

IDT 600 Graduate Applied Project Guidelines

Each master's degree candidate in Instructional Design and Technology (IDT) must select and complete a capstone (culminating) project from one of the following options: portfolio, applied project, and thesis. This document describes in detail the applied project option.

The purpose of the applied project is to serve as a capstone project allowing the student to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills gained through the master's degree program. The applied project is intended for those students interested in solving, or investigating, site-specific, practical problems. It is less formal than academic research and typically takes place within a real-world setting such as the workplace or classroom.

An applied project often involves the development of an instructional unit or product, testing it with a group of learners or other relevant population, and performing formative or summative evaluation of it. The applied project can also focus on applied research focused on solving or investigating a site-specific problem or an applied evaluation project focused on evaluating a large-scale program (school, industry, or software) in order to make a judgment about its merit. Students choosing an applied project must complete 29 hours of coursework plus the three-hour applied project (IDT 600) course.

Applied Project Committee

The applied project committee consists of two IDT faculty members (a committee chairperson and a committee member). Candidates may request the addition of a third committee member. The chair of this committee is your applied project advisor and will direct the applied project planning and subsequent activities. The committee chair will assist with:

- Formation of plans for the applied project activity.
- Supervision of applied project activity and subsequent writing.
- Preparation of research protocol material for the WIU Institutional Review Board (IRB).
- Program and university procedures for completing and defending the applied project.

Types of Applied Projects

An applied project may take the form of an action research project, an applied development project, or an applied evaluation project. The following section describes and provides examples of these three project types. The applied project allows for considerable flexibility in the type of project undertaken.

- Action Research Project: This type of applied project is specifically focused on solving, or investigating, site-specific, practical problems using the conceptual and methodological tools of the researcher. It is less formal than a thesis that focuses more on generalization (of findings to larger populations) or contribution to the body of knowledge/literature. An action research project focuses on addressing a specific problem or need, and typically takes place within real world settings such as the workplace or classroom. For example, the researcher may wish to examine the effects of the new technologies integrated into a school or corporate training setting.

- **Applied Development Project:** This type of applied project often involves the development of instructional materials or an instructional system, and the formative or summative evaluation of that product as it is employed within a target audience. These projects are developed to solve or resolve a particular instructional problem. For example, the student may wish to conduct an instructional analysis and then design, develop, implement, and evaluate a specific training or instructional project. Or he/she may wish to research and then create an instructional tool (such as a needs assessment or staff development instrument), test the tool, and use the results of the tool's implementation to create a comprehensive plan that will solve a variety of instructional problems for a particular audience.
- **Applied Evaluation Project:** This type of applied project involves the evaluation of a program or product. Evaluation projects seek to make a judgment concerning the merit or worth of the program or product being evaluated. Such programs may be school-based (such as evaluating the achievements and impact of a grant), industry-based (such as evaluating the success and impact of a three-year training initiative), or software-based (such as conducting usability studies and evaluating achievements and the impact of an instructor-independent web-based or CD-ROM curriculum/software program), etc.

Applied Project Procedures and Timeline

A student's IDT 600 Request for a Graduate Advising Committee form must be approved by the IDT Program Coordinator. Permission to proceed with the production, assembling, and defense of the applied project is dependent upon the completion of all requirements for the IDT degree. In general, this means that all incomplete coursework that appears on the student's graduate degree plan must be finished, that the student must complete 29 hours of coursework with a GPA of at least a 3.0. If necessary, a student may take one or two classes along with IDT 600 during the last semester, but it is strongly discouraged.

The procedures and timeline steps are described below:

1. After completing 15 to 18 hours of coursework, the student initiates a discussion of possible ideas for the applied project with the IDT Program Coordinator. For example, options may be explored about the student's purpose in doing an applied project, its focus, possible faculty person to work with, possible audiences for its content, and a potential timeframe.
2. The student contacts an IDT faculty member to see if the faculty member is available to serve as the applied project committee chair. The IDT Program Coordinator can help the student identify a possible committee chair.
3. The student submits a completed [Request for Graduate Advising Committee form](#) to IDT Program Coordinator. The form must be submitted at least four weeks before the last day of the semester prior to the semester the student plans to register for IDT 600. The student will be notified when a committee chair and member(s) have been assigned.
4. Once the applied project committee has been assigned, the student will dialog with the committee chair to create a plan for the project. The student will create a written applied project plan write up that is about three to five pages in length and contains the following components:

- Purpose
- Research question(s) or project objective(s)
- Brief description of the methodology planned (e.g., survey, interview, (quasi) experimental design, etc.)
- Conceptual framework of relevant existing studies and projects (1/2 page)
- Evaluation plan (1 page)
- Project timeline
- Literature review (month/date estimate)
- WIU Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for research
- Data collection and analysis
- Oral defense

Once the applied project plan has been approved and signed by the committee chair, the student must complete the IDT 600 Enrollment form and submit it to the committee chair for approval. The committee chair will then submit the form to the IDT Program Coordinator who will review the form and contact you that the material is approved. At that time, you can register for IDT 600.

