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**Author**

GARDNER, Susan K.

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**Abstract**

Sixty doctoral students and 34 faculty members were interviewed in departments identified as having high and low doctoral student completion rates at one institution in the United States in order to examine the cultural contexts and structures that facilitate or hinder doctoral student completion. This paper outlines the differences in understandings of doctoral student attrition by role and by department using attribution theory. Implications for policy, practice, and further research are included. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Gardner, Susan K., E-Mail: [sudsan.k.gardner@maine.edu](mailto:sudsan.k.gardner@maine.edu)