



**2024 AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF HISPANICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (AAHHE)  
AND EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE (ETS)  
OUTSTANDING DISSERTATIONS COMPETITION GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines and accompanying explanations are provided to ensure objectivity and the highest possible standards for the AAHHE & ETS Outstanding Dissertations Competition (ODC).

Who is eligible to enter the competition?

The competition is open to any Latinx who has completed a dissertation as part of a doctoral degree program in the social sciences, broadly defined, and/or anyone whose dissertation research conducted as part of a doctoral degree program in the social sciences focuses on the Latinx community. Additionally, the dissertation needs to have been completed between December 2021 and August 1, 2023.

Dissertations are eligible if they are in domains that are related to the ETS corporate mission, including education, linguistics, psychology, statistics, testing, and so forth. Studies using any research approach (historical, experimental, survey, quantitative, mixed methods, etc.) are eligible. *Dissertations in the humanities, basic sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics are not eligible.* Previous applicants are ineligible to apply.

Completion is defined as either a OR b as follows:

- a) received the doctoral degree between December 2021 and August 1, 2023
- b) satisfactorily completed all the coursework and the dissertation between the dates specified above and the dissertation is acceptable to the candidate's committee, but the degree has not been conferred.

What is the process?

The competition involves a two-phase process. The first phase is to complete the ODC online application and upload a Dissertation Summary via the [AAHHE Submission Portal](#). The submission portal will close on August 8, 2023 at 11:59 pm ET. Applicants will have the opportunity to complete an online application; at the end of the application, they will be prompted to upload their Dissertation Summary (PDF, see instructions below).

If selected, semi-finalists will advance to the second phase of the process in which they are invited to submit a full dissertation via the AAHHE Submission Portal. Semi-finalists will be notified of their selection via email and further instructions will be provided at that time.

How should the Dissertation Summary be prepared?

For the first round of judging, the applicant's dissertation is rated SOLELY upon the Dissertation Summary submitted. These summaries must accurately, concisely, and precisely reflect the

research of the full dissertation. ***Dissertation Summaries that do not adhere to page limits specified in these guidelines will not be considered for the competition.***

The Dissertation Summary must include and clearly label the following in this order:

- 1) Title page — A title page in the format provided for your use. Please provide all the information requested. One (1) page in length.
- 2) Letter — A letter on university letterhead signed by the applicant’s dissertation committee Chair indicating that the dissertation meets the eligibility criteria defined earlier in these guidelines — detail is essential. The letter must be submitted in PDF and must also state how the dissertation committee chair would rank the dissertation among previous dissertations chaired.
- 3) Abstract — On a separate page, include a summary of approximately 250 words in length stating, in non-technical terms, the purpose, research problem, the methods, and major findings of the study, and the significance to the Latinx community. One (1) page in length, double-spaced.
- 4) Main report section — You should include: (a) the statement of the problem; (b) the purpose of the study; (c) conceptual model, theoretical framework, and/or orientation, as applicable, and literature review; (d) methodology including participants, instrumentation, hypotheses or research questions, and data analysis; (e) major findings; (f) conclusions; (g) implications; and (h) significance to the broader research community and to the Latinx community. Not to exceed eighteen (18) pages, double-spaced.
- 5) Appendix — List the references, tables, figures, diagrams, and pictures relevant to your summary. Not to exceed four (4) pages, double-spaced.

Compile all documents (1-5) into **ONE** PDF in the order above. During the application process via the [AAHHE Submission Portal](#), applicants will upload the PDF to the submission portal with the file name LastName\_FirstName.pdf.

What is the general judging process that will be used in the competition?

The judging will occur in two phases.

The first phase uses the Dissertation Summaries as a basis of selection. The ODC Chair will send the Dissertation Summaries to a panel of judges who will evaluate them using the rubric attached to these guidelines (see p. 4). Each judge will be asked to submit a Dissertation Summary ranking score. Based on the judges’ rankings, the ODC Chair will determine the top seven (7) to ten (10) Dissertation Summaries and these become the semifinalists.

In the second phase, the ODC chair contacts the semifinalists and requests a copy of the complete dissertation. The panel of judges will evaluate the complete dissertations using the rubric attached to these guidelines as a basis for the selection’s second phase. The panel of judges will convene to discuss and rank the complete dissertations and will determine the top three (3) dissertations, and honorable mentions, if applicable.

What are the most important dates and deadlines?

The schedule below, in addition to providing important dates and deadlines, provides additional information about the process.

May 16, 2023            Call for proposals opens via [AAHHE Submissions Portal](#).

