dissertation Committee

While the university does its best to ensure consistency amongst the dissertation committee assigned to each doctoral candidate, inevitable events may arise where a dissertation committee member or chair changes. Should this occur, the dissertation coordinator will be in contact with the candidate and work to assign a new chair or committee member. (Please Note: It is crucial that all communication between the dissertation chairs and the doctoral candidate is centralized within the GAP dissertation block course series in order to ensure any replacement to the committee has access to previous feedback and suggestions. Should a change occur, the new chair or committee member should be able to see and have access to previous feedback and suggestions).

Doctoral candidates may request a maximum of one change of chair throughout the duration of their work on the dissertation. Students must follow the process stipulated by the University to receive approval of this change request. For information related to this process, [see here](#). This request must be approved by the associated college prior to any change occurring.

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE RESPONSIBILITIES

Doctoral candidates maintain responsibility for the production of a quality, scholarly final dissertation. While dissertation committees are provided to guide the work and reinforce rigor and the adherence of quality standards, it is the responsibility of the doctoral candidate to: (1) communicate consistently, professionally, and timely with the dissertation chair, (2) maintain adherence with Westcliff University's Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy (see Student Catalog), (3) engage with critical feedback from the position of a learner, revising as necessary to adhere to doctoral level research and standards, (4) ensure depth of understanding of the research process and the independent research required to achieve it.

DOCTORAL RESEARCH COURSES

Doctoral candidates engage in research courses throughout the first and second year of their programs, providing a preparatory foundation for the dissertation. In the third year, doctoral candidates are enrolled in a dissertation block course series, where the dissertation is written and finalized.

Preparatory Research Courses

Doctor of Business Administration

RES 700: The initial research course offers an overview of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research methodologies. It provides a framework within which candidates begin to design their research methodology. Emphasis is placed on data collection and analysis methods. This course will lay the foundation for a candidate's dissertation.

RES 701: The second research course guides candidates through the pre-dissertation preparation process. The pre-dissertation process consists of writing a preliminary prospectus. The final assignment should be a completed preliminary dissertation prospectus, which is required to begin the dissertation sequence.

RES 702: The third research course guides candidates to apply appropriate methodology to answer research questions in a dissertation. Critical exploration of research language, ethics, and approaches are covered.

RES 703: The fourth research course is a culmination of the research curricula candidates have explored in tandem with their dissertation journey. Students develop a literature review and complete the proposal draft. The candidates will use a fresh perspective and inclusion of existing literature toward the development of a clear need for the study.

Doctor of Education

RES 801: The initial research course offers an overview of descriptive statistics to conduct inferential statistics. Students will test hypotheses, test the difference between two means, two proportions, and two variances, study correlation and regression, conduct chi-square and ANOVA, and review nonparametric statistics, sampling, and simulation. Students will apply these skills to the data sets they have previously been working with to increase their proficiency and skills in conducting, interpreting, and reporting inferential statistics. Students will use SAS for this course.

RES 802: The second research course reviews fundamental research principles set in an educational context and forms the basis for quantitative and qualitative analysis. Students will explore the philosophical underpinnings, history, and key elements of quantitative and qualitative research. This course will guide students in a comparison of these theoretical frameworks and methods of employing quality standards.

RES 803: The third research course culminates with a pre-prospectus and the dissertation chair selection in preparation for the dissertation. A prospectus is a formal research project proposal to convince a reader that the research can be carried out and will yield beneficial results. The prospectus reviews existing scholarship, summarizing basic arguments relevant to the project, and positions the project concerning this scholarship. Additionally, the prospectus includes a hypothesis statement or research problem and a project organization overview. Writing a prospectus sharpens several important communication skills applicable in various situations, such as scholarship and funding applications, proposals for research forums, conferences, publications, job applications, and preparation for larger and more complex research projects found in a variety of professional settings.

RES 804: The fourth research course culminates in the review of the literature. The students build and refine scholarly writing by using archival research, documented sources, and library databases as they synthesize pertinent literature and develop their topic knowledge base. Students leverage peer and instructor support systems to complete a 30-source (minimum) literature review that focuses on the methodology, arguments, and frameworks associated with the chosen topic, resulting in a clear description of the study's need. Emphasis is also placed on examining emerging connections and themes emerging from source findings and discussions in preparation for future course requirements. Students will use the latest American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual style guide.