5. Note that the student needs to be in his/her last semester when the applied project is defended. Any exception to the defense date must be approved by the committee chair. If students cannot complete the defense by the end of the planned semester, different requirements apply based on the student's starting year. If that situation happens or is expected, those who started in Fall 2013 or later must register for the one-credit course, UNIV 695. See the Continuous Enrollment in Thesis, Dissertation or Exit option section at http://www.wiu.edu/graduate_studies/catalog/academic_guidelines/. If a student does not complete the defense in the semester which he/she is registered for IDT 600, then the student will receive an Incomplete. The student will have up to one year to complete their IDT 600 requirements.
6. In communication with the committee chair, the student will write a proposal that consists of Chapters 1 and 2 for the applied project. When the chair deems the proposal ready for review by the committee, he/she will share the proposal with the other committee members(s) for approval. The students may not begin the project until the proposal has received approval from the committee. The committee may request a meeting with the student before approving the project.

It is the student's responsibility to maintain dialogue, written and/or oral, with the committee chair while the work is in progress.

7. If the planned project involves the participation of human subjects, the student must work with the committee chair to fill out the IRB form (can be downloaded at http://www.wiu.edu/sponsored_projects/compliance/hs_human_subjects.php) and obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). **No data can be collected until IRB approval is completed!**
8. The student should work directly with the committee chair in completing the applied project activities (e.g., creating and implementing solutions, collecting and analyzing data).

9. Once the activities of the applied project have been completed, the student should continue to work directly with the committee chair to write up the final chapters of the applied project paper. When the committee chair deems the final report is ready, he/she will share it with the other committee member(s) for feedback, suggestions, and/or approval. At least two weeks of turn-around time is expected when the chair or the committee member reviews any work or updates submitted. Therefore, the IDT Program encourages the student to submit "the best and most complete work" to reduce rounds of waiting. All communications between the student and the second member goes through the applied project committee chair. Note: In planning the timeline for oral defense or graduation, students must understand that: (a) this step of writing the final report is a time consuming process, (b) it normally requires a few or several revisions when working with the committee chair, (c) the chair (and also the committee member) requires up to two weeks for reviewing any update, and (d) the final report must be approved by the committee before the student inquires about the oral defense timeline.
10. Once the committee has determined that the final report is ready for a defense, the defense may be scheduled on WIU's Macomb campus at least two weeks prior to the end of any semester/term. Online defenses must be approved by the committee.
11. The student will defend his/her applied project in a formal defense meeting with the applied project committee. After the defense and committee questioning, the student will be asked to leave the room while the committee makes a decision: pass without changes, pass with (minor or major) changes, or do not pass. The committee will then call in the student to hear the decision and discuss any needed revisions.

A student cannot pass IDT 600 until the applied project committee approves the applied project defense and report. If revisions are requested at the time of the oral defense, such revisions must be completed and approved by the committee chair.

Other faculty members, students, and family may attend the presentation but will be asked to leave before the committee meets to make a decision.

12. The final approved copy of the applied project must follow the School of Graduate Studies Guidelines for Preparation of Theses/Dissertations (http://www.wiu.edu/graduate_studies/thesis_and_dissertation/).
13. An incomplete or "I" grade in IDT 600 must be cleared within two years after enrollment in the course. Oral exams will not be scheduled during the final two weeks of a semester, or during the last week of the summer semester. APA guidelines must be followed in both the proposal and final report of the applied project.

14. Report Structure

An applied project is comprised of four chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Procedures
3. Results
4. Discussion and Conclusions

Essentially, Chapters 1 and 2 are the expansion of the proposal and Chapters 3 and 4 are added following the completion of the project. The student negotiates the general plan for the project and topics for the literature review with his/her applied project committee chair and then writes the two-chapter proposal. The committee chair assists the student by reading and making suggestions on drafts of the paper, and shares it with the other committee member when it is ready for a final read prior to approval.

Once the proposal has been approved by the committee (and the Approval Page has been signed), the student may begin the project itself. When the project has been completed, chapters I and II are rewritten to represent what was actually done and chapters III and IV are added to report the results and discuss the implications of the project. The committee chair again reads and assists in the final revisionary work of the paper, shares it with the other member of the committee when it is near completion, and then approves the scheduling of the oral defense.

The following sections often appear in applied project proposals and final papers. Actual sections may vary depending on the nature of the project and the procedures chosen. Order of topics within each chapter may also vary to fit the project. APA guidelines for formatting must be followed.

	Proposal	Final Paper
Title Page	X	X
Approval Page	X	X
Acknowledgements		X
Table of Contents	X	X
Table of Tables		X
Table of Figures		X
Table of Graphs		X
Chapter 1: Introduction	X	X
Rationale or theoretical basis for the project		
Project question or objectives		
Significance of project for local site		
Project definitions		
Assumptions, limitations, or delimitations for the project		
Review of literature (Subheadings)		
Chapter 2: Procedures	X	X
Project population description		
Site description		
Instrumentation		

Procedures and timeline		
Chapter 3: Results		X
Introduction		
Results or project evaluation		
Chapter 4: Discussion		X
General summary		
Implications of findings		
Recommendations		
References	X	X
Appendices		X
Log of time and activities		
Letters of permission/evaluation		
Human Subjects Clearance Forms		
Copies of Instrumentation		