



Nova Southeastern University

Health Professions Division

College of Health Care Sciences

Dissertation Guide

2017

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THE DISSERTATION PROCESS

This guide describes expectations for the dissertation, dissertation components, and their proper sequence as well as general instructions for successful completion of the dissertation process. This guide defines a dissertation, how to find a topic, how to select a dissertation advisor/chair, the dissertation committee, and how the candidate will prepare and submit each of three key documents to complete in the process: the idea paper proposal, the dissertation proposal, and the dissertation report.

The dissertation is the most important requirement for the PhD degree. With the help and approval of an advisor, the candidate is expected to select an appropriate topic of sufficient scope to satisfy the requirements for the dissertation. The dissertation is original, rigorous research work carried out with substantial independence by the doctoral candidate. It represents a significant extrapolation from a base of solid experience or knowledge in the area of concentration. In a significant way, the dissertation advances knowledge, improves professional practice, or contributes to understanding in the field of study. Dissertation work is presented in a logical and understandable fashion.

Originality, independence, and rigor deserve some explanation. Originality means that the research is conceived, performed, and documented primarily by the doctoral candidate. To be rigorous, the research work is characterized by strict accuracy and scrupulous honesty and presents precise distinctions among facts, implications, and suppositions. Rigor is achieved by using demonstrable facts when reporting procedures and results, by building on a foundation of facts when drawing conclusions, by specifying links to facts when inferring implications, by always bringing forward all relevant data, and by being both self-critical and logical in reporting (Mauch & Birch, 1993). The dissertation must be of sufficient strength to be able to distill from it a paper worthy of publication in a journal or in conference proceedings or to use it as the basis of a textbook or monograph.

Candidacy Requirement

The candidacy examination is a comprehensive written examination that candidates will take after the completion of all the required course work and before beginning the dissertation phase of the PhD program. It is designed for the candidate to demonstrate that he/she is a suitable candidate for a PhD degree. Successful completion of the comprehensive examination is required to move to advanced standing and begin dissertation research.

Getting Started

Candidates are encouraged to keep a running list of possible dissertation research topics as they proceed in the program. For each topic, provide a title, a short description of the possible idea, an indication of the source of the idea, relevant references, and topic discussion feedback from faculty members. The candidate's research interests may change throughout the program, thus keeping track of even mildly interesting potential topics can be worthwhile.

It is important for candidates to communicate with faculty members about interests and possible topics. Candidates can communicate with faculty via e-mail or phone. In addition,

candidates are encouraged to make appointments to meet with faculty members. Remember that faculty are available to talk with candidates, and candidates should take advantage of every opportunity to meet with faculty.

Candidates are expected to use the library, the Internet, and the World Wide Web extensively. Candidates may use the University's electronic library, which can be accessed through their NSU email account. Note, it is necessary to go through the Health Professions Division (HPD) Library (<http://www.nova.edu/hpdlibrary/>) to access all the available databases.

Many candidates become anxious because they do not have a dissertation topic, but this anxiety is not unusual, and almost every candidate goes through this search process. Candidates may also experience one or more false starts that result in the search for new topics, which is also a normal part of the process and should be expected. Resources for dissertation samples are found at (<http://www.dissertation.com>) or use the search engine Google and type in “dissertation.”

IDEA PAPER PROPOSAL

The idea paper or draft proposal should be a short document approximately seven to 14 double-spaced pages in length. Candidates will risk rejection by submitting shorter or longer papers. The dissertation idea paper proposal needs to be clearly and concisely stated with supporting documentation. It is not intended to be a one-time or static document. As dissertation work proceeds, goals evolve.

Format and Content of the Idea Paper Proposal

Use following outline and instructions for the idea paper proposal. The candidate should refer to him/herself as “the investigator” and refer to his/her study as the “dissertation study” to be clear in distinguishing the dissertation study from studies in the literature used to support points made. **Use the following level one headings.** For a qualitative study, see the information starting on page 31 because the language is a little different from other study designs.

Use the present tense. Use the past tense when referring to studies from the literature. Remember the active voice is preferred. Be careful not to give a human quality to an inanimate object, which is anthropomorphism. Studies, findings, results, literature, research, theories, tables, or figures **cannot** explain, compare, deduce, explore, examine, assess, conclude, interpret, support, discuss, address, focus, highlight, provide, give, or determine anything. Objects have a limited vocabulary. They **can** find, show, indicate, demonstrate, and include. Only people or organizations can perform actions. Instead, have author doing the action, or use the passive voice. Remember to be clear when referring to the dissertation study and referring to studies that support the dissertation study.

Problem Statement and Goal

A concise statement of the problem to be addressed (why the work is being undertaken) and a concise definition of the goal of the work (the accomplishment of the work) will be addressed in this section. Candidates should provide supporting evidence of the problem and goal from the literature. Every effort should be made to define a goal that is measurable. The goal contained in the idea paper is a step in that direction. In other words, it attempts to establish some degree of measurability. Many candidates do not provide an adequate statement of the problem, which has been the basis for rejection. Candidates must clearly identify the need for the research and the outcome the research will accomplish in order to establish the basis for the dissertation research.

Research Question or Hypothesis

In this section, the candidate will state the preliminary research question(s) to be answered by the study. State any hypothesis or hypotheses that will be tested.

Relevance and Significance

The statement of the problem that will be addressed will be strengthened in this section. It contains a brief description of the relative value of the work proposed. While a full literature search is not required at this stage, a brief discussion and synthesis of at least 10 to 15 references of key relevant work must be included. Knowledge, improvement in professional practice, and/or contribution to understanding in the field of study must be significantly advanced by the dissertation research. It should answer the “So what?” question. In essence, looking forward, it should be possible to distill from a completed dissertation a paper that is worthy of publication in a journal or conference proceedings or as a textbook or monograph.

Practical Applications of the Findings

In this section, there should be an answer to the question “Who cares?” How might/will the results of the research be applied to the candidate’s field of interest?

Barriers and Issues

In this section, pre-existing barriers and current issues relative to the candidate’s chosen topic are identified. Why has this goal not already been met? Is it because the work is difficult and the solution elusive? If the answer is yes, it might make it appropriate for a dissertation. If, on the other hand, the work would be easy but no one until now has thought of it, then it might not be doctoral-level work. In this section, the candidate will discuss the underlying problem(s) and issues and the expected degree of difficulty of the solution.

Approach

In this section, the candidate will state how he/she expects to accomplish the stated goal. The candidate will prepare a sequential list of the proposed major steps that will accomplish the goal, including the proposed conceptual methodology.

Resources

In this section, the candidate provides a preliminary description of the facilities or human resources to be used to accomplish the stated goal.

References

The reference list has an entry for every work cited in the sections from the problem statement and goal through the approach. Do not include sources not used to write the paper. There must be a matching in-text citation for every entry in the reference list. It should follow either AMA or APA style. Upon committee approval of the idea paper proposal, the candidate's advisor will notify the Program Director. A copy of the approved idea paper is kept on file in the program office.

Dissertation Committee

The formation of the dissertation committee is one of the most important steps in the dissertation process. Candidates will be eligible to begin their dissertation research upon successful passage of the comprehensive/qualifying examination. The Program Director will advise the candidate when to initiate the formation of a dissertation committee. Based on general discussion, the Program Director will recommend NSU faculty with expertise in the identified area of proposed research.

Upon discussion of the idea paper with the Program Director or potential committee chair, the candidate will communicate directly with potential committee members. The Program Director or committee chair may recommend faculty members who may be contacted to explore the possibility of their serving on the candidate's committee. A dialogue between the candidate and the potential committee members is recommended. These individuals should be given copies of the candidate's preliminary idea paper for their review prior to committing to serve on the candidate's committee. Committee members must be approved by the dissertation chair and the completely formed committee must be approved by the Program Director. Ideas for topics may come from many sources, including course materials and assignments. The more the candidate reads the literature, the topic selection will be easier.

Composition/Formation of the Dissertation Committee

The PhD candidate will need to form a dissertation committee prior to starting the dissertation proposal. At minimum, a committee chair and second member must be officially identified and approved prior to developing the student's specific dissertation proposal. The third member must be included before the approval of the final proposal. The dissertation committee assumes responsibility for overseeing and assuring the quality of the candidate's dissertation proposal, study, and dissertation report.

Committee Members

Each dissertation committee will consist of at least three members: two from the NSU doctoral faculty¹ and one outside² person. Candidates should discuss their research interests and dissertation proposal ideas with select faculty members to determine whether there is a mutually satisfactory fit (topic area or methodology). The chairperson and committee members should be selected with care because it is the intent that these individuals will serve through to completion of the final dissertation. A good working relationship is necessary as the candidate and committee chairperson will make many decisions together. The candidate should not be discouraged if a faculty member declines a request to be a committee member. Faculty members have varying workloads, and some are already committed to a number of dissertation committees. Also, a faculty member may feel that she or he may not be the best person to meet the student's needs.

Qualifications for the second committee member include the following:

- Earned dissertation research doctorate.
- Expertise in area of research or methodology.

Qualifications for the third committee member include the following:

- Earned doctorate.
- Expertise in area of research topic or methodology.