DISSERTATION BLOCK

The Dissertation Block is composed of a series of four (4) dissertation courses that doctoral candidates are enrolled in on GAP once their other program coursework is complete. Each of the four (4) dissertation courses are 8 weeks in length. The courses are composed of assignments called milestones, which candidates move through at their own individual pace within the 8-week time allotment. Should the candidate complete all required milestones in a given course prior to the end of the 8-week period, they automatically move forward into the next course of the Dissertation Block series. Should the candidate not complete all required milestones prior to the end of the 8-week period, the candidate will automatically be enrolled into an extension course to fulfill all remaining requirements.

1. **DIS900/BUS790a/EDU900 (Milestones 1-3):** The first course in the Dissertation Block guides doctoral candidates through the completion of CITI certifications, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2.
2. **DIS901/BUS790b/EDU901 (Milestones 4-6):** The second course in the Dissertation Block guides doctoral candidates through the completion of Chapter 3, the committee member review, and the preliminary defense.

3. **DIS902/BUS795a/EDU902 (Milestones 7-8):** The third course in the Dissertation Block guides doctoral candidates through the acquisition of IRB approval and completion of Chapter 4.
4. **DIS903/BUS795a/EDU903 (Milestones 9-12):** The fourth course in the Dissertation Block guides doctoral candidates through the completion of Chapter 5, the committee member review, the final defense, the formatting committee review, and the finalization of documentation required for graduation.

Credit Distribution for the Dissertation Block

DIS900/BUS790a/EDU900: 3 credits earned (DBA), 4 credits earned (EdD)
DIS901/BUS790b/EDU901: 4.5 credits earned (DBA), 4 credits earned (EdD)
DIS902/BUS795a/EDU902: 3 credits earned (DBA), 4 credits earned (EdD)
DIS903/BUS795b/EDU903: 4.5 credits earned (DBA), 4 credits earned (EdD)

***Note:* Doctoral candidates may re-enroll in each course a maximum of three times to complete the milestones in the associated course. Should a candidate not complete the milestones within three attempts, they will need to file an appeal with the college to remain in the program.

Enrollment Status

Full-time enrollment in the Dissertation Block is 3-4.5 credits for DBA (dependent upon current course enrollment) and 4 credits for EdD.

Session Breaks

Doctoral candidates may request an annual leave of absence or annual vacation through their student advisor. The university must approve of the request.

DISSERTATION PROCESS: OVERVIEW

The dissertation process at Westcliff University is composed of twelve milestones. The steps can be found outlined below and explained in further sections in more depth.

Milestones

Milestone 1. CITI Certifications
Milestone 2. Prospectus and Chapter 1
Milestone 3. Chapter 2
Milestone 4. Chapter 3
Milestone 5. Proposal Committee Member Review
Milestone 6. Preliminary Defense

Milestone 7. IRB Approval

Milestone 8. Chapter 4

Milestone 9. Chapter 5

Milestone 10. Dissertation Committee Member Review

Milestone 11. Final Defense

Milestone 12. Formatting Committee and University Approval

Approvals Required at Key Milestones

Milestone	Information	Important Note	Approval Needed
Milestone 2: Prospectus	The doctoral candidate will revisit and revise the prospectus they learned to create in their previous research courses that were embedded earlier in their program.	Upon chair approval of the prospectus, the Prospectus Completion Form must be emailed to the Dissertation Department.	Chair College
Milestone 5: Proposal Review	The proposal will consist of the first three chapters of the dissertation. This document will serve as a way for the institution to assure appropriateness of research design, adherence to standards, and provide a basis for the review by the IRB.	Upon chair approval of the proposal, the chair will email the draft of the proposal to the committee members to initiate review and approval.	Chair Committee Members
Milestone 6: Preliminary Defense	After approval of the proposal, the doctoral candidate will present their proposal to the dissertation committee, receive feedback, and revise the proposal based on the feedback.	Upon dissertation committee approval (approval of all members is required) of the proposal, the doctoral candidate must submit a Preliminary Defense Readiness Form to the Dissertation	Chair Committee Members Dissertation Coordinator

