

**Ph.D. in Leadership**



# Student Handbook

Fall 2014

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## **General Information**

### **Mission Statement - To learn. To love. To serve.**

Guided by Franciscan values and the ideal of “knowledge joined with love,” rooted in the Catholic and liberal arts traditions, Alvernia is a rigorous, caring, and inclusive learning community committed to academic excellence and to being and fostering:

- broadly educated, life-long learners
- reflective professionals and engaged citizens
- ethical leaders with moral courage

### **Core Franciscan Values**

The mission statements of the Bernardine Congregation and Alvernia University are the sources of the five core values of the Franciscan tradition — service, humility, peacemaking, contemplation, and collegiality. To call these values “traditional” to the Catholic, Franciscan view of the world does not imply that they are merely “old” or without relevance to contemporary society. On the contrary, these basic values have continued, throughout the centuries, to inform a way of life, a view of the world, and a definition of men’s and women’s relationship to their Creator that is perhaps more relevant in today’s world than ever before.

These values are, then, very much alive at Alvernia. Together they form the foundation for decision-making, for program development, and for our relationships with each other in the pursuit of our personal, communal, and educational goals. They are what make an education at Alvernia University unique. As members of the Alvernia University community, each of us, no matter our role, willingly proclaims common ownership of these core values.

### **General Objectives**

Alvernia University is founded on the Judeo-Christian commitment to the harmonious development of the whole person. The student’s development into a responsible person is the basic reason for the existence of the University. The Alvernia University environment, therefore, is designed to provide students with the opportunity:

- To develop their ability to think logically and critically, to comprehend accurately, and to communicate effectively;
- To develop their personal relationships with self, community and God; To comprehend the Judeo-Christian heritage and its relationship to their responsibilities to themselves and to society;
- To develop and strengthen their moral and ethical integrity in a changing society;
- To acquire knowledge of their physical and social environment while developing a greater appreciation for the contributions of the past with a sense of responsiveness to a changing future;
- To develop their ability to be self-directed human beings, capable of moving through various work, leisure, and life roles in order to make vital contributions to the home, church and community;
- To explore ways of integrating their spiritual development with their physical, intellectual, social and cultural participation in the world;
- To develop an understanding for and an appreciation of the literary and aesthetic arts that will enable them to continue to enrich their lives through study and creativity; and
- To demonstrate proficiency in those skills required by their chosen career and professional concentration.

## **Doctor of Philosophy**

The Alvernia University program in Leadership leading to a Doctor of Philosophy with concentrations in Education, Corporate, and Community Leadership is designed to prepare professionals who will excel in positions of leadership in public and private settings. The doctorate will afford professionals opportunities to make substantive contributions to the leadership research literature in three areas of Education, Corporate, and Community.

The goal of the program in Leadership leading to a Doctor of Philosophy is to provide an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary focus that requires a critical examination of contemporary theories of leadership, within a value based framework. The program demands academic rigor that engages students in the systematic analysis of research and current theories of leadership; it will also prepare individuals to contribute to the knowledge of leadership and function as agents of change in a contemporary and diverse society.

### **Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership General Objectives:**

- To develop at the doctoral level a cadre of talented leaders who aspire to or currently hold positions with leadership responsibilities in educational, community or corporate organizations.
- To develop individuals who are capable of analyzing and evaluating various leadership theories and their relevance to existing and emerging research findings.
- To make substantive contributions to the body of knowledge in executive educational, community and corporate leadership.
- To advance the capabilities of individuals to critically analyze research findings and their implications for leaders within organizational contexts.
- To develop professionals who are capable of visionary leadership in generating institutional and social policies that acknowledge and respond to the contributions of diversity.
- To enhance the ability of individuals to critically examine ethical issues that impact leaders within an increasingly complex and pluralistic global environment.
- To promote social justice and social responsibility as a leader by increasing understanding of policies, legal constraints, and socioeconomic conditions that contribute to social, economic, and political inequities and impact on organizations.
- To have students make scholarly contributions to their area of concentration through original research that focuses on either advanced qualitative or quantitative methods.

The three areas of concentration within the Ph.D. in Leadership are corporate leadership, community leadership, and educational leadership.

**Corporate Leadership** will prepare professionals for leadership positions within various fields of business. Through coursework in advanced research and scholarship in corporate leadership, this program will enable executives to continue to develop their leadership talents, and research capabilities and understand their transformative role and responsibilities as servant leaders. Exploring global issues, opportunities and the challenges of leading a workforce with individuals from diverse backgrounds will contribute to their effectiveness and ability to be visionary agents of change.

**Educational Leadership** will prepare educators to meet the challenges of contemporary school leadership at all levels of administration including higher education. Through course work in advanced research and scholarship, this program will enable individuals to develop their leadership talents and research capabilities, as well as to understand their responsibilities as agents of change within an increasingly complex and demanding educational system that is expected to meet the needs of all children. Individuals will contribute to the knowledge base as leaders responsible for creating and improving learning communities in our global society.

**Community Leadership** will prepare professionals for leadership positions as agents of change in government and community organizations. Coursework will include advanced research and theories of leadership, critical analyses regarding the impact of social welfare policies and procedures, entrepreneurial strategies, research-based assessment of programs, and evidence-based management. This program will enable leaders in government and community organizations to act as agents of change and to contribute to a greater understanding regarding community leadership.

### **Accreditation**

The Ph.D. in Leadership program has been approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

### **Admission Requirements for Doctor of Philosophy**

Applicants must send the completed application form and the \$100 nonrefundable application fee to the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office. This form can be obtained by contacting the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office, or applications may also be completed and submitted via the University's website (<http://www.alvernia.edu/gradandadult/programs.html>). Applicants must also submit the following documents to demonstrate potential as a doctoral student.

- A. An official transcript indicating that the applicant has earned an appropriate graduate degree from an accredited university or university must be submitted to the Alvernia University School of Graduate and Adult Education. A grade point average of 3.3 on a 4.0 scale for all previous graduate work is typically required.
- C. Doctoral program applicants must submit three letters of recommendation from former professors, employers, supervisors, or religious or community leaders that are familiar with the applicant's personal, educational, or professional achievements. Letters should speak to students' leadership capabilities as well as their potential as a graduate student.
- D. Scores from the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) are preferred; however the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) and the Miller Analogies Test (MAT) are accepted. Scores must be from the last two years. The examination scores in combination with grade point averages from previous graduate course work, will be used in assessing a student's previous educational achievement levels and to evaluate the potential for meeting the demands of course work. Professional experience will also be weighed against the results of any scores submitted from a graduate school entrance examination.
- E. Applicants are required to submit an essay that makes a strong case for their potential as a student of leadership theory, and also clearly articulates their reasons for taking this big step in their academic career. This is an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate the ability and the determination to succeed in a rigorous academic program that requires a great deal of independent scholarship.
- F. Applicants are required to submit a current resume that includes their leadership and educational experiences, employment history, publications, and other relevant information.
- G. Applicants will interview with the Director of the Program. The purpose of this interview is to discuss an applicant's academic interests and leadership experiences.
- H. The applicant may submit additional evidence of academic or professional awards and accomplishments, special certifications, samples of scholarly or creative work, or completion of specialized examinations.

### **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)**

The goal of the Program in Leadership leading to a Doctor of Philosophy is to provide an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary focus that requires a critical examination of contemporary theories of leadership, within a value-based framework. Program requirements are as follows:

## **Course Requirements - 63 credits**

The Doctor of Philosophy has a common leadership core, research core and dissertation. In addition, there are the following three areas of concentration: Corporate Leadership, Community Leadership, and Educational Leadership.

- **Research Core (15 credits)** (unless noted courses are 3 credits)
  - PHD 701: Advanced Research Colloquium (6 cr.)
  - PHD 704: Quantitative Research: Design & Analysis
  - PHD 710: Qualitative Research: Design & Analysis
  - **Select one of the following three advanced research courses as appropriate:**
    - PHD 851: Instrument Design and Analysis
    - PHD 853: Advanced Quantitative Research: Design & Analysis
    - PHD 855: Advanced Qualitative Research: Design & Analysis
- **Leadership Core (18 credits)**
  - PHD 706: Leadership: Advanced Systems Theory and Research
  - PHD 709: Organizational Analysis: Culture, Theory and Change Strategies
  - PHD 711: Moral and Ethical Foundations for Decision-Making
  - PHD 724: Theories in Organizational Structure and Strategic Leadership
  - PHD 725: Leadership: Diversity and Social Justice in Complex and Global Organizations
  - PHD 801: Negotiations and Conflict Resolution for Contemporary Leaders
- **Areas of concentrations: Corporate, Community, and Educational Leadership (18 credits)**
  - **Required courses for Corporate Leadership (9 credits):**
    - PHD 727: Developing Human Resources in Organizations
    - PHD 803: Leadership and Spirituality
    - PHD 821: Organizational Policy and Finance
    - **Select three of the following electives for concentration (9 credits):**
      - PHD 812: Leadership and Communication
      - PHD 814: Seminar in Organizational Law
      - PHD 815: Economic Development of Organizations
      - PHD 820: Current Issues in Philanthropy and Organizational Development
      - PHD 828: U. S. Presidents as Leaders
  - **Required courses for Community Leadership (9 cr.):**
    - PHD 729: Welfare Politics and Leadership with Community Organizations
    - PHD 805: Development and Evaluation of Organizational Policies and Programs
    - PHD 815: Economic Development of Organizations
    - **Select three of the following electives for concentration (9 credits):**
      - PHD 803: Leadership and Spirituality
      - PHD 812: Leadership and Communication Theories
      - PHD 814: Seminar in Organizational Law
      - PHD 818: Federal, State and Local Government Relations
      - PHD 820: Current Issues in Philanthropy and Organizational Development
      - PHD 821: Organizational Policy and Finance
  - **Required courses for Educational Leadership (9 cr.):**
    - PHD 731: Advanced Supervision and Leadership Theory
    - PHD 807: Curriculum, Culture and Instructional Leadership
    - PHD 825: Educational Policy and Leadership
    - **Select three of the following electives for concentration (9 credits):**
      - PHD 821: Organizational Policy and Finance
      - PHD 822: Informational Technology and Organizational Effectiveness
      - PHD 824: Personnel and Human Resource in Educational Organizations
      - PHD 830: Current Issues in Education
      - PHD 832: Law, Advocacy and the Educational Institution