The candidate will submit the following to his/her committee chair and PhD Program Director in writing:

- Rationale for the third committee member for student's dissertation.
- Curriculum vitae (CV) of the potential third committee member.
- Letters of agreement will be sent to committee members as appropriate per program guidelines. The letter and agreement form will be sent by the PhD Program Director. An optional fourth member may be added to the committee at the discretion of the chairperson and student.

After selecting his or her committee and receiving approval for the third member from the chair of the committee and PhD Program Director, the student must complete the **Appointment of Dissertation Committee form**. Any request for changes in the committee composition must be made in writing and approved by the student's chairperson and PhD Program Director. As per program policy, the honorarium will be paid to committee members when the candidate successfully defends or completes his/her dissertation.

¹ Occupational Therapy PhD Program requires the committee chair to be an NSU Occupational Therapy full time faculty member; the second member may be NSU Occupational Therapy faculty member fulltime or adjunct. Physical Therapy and Health Science PhD Programs require the chair and the second member to be NSU full time or adjunct faculty.

² Occupational Therapy PhD Program requires the third committee member to come from outside of NSU. PT and Health Science allow the third member to be either NSU faculty or an outside expert.

Operation of the Committee

After the committee has been formed, it shall operate under the leadership of the dissertation chair, who has the primary responsibility for advising and guiding the candidate. The chair will keep the committee informed about the candidate's progress and will ensure that the committee provides guidance, evaluation, and consultation. The candidate must avoid taking or assuming direction from a committee member who might result in a change in approach or direction of the research without first coordinating with the advisor/chair. Each committee member will be required to indicate the approval of the formal dissertation proposal as well as the final dissertation report by his or her signature.

Committee and Candidate's Responsibilities

Chair of the Committee

- Serves as the candidate's research advisor.
- Assumes primary responsibility for supervising the candidate, including the following:
- Helps candidate and other members define their roles.
- Helps candidate to narrow topic into a feasible and appropriate dissertation study.
- Helps assure research is meaningful and will add to the body of knowledge and reflect the mission and educational outcomes of the program.
- Collaborates with the candidate regarding the timeline the candidate has developed to facilitate continued progress on the dissertation.
- Gives substantive feedback about the candidate's research process (proposal, implementation, analysis, and report).
- Has the final word in areas of disagreement among members and/or between members and the candidate.
- Conducts the candidate's oral defense.
- Will be the approving authority (for the dissertation committee) of the final dissertation report prior to submissions and binding.

Members of the Committee

Members serve on the candidate's dissertation committee in which they offer expertise in methodology or topic area in the following roles:

- Give substantive and organizational recommendations for sections or areas of their expertise (or strong interest).
- Participate in the dissertation proposal development and approval process; participate in the dissertation report development and approval process.
- Participate in the committee's decision-making process.
- Participates in the defenses (proposal and dissertation report) and approves both documents for those programs that require oral defense.

The Candidate's Responsibilities

- Thoughtfully seeks out appropriate faculty for her/his committee.
- Takes responsibility to develop and adhere to a feasible timeline for the dissertation milestones.

- Is responsible for timely and accurate communication with the chair and committee members through all phases of the dissertation process.
- Relies on the committee chair as the primary mentor and approving authority on all aspects of the dissertation process.
- Works closely with the committee chair throughout the dissertation process and works with the committee chair and members to develop a feasible and relevant dissertation proposal.
- Submits dissertation research to IRB for approval soon after proposal is approved by committee.
- Seeks outside editorial and statistical/methodological assistance as needed.
- Checks with chairperson and committee members before making any changes in process or analysis.
- Submits drafts of chapters for feedback.
- Prepares for a successful oral defense (proposal and dissertation report).
- Is responsible for writing at a scholarly level.
- Works independently on all dissertation documents, including the proposal and dissertation report (complete and sign the Certification of Authorship form, See Appendix B) and is responsible for giving appropriate credit for all word content, ideas, and thoughts where it is due.
- Secures copy editing through a professional editor as per program guidelines at his/her expense.

Governance of Serving on Doctoral Committees

In some instances, a change in the composition of the committee may be needed due to unforeseen circumstances. If a change of advisor/chair is required, the Program Director must be notified, and the process described previously regarding agreement to serve as Advisor must be followed. In that case, the faculty member who agrees to serve as Advisor must review and upon approval, sign the dissertation tracking form and indicate approval of the idea paper. If there is no change of advisor, the process described previously for committee formation must be followed.

All committee members, including the chair, must be approved by the Program Director. Generally speaking, committee chairs must be full-time, part-time, or adjunct NSU faculty. All CV, including areas of expertise, are maintained on file for all NSU faculty. If the candidate requests approval for a committee member who is external to NSU, the candidate must submit that individual's CV directly to the Program Director for consideration and final approval. The candidate must also provide narrative information with the CV that describes the expertise of the proposed committee member and a description of the role of that committee member in the dissertation process.

Once the Program Director has reviewed all information about all committee members, including the chair, the candidate will be advised if the individual is qualified to serve. Once approval is received, it is the candidate's responsibility to obtain the appropriate signature (PhD dissertation tracking form) and submit it to the program chair.

If during the dissertation process, the candidate perceives that a committee member, including the chair, may be hindering the progress of the dissertation, the candidate must communicate the concerns directly with the Program Director. It is then the responsibility of the Program Director to communicate with all parties involved to remediate the situation. In cases in which remediation is not possible with current committee members, the Program Director will advise the candidate about alternatives. In the event that a committee member, including the chair, is unable to serve, the Program Director will advise alternatives as well.

Important Time Limits

Candidates must complete all doctoral program requirements within 7 years from starting the PhD program. Failure to complete the requirements within the time frame may result in the candidate's dismissal from the program.

Candidates may petition for an extension of time for completing the dissertation only in the event of unforeseen extenuating circumstances, such as medical/health conditions or other long-term issues that may result in leave of absences from the program. Candidates may only have one extension during their doctoral education program at NSU. Time limit extension requests must be submitted in writing to the PhD Program Director. All appeals or waivers must be approved by the Program Director and the Dean.

Dissertation Course

The candidate is considered a PhD candidate after successfully completing the qualifying/comprehensive examination process. The candidate will enroll in dissertation as per program guidelines for each term until the dissertation report is complete. The candidate must demonstrate effort/progress in dissertation each term as determined by the committee chair. The PhD programs recommend that the committee chair requires the candidate to develop an agreed upon set of objectives to be completed at the beginning of each upcoming term. The candidate will report to the chair his/her progress or status by the end of each term. Regular communication between the chair and candidate is ensured by this dissertation process.

Formal Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal (see format in this document) is the first *formal* aspect of the dissertation, which is brought before the entire doctoral dissertation committee for its approval. The candidate works closely with her/his committee chair, who will instruct the candidate about when to distribute copies to the other committee members for their review and comments. If a committee member's suggested modifications are in conflict with the chair, there should be a committee discussion to clarify and resolve the conflicts, preferably with the candidate. However, the chair has the final say. The chair should discuss any unresolved conflicts with the PhD Program Director, who may assist with a resolution.

The framework within which research will be conducted shows evidence of the candidate's qualifications to pursue the research. Concepts and theories underlying the study are articulated; the problem is clearly stated; a specific, measurable goal is specified; a thorough literature review is presented; the methods for conducting the research are delineated; and a

strategy to achieve the goal is given. The proposal is written in the present and future tenses and indicates the outcome the candidate will accomplish in executing the investigation. An effectively formulated dissertation proposal becomes a blueprint for developing the final dissertation report.

Generally, the formal dissertation proposal is evaluated on the basis of the content and clarity of the introduction, literature review, procedures, and the effectiveness with which the document is organized and planned. Factors affecting the evaluation process include the purpose, significance of the investigation, and the appropriateness of procedures chosen to meet the goal.

The candidate's committee chair will perform an in-depth analysis of the proposal, and at the appropriate time, the committee chair will instruct the candidate to distribute copies to the committee members for their review and comments. The candidate's committee members will make all instructions and requests for modifications directly to the candidate with a copy to the committee chair. If those modifications conflict with suggestions made by the chair, the candidate will contact her/his chair, who has the final say.

As per program guidelines, candidates will use the most current edition of AMA/APA format for all proposals and reports for dissertation research, including typeface, spacing, headings, reference and citation style, and so forth. Specific program guidelines may take precedence if there is a conflict with AMA/APA format. Suggested *minimum* length of the proposal is 20 pages, which does **not** include references and appendices. However, the committee chair can decide on other limits.

Note: Candidates must complete and sign a Certification of Authorship form with the initial complete draft dissertation proposal for review and with the final dissertation proposal (see Appendix B). Signed Certification of Authorship will be maintained in the candidate's file.

Dissertation Proposal Defense (Per program guidelines)

As per program guidelines, candidates must orally defend the proposal to the entire dissertation committee. After the committee is satisfied that the candidate has met the identified requirements, the candidate and each committee member will sign the proposal, which becomes the "contract" for dissertation study. Any variance from the proposal must be amended, and all amendments must be approved by the dissertation committee and the IRB. The committee must ensure that all procedures from recruiting subjects to data analyses are adequately detailed and defined to meet requirements and assumptions of those procedures. The dissertation proposal defense presentation must enable replication of the candidate's research by other researchers. If other researchers were to obtain results that do not agree with a candidate's findings, doubt would be cast on the integrity of his/her research.