Step	Information	Important Note	Approval Needed
Milestone 7: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval	After a successful preliminary defense, the dissertation chair will submit an IRB application on behalf of the doctoral candidate to ensure ethical conduct is adhered to as per federal regulations.	Data collection may not begin prior to IRB approval.	Institutional Review Board
Milestone 10: Final Review	After chair approval of Chapters 1-5, the committee members will initiate the secondary review.	Upon chair approval of the dissertation, the chair will email the dissertation to committee members to initiate review.	Chair Committee Members
Milestone 11: Final Defense	After approval of the dissertation, the doctoral candidate will present their dissertation to the dissertation committee to ensure the dissertation matches the level and rigor of the academic standards maintained by Westcliff University.	Upon dissertation committee approval (approval from all members is required) of the dissertation, the doctoral candidate must submit a Final Defense Readiness Form to the Dissertation Department to schedule the defense.	Chair Committee Members Program Chair Dean
Milestone 12: Formatting Committee Approval	After a successful final defense, the doctoral candidate will submit the dissertation to the WU formatting committee to ensure the dissertation adheres to APA 7 th edition, follows the WU template and guidelines, and evidences a	Approval of the formatting committee is needed prior to graduation.	WU Formatting Committee

	publishable level of mechanics.		
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** All required forms are incorporated into the Dissertation Block and are accessible on the [Dissertation Process webpage](#).*

DISSERTATION PROCESS: DETAILED VIEW

Dissertation Topic

Topics selected for the dissertation must come out of a problem space supported by peer-reviewed, recent literature, align to the candidate’s program of study, be researchable within the learner’s doctoral program length, and be focused and manageable. The college will verify the topic is accepted for their program after the completion of the prospectus.

For further information, please see the [Westcliff University Dissertation Proposal Alignment Foci](#).

Prospectus

The prospectus is the starting “blueprint,” or otherwise known as a preliminary plan, for the dissertation process. The prospectus describes what or who you plan to research and what is the “problem” or “issue”. This is a condensed version of the proposal. The primary purpose of the prospectus is to ensure there is alignment before moving onto the proposal.

Sections of the Prospectus

The sections incorporated into a prospectus can be found on the [Doctoral Writing Center](#) website under templates.

For further information, please see the [Westcliff University Dissertation Proposal Alignment Foci](#).

Proposal

The proposal comprises Chapters 1-3. Once alignment is met from the prospectus, then the researcher will move to the proposal stage. The proposal is full of detail and exploration of the particular “problem” or “issue”. These three chapters are very technical and require plenty of academic support through citations and references to support the need and/or fill in the gap of the literature.

Sections of the Proposal

The chapters/sections required for the proposal can be found on the [Doctoral Writing Center](#) website under templates.

For further information, please see the [Westcliff University Dissertation Proposal Alignment Foci](#).

Preliminary Defense

Doctoral candidates at Westcliff University are required to prove scholarly competency through a preliminary defense. The preliminary defense requires doctoral candidates to present their dissertation proposal in a detailed and logical manner to demonstrate mastery, rationale, and justification. The dissertation chair and committee members are present at the preliminary defense and sign the corresponding sections of the Dissertation Completion Form upon approval of a successful defense.

Steps of the Preliminary Defense

Step	Information	Student Action Needed
Receive Dissertation Committee Approval on Proposal	The dissertation chair and committee members must approve of the proposal prior to the scheduling of the defense. (Proof of approval is required in GAP.)	Email: dissertationdept@westcliff.edu Preliminary Defense Readiness Form
Schedule the Defense	The Dissertation Department will send an email gathering scheduling availability from the doctoral candidate and the dissertation committee.	Provide availability information on the scheduling tool. Wait for the Zoom link invite.
Revise PPT for Presentation	The doctoral candidate will submit the preliminary defense PPT in GAP and finalize it with the chair prior to the defense.	See GAP course
Attend the Defense	The doctoral candidate will present the proposal to the dissertation committee.	Present at the scheduled defense. Rubric used: Click here
Revise Proposal (if applicable)	If the doctoral candidate receives either: “pass with revisions” or “no pass” on the	See GAP course

	defense, revise the proposal with the chair's guidance.	
Acquire Signatures	To receive signatures and approvals on the preliminary defense, the doctoral candidate must email the completion form to the Dissertation Department.	Email: dissertationdept@westcliff.edu Preliminary Defense Completion Form

For information on the preparation, scheduling, and process of the defense, see [here](#).