**Qualifying Exam** (academic plan registration number PHD 900) **Dissertation** (12 credits, academic plan registration numbers PHD 910, 912, 914, 916-Students must complete Qualifying Candidacy Examinations (commonly called the Comprehensive Exam) before registering for the dissertation.

**Dissertation Defense** (academic plan registration number PHD 980)

## **Course Descriptions**

*PHD 701: Advanced Research Colloquium* (6 credits). This initial course for the doctoral program provides an overview of research designs and methodological approaches commonly encountered in research. The course provides a systematic approach to the scientific method as it is used in research in organizations with human participants, including critical reviews of literature, ethics, hypothesis testing, reliability and validity, sampling, research design, observational and self-report methods, and selected issues in data analysis. Note: The Appendix describes the Institutional Review Board and the procedures required for conducting research with human participants.

*PHD 704: Quantitative Research: Design and Analysis* (3 credits). A companion to Qualitative Research Methodologies, this course is designed to help students develop proficiency in quantitative analysis for interpreting social and organizational data. Includes experimental, quasi-experimental, and several multivariate designs as well as critical analysis of quantitative studies and an examination of the ethics involved in research. Appropriate statistical techniques are discussed, critiqued, and applied. The course will enable students to develop the ability to recognize valid data and valid evidence within the context of decision making within organizations.

*PHD 706: Leadership: Advanced Systems Theory and Research* (3 credits). The course content includes a critical analysis of the theoretical constructs in contemporary leadership. Attention is devoted to the study of organizational improvement, with an emphasis on the theories regarding how individuals and group skills interact to implement and manage dynamic systemic change. Structural, human resources, political and symbolic perspective on leadership are examined. Theoretical perspectives of leadership are studied in the context of the research from which they emerged.

*PHD 709: Organizational Analysis: Culture, Theory and Change Strategies* (3 credits). This course examines the theories and research regarding organizational cultures and change processes. Students examine organizations using organizational diagnosis and development tools in an effort to support leaders as they transform their organizations into highly performing entities. Students study organizational culture and leader-follower interaction as they develop a change model using constructs from existing, as well as emerging, research to explain the behaviors and events in an organizational setting. Case studies and simulations are included to enhance the analysis of emerging forms of educational, corporate and community development and improvement.

*PHD 710: Qualitative Research: Design and Analysis* (3 credits). A companion to Quantitative Research Methodologies, this course is designed to develop proficiency in collecting, analyzing and reporting qualitative data, using a variety of qualitative tools. Included will be ethnography, research interviews, content analysis, and other qualitative research designs. Attention will be given to their history, traditions, conceptual bases and justifications. In addition, the course includes the critical analysis of qualitative studies with an emphasis on ethical considerations and social justice and the political issues that impact research in organizations. Case studies, phenomenological studies, participant observation, unstructured life histories and emerging theories are explored and analyzed.

*PHD 711: Moral and Ethical Foundations of Decision Making* (3 credits). A study of the theories of ethical decision making is combined with the critical analysis of case studies that focus on the role that leaders play in shaping the vision, mission, and activities of organizations. Special emphasis is placed on the tactics, techniques, and skills needed to solve problems, as well as to address external threats. Students gain insights about their values and refine their concepts about leadership. The course is also designed to help students study the importance of systematic reform of political, economic, and social services, and society in general

*PHD 724: Theories in Organizational Structure and Strategic Leadership* (3 credits). The course content focuses on economic, political and legislative issues impacting contemporary organizations and their structure. Emphasis is on the organizational level of analysis on topics including job design, organization structure and design, and inter- and intra-organizational processes and influences, as well as the role of the leader as a strategic manager.

*PHD 725: Leadership: Diversity and Social Justice in Complex and Global Organizations* (3 credits). This course investigates the increasingly prominent issues surrounding diversity and the cultural, social, economic, and political forces that underlie conflicts in our communities. The course examines the historical experience of women and marginalized groups in the special circumstances they face in modern society, and the impact of government policies on their position. Special emphasis is placed on the role of the leader in organizations that are addressing the needs of a diverse workforce and facing the challenges of a global economy. Strategies for improving interpersonal relationships and developing communities are to be explored.

*PHD 727: Developing Human Resources in Organizations* (3 credits). Course content focuses on contemporary research on employment issues as they relate to theories in organizational studies, culture and labor economics. This course analyzes these issues from both the individual and organizational level of analysis. Included is the role of the leader as they influence others—subordinates, peers, superiors, clients, boards, owners, regulators, pressure groups, media and others. Emphasis is placed on addressing the diversity among individuals as well as the legal requirements for promoting equity and building capacity.

*PHD 729: Welfare Politics and Leadership with Community Organizations* (3 credits). This course evaluates the impact of the socioeconomic and political environment on formulation and implementation of social welfare policies both past and present. Special interest groups and political movements will also be addressed as they influence the community leader within organizations. The context of political change/political action as well as the changing nature of the concept of welfare for community leaders will be examined. The relationship between policy and leadership will be a focus of this course addressing social injustice in cross-cultural settings.

*PHD 731: Advanced Supervision and Leadership Theory* (3 credits). This course is an investigation of the research in the theories, purposes and effects of supervision and evaluation in educational settings. Supervisory models are explored, with a focus on approaches that involve teachers as members of collegial units. Imbedded in the course content will be analysis of leadership styles as related to supervisory practices.

*PHD 801: Negotiations and Conflict Resolution for Contemporary Leaders* (3 credits). This course explores the theories, policies and approaches required for conducting successful negotiations and resolving conflicts for education, community and corporate leaders. The content includes legislation, legal issues, and alternatives to litigation. It enhances leaders' involvement in the dispute resolution process, and facilitates access to justice as central to the role of a contemporary leader. The impact of collective bargaining on negotiations in the public sector is discussed. Current research findings are integrated as support for various approaches in conflict resolution. Students participate in a series of increasingly complex cases in which they assume the roles of arbitrators and key stakeholders.

*PHD 803: Leadership and Spirituality* (3 credits). This course is based on the foundation that spiritual development is essential to human development. This course emphasizes the importance of leaders awakening their own spirit in management and leadership. Students will analyze theoretical and philosophical perspectives on spirituality and how those perspectives apply to the workplace.

*PHD 805: Development and Evaluation of Organizational Policies and Programs* (3 credits). This course addresses development, evaluation design, execution, and assessment of policies and programs at federal,

state, local and organizational levels. The course focuses on various theories of policy analysis including formative to summative approaches. Policy-making structures will be identified and the underlying influences of socio-economic and political context of policy evaluation.

*PHD 807: Curriculum, Culture and Instructional Leadership* (3 credits). The course content explores the major curriculum theories and their relationship to planning, improvement and evaluation of school programs. The current literature and research on strategies for affecting curriculum innovation and change are examined and analyzed. An examination of the impact of current cultural influences both internal and external to the educational organization will be included.

*PHD 812: Leadership and Communication* (3 credits). This course focuses on communication styles of leaders. Students examine various theories of effective internal and external organizational communication. Exploration of the various organizational structures that impact communication will be reviewed.

*PHD 814: Seminar in Organizational Law* (3 credits). This course provides an in-depth analysis of the effects of legal forces on the objectives and operations of for profit and not-for-profit organizations, churches, schools and businesses. Policies that impact leadership and decision-making are analyzed using current case studies. Emphasis is placed on vulnerabilities and the appropriate techniques of managing exposure risks. Contemporary issues relating to governmental regulations, employment issues, and human resource policies faced by leaders in cross-cultural settings are explored.

