The Colloquia Experience FAQs

Why is there a residency requirement in the doctoral program?
The in-person colloquium experience is a key element of the doctoral program at Capella University and is linked to the academic online curricula offered by the schools. The school-based academic programs provide the depth and breadth of coursework required for the doctorate, and the colloquia provide hands-on developmental learning experiences that optimize the face-to-face encounter between learners, faculty, support and administrative resources. Essentially, colloquia provide a level of intensity, intellectual stimulation, and collegiality that expands, enlarges, and concentrates in-person learning and community building opportunities that aren’t feasible in the online courseroom.

Why is it important for me to attend colloquia at recommended times?
Faculty recognize that earning a doctoral degree is a demanding, challenging, and lengthy process that we term “becoming doctoral”. Part of this transformation takes place in the in-person company of your peers, faculty, and Capella staff at colloquia. For example, to help you start the program with a clear understanding of the commitment you’re making and what it will involve, the Track 1 colloquia emphasizes learning experiences specifically designed to meet for your needs at the early stage in the program. Each next colloquium you attend has specific learning and community building experiences that take into account your continuing development in becoming doctoral. Attending at the recommended times, therefore, can optimize the benefits at each stage of your program: at the beginning, mid-way, and prior to the comprehensive examination.

What’s unique about the colloquium experience?
Your in-person colloquium experiences with faculty, peers, staff, and stimulating, enjoyable, and supportive environment provide tangible evidence of your connection with a larger university community of scholars. The three colloquium experiences (COL-R8921, COL-R8922, COL-R8923), positioned at specific times in the doctoral program, are progress milestones. The atmosphere in which colloquia take place promotes the acquisition, affirmation and application of doctoral competencies associated with becoming a scholar practitioner1 in ways that can’t be duplicated in an online course. Understanding of adult learning styles and needs, within a context of sensitivity to multiculturalism and diversity, is integral to a dynamic and inspiring colloquium experience.

How can the colloquium experience help me succeed in the doctoral program?
The focus of the learning experience at each colloquium reflects both your increasing development of the doctoral competencies and application of these essential competencies when at colloquium. What you learn at colloquium can help you apply

1 See the Colloquia Doctoral Competencies and Learning Outcomes and/or The Doctoral Competencies FAQs.
academic skills to current and upcoming coursework. In addition, as you advance in the
program, the colloquium emphasis on research skills and competencies can be used to
plan dissertation research, take advantage of on site resource experts, and network with
peers who are at the same point in the program.

What do I need to know about “academic skills”?
“Academic skills” consist of abilities, methods, and strategies you will use when
completing coursework, while you participate in colloquia, and when you work on the
comprehensive examination and dissertation (e.g., academic writing, library research,
discourse, critical thinking, academic integrity). The colloquium experience provides
numerous opportunities for you to engage in self-assessment of your academic skill
sets. Knowing your strengths and areas for improvement can help you plan your
colloquium schedule.

How do I self-assess my “academic skills” at colloquium?
There are numerous opportunities to learn about your proficiencies in academic skills
during interactions with faculty (e.g., Library and Writing Center appointments or
sessions), during meetings with faculty, in academic sessions, with Capella learner
support resource experts (e.g., Doctoral Advisors) or with peers through information
sharing conversations.

As an illustration for the Track 1 learner, gaining insights about the professional
communication competency can take place during cohort meeting discussions that
provide a supportive setting in which to talk about this topic. School specialization
meetings provide opportunities for learners at different points in the program to share
strategies for developing skills and monitoring progress. For example, feedback from a
course instructor may highlight academic skill development needs that you can address
while at colloquium through bringing a writing sample from the courseroom that can be
used during a 1:1 appointment with Writing Program faculty.

It’s important to realize that when it comes to developing academic skill sets, the depth
of application of academic skills will change as you progress through the doctoral
program. As you become proficient in the academic skills that support foundation
coursework, for instance, you’ll then be able to expand and refine these skills for
advanced coursework, the comprehensive examination and the dissertation.

