WHEREAS, the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) offers a doctoral degree requiring the completion of a dissertation; and

WHEREAS, both University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign (UIUC) have graduate policies outlining the process for committee composition, eligibility and selection; and

WHEREAS, UIS has a policy (Resolution 41-6: Graduate Closure Guidelines) for closure at the master’s level; and

WHEREAS, the Graduate Council has determined that administrative procedures for closure projects at the doctoral-level are needed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the University of Illinois at Springfield Campus Senate approves Doctoral Closure Guidelines.

Section 1. Applicability

This closure policy establishes criteria for a doctoral committee and a standard closure process for academic programs granting the doctoral degree. The policy is intended to set a uniform dissertation process and committee structure. The policy is not intended to serve as a guide to the quality and format of the dissertation, which should be left to the discretion of the academic program and the necessary formatting guidelines established by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Section 2. Uniform Closure Process/Retention

Doctoral degrees will be awarded to students who have satisfactorily completed the dissertation closure requirements prescribed by their academic program.

Section 2.1 Qualifying for Dissertation Closure
Entry into closure will occur after the students have passed qualifying or comprehensive exams and other departmental programmatic requirements permitting them to enter the research and dissertation phase of the studies. Written components for the qualifying exams shall be housed in student records kept by the academic programs, according to the records retention schedule of the department.

Section 2.2. Dissertation

When requirements for dissertation are set or are significantly modified by the academic program, they are subject to review and approval by the appropriate College Curriculum Committee and Graduate Council. Dissertation closure exercises shall carry a minimum of 12 semester hours of credit, as deemed appropriate by the program.

The dissertation closure exercises must include a written component, prepared in accordance with the effective formatting and style guidelines of the Office of Graduate Studies. Formatting and style guidelines are developed by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education and Research in consultation with the Graduate Council and the Dean of the Library or their designees. Upon final approval, a hard copy of the dissertation shall be housed in University Archives. An electronic copy may be submitted and made available through an approved online repository, in accordance with UIS procedures and exceptions for restricting availability to external parties.

The dissertation closure exercises must also have an oral component in defense of the written component.

Approval by the dissertation committee members shall indicate passing of the dissertation exercises. The committee determination on substantive quality and acceptability of the dissertation is final. The student may appeal a negative committee decision only based on procedural issues. The appeal would be to the appropriate college dean.

Section 2.3. Dissertation Closure Approval Forms

The Dissertation Closure Approval Form documents that the dissertation has been successfully completed by the student. The Closure Committee appropriate to the dissertation closure (see 3.0 Dissertation Committee Membership) shall be documented on the Dissertation Closure Approval Form. Collectively, the Dissertation Committee members shall determine the quality of the dissertation and determine whether the dissertation has been satisfactorily completed. Signatures required on the Dissertation Closure Approval Form are as follows:

- Dissertation work –The Dissertation Closure Committee is constituted to approve the dissertation exercise in both its initial developmental stage
and in its final form. The developmental work must be approved in writing by the Dissertation Closure Committee, which shall meet prior to action. When all elements of the dissertation closure exercise have been satisfactorily completed, each member of the Dissertation Closure Committee shall sign the Dissertation Closure Approval Form, which is attached to the written portion of the closure exercise and submitted for archiving.

- A copy of the committee-signed Dissertation Closure Approval Form shall then be processed administratively through the appropriate academic program chair or equivalent and submitted to the Office of Records and Registration. The academic program chair must verify that the form is completed accurately.

- The written dissertation, along with the Dissertation Closure Approval Form signed by the committee and the academic program chair or equivalent, shall then be processed for archiving through the appropriate College Dean’s office to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education and Research or his/her designee by whom the final copy is reviewed for consistency with university dissertation copy standards. The dissertation is then sent to University Archives. A copy of the Dissertation Closure Approval Form shall then be sent to the Office of Records and Registration for final processing.

Section 3. Dissertation Committee Membership

All dissertation closure exercises must be approved by a Dissertation Closure Committee that will consist of at least three fulltime (at the time committee is constituted) faculty. The three faculty shall meet the criteria of graduate faculty within the college which houses the academic doctoral program and include the student’s dissertation advisor and two or more additional faculty members. One of the faculty members must be appointed by the appropriate dean after consultation with the closure advisor. (The dean’s representative shall serve the primary purpose of ensuring that the closure process is maintained. In addition, the dean’s representative may serve to provide additional disciplinary expertise important to the advising and review of the student’s dissertation). In consultation with the dissertation advisor, students may request additional committee members from within or outside the university representing disciplinary expertise important to advising the student on the dissertation research.

Membership in the Dissertation Committee shall be for the entire dissertation process. A faculty committee member may become emeritus, move into an administrative position, or leave employment of the university and retain membership on the committee with the approval of the academic program and the appropriate dean. It is recognized that there may be circumstances meriting membership changes in the Dissertation Committee. Requested membership changes shall be made in writing to the
chair of the academic program. Final committee membership and/or changes in
membership shall be approved through the appropriate dean.

Section 4. Implementation

All academic programs awarding the doctoral degrees must submit guidelines and
processes for assuring the quality of the doctoral dissertation at the time proposed to the
appropriate College Curriculum Committees and Graduate Council for review and
approval prior to implementation consistent with catalog copy deadlines. The guidelines
and processes of Dissertation Closure are subject to assessment and review during the
eight-year academic program review in accordance with university policy.