



ASPEN
UNIVERSITY

2025-2026

**Doctoral
Residency
Guide**

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Doctoral Residency Guide

Statement

Statement

All students must abide by the Academic Catalog in addition to the residency guidelines outlined in this handbook. Both the catalog and guide are updated annually at a minimum. Students should check back regularly for updates.

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Residency Workshop

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The Mission and Vision of the Residency Workshop

The doctoral virtual residency programs for the Doctor of Education (Ed.D) and the Doctor of Science in Computer Science (DScS) are immersive, online programs designed to support doctoral candidates through intensive academic and professional development activities.

The mission of the virtual residency is to provide a dynamic, interactive platform that fosters rigorous research, critical thinking, and scholarly collaboration among students and faculty. By leveraging digital technologies, the residency aims to create a flexible yet robust learning environment where students can engage in meaningful discussions, receive personalized feedback, and develop advanced research skills.

The vision of the virtual residency is to cultivate a global network of scholars equipped to address complex challenges in their fields with innovative solutions and thought leadership. Through this virtual platform, the residency aspires to bridge geographical barriers and promote a diverse and inclusive academic community that drives excellence in research and contributes to advancing knowledge across disciplines.

The Purpose of the Residency Workshops

The purpose of a doctoral virtual residency is to provide postgraduate students with an intensive, interactive academic experience that supports their research, professional development, and scholarly growth. It serves several vital functions:

- **Academic Engagement:** It offers a structured environment for students to engage deeply with their research topics, receive feedback from faculty and peers, and refine their research proposals or

dissertations.

- **Professional Development:** The residency provides opportunities for students to develop essential academic and professional skills, such as advanced research methodologies, critical thinking, and scholarly writing.
- **Networking:** It facilitates connections among students, faculty, and experts in their field, helping to build a supportive academic community and fostering collaborative relationships.
- **Mentorship:** It allows for personalized guidance from experienced faculty members, helping students navigate their research challenges and career planning.
- **Integration:** It integrates various aspects of doctoral study, such as coursework, research activities, and discussions, into a cohesive experience that aligns with the student's academic and professional goals.

The Focus of the Residency Workshops

The focus of an online doctoral residency is multifaceted, aiming to enhance the doctoral student experience significantly. Central to the residency is developing research projects, where students receive support in advancing their research, refining dissertation proposals, and engaging in rigorous scholarly analysis through workshops and seminars. The residency also emphasizes developing essential academic skills, such as critical thinking, advanced research methodologies, data analysis, and academic writing, which are crucial for producing high-quality research.

Professional growth is another key focus, with opportunities for networking with faculty, peers, and industry experts, as well as career planning and academic publishing. Additionally, the residency fosters collaboration and community building by creating a supportive educational environment where students engage in discussions, peer reviews, and collaborative projects.

Personalized mentorship and guidance from experienced faculty help students navigate their research and the doctoral process. The online doctoral residency integrates these elements into a cohesive learning experience, providing a rich, interactive platform that supports

advanced research, professional development, and academic achievement.

The Strategic Goal of Residency Workshops

Doctoral residencies offer strategic opportunities for students to meet with their peers, faculty, and School leadership to network and share ideas related to postgraduate studies before graduation. The overarching goal for Aspen's Doctoral Residency is to allow students to build foundational knowledge and exposure to concepts and ideas in addition to the program curriculum. This initiative was prompted by student and faculty feedback to meet, collaborate, and connect with the Aspen doctoral community.

Each residency is explicitly structured to meet students' academic and professional needs at specific educational levels. Each residency takes the form of multi-session, virtual events to fit around students' personal and professional responsibilities easily. Aspen doctoral students are primarily working adults and require the flexibility to participate in virtual sessions. The online modality is consistent with the learning experiences Aspen students are accustomed to. The residency model aligns with Aspen's university mission of offering motivated college-worthy students an opportunity to receive a high-quality, responsibly priced distance-learning education to assist them with achieving their goal of graduating. To this end, students are given multiple opportunities to attend each residency throughout their program.