How can I optimize my colloquium experience to acquire or expand my academic
skill sets?
The colloquium brings together academic skill set development experts and learners in
an in-person environment that supports learning in a respectful, sensitive setting while
optimizing insight and acceptance of teaching and follow-up recommendations. If you’ve
received courseroom feedback and faculty recommendations or referral to pursue
specific colloquium resources (e.g., academic writing skill development), colloquium
provides multiple opportunities to follow through with those recommendations. In
addition, this experience supports your exploration, refinement, and continuing use of
extensive resources available through your learner iGuide after colloquium to continue to
build essential academic skill set strengths.

What are some of the highlights of the colloquium experience?
Colloquium provides daily opportunities for learners to interact with faculty as teachers of
academic sessions, as exemplars of being scholar-practitioners within the professional
disciplines and specializations, and as on-site mentors of the doctoral transformation process. Through the scheduled as well as informal encounters with faculty, you are able to engage in scholarly communication, receive feedback on elements of your doctoral program, and experience mentoring as a continuous process of collegial interaction, supportive coaching, and guidance. These experiences reflect a central element of the doctoral education process: Becoming socialized into your field and specialization through interaction with faculty who model being doctoral scholar practitioners.

**How will colloquium help me plan my coursework?**
The colloquia curriculum is designed to provide educational opportunities that are linked to, but do not duplicate, the academic curricula in your school. Your participation in content sessions can prepare you for upcoming academic coursework, assist with current coursework, or further refine or apply understanding from academic coursework already completed. In addition, exposure to content in academic sessions may suggest coursework that you will consider including in your doctoral program of studies. The academic sessions further offer opportunities to demystify advanced academic concepts, gain a deeper understanding of the rationale for academic coursework requirements, and expand your understanding of coursework options across the University.

**How will colloquium help me build identification with my specialization?**
Inherent in the colloquium experience is the theme of identifying with your discipline or profession at the doctoral level of scholarship and practice. This experience outcome pervades the residency experience as you interact with faculty from your respective discipline or specialization as well as with faculty from different disciplines. This colloquium experience outcome is incorporated into the context for learning through academic sessions, peer networking, specialization and discipline specific meetings, and other activities that allow you to visualize your professional role as a scholar practitioner as you earn your doctoral degree.

**What will I take with me after the colloquium?**
There are several types of “take-aways” from the colloquium experience….we’ll mention several here. One take-away is very tangible in the form of the notes and resource information you compile from the academic sessions you’ve attended and appointments with academic skills faculty you’ve kept. This information becomes portfolio entries that you compile, retain, and can refer to as you progress through the program. The notations you make about academic resources will be especially useful on a day-to-day basis in coursework.

A second take-away is more intangible, highly personal and individualized to your own learning experience and needs. At colloquium and after it is completed, you’ll be self-reflecting on what you learned about becoming doctoral. This can include the insights you gained about your own needs to strengthen or refine academic skills that will be applied to coursework and the comprehensive examination. Considering how you’re progressing in development of the doctoral competencies is an important part of the self-reflective practice that is part of the scholar practitioner role.

A third take-away that may emerge from the colloquium experience has to do with the evolution of dissertation ideas. At the beginning of the doctoral program, dissertation ideas generated at the first colloquium typically are broad in scope and often unfocused. As each colloquium is completed alongside coursework activities, the initial ideas may
be replaced by new ones or undergo significant refinement. Keeping these ideas on file following the colloquium will help with the eventual narrowing of the dissertation topic.

The fourth and often most highly evaluated take-away from the colloquium experience are the collegial relationships that form between peers, learners and faculty, and learners and Capella staff. These relationships are part of your learning community, are powerful sources of professional and academic networking, and offer peer support that enables you to make steady progress in achieving each milestone in the doctoral program.