*PHD 815: Economic Development of Organizations* (3 credits). This course explores the application of economic principles to the study of policy and to the solution of economic problems in complex organizations. Included are discussions of the major economic theories and their relationship to leadership decision-making in the corporate, not-for-profit, and public policy arenas. This course is designed to identify and analyze factors that contribute to the successful economic development of organizations. Major topics include risk assessment and management, leadership skills, sources of funding, and the economic policies that enhance the development of organizations. Case studies of successful and unsuccessful economic development of organizations will be analyzed.

*PHD 818: Federal, State and Local Relations* (3 credits). Federal, State and Local Relations is designed to help aspiring leaders understand and appreciate the governmental, regulatory and political processes involved in achieving positive relationships and outcomes with federal, state and local agencies and personnel.

*PHD 820: Current Issues in Philanthropy and Organizational Development* (3 credits). Philanthropy will be viewed from a number of perspectives ranging from that of the individual to that of the corporation and foundation. The course will explore the relationship of these factors and their collective impact on the not-for-profit organizations that benefit. A primary focus of the course will be to examine the ethical and legal issues of philanthropy, the professionalism of fundraising and current and future trends. The purpose is to establish an understanding of the complexities of philanthropy and philanthropic organizations and how they relate to the individual's experience within the for-profit and not-for-profit world.

*PHD 821: Organizational Policy and Finance* (3 credits). This course examines the role of leadership through fiscal policy development. Emphasis is focused on the analysis and development of effective fiscal leadership approaches. Included is an examination of the role of the financial manager in a modern corporate organization. Topics include: time, value of money, financial analysis, risk analysis, financial forecasting, cost of capital, stock and bond valuation modes, capital budgeting, and investment decisions under conditions of uncertainty.

*PHD 822: Informational Technology and Organizational Effectiveness* (3 credits). This course examines the impact of information technology on the management, communication, and instructional systems in educational organizations. Students explore the current literature and research on the effective implementation of information technology in schools and school districts.

*PHD 824: Personnel and Human Resources in Educational Organizations* (3 credits). This is a course designed to provide prospective educational administrators with a broad overview of personnel administration, which is concerned with the employment, staff evaluation, development, utilization and general welfare of professional and non-exempt staff. Examination of diversity among individuals, interpersonal relationships and legal requirements for promoting equity are included in this course.

*PHD 825: Educational Policy and Leadership* (3 credits). This course is a critical examination of the current issues in educational policy making. Students explore the role of participants and the procedures used in the development of public policies that effect educational organizations. The course addresses issues such as the rights and responsibilities of teachers, limits of democratic authority, and equality of educational opportunity. Empirical data will be used to review and evaluate the impact of external policies on the educational organization and the role of the leader.

*PHD 828 U. S. Presidents as Leaders* (3 credits). In this course, the biographies of four presidents are critiqued with four primary objectives: To appreciate the qualities of observation, reflection and verbal expression that distinguish a biographical account of a leader; to appreciate the elements of bias, mythmaking and unconscious selection that frame our understandings of leaders; to practice the solid empirical research necessary to *approach* objectivity in analyzing leaders; to discuss the importance of context in making a leader.

*PHD 830: Current Issues in Education* (3 credits). The content of this course focuses on the complex political, societal, economic, and global issues that impact schools and districts. Students explore issues such as diversity, federal accountability legislation, inclusion, unions, gender equity, comparative education and social justice. The role and responsibility of the educational institution in promoting equal opportunity will be examined.

*PHD 832: Law, Advocacy and the Educational Institution* (3 credits). This course provides an in-depth analysis of the effects of legal forces on the objectives and operations within educational organizations. Policies that impact leadership and decision-making are analyzed using current case studies. Emphasis is placed on vulnerabilities and the appropriate techniques of managing exposure risks. Contemporary issues relating to governmental regulations, employment issues, and human resource policies faced by leaders in cross-cultural settings are explored. Processes for advocacy within the political arena are analyzed and examined.

*PHD 851: Instrument Design and Analysis* (3 credits). The course presents the major concepts in evaluating and designing a variety of instruments, including reliability and validity, writing and editing of items, scoring and weighting procedures, and item selection methods. The use of ANOVA, multiple regression, and factor analysis will be included.

*PHD 853: Advanced Quantitative Research: Design and Analysis* (3 credits). This course will concentrate on univariate and multivariate analyses, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, analysis of covariance and various factorial analysis designs. The general linear model and post hoc analysis will be examined. Focus will be placed on understanding these approaches and how to implement them for individual research questions and problems.

*PHD 855: Advanced Qualitative Research: Design and Analysis* (3 credits). Building upon the knowledge and experience acquired in *Qualitative Research: Design and Analysis*, this course will prepare students to conduct more advanced qualitative research, including structural analysis, ethnographic interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and the repertory grid.

*PHD 875: Community Based Research Project*: The purpose of this course is to give students an opportunity to serve as leaders with their community while doing meaningful research while working toward a PhD in Leadership at Alvernia University. Students are encouraged to select a challenging project that addresses a community need. Students are encouraged to seek a faculty advisory with expertise in a relevant field to serve as a participant or mentor.

*PHD 900: Qualifying Exam*: Each student is required to pass a comprehensive examination that will reflect the student's mastery of course content and research practices. Students must have completed all the required course work or be registered for their remaining courses, prior to this qualifying examination process. This exam will be graded on a pass/fail basis and students will be notified in writing regarding the results of this exam. A passing grade must be achieved before permission is granted to engage in the formal dissertation process. Students may register for the first three credits of their dissertation during the semester they complete their qualifying exam with the permission of the Director of the doctoral program. To prepare for the qualifying examination students should keep a running bibliography of materials from courses and additional resources relevant to the student's area of focus in the format appropriate for their discipline. The bibliography should be organized into the following three broad areas: (1) research, (2) leadership, and (3) the specific area of student's concentration.

The faculty will have the responsibility for selecting the qualifying exam questions and grading the student's performance. A recommendation will be made to the director of the Doctor of Philosophy program regarding the ability of the student to proceed to their dissertation. The Director will inform the student of the outcome of the qualifying examination.

*PHD 910: Dissertation- Preparation of the Proposal*: Students will prepare their dissertation proposal for approval by the committee. Students will not be cleared to register for research course(s) until an approved proposal with original committee signatures is submitted to the Ph.D. Program office.

*PHD 912: Dissertation- Research*: These courses provide the student with an opportunity to dedicate all of their time for dissertation research and writing. Students should work with their committee to establish goals and measurable outcomes to monitor progress. It is recommended that students register for one research course per semester (it is necessary to seek approval from the dissertation chair to register for 912 and 914 simultaneously). Only students who are prepared to write the final sections of their dissertation will be cleared to register for 916.

*PHD 914/PHD 980: Dissertation- Analysis, Writing and Defense*: Students will complete their dissertation work in preparation for the defense during this course. When the chair and student agree, the student will be cleared to register for 980—the defense. Students who successfully defend must then submit an approved dissertation with original committee signatures to the Ph.D. Program office. To graduate, students must demonstrate that they have also submitted a properly formatted dissertation for *UMI Dissertation Publishing* and a bound copy for library access.

**Dissertation:** The dissertation is the culmination of the doctoral program and as such must attest to a high degree of scholarly competence for students. Students will advance after approval of the dissertation topic and successful completion of qualifying examinations. The research for the dissertation must be submitted to the University's Institutional Review Board, if appropriate, for approval. The dissertation must report, in an accepted scholarly style, an original investigation of a research problem or theory of significance in the student's area of concentration. The final product will demonstrate the candidate's ability to conduct original qualitative, quantitative or mixed research design in an area related to leadership in an educational, public, or private organization. The academic plan registration number for dissertation defense is PHD 980.

## **Student Services**

### **Bookstore (610-796-8250)**

Textbooks and supplies are sold in the bookstore, which is located in the Student Center. Cash, check, money order, or credit card is accepted for payment. Students who wish to purchase books with financial aid must gain pre-approval by e-mail or by visiting the Billing Office. Students may also order books on-line at [www.efollett.com](http://www.efollett.com) and will receive an e-mail when books are ready to be picked up. Satellite site students are encouraged to purchase books on-line so the books can be delivered to the site by bookstore personnel. In addition, Alvernia University clothing, novelties, cards, postage stamps, snacks, diploma frames, and a selection of personal items are available for purchase at the bookstore.

### **Career Services (610-796-8225)**

The Career Services Office assists students in all phases of educational decision-making and occupational planning. Resources and staff are available in self-assessment, career exploration, resume writing, and job placement. Services include a career library of books, pamphlets, brochures, catalogs, and other resources to assist graduate students in the information-gathering stages of the career planning process. The Career Services Office is located in Bernardine Hall, room 1104.

### **The Center for Academic Advancement**

The Center for Academic Advancement includes tutorial services, a writing lab, academic testing, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations coordination, and internship search assistance. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the services provided by the Center. Evening hours are available.

### **Information Technology (610-796-8411)**

The Information Technology (IT) Department is located on the second floor of the Library and is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. IT maintains all university-owned computers and administers the University network. Students must obtain a network user ID and password from IT by calling or visiting. The department will also assist students with connection to the University network, problems with network or e-mail accounts, or other questions relating to the use of technology in the educational environment. Labs for student use are available in Bernardine Hall and the Library. Computers are also available at the satellite sites for student use.