Develop a Timeline for the Dissertation Research

After the dissertation topic has been approved, the candidate will provide an estimated timeline to her/his committee for the following milestones: complete draft proposal submission, proposal defense, institutional review board (IRB) protocol approval, study implementation date

(includes advertising/recruiting subjects), data analyses, completion of the dissertation report, dissertation defense, and graduation. Note that the candidate will not be held accountable to meeting milestone dates, but the timeline can be useful as a guide for the committee chair and the candidate in planning the dissertation phases. The timeline also has realistic target dates for the candidate and chair. Timelines can be adjusted or revised during the proposal and study phases, and agreed upon objectives and tasks for each upcoming term should also be documented. See Appendix C for the Dissertation Tracking form.

Outline and Format

The following outline and instructions must be followed unless the proposal is of a **qualitative** nature, which requires a different format, which is described, beginning on page 31. The details for the front and back matter for the proposal are the same for quantitative and qualitative studies.

The candidate should refer to him/herself as “the investigator” and refer to his/her study as the “dissertation study” to be clear in distinguishing the dissertation study from studies in the literature used to support points made.

The dissertation proposal is composed of the first three of the five chapters that make up the final dissertation report. The outline for the formal dissertation proposal follows:

Front Matter

These pages are not numbered

1. Title Page.
2. Abstract
3. Table of Contents
4. List of Tables
5. List of Figures

The Text

Start the page numbering with the first page of Chapter 1, according to APA or AMA style. Each chapter starts on a new page.

Chapter 1: Introduction (The chapter identifier is a level one heading.)

This chapter includes the following topics, and the level one headings and subheadings for the chapter may be derived from the topics. The following headings are suggested headings for level one and level two. Make adjustments as needed to fit the candidate’s study. Use the present tense. Use the past tense when referring to studies from the literature.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Chapter

Summary of the information to be presented

Background to the Problem

Population statistics, provide the context, issues

Statement of the Problem

Issue to be investigated and goal to be achieved

Relevance

Significance, purpose, or need for the study

Elements**Theories****Research Questions****Hypotheses****Definitions of Terms**

Use conceptual and operational definitions if appropriate as level two headings

1. Term one. Use paragraphs in a series to display information vertically.
2. Term two. Explanation and citations if appropriate follow the term.
3. Notice the format. This format is used for paragraphs in a series.

Description of Variables

Describe dependent, independent, and covariates

Rationale

Describe the rationale and need for the study

Assumptions

Describe the assumptions that you assume to be true but not necessarily verified

Summary of the Chapter

The summary is one or two paragraphs

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This chapter includes the following topics. There are examples of possible level one and level two headings. Make adjustments as needed to fit the candidate's study.

Use the past tense when referring to studies from the literature. Remember the active voice is preferred. Be careful not to give a human quality to an inanimate object, which is anthropomorphism. Studies, findings, results, literature, research, theories, tables, or figures **cannot** explain, compare, deduce, explore, examine, assess, conclude, interpret, support, discuss, address, focus, highlight, provide, give, or determine anything. Objects have a limited

vocabulary. They **can** find, show, indicate, demonstrate, and include. Only people or organizations can perform actions. Instead, have author doing the action, or use the passive voice. Remember to be clear when referring to the dissertation study and referring to studies that support the dissertation study.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction to the Chapter

Summary of the information to be presented

Historical Overview

Brief summary of relevant theory(ies) and research literature on topic
The candidate will use his/her own subheadings for the following topics. What is known and unknown about the topic? Summarize and critique of the known and unknown and describe how these are linked connection to the research. Critique of validity of theory and research in the literature, instruments (description, history, development, application in other studies, reliability, validity, trustworthiness), procedures (description, history, development, application), and so forth as applicable to the candidate's study

Relevant Theory

What is known and unknown about the topic? The candidate will use his/her own subheadings. Give a summary and critique of the known and unknown and a discussion of how these are linked connection to the candidate's research. Critique of validity of theory and research in the literature, instruments (description, history, development, application in other studies, reliability, validity, trustworthiness), procedures (description, history, development, application), and so forth as applicable to the candidate's study.

Relevant Concepts

Not covered under relevant theory

Relevant Contexts

Reflexivity, clinical experience, or issues if a qualitative study

Summary of Literature

(One or two paragraphs)

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter includes the following topics. The level one headings (and other subheadings) for the chapter may be derived from the topics. Examples of level one and level two headings are listed. Make adjustments as needed to fit your study. Use present and future tenses.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction to the Chapter

Summary of the information to be presented

Research Design and Methodology

Study Design

Rationale

If more than a few sentences, this section should go in Chapter 2

Threats

Describe how they will be addressed

Strengths and Weaknesses of Design

Specific Procedures

Subjects (Participants)

Power

Sample Size

Inclusion Criteria

Address how determined

Exclusion Criteria

Address how determined

Characteristics

Recruiting Procedures

Formats for Presenting Results

Resource Requirement

Reliability and Validity

Timeline

This information will not be part of the final dissertation

Ethical Considerations and Review

IRB, HPD Research Committee, HIPPA, other

Funding

State the source of the funding, or state the study is unfunded

Study Setting

Instruments and Measures

If applicable, describe measures, data type/level, use or application procedures, reliability and validity of measures, and equipment needed

Pilot Study Summary

If applicable, describe the pilot study and how it is linked to study

Data Collection Procedures

(Remember, data is plural and takes plural verbs and pronouns)

Data Analyses

Describe management of data, all analyses, include rationale for use of analytical procedure for data type to answer research questions

Format for Presenting Results

Anticipated Limitations and Delimitations

As applied to the results and interpretation of the data**

Summary of the Chapter

****Anticipated limitations and delimitations of the study**

Note: 1. *In the final dissertation report, this section will move to Chapter 5. Candidates will drop the word “anticipated” as the candidate will report, describe, and discuss the actual limitations and delimitations of the study.*

Note: 2. *A **limitation** is a factor that may affect the study but is not under your control. A **delimitation** is a factor that is under your control. Delimitations define the scope and boundaries of the study.*

Back Matter

1. References. (References must be cross-checked to ensure that all in-text citations were properly cited and that all in-text citations have a corresponding entry in the reference list.).
2. Appendices.

Dissertation Proposal Details of Front Matter

Title Page

The title page includes the exact title of the dissertation, date of submission, the candidate's name, and name of the doctoral program. The title clearly states the subject of the dissertation, and reflects the scope and content of the investigation. The title is comprehensive and descriptive, yet succinct. Intricate and extremely long titles are not acceptable. APA recommends a title length of no more than 12 words. This is page i; however, no page number is placed on this page. No bold is used.

Abstract

The abstract is one or two pages (page ii or pages ii and iii) but the page numbers should not be printed. The abstract is a brief summary of the purpose and content of the dissertation proposal. The abstract includes the problem statement, a description of procedures or methodology, and an account of expectations. The abstract shall not exceed 350 words for AMA style and 250 words for APA style in length, and it shall be written in future tense. The title "Abstract" is centered; it is the first line on the page, and it is not bolded. For an example of an abstract, please refer to APAstyle.org, the current APA *Publication Manual*, or the current *AMA Manual of Style*.

Table of Contents

The table of contents follows the abstract. Like the abstract, the page is not numbered and "Table of Contents" is the first line on the page, and it is centered and not bolded. Unless otherwise instructed, level one and level two headings will be included with their page locations in Arabic numerals, starting with Chapter 1: Introduction on Page 1. The table of contents will be single-spaced in order to save space. Be sure the headings, the dot leaders, and the page numbers span from the left margin to the right margin. The indentation will be in increments of 0.25 inch. Any overflow of headings will be indented 0.25 inch. All the important words will be capitalized. Do not capitalize articles, prepositions, or conjunctions unless they are the first word of the heading. The table of contents for this document is constructed with these principles. The abstract, list of tables, and list of figures (if any) will be listed before the chapter headings, using the Roman numerals for the page numbers they represent.

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(Notice the title “Appendices” appears in the table of contents but does not have its own page in the paper. The page number is the same as Appendix A. In AMA style, the appendices are numbered and not lettered, such as Appendix 1)

List of Tables

The list of tables will follow the table of contents. Like the table of contents, the page is not numbered, and “List of Tables” is the first line on the page, and it is centered and not bolded. The list of tables is formatted like the table of contents and lists by title each table included in the dissertation along with its page location. If all the titles of the tables will fit on the page if double-spaced, this format is preferred because it is easier to read. In order to save space, the list of tables may be single-spaced like the table of contents.

List of Tables

Table 1: Title of the Table.....	34
Table 2: Title of the Table and if the Title of the Table Overflows to the Next Line, Use This Format	35

List of Figures

The list of figures will follow the list of figures. Like the list of tables, the page is not numbered and “List of Figures” is centered and not bolded. The list of figures is formatted like the table of contents and lists by title each figure included in the dissertation along with the page location. If all the titles of the figures will fit on the page if double-spaced, this format is preferred because it is easier to read.