Residency 1 - RSH900

This residency workshop is built into your RSH900 course and was recorded for your viewing. The topics that will be included:

- Understanding the Library
- Who and What is Your Support System?
- Understanding Aspen's Doctoral Resources
- Self-Care: Why is it so important?
- Time Management using Deep Learning

Overview of Residency II Workshop

Residency II is specifically structured to address students' academic and professional needs at critical stages of their educational journey. It is comprised of multi-session, virtual events that accommodate students' personal and professional responsibilities. Given that Aspen doctoral students are primarily working professionals, the flexibility of virtual sessions aligns well with their needs and fits seamlessly with their existing online learning experiences. Students are afforded multiple opportunities to participate in Residency II before registering for RSH912, ensuring continued engagement and support. Upon completion of Residency II, students will be awarded a Certificate of Completion, which must be submitted to RSH912 during week 7 of the course.

Residency II Duration

The residency program spans four days, from Tuesday through Saturday with all work being completed virtually. During this period, participants will engage with the materials and activities at their own pace, as there is no prescribed time limit for completing the tasks. This self-paced structure allows participants to manage their time, accommodating their schedules and learning preferences. Each day of the residency will offer a range of resources, activities, and sessions designed to support academic and professional development. The self-paced format ensures that students can fully absorb the content, engage with the material meaningfully, and complete the required activities to fit their pace and understanding. This approach is intended to provide a comprehensive learning experience while allowing students to balance other commitments and ensure a thorough engagement with the residency's objectives.

Time Requirements for Residency II Workshop

Note: These are just guidelines, and actual time requirements will depend on your needs and schedule

Day 0: Review the material and familiarize yourself with the residency's context and expectations. (1 hour)

Day 1: Focus on orientation materials, initial engagement

with discussion boards, and starting the first assignment. (2-3 hours) Zoom Meeting (60 minutes)

Day 2: Continue working on the first assignment, participate actively in discussion boards, and start the second assignment. (2-3 hours)

Day 3: Complete the second assignment, engage in discussion boards, and begin work on the third assignment. (2-3 hours)

Day 4: Finalize the third assignment, participate in any remaining discussion boards, and review all work to ensure completeness and quality. (2-3 hours)

Day 5: Two-hour workshop covering the learned materials and discussing real-life examples in detail. (3 hours)

Total: (13-17) hours preparing and completing your residency work, including participation in the discussion threads.

Required Zoom Meetings

During that week, two essential Zoom meetings will be conducted as part of Doctoral Residency II, both of which are crucial for fulfilling the requirements for the Certificate of Completion. The first session, the "Intro Zoom Session," will be held on Tuesday from 5:00 to 6:00 pm PST. This one-hour meeting is designed to orient participants to the upcoming week, providing an overview of the residency's activities, objectives, and expectations. It is an opportunity to clarify any initial questions and ensure everyone is well-prepared for the sessions.

The second session, the "Final Zoom Session", will occur on Saturday from 08:00 am to 11:00 pm PST. This three-hour meeting at the end of the Residency will review the key concepts covered throughout the week, address any remaining questions, and facilitate discussions on applying what has been learned. Attendance and active participation in these live sessions are required to complete the residency and receive the Certificate of Completion. These meetings ensure that participants have engaged fully with the residency content and can effectively integrate the knowledge and skills gained into their doctoral research.

What are the Topics Covered in the Residency II Workshop

What Makes a Scholarly Topic?

In doctoral research for the Ed.D. (Doctor of Education) and DScS (Doctor of Science in Computer Science) programs, a scholarly topic is defined by several critical attributes that ensure its alignment with the rigorous standards of advanced academic inquiry. Firstly, the topic must address significant issues within the field, aiming to solve practical problems or advance knowledge in ways that have meaningful implications for practice, policy, or further research. It should be grounded in relevant theories or conceptual frameworks, demonstrating a thorough understanding of existing literature, which guides the research questions and informs the study design. Originality and innovation are also essential, with the topic offering new insights or exploring under-researched areas to contribute novel value to the field. Additionally, the topic must be feasible within the program's constraints, including time, resources, and access to data, and should be scoped to allow for thorough investigation within the program's timeline. Methodological rigor requires a clear and robust research design that applies a meticulous approach to ensure valid and reliable results. Moreover, the research should hold both academic significance, contributing to scholarly discourse, and practical relevance, offering insights applicable to real-world settings. Finally, the topic should align with the goals and objectives of the Ed.D. or DScS program, focusing on educational practice, policy, or administration for an Ed.D., or emphasizing scientific research, innovation, or applied science for a DScS.

Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a scholarly tool that provides a detailed and evaluative summary of sources relevant to a particular research topic. Each entry typically includes a citation of the source in the appropriate academic style, followed by a concise annotation that summarizes the source's main arguments, methodology, and conclusions. This summary helps readers understand the source's content and relevance in the research context. Beyond summarizing, the annotation also evaluates the source's credibility, relevance, and contribution to the research topic. It might address the source's strengths and

weaknesses, its place within the existing literature, and how it informs or influences the research. The annotated bibliography demonstrates the breadth and depth of research conducted. It also aids in organizing and synthesizing information, allowing researchers to critically engage with their sources and effectively integrate them into their work. By providing a clear overview of each source's value and relevance, an annotated bibliography helps to establish a strong foundation for scholarly research. It ensures that the research is grounded in a comprehensive literature review.

Background of the Study

The background of the study in Chapter 1 of the dissertation provides a comprehensive context for the research problem by outlining the historical, theoretical, and practical underpinnings relevant to the study. This section begins by detailing the broader context of the research, including key developments, trends, and issues that have shaped the field. It then identifies the specific problem or gap in the literature that the current study aims to address, highlighting the significance of this gap and its implications for the field. By reviewing relevant theories and previous research, the background section establishes a theoretical framework that supports the research questions and objectives. Additionally, it often discusses the practical relevance of the study, demonstrating how the research will contribute to solving real-world problems or advancing knowledge in a meaningful way. This foundational overview not only situates the study within the existing body of knowledge but also justifies the need for the research, providing a clear rationale for why the study is essential and how it will add value to the field. Overall, the background of the study sets the stage for the research by providing critical context and establishing the significance of the investigation.

Problem Statement

The problem statement in Chapter 1 of a dissertation articulates the core issue or gap in the existing body of knowledge that the research aims to address. It begins by defining the problem or challenge identified through a preliminary study or literature review. This statement should convey the importance of the problem and its impact on the field, demonstrating why it warrants investigation. It often includes a description of the problem's scope, relevance, and specific unresolved or inadequately understood aspects. The problem statement should also highlight the consequences of not addressing

the issue, emphasizing the potential benefits of resolving the problem for both theoretical advancement and practical application. By providing a clear and focused articulation of the problem, this section establishes the foundation for the research questions, objectives, and overall study design, ensuring that the investigation addresses a significant and impactful issue within the field.

Qualitative vs Quantitative Academic Language

In academic research, distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative approaches is crucial for understanding their respective methodologies, applications, and contributions to the field. Qualitative research explores and understands complex phenomena from a subjective perspective, often through in-depth interviews, focus groups, or content analysis. It aims to gain insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and meanings, emphasizing the richness and depth of data rather than numerical measurements. This approach is typically used to explore new or complex issues where the goal is to develop theories, generate hypotheses, or provide a nuanced understanding of a particular phenomenon. For example...

In contrast, quantitative research is centered on quantifying variables and analyzing statistical relationships to uncover patterns, test hypotheses, and generalize findings to larger populations. This approach employs structured tools such as surveys, experiments, and statistical analyses to gather numerical data that can be measured, correlated, and statistically validated. Quantitative research seeks to establish causal relationships, measure the extent of phenomena, and predict outcomes based on empirical evidence. For example...

Both approaches are valuable in academic research, with qualitative methods providing in-depth insights and context, while quantitative methods offer broad, generalizable findings supported by statistical evidence. The choice between qualitative and quantitative methods depends on the research questions, objectives, and the nature of the data being studied, with each approach contributing uniquely to the understanding of complex issues.