### **Library (610-796-8223)**

The Dr. Frank A. Franco Library supports the curriculum of Alvernia University with a growing collection of information resources, providing books and periodicals, non-print materials, and a wide range of information services. Alvernia University students are able to access the collection of electronic databases from all computers on the University network. Information on access to the University network from computers off-campus is available for students at the Library Circulation Desk. The Library provides free interlibrary loan services should students require materials from other libraries. Students must obtain an Alvernia ID card from the Public Safety Office to access library resources.

**Photo Identification Card (610-796-8350)**

Every student must possess a valid Alvernia photo identification card (ID). This card should be carried at all times and is not transferable. Students must present their ID to utilize dining and library services and to gain admission to sporting and social activities on campus. ID photos are taken throughout the year at the Public Safety Office in the Student Center. Arrangements are made for satellite site students to receive an ID card. Lost or stolen ID cards must be reported to Public Safety and may be replaced for a nominal fee.

**Student Parking (610-796-8350)**

Students must register and receive a permit for all motor vehicles from the Public Safety Office, which is located in the Student Center. Student parking is available in designated areas with the proper permit. Campus security personnel enforce parking regulations. Violations will result in fines or in the revocation of parking privileges. A copy of the full parking policy may be obtained from the Public Safety Office. Students at the satellite sites should make certain they have obtained the proper parking permit for their site if necessary.

**Contact Information**

Students are responsible for providing up-to-date contact information to Financial Aid, the Registrar's office and the Ph.D. Program Office. Students should also check their University e-mail account on a regular basis to insure that they do not miss important communications. **The Program and the University are not responsible for information that is not received as a result of a student's outdated contact information or a student's failure to check their University e-mail account.**

## TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

Graduate Division Reception Area 610-796-8228  
Upland Center (fax) 610-796-8367  
540 Upland Ave.  
Reading, PA 19611  
1-888-ALVERNIA

### **Ph.D. Office at Upland Center, Suite 223:**

**Ph.D. Program Office 610-790-1924**  
**(fax) 610-790-1927**  
**Ph.D. Program Director 610-796-8249**

### Main Campus Offices:

Bookstore 610-796-8250  
Campus Shuttle 610-796-8350  
Career Services 610-796-8225  
Event Management 610-796-8210  
Financial Aid Office 610-796-8356  
Health and Wellness Center 610-796-8334  
Information Technology 610-796-8411  
Library 610-796-8223  
Mission and Ministry Office 610-796-5509  
Physical Education Center 610-796-8276  
Public Safety 610-796-8350  
Registrar's Office 610-796-8201  
Student Billing Office 610-796-8319

## **Federal Policies**

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

Alvernia University complies with all applicable federal, state, and local nondiscrimination laws in the administration of its educational programs and services and in its employment relationships. We are committed to equality. Continued and responsible growth of our University results from enhancing and utilizing the abilities of all individuals to the fullest extent practicable within the framework of our environment. All employment decisions advance the principal of equal employment opportunity. In addition, personnel activities such as recruitment, interviewing, selection, promotion, training, benefits, transfers, layoffs, demotion and discipline are administered according to good business practices, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, Executive Orders concerning equal employment opportunity, and Equal Opportunity Commission regulations and guidelines, all of which require that all persons have equal employment opportunities and strictly prohibit discriminatory and harassment practices.

The Human Resources Office is charged with the responsibility to maintain the necessary programs, records, and reports to comply with all government regulations, and with the goals and objectives of the equal employment opportunity program. Any employee or applicant of this university who feels that he or she has been discriminated against in employment or recruiting should contact the Human Resources Office to pursue the proper discrimination complaint procedure.

### **Harassment Policy**

Alvernia University strives to maintain an environment where all employees and students are free from harassment. The University will not tolerate harassment of any type. No employee or student will be discriminated or retaliated against for bringing alleged issues of harassment to the attention of the University, and employees and students are encouraged to do so. The University has a committee that will examine EEO issues should they arise. The participation of women and minorities in management by employment and promotion will continue to be emphasized so that they may be given the opportunity to contribute to the success of the University. All employees of Alvernia University will continue to approach this responsibility with the sensitivity and human concern they have demonstrated in the past.

## **Academic Policies**

Alvernia will assess the candidate's strengths and academic potential using information provided by the student. Applicants for degree programs will be admitted to full, pending, or non-degree status as described below:

### **Full Graduate Status as a Doctoral Student**

Full status includes submission of all required documentation, including official documents verifying the earned baccalaureate and master's degree are from an accredited university or university. Application materials are reviewed and program acceptance granted by the Director of the Ph.D. Program and the faculty in the selected program.

Students with full graduate status must respond to a written offer of admission that specifies the date of entrance into the doctoral program. Students must notify the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office of their intent to accept, reject, or change the effective date of entrance. The admission letter will serve as a permit to register for courses. In most cases, students will be offered admission for a five-year period.

## **Graduate Assistantships**

A Graduate Assistantship is a non-tenurable, half-time academic appointment, which is available through a variety of office and departments across campus including academic departments, research centers, administrative offices, and athletics.

While the official title “Graduate Assistant” is used in all university documents to describe the various types of assistantships, for record keeping purposes Graduate Assistants are referred to as Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, Administrative Graduate Assistants, Graduate Interns, and Athletic Assistants.

Graduate Assistants’ primary concern should be with his or her individual assignment within the hiring department and with his or her academic course load. Therefore, it is important to know the policies, regulations, and benefits that apply to graduate assistantships. The assistant will also want to become familiar with the academic regulations of the University, and of their department.

For additional information, please contact Financial Aid.

## **Probation/Dismissal**

Students are required to earn a B or better in Advanced Research Colloquium, the first course, in order to continue in the program. A student with full graduate status is immediately notified that he or she is on probation after receiving a grade less than 3.25 in any one course. Any student with full graduate status receiving a grade point average less than 3.25 in two courses is notified of possible academic dismissal pending a Graduate Academic Council decision.

The Graduate Academic Council has approved assigning of numeric equivalency to the following graduate grading scale:

A	4.0	94 – 100
A-	3.7	90 - 93
B +	3.3	87 - 89
B	3.0	83 - 86
B -	2.7	80 - 82
C	2.0	73 - 79
F		72 and below

Cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable. Breaches of academic honesty include, but are not limited to, copying another student’s work, plagiarizing the published work of another, facilitating the dishonesty of another student, and cheating on an examination. All cases of academic dishonesty involving Ph.D. students will be referred to the Dean and Provost with a recommendation for dismissal. Additional information can be found in the *School of Graduate and Adult Education Student Handbook*.

## **Dismissal for Non-Academic Reasons**

Students may be dismissed from the graduate program for the following non-academic reasons:

1. Failure to respect the rights of others as evidenced by verbal, physical, or mental abuse of others, harassment of any kind, assault, or any action which endangers the rights of others.
2. Failure to abide by federal, state, and local laws which prohibit the use, possession, and sale of illegal substances.
3. Failure to adhere to the various professional codes of ethics, such as the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics.

4. Failure to function appropriately within the site placement settings, internships, or practicum, as documented through evaluations by on-site supervisor and academic adviser

Only the Provost may dismiss a student from the University for non-academic reasons. Students may appeal such a dismissal to the President.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

*The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* is understood and carried out. Therefore, anyone covered by the ADA who has specific needs will receive reasonable accommodations. Accommodations must be requested before the third week of class and/or by the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of a MOD class or the second meeting of a Saturday class, students are required to inform Jennifer Reimert, Assistant Dean of Academic Support Services, School of Graduate and Adult Education, of requested accommodations. Following a review of the student's IEP and/or 504 and/or additional appropriate assessment, Ms. Reimert will create accommodation letters for the student to deliver to his or her instructors.

### **Institutional Review Board**

Graduate students wishing to conduct research involving human participants are required to make application to the Institutional Review Board. All forms can be obtained on the Alvernia University website. Progress reports must be filed for all approved projects. Researchers are advised to consult <http://206.102.88.10/ohsr/site> and <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp> for information regarding national guidelines on human participant research. **Approval of the research by the Institutional Review Board Committee does not absolve the researcher(s) from the responsibility to engage in ethical research, and respecting the rights of participants.**

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Federal regulations require that institutions limit Title IV federal financial aid to those students who, according to institutional policy, are maintaining normal academic progress toward their degree objective. The primary interest of the regulations is to have reasonable, satisfactory progress standards established by institutions to assure the best and most equitable use of Title IV Student Financial Assistance funds. Alvernia University has prepared the following policy in accordance with these regulations. Title IV programs include Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford Loans.

### **Enrollment Status and Academic Year**

Alvernia University's definition of an academic year for the graduate programs consists of two fifteen-week semesters, which total 30 weeks for an academic year.

- Full-time status at Alvernia University is defined as being enrolled in at least 6 credit hours per semester.
- Half-time status at Alvernia University is defined as being enrolled in at least 3 credit hours per semester.