Westcliff University Institutional Review Board

The purpose of the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) is to protect the rights and welfare of participants. To that end, the background, purpose, and methodology of proposed dissertation research must be reviewed to determine the validity of anticipated results; the possible benefits to participants; the physical, psychological, social, and legal risks; the protection of confidentiality; and the adequacy of documented informed consent. The Board does not ordinarily review scientific design but may consider that step if it leads to reduced benefit in relation to risk.

For frequently asked questions, please see the Westcliff University IRB FAQs

IRB Principles

The IRB abides by the following principles:

1. Risks to participants are minimized.
2. Participants in the study (or their guardians) are fully aware of the risks and that individuals may withdraw from the study at any time without any form of penalty.
3. Risks to participants are so outweighed by the sum of the benefits to the participant and the importance of their knowledge to be gained as to warrant a decision to allow the participant to accept these risks.
4. The rights and welfare of any such participants will be adequately protected.
5. Legally effective informed consent will be obtained by adequate and appropriate methods in accordance with the provision of this manual, and unless legally waived.
6. Conduct of the activity will be reviewed at intervals determined by the IRB, but not less than annually.

****Note: Data may not be collected prior to IRB approval**

IRB Requirements

Prior to IRB Submission: All doctoral candidates must complete the four (4) Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certifications required by Westcliff University. These certifications are outlined here: [Doctoral Students CITI Requirements](#)

IRB Application: The dissertation chair will submit the [IRB application](#) on behalf of the doctoral candidate in DIS 903. It is common for the IRB to require revisions. All ethical considerations must be addressed prior to approval. (Again, doctoral candidates **may not** begin data collection prior to IRB approval.)

IRB Approval Letter: Upon approval, the IRB will issue an IRB approval letter to the doctoral candidate with an associated IRB Approval number. This approval expires one year after receipt. Should the doctoral candidate not complete data collection before the approval letter expires, the doctoral candidate will need to resubmit an application. Research must be conducted according to the protocol that was certified by the IRB. Any changes to the protocol must be reported to and certified by the IRB before the changes may be implemented.

IRB Close-Out Form: Upon completion of data collection, the doctoral candidate must complete an IRB Close-Out Form. This form must be uploaded to GAP and emailed to irb@westcliff.edu. After submission of this form, no additional data may be collected.

Final Defense

In the final defense, the doctoral candidate will present their dissertation research for the dissertation committee to assess the merits of the completed dissertation research and the ability of the doctoral candidate to interpret and explain research results and implications, explain the rationale for the research and methodology used, and justification for how this work adds to the current body of research available on the topic. In the final defense, the dissertation chair and committee members, program chair, dissertation coordinator, and guests (upon approval) may be present.

Steps of the Final Defense

Step	Information	Student Action Needed
Receive Dissertation Committee Approval on Proposal	The dissertation chair and committee members must approve of the dissertation prior to the scheduling of the defense. (Proof of approval is required in GAP.)	Email: dissertationdept@westcliff.edu Final Defense Readiness Form

Schedule the Defense	The Dissertation Department will send an email gathering scheduling availability from the doctoral candidate and the dissertation committee.	Provide your information on the scheduling tool. Wait for the Zoom link invite.
Revise PPT for Presentation	Submit the final defense PPT in GAP and finalize it with the chair prior to the defense.	See GAP course
Attend the Defense	Present the dissertation to the dissertation committee.	Present at the scheduled defense. Rubric used: Click here
Revise Dissertation (if applicable)	If the doctoral candidate receives either: “pass with revisions” or “no pass” on the defense, the doctoral candidate must revise the dissertation with the chair’s guidance.	See GAP course
Acquire Signatures	To receive signatures and approvals on the final defense, the doctoral candidate must email the completion form to the Dissertation Department.	Email: dissertationdept@westcliff.edu Final Defense Completion Form

For information on the preparation, scheduling, and process of the defense, see [here](#).