Purpose Statement

The purpose statement in Chapter 1 of a dissertation clearly articulates the specific aims and objectives of the research. It defines the central intent of the study by outlining what the researcher seeks to achieve through their investigation. This statement provides a focused direction for the research by specifying the goals, such as exploring, describing, or explaining a particular phenomenon and identifying the critical aspects of the issue that will be addressed. The purpose statement should align with the problem statement, detailing how the research will contribute to filling the identified gap or solving the problem. It typically includes the scope of the study, the specific aspects of the problem that will be examined, and the anticipated outcomes or contributions of the research. By setting clear, achievable objectives, the purpose statement guides the research design, methodology, and overall approach, ensuring that the study remains focused and relevant throughout its course. Overall, the purpose statement serves as a roadmap for the research, articulating the study's intentions and framing the research questions and hypotheses within a clear and actionable context.

Research Questions

The research questions in Chapter 1 of the dissertation are pivotal in guiding the investigation and shaping the direction of the study. These questions are designed to address the problem identified in the problem statement and align with the purpose of the research. They should be clear, focused, and researchable, outlining the exact aspects of the problem the study aims to explore or resolve. Research questions typically stem from gaps or issues highlighted in the literature review and serve as a framework for the data collection and analysis processes. They guide the investigation by specifying what the researcher intends to discover or understand, helping shape the study's methodology and approach. Each research question should be directly related to the study's objectives, ensuring that the answers obtained will contribute meaningful insights to the field. Additionally, well-formulated research questions provide a basis for developing hypotheses (in quantitative studies) or guiding thematic analysis (in qualitative studies), ultimately ensuring that the research remains focused and systematically addresses the core issue. Overall, research questions are essential for structuring the research design and ensuring that the study effectively solves the identified problem or fills the research gap.

Theoretical Foundations and Frameworks

Theoretical foundations or frameworks in Chapter 1 of a dissertation provide the conceptual underpinnings that guide and support the research. These frameworks consist of theories, models, or conceptual perspectives that help to format the research questions, shape the study's design, and interpret the findings. By grounding the research in established theoretical constructs, the theoretical foundations offer a structured lens through which the research problem can be examined and understood. This section typically reviews relevant theories and models from existing literature, highlighting how these frameworks relate to the research topic and contribute to the study's objectives.

Theoretical foundations help to identify critical variables or concepts that will be explored, explain relationships between them, and provide a basis for developing hypotheses or research questions. They also assist in contextualizing the study within broader academic discourse, demonstrating how the research fits into and extends existing knowledge. By aligning the study with established theories, the framework ensures that the research is anchored in a solid academic context and provides a basis for interpreting results. Overall, the theoretical foundations or frameworks are essential for guiding the research process, justifying the research design, and enhancing the study's scholarly contribution.

Commonly Asked Questions

What are the Benefits of Attending the Residency Workshop?

Attending an online doctoral residency offers several valuable benefits for students. One of the primary advantages is the opportunity to build a strong sense of community with peers who are also engaged in the doctoral journey. This environment fosters collaboration, allowing students to ask questions, share insights, and work together on common challenges, which can enhance their overall learning experience. The residency also provides a platform for in-depth discussions on topics crucial to Chapter 1 of their dissertation study, such as research questions, literature reviews, and theoretical frameworks. These discussions are integral to the initial stages of their research and play a critical role throughout the dissertation process. By engaging with these essential topics early on, students can ensure a solid foundation for their research, gain clarity on complex issues, and receive valuable feedback that will support their progress and success in their doctoral studies.

What if a student enrolls in the Residency II Workshop but does not attend?

Throughout your doctoral program, you will encounter additional opportunities to attend residencies to support your academic and research journey. This residency is a crucial resource, offering invaluable assistance in understanding and developing your dissertation. It provides a structured environment where you can delve into essential aspects of your research, receive targeted feedback, and engage with peers and faculty to refine your dissertation work. To maximize the benefits of this residency, completing any required preparatory steps before reaching Module 7 of RSH912, where you will submit your Certificate of Completion, is vital. Doing so will ensure that you are well-prepared to fully engage with the residency content and make the most of the support provided, thereby enhancing the quality and progression of your dissertation throughout your doctoral studies.