### **Continuous Enrollment and Leaves of Absence for Ph.D. Students**

In order to remain in good standing, and to avoid registration blocks, a student must be continuously enrolled each semester from the semester of matriculation until graduation. If for some reason, a student is not able to be registered, a leave of absence may be requested by submitting a request to the Director of the Ph.D. Program for approval by the Dean of Graduate Programs. A student may not be granted a leave of absence for more than four semesters. The degree completion clock is five years with two approved one year extensions. A leave of absence will not extend this time frame. Students are required to register for 12 dissertation credits for the three semesters following the comprehensive exam (typically, 3, 6, and 3 credits respectively), and at least one semester hour is required to maintain enrollment thereafter.

## Academic Progress Policy

The University will measure a student's progress in increments of one academic year in length unless the student was enrolled during the spring only. The standards, which limit a student's financial aid eligibility, will contain a minimum of successfully completed credits and a minimum Grade Point Average. Non-credit courses cannot be counted toward enrollment status or academic progress.

- a. Grade Point Average (GPA): A minimum GPA requirement of 3.25 must be met by doctoral students. A student enrolled at half-time status must complete 6 credit hours per academic year while a full-time student must complete 12 credit hours per academic year. The degree completion clock is five years with two approved one year extensions.
- b. Grades of 'A' through 'C' will be considered as credits toward academic progress.
- c. Grades of 'F', 'I', 'X' 'W' and repeat courses will not be considered as credits toward progress, however will be counted as attempted credits.

## Maximum Time Frame

### Credits Required for Degree Program

### Time Period for Completion

0-30 Credits	3 Years
31-40 Credits	4 Years
41-50 Credits	5 Years
51-63 Credits	7 Years

## Lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress

The Financial Aid Office will notify the graduate student of his or her financial aid suspension status as soon as information on academic progress is available from the Registrar's Office. In the event that a student fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined in this policy, he or she will be notified by the Financial Aid Office in writing that his or her aid has been suspended.

Lack of progress may be a result of:

- Incomplete Grades. The student must satisfactorily complete the required coursework and notify the Financial Aid Office in writing that the grade has been changed to a grade of 'C' or above. Financial Aid will then be reinstated.
- Low GPA or number of credits. When the additional coursework is completed the student must notify the Financial Aid Office in writing that the coursework has been successfully completed. If credits are taken at another university, the student must complete the proper forms with the Office of the School of Graduate and Adult Education and notify the Financial Aid Office when the credits have been successfully transferred to Alvernia University (transfer courses have no affect on GPA). Financial aid will then be reinstated.
- Mitigating Circumstances. If lack of progress is a result of mitigating and/or unusual circumstances and a student wishes to receive financial aid for the next semester, he or she must appeal the decision in writing to the Director of Financial Aid. The student will be notified of the outcome of this decision in writing. If a student is placed on financial aid probation, he or she must meet the terms as outlined in the letter of probation to continuing receiving financial aid.

## **Appeals**

The appeal process will proceed as follows:

- a. The student will indicate in writing to the Director of Financial Aid his or her reasoning why aid should not be terminated.
- b. The Director of Financial Aid will review the appeal and determine whether financial aid probation will be approved. The student will be notified in writing of the decision.
- c. Non-matriculated students may not receive financial aid. Students must appeal to the Dean of the School of Graduate and Adult Education for reinstatement to degree-seeking status. If the appeal is approved, financial aid is not automatically reinstated; students must then follow step (a). above.

## **Evaluation of Progress/Mitigating Circumstances**

The evaluation of satisfactory academic progress will occur each semester as required by federal financial aid guidelines and the Financial Aid Office. A student's academic standing may be reinstated by the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office, but the student financial aid may not necessarily be reinstated. The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to review individual cases of unsatisfactory progress to determine if extenuating circumstances mitigate in favor of continuing the student's financial aid eligibility. These circumstances may include, but are not limited to: medical problems; death of a parent, spouse, or close family member; separation or divorce involving an immediate family member; or a major change in employment or employment responsibilities. Any procedure which serves to limit the student's aid eligibility will take into consideration a degree of sensitivity to individual circumstances.

## **Qualifying Exams**

### **Qualifying Examination Purpose**

The purpose of the qualifying examination is to determine whether or not the student has learned, analyzed, synthesized and evaluated subject content in the core program as well as his or her specific area of interest. It also tests the student's ability to engage in research. The student must be able to integrate and apply the results of academic coursework in the areas of research, leadership, and a specific area of concentration. The qualifying examination is developed by faculty teaching in the program and is based on course content as defined by course syllabi. The Director of the Ph.D. Program will review all questions in order to generate a variety of quality questions for all students. To prepare for the exam students should keep a running bibliography, materials from courses, and additional resources relevant to their area of focus in the format appropriate for their discipline. These resources should be organized around the three areas: research, leadership, and the area concentration.

### **Qualifying Examination Process**

The qualifying examination will be administered upon successful completion of 45 credits. Exams are administered in November (year 3 ½ for cohorts). Successful students should then select a dissertation committee and register for their dissertation work in the following spring semester. In addition to the qualifying exam policies described here, students should also review sections dealing with the following:

- Continuous Enrollment
- Student Publication and Presentation
- Dissertation policies

### **Qualifying Exam Part I**

Part one is a written exam and will be administered from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM on the first Saturday of November. Only in extenuating circumstances will make-up exams be approved by the Program Director. This will be a sit-down exam containing questions generated by Faculty teaching in the program. The questions will be organized into three sections (research, leadership and professional concentration), and further randomized so that not all exams contain the same questions. There may be anywhere from three to six questions, but the student must answer one question in each of the three general areas.

To begin the exam, the student will pick up and sign for a packet containing the qualifying examination questions. The student has 5 hours in which to formulate and write the answers to the questions. Computers and printers will be available. To end the exam, students submit their answers to the exam proctor in hard-copy and electronic format, and then sign for the packet containing directions to Part II described in the next section.

The Director of the Ph.D. Program will then code the exams and remove student names for grading. Two members of the program Faculty will evaluate a student's exam using the following criteria:

1. Organization: Evidence of a logical, coherent and meaningful consistency in the structure of the response. Evidence of a planned presentation of major and minor points with a clear flow from beginning to the conclusion.
2. Completeness: Evidence of having covered all parts of the examination questions in the response that reflect depth of thought and core concepts.
3. Relevance: Maintenance of pointed and clear relationships in the response to the examination; avoidance of digression from main points of the examination; avoidance of filler material: avoidance of redundant material.
4. Cogency: Depth of insight and understanding exhibited in response; power of the performance, penetration of thought and argument stated; precision of facts and knowledge displayed; strength of logic or positions or propositions.
5. Documentation: Evidence of reliance on a broad base of knowledge and experience pertinent to the question, which comes from pertinent and scholarly inquiry and the accumulated experience of others as well as that of the respondent.
6. Citation: Appropriate citation, that is giving credit for the work of others within responses.
7. Self-Directedness: Indication of ability to engage in independent research.

### **Qualifying Exam Part II**

The case analysis (hard-copy and electronic format) is due in the Director's office (UC Room 223) by 11:50 AM the second Saturday of November. The Director will then code the papers and remove student names for grading. Each student's case analysis will then be reviewed along with their written exam by two professors that teach in the program.

This case analysis should be a conceptual synthesis with proposed action steps to address a dilemma presented in the case. The analysis should take the form of a short paper (10 page maximum, including a cover page and bibliography, 12 point font, APA format). Successful cases demonstrate the ability to apply concepts studied in the core doctoral courses for each area of concentration, and the ability to synthesize, organize and express a course of action to address a dilemma illustrated in the case.

Students will be advised of their scores on both sections of the exam by the first Saturday of December.

The examination is graded as Pass with distinction (P+), Pass (P), or Fail (F). All parts of the examination must receive a grade of Pass (P) in order to pass the qualifying examination. If the student does not pass one or more of the questions, he or she will be notified to arrange a meeting with one or more members of the graduate faculty to defend areas of deficiency. Those students that do not successfully defend their answers will be required to contact the Ph.D. Program Director to arrange a retake of the failing area(s). Any student who fails the required "retake sections" of the qualifying examination is ineligible for admission to the doctoral candidacy and cannot continue his or her studies in the Ph.D. program.

### **Entrance into Candidacy**

Once the student has passed both parts of the qualifying examination, he or she is officially entered into candidacy. This means that the student is considered to have mastered a significant body of knowledge and has indicated an ability to do independent research. He or she is a candidate for the doctoral degree, with successful completion of the dissertation being the remaining requirement.

## Student Publications and Presentations

Doctoral students giving presentations, submitting publications, and so forth, may use Alvernia University doctoral student as part of the author credits. One may also list current employment. For example:

Jane Smith  
Vice-President, ABC Home Health  
Doctoral Student  
Alvernia University

Upon passing the qualifying examination and receiving approval for the dissertation proposal, one is officially entered into candidacy. This means that one is considered to have mastered a significant body of knowledge and has indicated an ability to do independent research, dissertation being the remaining requirement to be met.