Formatting Committee Approval

Upon approval of the final defense, the doctoral candidate must receive the approval of the WU Formatting Committee for the completed dissertation.

Formatting Templates and Guidelines

Doctoral candidates finalizing a dissertation must use the Westcliff University approved [dissertation template](#) (found below “Guides”).

The Formatting Guide for the dissertation can be found [here](#).

COMPLETION OF DISSERTATION

Professional Editing

Doctoral candidates must evidence work that is publishable and free of mechanical, APA, and formatting errors.

Doctoral candidates are able to meet with Westcliff University [Doctoral Writing Specialists](#) throughout the duration of their program and work on the dissertation. The specialists are able to provide suggestions and considerations for the author, focus on the areas that the author has specified the need for, and discuss aspects related to writing, not content. The specialists do not provide line-by-line feedback or copyediting services.

Should a candidate wish to hire an external editor for copy-editing services, Westcliff University has compiled a list of possible candidates, found under ‘Additional Dissertation Related Documents’ and is labeled [List of Editors](#). *(Westcliff University provides this list as a resource only without endorsement or vetting of the claims made by the individuals/companies included. Please note that you are under no obligation to select any editor from this list. You are free to find your own editor. This list is a guide only).*

Please see here for help in [What to Consider When Selecting an Editor](#).

Signatures Required

Prior to eligibility for graduation, doctoral candidates must attain the signatures of the College Program Chair, Dean, Librarian, and Registrar. Signatures are acquired through the Dissertation Department.

Graduation

Upon receipt of final documentation, the Registrar’s office will contact the doctoral candidate to finalize all outstanding matters prior to clearance for graduation.

Distinguished Dissertation Award

Doctoral candidates are eligible for the [Distinguished Dissertation Award](#) should the dissertation chair nominate the candidate prior to graduation. Recipients include one candidate from the College of Business and one candidate from the College of Education annually.

RESOURCES

Doctoral Writing Center

The [Doctoral Writing Center](#) offers:

1. One-on-one consultation sessions at any point in the dissertation process. Students can discuss the organization, cohesion, flow, or mechanics of their work with a trained Doctoral Writing Specialist.
2. Topic development conversations where candidates can join with peers, discuss areas of research they are interested in pursuing, and select a relevant topic for their dissertation work.
3. Writing Support Groups where candidates can join up to five peers, all working on the dissertation at various phases. The support groups offer candidates a way to set aside time to work on the dissertation while remaining motivated, consistent and dedicated to making progress.
4. Foundations in Research is a program designed to provide participants with an interactive experience as they explore the primary aspects of research required to generate a foundational understanding of research design and development.

Research Events and Opportunities

Westcliff University offers candidates various opportunities to engage in the research process to disseminate their work and collaborate with professionals in the field:

1. [Symposium of Applied Research \(SOAR\)](#)
2. [Westcliff University Journal of Applied Research \(WIJAR\)](#)
3. Research Colloquium (Information is sent via LITE prior to the annual event.)

Community and Connection

Doctoral candidates are provided various avenues for connection and are urged to take advantage of the following provided through the university:

1. Engage with your cohort through your dedicated Slack channel
2. Join a [Writing Support Group](#)
3. Request a [Doctoral Peer Mentor](#)

Westcliff University Library

The Westcliff University's Library offers:

1. Contact the Librarian: library@westcliff.edu

2. [Library Research Assistance](#): Students at Westcliff can make appointments (30 minutes/one hour) with the Librarian for research assistance.
3. Westcliff researchers may request access to our [Dissertation Repository](#).

Mental Health Support

Completing a dissertation can be stressful, especially in consideration of work-life balance and varying responsibilities. All candidates have direct access to [IMPACT](#), a program dedicated to candidate life assistance.