- August 8, 2023 Call for proposals closes. By this date, applicants have submitted a Dissertation Summary (as one complete document; PDF) via the AAHHE submission portal. AAHHE will forward a copy of the summary to the Outstanding Dissertations Competition Chair Dr. David Garcia.
- August 15, 2023 Chair distributes dissertation summaries to judges.
- September 12, 2023 Judges complete screening and advise the Chair of rankings.
- September 18, 2023 Chair determines the top seven (7) to ten (10) Dissertation Summaries. AAHHE announces all semifinalists and requests that semifinalists submit a complete dissertation
- September 22, 2023 AAHHE notifies all semifinalists
- September 29, 2023 Semifinalists submit a copy of complete dissertation in PDF format via the AAHHE submission portal. A link to the portal will be provided to all semifinalists.
- October 10, 2023 Panel of judges confers and selects the top three (3) dissertations and honorable mentions, if any.
- October 11, 2023 Chair notifies results to winners and non-selected applicants. Winners are invited to present their dissertations at the AAHHE National Conference.
- October 24, 2023 Winners submit a color digital headshot photo (JPEG), a narrative bio (max. 200 words) and a 75 word dissertation summary via the AAHHE Submission Portal.
- March 2024 Winners present their dissertations at the AAHHE National Conference.

*Announcements will be posted on the website of both AAHHE and ETS and advertised in the Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, Hispanic Outlook of Higher Education and other journals. ETS will announce the competition results to its constituencies.*

#### What recognition will be given to the finalists?

There will be two levels of finalists. The first level consists of the first, second, and third place finalists. The second level, if applicable, consists of those who are recognized as Honorable Mention (out of the remaining semi-finalists). All finalists are required to be AAHHE members.

The first place winner will receive an award \$3,000 and an AAHHE Award. The second place and third place winners will receive an award of \$2,000 and \$1,000, respectively, and an AAHHE/ETS framed certificate.

The three (3) finalists will be formally recognized at 2024 AAHHE National Conference in March 2024. If applicable, AAHHE will reimburse travel expenses within the continental U.S. for the three (3) finalists, to include hotel room for two (2) nights and per diem for two (2) days. All winners will receive complimentary conference registrations.

The three (3) finalists are given the opportunity to present their dissertations in individual concurrent sessions at the conference.

Who makes the final decision? All decisions by the panel of judges are final.

**AAHHE & ETS OUTSTANDING DISSERTATIONS COMPETITION  
DISSERTATION SUMMARY RUBRIC**

Category	Exemplary	Good	Satisfactory	Not Acceptable	Absent	Score
(1) Abstract (Includes purpose, research problem, methods used, major findings, and significance to Hispanic community; 250 words max)	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(2) Statement of the problem	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(3) Purpose of the study	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(4) Conceptual model, theoretical framework, and/or orientation, and literature review	13-15	9-12	5-8	1-4	0	
(5) Methodology - Quantitative: participants, instrumentation, hypotheses or research questions, and data analysis; Qualitative: participants, instrumentation, research questions, and data analysis (coding, software used, rationale, triangulation, themes, interpretations, conclusions).	16-20	11-15	6-10	1-5	0	
(6) Major findings	9-10	6-8	3-5	1-2	0	
(7) Conclusions	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(8) Implications	9-10	6-8	3-5	1-2	0	
(9) Significance to the broader research community	9-10	6-8	3-5	1-2	0	
(10) Significance to the Hispanic community	9-10	6-8	3-5	1-2	0	
(11) Overall clarity, grammar, spelling and organization	5	3-4	2	1	0	
Total Score						/100

**AAHHE & ETS OUTSTANDING DISSERTATIONS COMPETITION  
COMPLETE DISSERTATION RUBRIC**

Category	Exemplary	Good	Satisfactory	Not Acceptable	Absent	Score
(1) Statement of the problem	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(2) Purpose of the study	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(3) Conceptual model, theoretical framework, and/or orientation	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(4) Literature review	9-10	6-8	3-5	1-2	0	
(5) Methodology: Participants/sample/dataset/case study	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(6) Methodology: Instrumentation/Protocol	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(7) Methodology: Research questions & hypotheses	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(8) Methodology: Data Analysis Qualitative: coding, software used, rationale, triangulation, themes, interpretations, conclusions, if applicable; Quantitative: appropriate statistical analysis used and results interpreted correctly, validity and reliability of scores addressed.	9-10	6-8	3-5	1-2	0	
(9) Major findings	9-10	6-8	3-5	1-2	0	
(10) Conclusions	5	3-4	2	1	0	
(11) Implications	9-10	6-8	3-5	1-2	0	
(12) Significance to the broader research community	9-10	6-8	3-5	1-2	0	
(13) Significance to the Hispanic community	9-10	6-8	3-5	1-2	0	
(14) Overall clarity, grammar, spelling and organization	5	3-4	2	1	0	
Total Score						/100