Attaining the status of candidate does not entitle one to use the Ph.D. credential after one's name. **It is neither correct, nor permissible to use "Ph.D. candidate, Ph.D. (C.), or any other variation thereof as a credential.** One can and should make a statement that one is a Ph.D. candidate in the doctoral program at Alvernia University. For example:

Jane Smith  
Vice-President, ABC Home Health  
Doctoral Candidate  
Alvernia University

Second authorship or acknowledgement should be considered for a faculty member or peer when he or she has contributed to or strongly influenced your work.

## Dissertation Purpose

*"The dissertation is the beginning of one's scholarly work, not its culmination. Dissertation research should provide students with hands-on, directed experience in the primary research methods of the discipline, and should prepare students for the type of research/scholarship that will be expected of them after they receive the degree." (p. 3)*

*"Regardless of the differences certainly and naturally existing among the various fields and disciplines of study, the dissertation must be an extended, coherent, written work or original research, demonstrating a doctoral candidate's comprehensive knowledge and mastery of methodological, historical, topical, empirical and theoretical issues relevant to the chosen research subject. It must be a significant contribution to scholarship." (p. 7)*

Council of Graduate Schools. (1991). *The role and nature of the doctoral dissertation*. Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools.

This section contains the policies and procedures that provide the organizing framework for the doctoral dissertation and the expectations for its completion. It is each student's responsibility to be clear in communications, to seek out faculty, to follow-up and to follow through.

The faculty will be available to guide, consult, teach, model, facilitate, push, encourage, introduce, make connections, provide support, critique, give constructive feedback, and help students to grow further as a self-directed learners.

All students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the contents of this section of the *Ph.D. Student Handbook*. This section on the *Dissertation Process* is an essential reference, and contains information on policies and procedures pertinent to the completion of your dissertation.

## **Dissertation Committee**

### ***Composition***

The student will work with his or her committee to develop a dissertation. The committee will assist the student in defining the research hypothesis and in designing the research study with attention to underlying concepts, theoretical constructs and analytic frameworks, and appropriate research design methods.

Near the end of the student's required academic coursework, he or she will have become familiar with most of the faculty through courses, conversations, and readings. The student should select a doctoral research committee chairperson from among the doctoral faculty. Each doctoral research committee will consist of 3 members and 1 or 2 readers. Additional committee members may be suggested at the discretion of the committee chairperson. One outside committee member may be selected with approval by the chair and the Ph.D. Program Director.

*The student will ask the prospective outside member to provide the committee chair and program director a resume and evidence that the following criteria have been met.*

1. must be a recognized individual practicing within the area of concentration or expertise related to the dissertation topic
2. must be able to articulate theoretical and/or practice aspects of the profession relative to the dissertation topic
3. must be able to demonstrate a high level of experience in the student's area of dissertation interest
4. is involved in professional development activities in an ongoing manner
5. is able to share knowledge and willing to participate in educational endeavors
6. must hold a terminal degree in the field of study relevant to the dissertation topic

A chairperson should be selected with care, with the intent that this individual will serve as doctoral research committee chair through to graduation. A good working relationship is necessary as the student and committee chairperson must make many decisions together. Committee members function as resources to the student, and can provide guidance and counseling in their areas of expertise.

Once the committee has been formulated, the student will complete and submit the *Dissertation Committee form* (available in the Director's Office) for approval by the Director of the Ph.D. Program. The Dean will send a letter of appointment to each committee member. Thereafter, any changes to the committee must be approved by the committee chairperson in consultation with the Program Director, but if the change is to the committee chairperson, approval must be granted by the Director of the Ph.D. Program.

### ***Responsibilities of the committee chair***

The committee chair serves as the student's primary research advisor and assumes primary responsibility for supervising the doctoral student's dissertation, in which role she or he:

1. helps the student and other members of the committee define roles
2. helps student to narrow research topic to something possible
3. helps assure research is meaningful and will add to the body of knowledge about the student's area of concentration
4. conducts the "proposal meeting" where the student presents the final draft proposal to all committee members for their approval and "sign-off"
5. sets up a regular schedule of meetings with the student

6. gives substantive and organized feedback on the research process
7. serves as the arbitrator and final determinate in areas of disagreement among committee members and/or between members and the student
8. conducts the student's oral defense and approves via signature

### ***Responsibilities of committee members***

Committee members serve on the student's dissertation committee, in which role they:

1. participate in the "proposal meeting" and approve via signature
2. offer expertise in methodology or topic area
3. give substantive and organizational recommendations for sections for which they are the expert
4. read and approve final draft
5. participate in the oral defense and approve via signature

### ***Responsibilities of readers***

The Ph.D. Program Director in consultation with the Graduate Dean may select one or two readers to join a dissertation committee one month in advance of defense. The readers read the final draft of the dissertation in preparation for the defense. Readers participate in the oral defense process.

### ***Responsibilities of the Student***

The student should thoughtfully seek out appropriate faculty for his or her committee, and must make and keep appointments. The student has primary responsibility in consultation with the chairperson and committee for:

1. development of the dissertation proposal
2. submissions to the Institutional Review Board for approval in a timely fashion before the proposal is approved by the committee
3. seeking outside editorial and statistical/methodological assistance if needed
4. obtaining approval from the chairperson before making any changes in process or analysis
5. submitting drafts with copies to all committee members for feedback in accordance with established time-lines
6. preparing for the oral defense
7. preparing bound copies for the Alvernia University Library, Dissertation Abstracts, and the Ph.D. Program Library

## **DISSERTATION**

### ***Overview***

The dissertation is the culmination of the doctoral program and as such must attest to a high degree of scholarly competence for students. Students will advance after approval of the dissertation topic and successful completion of the qualifying examinations. The research for the dissertation (if required) must be submitted and approved by the Alvernia University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The dissertation must report, in an accepted scholarly style, an original investigation of a research problem or theory of significance in the student's area of concentration. The final product will demonstrate the candidate's ability to conduct original qualitative, quantitative or mixed method research design in an area related to leadership in an educational, public or private organization. Student participation in dissertation seminars and periodic meetings will facilitate the development and progression of their dissertation.

The student will work with his or her committee to develop the dissertation topic. The committee will assist the student in defining the research hypothesis and in designing the research study with attention to underlying concepts, theoretical constructs and analytical frameworks, and appropriate research design methods. Candidates will be cautioned that all work on the dissertation is to be original and proposed exclusively by the candidate.

Candidates will be required to first defend their research question and proposed methodology through a presentation to their dissertation committee. Second, if utilizing human subjects, or protected information, the candidate must secure approval from the University's IRB concerning the ethical treatment of human subjects prior to initiating research. Third, the student will be required to present and defend their completed dissertation to his or her committee and the Alvernia University community at large. Students will receive one of the following grades for successfully defending their dissertation: pass, honors, or high honors. Bound copies of the dissertation will be submitted for publication to Dissertation Abstracts, the Doctoral Program and the Alvernia University Library.

### ***IRB Process***

Students who are utilizing human subjects, or protected information, must submit to the Alvernia University Institutional Review Board, a proposal to conduct the research as outlined in the Policies and Procedures of the Alvernia University Institutional Review Board (IRB). All students must consult with their advisor and the chair of the IRB to determine need for IRB approval to conduct research and to answer specific questions regarding the IRB process. It is the responsibility of the student to complete all of the necessary paperwork within the appropriate timeframes as outlined by the IRB and the committee chairperson. Failure to complete this process in a timely manner may result in delay of the student's academic progress. No research involving human subjects may commence without full approval to conduct such research by the IRB. Dissertation proposals will not be approved without evidence of IRB approval (or evidence that IRB approval is not required). Initiation of research without appropriate approval will be considered academic misconduct and will result in dismissal from the doctoral program.

### ***Proposal***

The proposal is a foundational expansion and finalization of your research idea. In the proposal, the student will present, explicitly, the final research question. A thorough literature review is present in the proposal and is utilized to justify the study and the methodology for study. Additionally, it will include the finalized methodology, including as appropriate, the specific sampling strategy, including the target sample size, the final form questionnaire (already piloted) or research tools, and the processes for analysis. The approved proposal becomes a contract between the student and the committee regarding the exact nature of the dissertation project. Once approved, the proposal cannot be altered without the agreement of all parties (including IRB as appropriate).

The proposal is negotiated between you and your committee that, at a minimum meets the following requirements:

1. It specifies a clear, mutable problem or opportunity to be solved.
2. It must identify the possible or probable causes of the problem
3. It must provide a brief, but critically analyzed review of the research and literature relevant to that problem
4. It must delineate specific research or evaluation procedures for assessing the effectiveness of that intervention.

All proposals for dissertation research must use the most current edition of the discipline recommended format, including typeface, spacing, margins, headings, references and citation style. The following format should be used for your dissertation proposal to ensure completeness and orderly development and organization. Students should utilize information provided to them in the core and advanced research courses to further clarify what comprises each of these topic areas. The proposal is limited to 15-20 pages, not including references and appendices.

