

A Data-Driven Approach to Improving Doctoral Completion

Maureen Grasso
Dean of The Graduate School

Melissa Barry
Doctoral Completion Project Coordinator

Thomas Valentine
Professor of Adult Education

The University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia



COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS

THE CGS OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES ON INCLUSIVENESS, VOLUME
TWO

A Data-Driven Approach to Improving Doctoral Completion

By Maureen Grasso, Melissa Barry, and Thomas Valentine

Copyright © 2007 University of Georgia and Council of Graduate Schools, Washington, DC. This publication is copyrighted, but may be quoted without permission providing that the source is identified as: Maureen Grasso, Melissa Barry, and Thomas Valentine (2009). *A Data-Driven Approach to Improving Doctoral Completion*. Washington, DC: Council of Graduate Schools.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The Crucial Issue of Doctoral Non-completion	6
2. Description of Projects	8
3. What University Administrators Can Do to Improve Completion Rates	13
4. Attracting the <i>Right</i> Applicants	23
5. Admitting the <i>Right</i> Students	26
6. Facilitating Positive Student-Faculty Relationships	29
7. Encouraging Student Cohesiveness	33
8. Summary of Recommendations for Improving Doctoral Completion	35
REFERENCES	40
APPENDIX	42

TABLES

1. Four Conditions for Optimal Doctoral Completion	10
2. Completion Rankings of 11 Programs at The UGA	17
3. Time-to-Degree Rankings of 11 Programs at The UGA.....	17
4. Completion Rate Benchmarks at The UGA	18
5. Time-to-Degree Benchmarks at The UGA.....	19
6. Withdrawal Rate Benchmarks at The UGA.....	19
7. Time-to-Withdrawal Benchmarks at The UGA.....	19

RESOURCES

1. Program Practices Survey (Example)	43
2. Program Statistical Report	45
3. Faculty Discussion Guide.....	48
4. Program Self-Assessment (Example)	52
5. Program Self-Study	54