List of Figures

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Dissertation Proposal **Details of Back Matter**

The contents of the back matter elements consist of the following:

Reference List

All works cited in the text of the dissertation proposal must appear in this section. Any entry in the reference list will have a corresponding in-text citation. References must be cross-checked to ensure that all in-text citations were properly cited. The format of the reference list is dictated by the style of writing required by the candidate’s specific PhD program. The title “References” is not bolded in APA or AMA style.

Appendices

An appendix is used to present material that supplements the text or may be of interest to readers but is too detailed or distracting for inclusion in it. Surveys, evaluation instruments, original data, complicated mathematical tables, new computer programs, computer print-outs, and data collection forms are examples of materials that are most appropriately appended. Appendices help the reader replicate, assess, or understand the investigation. Each appendix is listed by letter and title in the table of contents for APA style, such as Appendix A. For AMA style, the appendices are numbered, such as Appendix 1. The appendices in this document are formatted properly for the appendix identifier and the title of the appendix in APA style. For AMA style, change the letter of the appendix to the number. The appendix identifier and the title of the appendix are centered and no bold

Research with Human Subjects

Institutional Review Board

The candidate must be aware of the University's policy regarding research involving human subjects. If the candidate plans to conduct surveys (e.g., email, telephone, and regular mail), interviews, testing, or any other types of assessments involving human subjects as part of the dissertation, the instruments and protocols must be reviewed by the University's IRB. The purpose of the IRB is to protect human subjects involved in research and ensure appropriate practices are being carried out at NSU. Please note that whether the research involves direct contact with human subjects or not (e.g., retrospective research), the candidate will still need IRB approval.

The college has a center representative to the IRB who can help the candidate with the IRB submission process and can assist with any paper work and procedures. There are three levels of review: exempt, expedited, and full review. The candidate may obtain additional information from the IRB's homepage (<http://www.nova.edu/irb>)

CITI Training

NSU has determined that all individuals involved in research with human subjects, including investigators (principal and co-) and members of the research team, must complete the CITI: Course in the Protection of Human Subjects. The CITI training has certain modules. Each college/center at NSU selected the modules that its respective investigators would have to complete. Members of the research team who are not affiliated with NSU may complete the modules that are designed for the College of Health Care Sciences or complete the National Institutes of Health (NIH) training on Human Subject protection. Please visit the CITI program (www.citiprogram.org) to register and complete the requisite modules. Please note that the CITI program must be completed **prior** to submitting to the IRB for initial review of a protocol or for continuing review or revision of a previously approved protocol. Please be sure to register for the correct learner group that reflects the center/college to which the candidate belongs. The CITI certificate is valid for 3 years. Candidates need to make sure they maintain valid CITI certification throughout the dissertation. Investigators are encouraged to consult with their Center Representative if they have any questions regarding CITI training.

Note: No data collection can occur prior to the approval from IRB.

Committee Document Review

Once the candidate's committee and IRB have approved the proposed research, the researcher will be allowed to implement the study and recruit participants. The dissertation committee should be allowed a **minimum of 10 working days** for review of all study-related document drafts. Fifteen working days should be allowed for a full dissertation. Candidates should consider and respect the schedules of all committee members involved. Candidates should build considerable flextime into the completion schedule to allow sufficient cushion of time before an absolute deadline

Note: The candidate should be aware that there may be multiple revisions of the dissertation documents as the candidate moves through the process.

FINAL DISSERTATION REPORT

First tell them what you are going to tell them. Tell them. Then, tell them what you told them.

The final dissertation report is a coherent, detailed, accurate, and comprehensive scholarly account of the candidate's investigation to answer a specific research question and to report new knowledge from the dissertation study findings. The report is written mostly in the past tense as it describes the research the candidate proposed to do, did, and the results the candidate found. The candidate should refer to him/herself as "the investigator" and refer to his/her study as the "dissertation study" to be clear in distinguishing the dissertation study from studies in the literature used to support points made.

Candidates are responsible for a scholarly level of writing and careful editing. A professional editor may be recommended prior to and in addition to the required final copy editing as per specific program recommendations.

Note: The candidates must complete and sign a Certification of Authorship form with her/his initial complete draft dissertation report for review and with the final dissertation report (see Appendix B).

Dissertation Final Report Outline and Format (Chapter Format)

Generally, the first three chapters of the formal dissertation proposal will become the first three chapters of the dissertation; however, some modification of verb tense and other details are usually necessary. The sections that make up the final dissertation report include the following:

Front Matter

Title Page

Dissertation Committee signature page

Dissertation Report Certification signature page (per program policy)

Abstract

Acknowledgments (optional)

Table of Contents
 List of Tables
 List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

The text for the body of the paper includes the following. **Each chapter starts on a new page.** The chapter identifier is a level one heading. The following headings are suggested headings for level one and level two. Use the headings and subheadings from the proposal as appropriate.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Chapter

Brief summary of the information to be presented in this chapter
 Use the present tense or past tense as appropriate. Use the past tense when referring to studies from the literature. Use the present tense when discussing general information that was true in the past and is true in the present.

Background to the Problem

Describe population statistics, provide the context, issues, etc. Use level two headings as appropriate

Statement of the Problem

Describe the issue investigated and goal achieved

Relevance

Describe the significance, purpose, or need for the study

Elements

Use level two headings as appropriate for the hypotheses, theories, research questions investigated

Definitions of Terms

Use level two headings as appropriate for conceptual and operational terms, or use paragraphs in a series or a bulleted list

Explanation of Variables

Use level two headings as appropriate for conceptual and operational terms, or use paragraphs in a series or a bulleted list for dependent, independent, and covariates

Study Rationale

Use the information from the proposal and adjust as necessary

Assumptions

Use the information from the proposal and adjust as necessary

Summary of the Chapter

Brief summary of information presented

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Each chapter starts on a new page. This chapter reviews the relevant literature. Examples of possible level one and level two headings are listed. Use the headings and subheadings from the proposal as appropriate.

Use the past tense when referring to studies from the literature. Remember the active voice is preferred. Be careful not to give a human quality to an inanimate object, which is anthropomorphism. Studies, findings, results, literature, research, theories, tables, or figures **cannot** explain, compare, deduce, explore, examine, assess, conclude, interpret, support, discuss, address, focus, highlight, provide, give, or determine anything. Objects have a limited vocabulary. They **can** find, show, indicate, demonstrate, and include. Only people or organizations can perform actions. Instead, have author doing the action, or use the passive voice. **Remember to be clear when referring to the dissertation study and referring to studies that support the dissertation study.**

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction to the Chapter

Brief summary of the information to be presented in the chapter

Historical Overview

Use the subheadings and information from the proposal

Relevant Concepts

Use the information from the proposal

Relevant Contexts

Use the information from the proposal

Summary of Literature

Brief summary of the information presented in this chapter

Chapter 3: Methodology

Each chapter starts on a new page. Use the headings from the proposal and make any adjustments needed for the final report. Use the past tense to discuss your process. The passive voice may be helpful here. Use the present tense to explain tables and figures.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction to the Chapter

Brief summary of the information to be presented in this chapter

Pilot Study Summary

If applicable, discuss how it was linked to study

Research Design and Methodology

Study Design

Use the information from the proposal

Rationale

Include the rationale for the research decisions

Threats

Describe how they were addressed

Strengths and Weaknesses of Design

Study Setting

Subjects (Participants)

Power

Sample Size

Inclusion Criteria

Exclusion Criteria

Characteristics

Recruiting Procedures

Specific Procedures

(Remember to use the past tense)

Instruments and Measures

Reliability and Validity

Strengths and Weaknesses of Design

Threats

(Describe how they were addressed)

Ethical Considerations and Review

IRB, HPD Research Committee, Survey Committee, HIPPA, other

Funding

State the source of the funding, or state the study was unfunded

Data Collection Procedures

(Remember, data is plural and takes plural verbs and pronouns)

Data Analyses

Describe management of data, all analyses, include rationale for use of analytical procedure for data type to answer research questions

Summary

Brief summary of the information presented in the chapter

Chapter 4: Results

Each chapter starts on a new page. Use level one headings and subheadings as need to present the findings and results. Use the past tense to discuss the findings. Use the present tense to explain tables and figures.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction to the Chapter

Brief summary of information to be presented in this chapter

Data Analysis Results

Organize by research questions and sub-questions/hypotheses for quantitative studies. Remember to format tables and figures in APA or AMA style. The tables and figures must fit inside the margins. If tables need to continue to the next page, format correctly. Be sure to format statistical and mathematical text as per APA and AMA style, such as $p = .05$ and $a + b = c$). Do not use mathematical symbols as a substitute for text. Spell out the words for symbols in the text.