1. Title Page
2. Introduction

- a. Statement of the problem
- b. Significance of the problem
  - i. Significance to society/community (more global view)
  - ii. Significance to the profession/discipline
- c. Purpose of the study: Aspect of the problem which you are interested
- d. Significance of addressing this problem stated in professional/discipline specific terminology
- e. Delimitations of the study
3. Selected Review of the Literature
  - a. What is known about the topic (develop own subheadings)
  - b. Cultural context (reflexivity issues if a qualitative study)
  - c. Conceptual background, theoretical background, constructs
  - d. Operational definitions
  - e. Summary and critique of what is known and unknown (student must connect to his or her own research)
  - f. Research question
  - g. Hypothesis (as) (if applicable)
4. Methods
  - a. Research design to be used
    - i. Rationale
    - ii. Threats and how they will be addressed
  - b. Subjects (Participants)
    - i. Number and how determined
    - ii. Inclusion criteria and how/why determined
    - iii. Exclusion criteria and how/why determined
    - iv. Characteristics
    - v. Recruitment procedure
    - vi. How will informed consent be obtained
  - c. Setting
  - d. Equipment
  - e. Independent and dependent variables operationalized
  - f. Instruments, measures and psychometric data, reliability, validity, trustworthiness
  - g. Procedures
5. References (only those that are cited in proposal)
6. Proposed Timeline for Dissertation Research Process
7. Appendices
  - a. Interview guides, checklists, surveys, etc.
  - b. Definition of terms here if not in selected review of literature

Once accepted by the chair as satisfactory, the student will distribute copies of the proposal to the members of his or her dissertation committee at least 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting of his or her committee. This meeting is conducted in person. During this conference, the student presents a brief oral integrated summary of the proposal, and discusses and answers questions posed to him or her about each area and its relation to his or her special area focus. The committee members provide feedback on the proposal. The need for any changes will be discussed with the student by the committee. Students may be asked to redefine areas of the proposal and/or re-write the proposal. The committee chair will work with the student to bring about a final proposal that is satisfactory to all. The chair will notify the student upon final approval of the proposal by the committee. Once the proposal is signed by all members of the committee, work begins and cannot be changed in any major way by the student or the committee.

### ***Dissertation Progression***

Once the student's dissertation committee and the IRB (if required) have approved the proposed research, the student may proceed with the research project. It is suggested that the student develops a timeline for completion, and within that schedule build considerable flexible time, as faculty will have responsibilities outside the dissertation committee as will the student.

### ***Dissertation Report Format and Contents***

The final report is a comprehensive account of the student's study and analysis designed to answer a specific research question, and propose new knowledge, or insight regarding the area of study. The dissertation is always written in past tense, as it describes what has been accomplished and achieved, relative to what the student set out to do. It is suggested that along the way, students submit to their chair and or committee members, draft copies of the dissertation in smaller subsections. It is the student's responsibility to proofread, check for style and grammar, examine for subject-verb agreement, tense agreement, and non-sexist language. Students are responsible for all editing and the services of a professional editor may be recommended prior to the required final editing. It will be the responsibility of the student to pay for such editing expenses if deemed necessary.

### ***Dissertation Components***

Each of the components that follow should be included in the final dissertation. Furthermore, these general guidelines for a dissertation should be observed:

1. Each chapter should stand alone (i.e. a person should be able to understand each chapter without having to read the entire body of the final report.
2. Tables and figures must be labeled so as to have meaning without text, and must be discussed within the body of the text.
3. The study should be able to be replicated.
4. Appropriate standards of inquiry (qualitative or quantitative) must be observed for the study or the discipline. This should include discussion of validity, bias, reliability, limitations, and a reader should know the 'power' of the study.

### ***Assembly of the Dissertation***

The dissertation should be assembled in the following order:

1. Title Page
2. Approval page
3. Abstract
4. Acknowledgements
5. Table of Contents
6. Table of Figures (if relevant)
7. Index of Tables (if relevant)
8. Chapter I: Introduction
9. Chapter II: Review of Related Literature
10. Chapter III: Methodology
11. Chapter IV: Results
12. Chapter V: Discussion
13. References
14. Appendices

### ***Oral Defense of Dissertation***

Upon acceptance of the draft copy by the committee, the student will be invited to defend his or her research and the conclusions and recommendations drawn from it. The defense must occur in person. The purpose of the defense is to ensure that one is thoroughly competent to articulate, explain and defend any and every aspect of the dissertation. The defense is the final presentation and clarification process among the student and his or her committee.

The student, in preparation for the defense, should be able to explain in detail the rationale for the study, the methodology, the results, interpretations, implications and recommendations. Additionally, the student should be prepared to critique his or her dissertation critically and answer questions relative to the research, or to hypothesize based on findings of the research. Furthermore, the student will be expected to examine his or her study in light of current knowledge and discuss contribution of the findings of this study to that knowledge base.

Upon completion of the defense, the committee will deliberate to determine the outcome of the dissertation. A unanimous approval vote with signatures by all committee members is required for the student to pass the defense requirement. Students are required to take all necessary steps to format the dissertation for submission to dissertation abstracts. It is required that students provide a copy of the dissertation with signatures for library access.

## **Registration**

The University reserves the right to change its admission, registration, graduation or financial requirements as necessary. Every effort will be made to provide advance information regarding such changes. Attendance at Alvernia is a privilege, not a right. By registering, the student concedes to the University the right to require his or her withdrawal. Request for withdrawal can be made at any time it is deemed necessary to safeguard the ideals of character and scholarship and to secure compliance with regulations.

## **Effective Catalog**

Graduate students are subject to the course requirements contained in the catalog that is in effect when they are accepted by Alvernia University. Students may request to follow the course requirements in the most recent catalog. Students who interrupt their schooling for more than one calendar year must reapply to the University and are subject to the requirements in the most recent catalog.

## **Academic Calendar**

The current Academic Calendar is available via the University website: [www.alvernia.edu/academics/calendar.htm](http://www.alvernia.edu/academics/calendar.htm). This key resource should be consulted for important dates and deadlines.

## **Course Schedule**

The School of Graduate and Adult Education publishes a two-year schedule (projections of course offerings) for Main Campus graduate courses. The University reserves the right to revise schedules in response to changes in student interest, enrollment demand, and faculty availability. The University also reserves the right to cancel any scheduled course for which there is insufficient enrollment. The current schedule may be found on the University's website via IQ Web. Additionally, the full two-year schedule for Main Campus is available by calling or visiting the Graduate Center.

## **Enrollment**

To enroll in courses, all students must complete the registration process. No student can register for another student or allow another person to register on the student's behalf. If a student registers during advance registration and then decides not to return to the University, it is the student's responsibility to notify the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office in writing prior to the beginning of classes to avoid charges. Registration dates can be found on the Academic Calendar. Information regarding tuition and course offerings is available from the Graduate Office.

## **Credits/Overloads**

Graduate students may register for a maximum of six credits per academic semester. Students are officially registered when tuition and charges for the semester have been paid or arrangements for payment have been made with the Billing Office.

## **Registration Changes**

Each of the following constitutes a registration change: adding or dropping a course or changing a course section; withdrawing from a course after the add/drop period; or auditing a course. Schedule Change Forms are obtained from the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office and must be filed with that office to complete the process.

- **Add/Drop Period.** The deadline to add or drop weeknight courses is 5:00 p.m. on Monday of the second week of classes. Students must drop any Saturday classes before the second class meeting. Students will not be permitted to add a Saturday class after the first meeting of the course. The academic calendar will indicate adjusted deadlines. The student must pick up and complete the schedule change form in the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office and obtain the signature of his or her adviser. Students receiving financial aid must notify the Financial Aid Office when adding or dropping a course.
- **Withdrawal After Add/Drop.** Withdrawal dates vary by academic term. Please consult the Academic Calendar via the University's website for the specific dates that apply to your courses. Withdrawal for all Saturday classes is required before the third class meeting. Discontinuing a course without a valid withdrawal results in a grade of 'F'. A student receiving financial aid must notify the Financial Aid Office of his or her withdrawal from a course. The instructor for the course involved and the student's academic adviser must sign the Schedule Change form. During this period, a 'W' will be placed on the student's official record.

## **Change of Concentration**

A student may change his or her major by obtaining written approval from his or her academic advisor. The Change of Major Form, obtained from the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office, is completed as directed and returned to the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office.

## **Repeat/Delete Option**

The repeat/delete option may be used when students have a grade of less than 'C' or have failed to meet the minimum grade required by a specific program. When a course is repeated for credit, the earlier grade remains on the student's permanent record and appears on all transcripts. The higher grade is used in computing the cumulative grade point average. The repeat/delete option may only be used in cases where both the original and repeated courses were earned at Alvernia; neither may be by correspondence or by study at another institution. Students may be required to use the repeat/delete option to fulfill the specific requirements found in the catalog descriptions for some programs. The repeat/delete option can only be utilized one time during the graduate program.