Is this a Mandatory Residency?

Yes, this requirement is due in Module 7 of the RSH912 course and is a crucial component of the doctoral program focused on research methodologies and dissertation development. It is essential for students enrolled in this course to meet this requirement by the specified deadline to ensure that they are adequately prepared for their research work. However, it is essential to note that this requirement does not apply to EDS (Education Specialist) program students. Therefore, while students in the RSH912 course must adhere to this requirement, those in the EDS programs should follow the specific guidelines and deadlines set for their respective programs. This

distinction ensures that each program's requirements are tailored to the unique aspects of their respective academic and research focuses.

Will Residency II be Offered Throughout the Year?

Yes, the residency will be offered quarterly; please check the Doctoral Lounge regularly to ensure you have the most up-to-date information on specific dates for each quarter, including registration deadlines and session start dates. The Doctoral Lounge provides detailed schedules and additional information relevant to your program, helping you stay informed about key dates and any changes or updates.

Can I Take This Residency Even if I am in the Dissertation Course?

You can review this material as a refresher, mainly since the concepts and information have already been covered in previous coursework. Revisiting this content can help reinforce your understanding and ensure you have a solid grasp of the foundational principles necessary for your current research or assignments. It's often beneficial to review earlier material periodically to keep critical concepts fresh, especially as you progress in your studies and encounter more complex topics. This review will allow you to build on your previously acquired knowledge and apply it effectively to new challenges or projects. Additionally, revisiting this information can clarify any lingering questions and strengthen your overall comprehension, ultimately contributing to your success in your ongoing academic endeavors.

What are the Requirements for Attending the Residency II Workshop?

To be eligible for this particular requirement or opportunity, you must enroll in the core courses of the Ed.D. or DScS program. You should actively participate in the foundational coursework forming your doctoral studies' core. Moreover, you must have finished RSH900, a course often covering essential research skills and methodologies pertinent to your dissertation work. Meeting these prerequisites ensures that you have acquired the necessary background and skills to engage effectively with the upcoming requirements or opportunities, and it signifies that you are well-prepared to advance in your doctoral program.

Can I Attend This Residency More Than Once?

Yes, if you find it challenging to grasp the relevance or clarity of your study's purpose, program, or research question (RQ) statements, this is an ideal moment to seek feedback and guidance from others. Engaging with peers, faculty, and mentors can provide valuable insights and perspectives that help clarify your understanding and refine your statements. Peers, who are often navigating similar issues, can offer practical advice and share their experiences. At the same time, faculty members bring a wealth of academic expertise and can provide targeted feedback on how well your statements align with scholarly standards. With their broader experience and knowledge, mentors can offer strategic advice and help you align your research objectives with your academic and career goals. By discussing your ideas with these individuals, you can better understand how your purpose, program, and RQ statements fit into the larger context of your research and make necessary adjustments to strengthen your study. This

collaborative approach enhances your clarity and focus and helps ensure your research is relevant and rigorously developed.

Do I Need to Travel to Attend this Residency?

No, this program component is delivered online. Unlike traditional in-person sessions with fixed schedules, this format provides the flexibility to engage with the content according to your timeline and learning style. You can access the online resources, complete assignments, and participate in discussions or activities whenever possible within any specified deadlines. This self-paced approach enables you to balance your studies with other commitments, ensuring you can thoroughly understand and apply the material without the pressure of adhering to a rigid schedule. It accommodates various learning preferences and time constraints, allowing for a more personalized and manageable learning experience.

Can I Take This Residency with Another Class?

Yes, you can take this residency alongside another class. The residency is designed to be self-paced and spans just four days. Because it is self-paced, you can quickly progress through the residency materials, allowing you to balance your time between this and your other academic commitments. The short duration of the residency ensures that it will not significantly interfere with your schedule, and the self-paced format allows you to integrate the residency into your study plan more efficiently. This setup is intended to accommodate your responsibilities and ensure you can complete the residency and other class requirements effectively.

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