Summary

Brief summary of the information presented in this chapter

Chapter 5: Discussion

Each chapter starts on a new page. This chapter includes the following topics. Examples of possible level one and level two headings are listed. Make any adjustments to fit your study. Use the past tense when referring to your completed study. Use the present tense and future tense for implications and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction to the Chapter

Give a *brief* summary of the earlier chapters

Discussion and Interpretation of Results

Use the context of problem statement

Literature Review

Review the literature and other theoretical background (*no new literature should be introduced here*)

Implications

Implications for Practice

Implications for Further Research

Limitations and Delimitations

Based on results and interpretation (*include unexpected ones*)

Recommendations

Summary

Back Matter

- References
- Appendices

Possible appendices included should be approved by the committee

- Correspondence from individuals involved in the study.
- Officials granting permission to use facilities.
- Supervisors granting permission to conduct the investigation.
- Questionnaires.
- Unpublished tests.
- Raw data.
- Computer programs.
- Computer outputs.
- Additional tables to supplement material in the text.
- Additional figures to supplement materials in the text.
- Additional charts to supplement materials in the text.

Dissertation Final Report Details of Front Matter

Candidates will use the most current APA/AMA style in the dissertation report unless in conflict with dissertation formatting guidelines contained in this document. If a newer APA *Publication Manual/AMA Manual of Style* edition becomes available after candidates have started writing the report (chapters 4 and 5), then candidates may continue to use the APA/AMA manual that chapters 1, 2, and 3 followed.

Copyright Permissions

Inclusion of any copyrighted materials must have letters of permission from the holder of the copyright to use in the dissertation study. In addition, if the candidate seeks to include copyrighted materials in the final dissertation report, separate permission to from the holder of the copyright must also be obtained and included in the final report in order to include this material in the final dissertation report. The candidate should prepare himself or herself with information in the pamphlet, *Copyright Law and the Doctoral Dissertation: Guidelines to your Legal Rights and Responsibilities* available from ProQuest/UMI.

Typeface and Font

The preferred APA typeface is Times New Roman with 12-point font size throughout the manuscript. AMA allows Times New Roman, 12-point font, but suggests that the candidate follow the guidelines for the journal the manuscript will be submitted to.

Margins

If the final dissertation report will be bound, the left margin is 1.5 inches to allow for binding. Otherwise, if only an electronic version will be submitted, the left margin will be one inch. The top margin of the first page of each new chapter and all other margins (right side and bottom) are 1 inch. All text, including tables and figures, must fit within the 6" by 9" image area created by the margins for an 8.5 x 11 inch page. If needed, landscape orientation can be used for tables. It is the candidate's responsibility to check the margins to make sure they conform to the required margins. Title and signature pages have specific directions noted on them. **Use only left justification for body of the dissertation.**

Spacing

All text should be double-spaced with the following exceptions:

- Title Page.
- Signature Page.
- Table of Contents.
- Tables and Figures should be single-spaced in the body of the paper, including table and text figure captions, legends, and notes.

Appendices will have the appropriate appendix identifier and title.

- The item being appended itself does not have to be in APA or AMA style. The item being appended needs to fit within the margins and to allow the appendix identifier and the title of the appendix to be the first two lines on the page.

Page Numbers

The front matter pages are not numbered. Start the page numbering with page one of Chapter 1. Use the format for APA/AMA style as per the program.

Title Page

The title page includes the exact title of the dissertation, date of submission, the candidate's name, and name of the doctoral program. The title clearly states the subject of the dissertation, and reflects the scope and content of the investigation. The title is comprehensive and descriptive, yet succinct. Intricate and extremely long titles are not acceptable. No page number is placed on the title page. No bold is used

Approval/Signature Page

The page number should not be printed.
 Dissertation Committee signature page
 Dissertation Report Certification signature page

Abstract

The abstract is one or two pages (page ii or pages ii and iii) but the page numbers should not be printed. The abstract is a brief summary of the purpose and content of the dissertation proposal. The abstract includes the problem statement, a description of procedures or methodology, and an account of expectations. The abstract shall not exceed 350 words for AMA style and 250 words for APA style in length, and it shall be written in future tense. The title “Abstract” is centered; it is the first line on the page, and it is not bolded. For an example of an abstract, please refer to APAstyle.org, the current *APA Publication Manual*, or the current *AMA Manual of Style*.

Acknowledgments

The final dissertation report includes an optional section that expresses appreciation for the assistance of the dissertation chair and dissertation committee members. Many students also include statements thanking other faculty members, staff members, colleagues, family, and friends. **Acknowledgments should be in good taste and should not exceed one page in length.** Acknowledgments follow the abstract. The title “Acknowledgments” is the first line on the page, centered, and not bolded. A page number should not be printed on this page.

Table of Contents

The table of contents follows the acknowledgments or the abstract if there are no acknowledgements. Like the abstract, the page is not numbered and “Table of Contents” is the first line on the page, and it is centered and not bolded.

The first three items on the table of contents are page locations of the abstract, the list of tables, and the list of figures, followed by the chapters with their page numbers and titles, level one and level two headings, reference list, and appendices. The page numbers for the abstract, list of tables and list of figures are Roman numerals even though the page numbers are not printed on the actual page.

Unless otherwise instructed, level one and level two headings will be included with their page locations in Arabic numerals, starting with Chapter 1: Introduction on Page 1. The table of contents will be single-spaced in order to save space. Be sure the headings, the dot leaders, and the page numbers span from the left margin to the right margin. The indentation will be in increments of 0.25 inch. Any overflow of headings will be indented 0.25 inch. All the important words will be capitalized. Do not capitalize articles, prepositions, or conjunctions unless they are the first word of the heading. If the Word table of contents template is used, the candidate must take out the bold and fix the indent and spacing to follow the format for the dissertation report.

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Appendix B: Title of the Appendix	106
Appendix C: Title of the Appendix	107

(Notice the title “Appendices” appears in the table of contents but does not have its own page in the paper. The page number is the same as Appendix A. In AMA style, the appendices are numbered and not lettered, such as Appendix 1)

List of Tables

The list of tables will follow the table of contents. Like the table of contents, the page is not numbered, and “List of Tables” is the first line on the page, and it is centered and not bolded. The list of tables is formatted like the table of contents and lists by title each table included in the dissertation along with its page location. If all the titles of the tables will fit on the page if double-spaced, this format is preferred because it is easier to read. In order to save space, the list of tables may be single-spaced like the table of contents.

List of Tables

Table 1: Title of the Table.....	34
Table 2: Title of the Table and if the Title of the Table Overflows to the Next Line, Use This Format	35

List of Figures

The list of figures will follow the list of figures. Like the list of tables, the page is not numbered and “List of Figures” is centered and not bolded. The list of figures is formatted like the table of contents and lists by title each figure included in the dissertation along with the page location. If all the titles of the figures will fit on the page if double-spaced, this format is preferred because it is easier to read.

List of Figures

Figure 1: Title of the Figure.....	36
Figure 2: Title of the Figure and if the Title of the Figure Overflows to the Next Line, Use This Format	37

Dissertation Final Report Details of Back Matter

References

All works cited in the dissertation must appear in the reference list. Every entry in the reference list needs to have a corresponding in-text citation. Refer to the appropriate style manual for procedures and formats for reference citations.

Appendices

Appendices are used to present material that supplements the text but is too detailed or distracting for inclusion in it. They should be included if they help the reader replicate, assess, or understand the investigation. The programs discourage the attachment of lengthy program listings and other lengthy documents as appendices unless their content is critically relevant to the contribution the dissertation makes to the advancement of knowledge. Just because a program or data collection is a necessary part of the work does not mean that it must be published with the dissertation. Items that may be appropriate for inclusion in an appendix are correspondence from individuals involved in the study, such as letters from officials granting permission to use facilities or supervisors granting permission to conduct the investigation; questionnaires; evaluation instruments; critical original data; complicated mathematical tables; novel algorithms; and data collection forms. The candidate should consult his or her advisor regarding the suitability of inclusion of any lengthy material. Each appendix should be listed by letter and title in the table of contents for APA style and number and title for AMA style. The appendix identifier and the title of the appendix are centered and not bold.

FORMAT FOR QUALITATIVE DISSERTATION STUDY

The outline for the **qualitative dissertation** is outlined here for the final dissertation report. The qualitative dissertation proposal is composed of the first three of the five chapters that make up the final dissertation report.

Front Matter

These pages are not numbered

1. Title Page.
2. Abstract
3. Table of Contents
4. List of Tables
5. List of Figures

The Text

Start the page numbering with the first page of Chapter 1, according to APA or AMA style. **Each chapter starts on a new page.**

The candidate should refer to himself/herself as “the investigator” and refer to his/her study as the “dissertation study” to be clear in distinguishing the dissertation study from studies in the literature used to support points made.

Chapter 1: Problem and Domain of Inquiry

See the explanation for the suggested headings in this chapter. Differences between the proposal and the final paper will be noted.

Chapter 1: Problem and Domain of Inquiry

There will be a paragraph here under the chapter identifier. Do not include an “Introduction” heading or subheading for this content. This paragraph’s position in the paper and the fact that it is introductory is understood. This paragraph (or two) will contain the introductory information that provides a background of the problem. This content may have statistical data that supports that a problem exists. This paragraph explains the details about the study, which should make a natural bridge to the problem statement. For Chapter 1, the tense is usually the same for the proposal and the final report. Use the present tense. Use the past tense when referring to studies from the literature. Use the present tense when discussing general information that was true in the past and is true in the present.