## **Transfer of Credit**

Students who have completed doctoral study in other programs may transfer a maximum of six doctoral credits into any Alvernia University Doctoral program. Transfer courses must be from an accredited university or college and the student must have earned a minimum grade of "B+" to receive transfer credit. The courses must be equivalent to appropriate courses in the doctoral program at Alvernia University. Transferred credits do not count towards the cumulative grade point average at Alvernia University. An official transcript indicating the grade received and a complete course description or syllabus must be forwarded to the Director of Doctoral Programs. After all the required information has been forwarded, transfer credits are reviewed and approved by the Director.

### **Life Experience Credit**

The University does not award graduate level course credit or academic forgiveness based on life experience.

### **Semester Grades**

At the end of each semester, grade reports are sent to students by the Registrar's Office. Students with outstanding financial obligations do not receive their grades until their accounts are cleared. The responsibility for identifying errors on the grade report is that of the student. Any correction must be made by the instructor and filed in the Registrar's Office. The deadline for corrections is 21 calendar days after the grade reports are mailed. After that time, no changes will be made on the student's record.

### **Graduate Program Grading Scale**

At the completion of a course, each student is assigned one of the following letter symbols: A = 4.0; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0; B- = 2.7; C = 2.0; F = 0.0; Less than 3.25 = probation. The grade point average is obtained by dividing the total number of quality points achieved by the total number of credit hours attempted.

### **Incomplete Standing**

A student who has received an incomplete in the traditional scheduling format must finish the incomplete work within four weeks following the final examination period of the semester or the grade is recorded as an 'F.' In each instance the instructor may file a request for an extension with the Registrar within four weeks following the end of the academic term.

### **Academic Grievance Policy**

The Graduate Student Grievance Committee attends to grievances of an academic nature. The Committee is comprised of all the Graduate Program Coordinators and a graduate student representative appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate and Adult Education. The Committee is involved in a student grievance only if the proper steps have been followed by the student. Procedures can be found in the *School of Graduate and Adult Education Student Handbook*. The student must discuss the situation/grade with the instructor within 20 calendar days of occurrence/disagreement.

### **Tuition and Billing**

Alvernia University reserves its right to change tuition, fees and other charges from one academic semester to the next as deemed necessary by the University in order to meet its financial commitments and to fulfill its role and mission.

### **Payment and Billing**

Graduate students at Alvernia will be billed each semester. The Student Invoice will be mailed approximately 30 days prior to the due date to each student who has registered in advance for an upcoming semester. Also, electronic invoices (e-bills) are also available via Self-Service/ Finance tab / Online Resources. Pay is due one week prior to beginning of classes, and payment must be received on or before that date. Students registering after the due date are required to secure a Student Invoice from the Billing Office at the time of registration with payment due immediately. Students adding a course(s) during the add/drop period are required to obtain an invoice and settle any financial obligations at that time. The amount due on the Student Invoice is the total amount of unpaid charges less any unapplied financial aid or discounts reflected on the invoice. Unapplied aid is aid for which a student is eligible, but monies have not yet been received by the University.

Checks or money orders should be made payable to *Alvernia University*. If sent by mail, address payments to: **Alvernia University, Attn: Student Billing, 400 Saint Bernadine Street, Reading, PA 19607**. Payment may also be made online using Self-Service, accessible on the Alvernia website. Electronic payments from your bank account (e-checks) are simple and free. Convenience fees will apply

when utilizing a credit card (MC, Discover, Amex) as form of payment. Note: The University reserves the right to cancel a schedule and require a repeat of registration for any student who does not pay his/her invoice by the due date.

### **Bookstore Credit using Financial Aid**

Students who wish to purchase books with anticipated financial aid must submit a pre-approval request form via the Alvernia website or by visiting the Billing Office and giving their ID# to obtain that credit. Financial aid is processed on an individual basis and is dependent upon many factors including academic progress. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office to ensure all financial aid paperwork is completed and that funds are available to cover books. Students may also order books on-line through [www.alvernia.edu](http://www.alvernia.edu) by selecting the current students option and then the bookstore link. Students will receive an e-mail when books are ready to be picked up. Satellite site students are encouraged to purchase books on-line so the books can be delivered to the site by bookstore personnel.

### **KeyBank Payment Plan**

The tuition payment plan is a service provided by KeyBank on behalf of Alvernia University. Students may pay all or part of tuition on a monthly, interest-free basis. The yearly fee is \$50 and details and applications are available from the Billing Office at 610-796-8214 or [www.key.com/paymentplan](http://www.key.com/paymentplan).

### **Service Charges**

A one percent per month service charge will be assessed on any balance due (after applying financial aid) if not paid by the due date. Exceptions to the service charge will be at the discretion of the Provost or the Controller. The return of a check for any reason constitutes nonpayment. A \$25 fee will be assessed for each check returned.

### **Errors or Disputes**

Inquiries concerning schedules should be referred to the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office. Inquiries concerning charges should be referred to the Billing Office prior to the due date of the invoice.

### **Refund Policy (Drop/Add Period)**

During the first week of classes (the drop/add period), a student may drop a course and receive full tuition credit if applicable. Any course-affiliated and/or comprehensive fees will be adjusted accordingly. A student withdrawing from a class any time after the add/drop period is not entitled to a refund.

### **Financial Aid**

#### **Tuition Reimbursement**

All students receiving tuition reimbursement from their employer or other organizations must complete a tuition reimbursement form every semester and return them to the Financial Aid Office. This form is available on the Alvernia University website on the billing office forms page.

#### **Grants/Scholarships**

Students are encouraged to research private grant and scholarship funding through the Internet. The University encourages students to visit the following websites for scholarship search: [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com), and [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org).

#### **Graduate Assistantships**

Students are encouraged to research Graduate Assistantships available through the University. Students should consult the Financial Aid Office of Alvernia University or the Coordinator of Graduate Admissions and Student Services for details on positions currently available.

## Stafford Loans

Stafford Loans are federal loans available to any graduate student who is enrolled on at least a halftime basis (6 credits per semester). The student is eligible to borrow up to the cost of education per year, and the exact amount depends upon enrollment status. Students applying for a Stafford Loan must file the **Master Promissory Note (MPN)** and complete Stafford loan entrance counseling. This form will be mailed to the student after he or she has filed the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. If an MPN is not received, student may call PHEAA at 1-800-692-7392. Students may file the FAFSA on the web at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). The MPN and Stafford loan entrance counseling may be completed on the web at [www.aessuccess.org](http://www.aessuccess.org). Students must make academic progress to continue receiving Stafford loans. See the Financial Aid Office for details.

## Private Alternative Loans and Graduate PLUS loans

Private Alternative Loans are available to students who are enrolled for only one class per semester. These loans may require a co-signer and applicants must be creditworthy. Please check [www.alvernia.edu/financialaid](http://www.alvernia.edu/financialaid) for more information about alternative loans. Graduate PLUS loans are now available to Graduate students. The Graduate PLUS loan is a federal loan that requires a credit check of the applicant. Graduate PLUS applications are available on [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov). Once the borrower is credit-approved, the borrower must complete a Master Promissory Note.

## Withdrawal Policies

### Withdrawal from the University

Total withdrawal from the University applies only to students who submit in writing to the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office their intention to completely withdraw from all courses. Reapplication and acceptance are required for these students to be readmitted after withdrawing from the University. The effective date of withdrawal is the date a completed official withdrawal notice is returned to the School of Graduate and Adult Education. Students who do not comply with the withdrawal procedure forfeit their right to any refund. The tuition refund schedule for students who withdraw from the University and are enrolled in full semester classes is as follows:

<b>Withdrawal Dates</b>	<b>Student Refund</b>
during 1st week of class	100%
during 2nd week of class	90%
during 3rd week of class	80%
during 4th week of class	60%
during 5th week of class	40%
after 5th week of class	<b>No Refund</b> (see Financial Aid stipulations)

*\*Withdrawal refund percentage for alternatively structured classes must be evaluated individually*

- **Medical Withdrawal.** Students who withdraw for medical reasons during the first five weeks of class will receive tuition refunds in accordance with the previously described tuition refund schedule. Students who withdraw for medical reasons after the fifth week of class may be considered for a tuition refund, but in no case will the refund be more than 20 percent. Official medical documentation is required at the time of withdrawal. Inquiries regarding the withdrawal procedure should be directed to the School of Graduate and Adult Education Office.
- **Financial Aid Recipients.** In the case of a financial aid recipient, the portion refunded may include monies that must be returned to Federal Title IV programs. The University will use the Title IV refund policy to determine the portion that must be repaid to the Title IV programs. Any refunds otherwise due to a withdrawing student will be reduced by such Title IV refunds. This is in accordance with the 1998 Code of Federal Regulations 668.22.

*The contents of this catalog are provided for the information of the student. It is accurate at the time of printing, but is subject to change from time to time as deemed appropriate by the University in order to fulfill its role and mission or to accommodate to circumstances beyond its control. Changes may be implemented without prior notice and without obligation and, unless specified otherwise, are effective when made. Feedback, additions, and corrections should be directed to the:*

**School of Graduate and Adult Education  
610-796-8228**