Problem Statement

The problem statement should not be more than a few sentences that are specific and to the point, which explains why the candidate’s study is important. The topic of interest, the population of interest, and the significance of the topic or how it is problematic are identified in this section. The problem statement is a natural bridge to the purpose of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose should not be more than a few sentences. The purpose of qualitative research varies, depending on the research method and the associated assumptions. The study should be designed as an inquiry process to describe or interpret a social or human phenomenon studied in the natural environment. Rich, descriptive data obtained from using qualitative research methods helps to illuminate language, lived experiences, essence, values, and culture through the use of multiple ways of knowing.

Research Questions

How the research questions are stated will depend on the research tradition used. For instance, ethnography always asks *how*; phenomenology asks *what*.

Research Question 1

Research Question 2

Add the research questions as appropriate to the study

Significance of the Study

Explain the expected contributions of the study to knowledge in the following arenas:

Education

Practice

Research

Public Policy

Philosophical Underpinnings

The basic assumptions of any given paradigm involve the following: ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the relationship between the inquirer and the known), and the methods (the methods of gaining the knowledge of the world). Positivism and post-positivism are the basis for quantitative research; constructivism, interpretation, and critical theory constitute the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research. In general, all qualitative paradigms assume the relativist ontology (there are multiple realities that are socially and individually constructed) and transactional epistemology (the knower and the known are inextricably entwined) as well as dialogic/interpretive methodology.

Research Tradition

Whereas quantitative studies have a theoretical framework, the qualitative approach is founded on a research tradition. There is a wide variety of approaches, but the more commonly used include (a) ethnography wherein the domain is culture; (b) phenomenology and interpretive phenomenology (hermeneutics) wherein the domain is the lived experience (Giorgi, 1985; Moustakas, 1994; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009); (c) grounded theory leading to the development of theory (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1999); and (d) historical research wherein the domain is past behavior, events, and conditions. Other types of qualitative research include case studies and narrative analysis. Information for this section comes from a resource that probably was written by the theorist. Give the historical development of the tradition, including the discipline from which it was derived and the domain which it addresses. Thoroughly describe the tradition and explain its application to the present study.

Definition of Terms

In this section, provide conceptual definitions or a concept analysis for key phenomena addressed in the study but indicate that the intent of the study will be (or was) to have the meaning of the concepts defined by those being studied. Do not include information that defines the population of interest as that will be included in Chapter 3.

Paragraphs in a series can be used for definitions of terms.

1. Term one. Use paragraphs in a series to display information vertically.
2. Term two. Explanation and citations if appropriate.
3. Notice the format. This format is used for paragraphs in a series.

Chapter Summary

The chapter summary is brief. Succinctly review the chapter in no more than two paragraphs.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Each chapter starts on a new page. In qualitative research, when the literature review is carried out, it is largely dependent on the research tradition chosen. This chapter has the

knowledge that is the context for the study. It is used to demonstrate the potential for complexity of the phenomenon. Historical context can include the tracing of the historical background of the study focus, the tracing of the conceptual threads of the study, and the disciplinary perspective of the focus. The candidate's personal knowledge or involvement with this topic is addressed by the experiential context.

Content headings will be dependent on the particular phenomenon being studied. The subheadings within the chapter should reflect a logical pattern of knowledge content surrounding the focus of the study.

Use the past tense when referring to studies from the literature. Remember the active voice is preferred. Be careful not to give a human quality to an inanimate object, which is anthropomorphism. Studies, findings, results, literature, research, theories, tables, or figures **cannot** explain, compare, deduce, explore, examine, assess, conclude, interpret, support, discuss, address, focus, highlight, provide, give, or determine anything. Objects have a limited vocabulary. They **can** find, show, indicate, demonstrate, and include. Only people or organizations can perform actions. Instead, have author doing the action, or use the passive voice. **Remember to be clear when referring to the dissertation study and referring to studies that support the dissertation study.**

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Use levels of heads as appropriate to present the information from the literature. Use the same information for the proposal and the final report

Chapter Summary

Succinctly review the chapter in no more than two paragraphs.

Chapter 3: Methods

Each chapter starts on a new page. Use the present and future tenses for the proposal. For the final report, use the past tense to discuss the process. The passive voice may be helpful here. Use the present tense to explain tables and figures.

Chapter 3: Methods

Research Design

An emergent design is used for qualitative studies. The design can be either cross-sectional or longitudinal.

Research Assumptions

The research assumption is a statement that is presumed to be true without validation. By determining our assumptions, biases, understandings, and beliefs prior to the research, we are open to the possibilities. For example, the candidate assumes the following:

- People can reflect on and share their experiences of deeply personal issues.
- The investigator will maintain openness when interpreting new perspectives.
- Individuals will report accurately and truthfully about themselves.
- Reaching saturation validates the themes.

Setting

Data collection usually occurs in real-world, naturalistic settings with high potential for information richness. Clearly describe the setting from which the sample will be recruited and in which the data will be collected. Start large and then taper to the exact spot.

Sampling Plan

Purposive sampling methods are the sampling strategies for qualitative studies. There are several variations of purposive sampling, including maximum variation sampling, typical case, extreme (deviant), reputational case, critical case, criterion sampling, and others. Describe which type of purposive technique will be (or was) employed.

Participants

The demographic portion of the research instrument should have questions that will assure that individuals are eligible to be participants.

Inclusion Criteria

Exclusion Criteria

Sample Size

Sample size estimation is based on previous experience, pilot work, and methodology. Typically, data are collected until the candidate reaches the point of saturation, or in which no new information is noted in the responses. However, final sampling decisions take place during the data collection. Qualitative research samples typically do not exceed 50 participants. For example, ethnography has approximately 25 to 50 participants, phenomenology approximately 10 or less, and grounded theory approximately 20 to 30. In the IRB application, provide a sample range that the candidate anticipates.

Protection of Human Subjects

The IRB considers this section very carefully. Specify if the data will be confidential (not anonymous). The explanation must include how the candidate will protect the privacy of the participants and address any risks or benefits that might result from participation. The NSU IRB Web site provides clear instructions.

Risks and Benefits of Participation

If the candidate plans to give some sort of gift, it is an honorarium. It should be small so as not to be considered coercion. Under risks, include if there may be some sort of psychological discomfort related to the questions and/or responses and how the risks will be handled.

Data Storage

The IRB requires data be stored separately from any identifiers if the candidates have them. Data are saved in a locked file cabinet in the investigator's home and on the investigator's home computer that is password protected for 3 years, and then, survey instruments are destroyed by shredding, computer files are erased, and computer storage (such as CDs) are destroyed. Explain who will have access to data.

Procedures

Provide a clear step-by-step, detailed explanation as to how the candidate will (or did) recruit participants, gain their trust, and the activities or procedures the candidate expects the participant to do. This section does not need to be lengthy, but the reader should be able to “see” the process from start to finish. Examples of procedure types include the following:

- Individual interviews.
- Participant observation.
- Focus groups.
- Personal and public documents.
- Internet-based data.
- Videos.

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments will depend on the research tradition and research questions. It is beyond the scope of this outline to address all approaches and, therefore, all types of data collection instruments. However, if interviews are being (or were) conducted, the following provides assistance as to the elements that will be included in this section.

Demographic Data

Which data will (or did) the candidate collect and why?

Interview Questions

If interviews are (or were) being conducted, briefly explain the purpose of the interviews and relate the interviews to the qualitative tradition and the research design. The actual list of questions should be in the appendix.

Field Notes

Field notes are both descriptive and reflective.

Data Management and Organization

Content will be dependent on the specific qualitative method being used but should include information on data management, organization, and analysis plan.

Transcription

Explain how the investigator will (or did) assure accuracy of transcription.

Category Scheme

Coding Data

Coding is the process that involves labeling common ideas that come from the data (transcripts). It is a process in which the investigator organizes the material into groups and then adds meaning to the groups. This process may include the actual language of the study participant. Closely meaning words are grouped into themes and given a broader category.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis process is explicitly and methodically described and based on the research tradition used.

Trustworthiness and Integrity

Criteria for trustworthiness (rigor) of the data and analysis, including credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity are addressed in this section. The explanation of confirmability should include how the candidate will (or did) carry out the member checks. The discussion should include how they apply and how they will be (or were) assured.

Strengths and Limitations of the Research Design

The candidate should discuss the strengths of qualitative research, such as the collection of data in naturalistic settings, rich description of complex phenomena as they are situated in local contexts, understanding of participants' personal meanings and experiences of phenomena being studied, and the ability to study phenomena in depth. The candidate will also discuss the limitations of a qualitative study, such as the inability to generalize the findings, which restricts the truthfulness of the study. Another limitation is that participants may fear repercussions of their open dialogue about their behavior. Other limitations will be specific to the study. This section will be in Chapter 3 for the proposal and then be moved to Chapter 5 when the study is completed.

In a written or oral defense of the proposal, candidates should be prepared to defend the strengths and limitations of the chosen research design.

Chapter Summary

The summary of the chapter is brief. Succinctly review the chapter in no more than two paragraphs.

Chapter 4: Findings

Each chapter starts on a new page. Use level one headings and subheadings as need to present the findings and results. Use the past tense to discuss your findings. Use the present tense to explain tables and figures.

Chapter 4: Findings

In Chapter 3, the candidate laid out a plan for deconstruction and reconstruction of the data. In Chapter 4, the candidate explains the outcomes discovered through the process. Logical explanation of the findings is divided by means of subheadings appropriate for the content of the study and the qualitative method that was employed. The findings may be organized by the themes of the data or by participant among other organizational strategies.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Each chapter starts on a new page. Examples of possible level one and level two headings are listed. Make any adjustments to fit your study. Use the past tense when referring to

your completed study. Use the present tense and future tense for implications and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion

It is time for the candidate to speak from experience. Remember the purpose of the study.

Summary of the Findings

Provide a succinct summary of the results. The candidate steps out of the details and speaks more globally about the findings of the study and their implications. It is less about the findings and more about the meaning of the findings.

Integration of the Findings with Previous Literature

Compare the findings to those reported by other researchers, which will take the candidate back to the studies reviewed in Chapter 2. Do not re-state these studies in the depth as previously done; simply recall these studies for comparison to the candidate's study. Use both those studies in which the candidate's findings converged (similar findings) and those from which the candidate's findings diverged (different findings). Provide an explanation as to why the candidate's results may have been different.

Implications of the Findings

Now, the implications that were discussed in Chapter 1 are brought forward. The candidate had anticipated implications in various arenas. Now the candidate can provide some concrete discussion as to how these findings might be put in to practice or inform future researchers. Do not invent new implications. All implications must have come from the findings or the experience of the study.

Implications for Education

Implications for Practice

Implications for Research

Implications for Public Policy

Limitations and Recommendations

Limitations were originally presented in Chapter 3 in the proposal. Move that section into this location. As the study progressed, the candidate likely found that it did not proceed as optimally as had been planned. Be candid. Do not negate the efforts made, but stand back and realistically consider anything that could have been done differently that would have improved the study and the considerations that should be made for the next time.

The recommendations should offer possibilities for future research that may improve knowledge about the topic the candidate studied.

Chapter Summary

The summary of the chapter is brief. Succinctly review the chapter in no more than two paragraphs.

Details of Back Matter

References

All works cited in the dissertation must appear in the reference list. Every entry in the reference list needs to have a corresponding in-text citation. Refer to the appropriate style manual for procedures and formats for reference citations.

Appendices

Appendices are used to present material that supplements the text but is too detailed or distracting for inclusion in it. They should be included if they help the reader replicate, assess, or understand the investigation. The programs discourage the attachment of lengthy program listings and other lengthy documents as appendices unless their content is critically relevant to the contribution the dissertation makes to the advancement of knowledge. Just because a program or data collection is a necessary part of the work does not mean that it must be published with the dissertation. Items that may be appropriate for inclusion in an appendix are correspondence from individuals involved in the study, such as letters from officials granting permission to use facilities or supervisors granting permission to conduct the investigation; questionnaires; evaluation instruments; critical original data; complicated mathematical tables; novel algorithms; and data collection forms. The candidate should consult his or her advisor regarding the suitability of inclusion of any lengthy material. Each appendix should be listed by letter and title in the table of contents for APA style and number and title for AMA style. The appendix identifier and the title of the appendix are centered and not bold.

DISSERTATION REPORT MANUSCRIPT FORMAT

The manuscript option is a combination of formatting requirements from the standard formatting (chapter format) and new formatting requirements for chapters that have been or will be published. Each candidate following the manuscript option will still need to include (a) dissertation front matter, following the standard formatting guidelines; (b) chapter formatting for all non-publication-related chapters, following the standard formatting guidelines; and (c) a cumulative references section and appendix material (if applicable), following the standard formatting guidelines.

So how is the manuscript formatting option different from the standard formatting option? The manuscript formatting option allows that chapters qualifying for the manuscript option can be left in the formatting style used by the journal(s) in which the chapter(s) have been or will be published with two exceptions: page numbers must continue consecutively throughout the thesis/dissertation and the page margin requirements for the standard formatting option must be followed.

All dissertations incorporating the manuscript formatting option **must** meet the following:

- Have been (a) prepared, (b) submitted, (c) accepted, or (d) published for a peer-reviewed journal. Each department will determine how many manuscripts will be included with a separate chapter for each manuscript.
- Represent research conducted while the student was enrolled in a College of Health Care Sciences (CHCS) graduate program.
- Must be a product of the dissertation study.
- Must not have been used to obtain another degree.

For chapters that do not meet the above criteria, formatting must be consistent with the standard formatting option rather than the manuscript format option.

Mandatory Inclusions for Each Chapter (for manuscript)

Following the Manuscript Format Option

For each chapter based on publication, the candidate must include a *Contribution of Authors and Co-authors* page and a *Manuscript Information* page, both preceding the chapter text. The *Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors* page and the *Manuscript Information* pages must be included in the candidate's table of contents.

Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors Page

Each department will determine whether the candidate is the primary author or co-author of each manuscript. All authors must be mentioned in a *Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors* page as well as a brief paragraph of contributions for each author. Please follow the formatting in the sample *Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors* page or use The Graduate School *Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors* template.

Manuscript Information Page

Within the manuscript format dissertation, a *Manuscript Information* page will precede individual manuscripts that have already been (a) prepared, (b) accepted, (c) submitted, or (d) published for a peer-reviewed journal. The *Manuscript Information* page follows the *Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors* page. Please follow the formatting in the sample *Manuscript Information* page or use The Graduate School *Manuscript Information* page template.

Instruction to Author

Include the journal's instructions to the author at the end of the chapter.

Summary of Manuscript Formatting Option Layout

Front Matter

The thesis/dissertation is to include all front matter (title page, abstract, table of contents, etc.) as specified by CHCS standard formatting option.

Body of Dissertation

Chapter 1. General Introduction

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Chapter 3. Methodology

Chapter 4. First Manuscript, preceded by Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors and Manuscript Information Page

Chapter 5. Second Manuscript, preceded by Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors and Manuscript Information Page

Chapter 6. Third Manuscript, preceded by Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors and Manuscript Information Page

Chapter 7b. General Conclusion/Discussion (common conclusion linking all manuscripts thematically to answer the broad research question. Follow the same instruction from standard formatting)

^a*If the literature review is written for publication, use the manuscript format.*

^b*Chapter number for General Conclusion depends on the number of manuscripts prepared.*

Back Matter

Bibliography/References Cited

Common bibliography/references cited cover all chapters although each manuscript should have its own reference section. If using AMA style, the candidate can choose to have reference list for each chapter.

Appendices

Follow the standard formatting.

Other Helpful Information

If work from a previously published manuscript or from a manuscript accepted for publication is to be used in the dissertation, it is standard for the copyright of this material to be held by the journal. Consequently, **permission from the journal to reproduce this copyrighted material must be obtained and included at the relevant sections of the thesis/dissertation.** An example of the permission statement might read as “The following chapter has been published (accepted for publication) in the *Journal of XYZ* and appears in this dissertation with the journal’s permission. Any modifications of published work (e.g., those required by the advisory committee) should also be clarified.

This option is not meant to provide you with information specific to the style required by peer-reviewed journals in your discipline. If you have any questions concerning details of the preparation of the journal article chapters(s) that are not covered in this section, consult the journal’s guide for authors in which your manuscript(s) will be published. ***It is the responsibility of the candidates and their dissertation committees to ensure that the journal style is followed.***

Template of Contribution of Authors

CHAPTER FOUR (OR OTHER CHAPTER NUMBER)

TITLE OF THE CHAPTER/MANUSCRIPT IN ALL CAPS
INVERTED PYRAMID STYLE AND
SINGLE SPACED

Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors

Author: Type Author Name Here
Contributions: List Contributions Here, Single Spaced

Co-Author: Type Co-author Name Here
Contributions: List Contributions Here, Single Spaced

Co-Author: Type Co-Author Name Here
Contributions: List Contributions Here, Single Spaced

Co-Author: Type Co-Author Name Here
Contributions: List Contributions Here, Single Spaced

**Make sure you include all authors and co-authors on this page, individually, and a brief paragraph of the contribution each has made.

Sample of Contribution of Authors

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL STRESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN PATIENTS WITH AMPUTATION

Contribution of Authors and Co-Authors

Author: James H. Taylor

Contributions: Conceived and implemented the study design. Collected and analyzed data. Wrote first draft of the manuscript.

Co-Author: Dr. Charles C. Sheet

Contributions: Helped conceive the study design. Provided feedback on statistical analyses and early drafts of the manuscript.

Co-Author: John A. Kerry

Contributions: Helped conceive and implement the study design. Provided field expertise and funding. Provided feedback on early drafts of the manuscript.

Co-Author: Dr. Scott Smith

Contributions: Provided feedback on the study design. Provided statistical advice and comments on the manuscript.

Manuscript Information Page (Template)

Type Author and Co-author(s) Names Here

Type Name of Journal Here

Status of Manuscript: (Put an x in one of the options below)

Prepared for submission to a peer-reviewed journal

Officially submitted to a peer-review journal

Accepted by a peer-reviewed journal

Published in a peer-reviewed journal

Type Name of Publisher Here

Type Date of submission here (submitted manuscript—otherwise leave blank)

Type Date the manuscript will appear here (accepted work—otherwise leave blank)

Type Issue in which manuscript appears here (published work—otherwise leave blank)

Manuscript Information Page (Sample)

James H. Taylor, Charles C. Sheet, John A. Kerry, Scott Smith

Journal of Allied Health

Status of Manuscript:

- Prepared for submission to a peer-reviewed journal
- Officially submitted to a peer-review journal
- Accepted by a peer-reviewed journal
- Published in a peer-reviewed journal

Published by Ingentaconnect from Publishing Technology
Submitted June 2014

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

All candidates are required to orally defend their dissertations. The defense is the final presentation and clarification process for a candidate's research committee and invited guests (invited guests are an option). The program will post notification to CHCS faculty and students.

The candidate must defend her/his research and the conclusions and recommendations drawn from it to the committee in person or by face-to-face technology. The dissertation oral defense can be scheduled only after the dissertation committee has agreed that the dissertation report is sufficiently complete with all major concerns and questions adequately addressed by the candidate. The purpose of the defense is to ensure that the candidate is thoroughly competent to articulate, explain, and defend any aspect of the dissertation. The defense is the final presentation and clarification process between the candidate and committee. The third member may participate by conference call or face-to-face technology instead of in person.

Candidates should be prepared to explain in detail the rationale for the approach and the findings and their interpretation. The candidate will summarize the dissertation, critique it, and then answer questions asked by the committee members. Candidates should be prepared to explain the dissertation's contribution to knowledge and professional practice as well as answer questions. A unanimous vote of all committee members is required for candidates to pass the dissertation defense requirement for degree completion

If a committee member disapproves and the committee is deadlocked, the dissenting opinion is filed with the chair, Program Director, and Dean. The Dean resolves the deadlock by overriding the dissenting opinion, rejecting the dissertation, obtaining the opinion of another faculty member, or by taking other appropriate actions. If two committee members disapprove, and there is a deadlock, then the dissertation is considered disapproved.

Candidates will be notified in writing of final approval or rejection of the final report. The Final Dissertation Defense must be scheduled as per each program's requirements. Occupational Therapy candidates must defend in person on the main campus. They may also defend in person at the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) national conference with committee approval. Physical Therapy candidates must defend in person on main campus. For Health Science, candidates must schedule the defense 45 days in advance for presentation in person either on main campus or a regional campus.

DISSERTATION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

The candidate must allow sufficient time for committee review (15 working days minimum) with each dissertation draft or revision and post-defense revisions and review. The final *pre-defense* copy of the dissertation must be submitted to the chairperson and committee members at least 4 weeks before the desired defense date to allow sufficient time for review and approval by all committee members. The defense date can be scheduled only after all committee members agree that the candidate is ready to defend. The defense date must be coordinated with all members of the committee and should not be scheduled during a university holiday.

DISPOSITION OF VERSIONS OF FINAL DISSERTATION REPORT

Copyediting

Candidates must follow program requirements for copyediting:

The committee-approved dissertation must be copyedited by a program-approved copy editor prior to sending it to the binder or the online dissertation repository. The committee is responsible for the content of the dissertation, but the copy editor's thorough line-by-line review assures that the technical details of the dissertation are accurate and consistent, and that the dissertation meets APA/AMA style guidelines as well as the program's format requirements. The candidate is responsible for the costs of copyediting and for a high-quality dissertation report. Check with the Program Director if a copy editor from CHCS is available.

The dissertation is considered **completed** (but not final) only after the candidate has done the following: (a) successfully defended his or her dissertation, (b) received post-defense revised version approval by the committee chair, and (c) the dissertation has been signed by all committee members. The dissertation is considered **final** only after the copy-edited revisions have been successfully completed, approved by the chair, and it is then ready for the uploading of the electronic version and printing and binding.

One-on-One Writing Help

If the candidate needs help with the writing of the paper before it is considered complete, the services of the writing coaches in the **Effective Writing Center** (EWC) may be appropriate. The purpose of the EWC is to improve students' writing skills by identifying problem areas, such as grammar, punctuation, and APA or AMA formatting issues. In addition, awkward sentences can be revised to language that is more scholarly or to eliminate anthropomorphism. Due to time constraints of the 50-minute appointment time frame, the paper cannot be read line by line; however, formatting will be demonstrated, so the student will be able to apply the "rules" to the rest of the paper. Students may have two appointments per week with any of the writing coaches in the EWC. Here is the link to make an appointment (<http://nova.campusguides.com/hpdwritingcenter/appointments>).

Submission of Final Dissertation Reports

Candidates will need to submit copies of the final report as an electronic version (pdf) to ProQuest/UMI. Candidates may want bound copies of the final dissertation report. Please see the instructions for each.

After the committee members, the Program Director, the Department Chair, and Dean have signed the Dissertation Approval Form, the candidate will receive information from the program office about how to submit the report for electronic submission and/or binding and the fees associated with it. **Do not submit the final copies until instructed to do so.**

Electronic Submission through ProQuest/UMI

After the candidate has passed the oral defense and made the required revisions for the completed dissertation, he/she will submit the approved final report to ProQuest–EDT UMI. The electronic copy (PDF) must include a correctly formatted unsigned signature page(s). The signature page must follow the cover page. The signature page **does not** need to include the committee and administrators' actual signatures.

Please go to (<http://dissertations.umi.com/hpdnova/>) to start an account and start the submission process. Candidates will also be given the following options: copyright your submission, have open (free of charge) access to your dissertation, and purchase printed copies of your dissertation. The dissertation will be searchable and retrievable through the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT) database (if through a library) or Dissertation Express at (http://www.proquest.com/products_umi/dissertations/disexpress.shtml) if not affiliated with a library.

Paper, Ink, and Printing

If candidates want bound copies of the final dissertation report, the final dissertation report will be printed on 25% cotton acid-free fiber bond paper that is 8.5 x 11 inches. The paper should have a watermark that reads 25% cotton when held up to the light. All manuscripts must be submitted in black ink. A laser or LaserJet printer should be used to ensure that all text will be clear and crisp.

Binding of Final Dissertation Report

Candidates have the option of binding copies of their dissertation on their own and determining the number of copies (gift copies) they choose to bind. Candidates can choose to bind their dissertations in soft cover format, or in the traditional hard cover format with the Nova Southeastern University logo. Candidates who elect soft cover binding can choose the type of binding and which company to bind their dissertation. Remember to include the appropriate number of signed signature pages for the bound copies.

After the candidate has passed the oral defense and made the required revisions for the completed dissertation, he/she will start routing the signature pages to all committee members for signatures. The Program Director will send the printed certification signature pages through the college certification authorities and will mail the signed pages back to the candidate (to be included for binding). The signature page must follow the cover page. The signature pages are circulated to the committee and Dean for signatures along with a copy of the final report.

Here is the contact information for the book binder.

D & B Book Binders

Contact: Anthony

1030 E 14th Street

Hialeah, FL 33010

(305) 885-5215 – Anthony's cell number

Email: quotes@dbbinders.com

Web site: <http://www.dbbinders.com/>

PEER-REVIEWED PRESENTATION AND PUBLICATION OF RESEARCH

The candidate will be required to show evidence that she/he submitted the following:

1. A proposal based on the dissertation research for a national or international level peer-reviewed presentation.
2. An article for a national or international level peer-reviewed publication.

The chair of the committee and appropriate members **should** be listed as secondary authors and others involved with the study or dissertation may be included in *acknowledgements*. Such a manuscript must include wording similar to the following: “Based on a dissertation completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the candidate’s PhD program at Nova Southeastern University.” Candidates should follow their department’s authorship and order guidelines and requirements when submitting dissertation-related manuscripts for publication and presenting your dissertation at conferences and meetings.

The specific PhD programs track alumni and would like to acknowledge the graduate’s achievements by noting the alumnus or alumna, awards, career progression, new positions, and so forth in our newsletters and other publications in the future. Our graduates’ future achievements and scholarly products are also considered program outcomes for our required internal and external program evaluation reports, so please keep your contact information with us current and help us by responding to requests for information on your achievements.

Important note: if the graduate fails to **submit** his/her dissertation research for publication in a refereed journal within **12 months** of completing the final dissertation report, the chair may submit for publication an article(s) about this research as first author with the student as secondary author and committee members as indicated.

GRADUATION AND CONFERMENT

After the final dissertation report has been approved, the Program Director or designee will contact the candidate with information about how to apply for graduation. All grades must be finalized, and all financial obligations to the University must be paid before a degree is granted.

Graduation and Commencement

Candidates may apply for commencement and hooding ceremony if the candidate has successfully defended before the commencement application deadline. Graduation is held once a year in August and the commencement application deadline is typically in May or June. Candidates not meeting the commencement application deadline may apply for commencement the following year. Note that the degree conferral is a separate process from commencement. The PhD degree will be conferred after all program requirements have been fulfilled and after the candidate has completed the degree application.

Appendix A

Letter of Agreement

Use NSU letterhead

Letter of Agreement

Date

Dear Dr.

This letter of agreement serves to confirm that you have agreed to serve as the Chair of the Dissertation Committee for name, a PhD student, at Nova Southeastern University Program name Doctoral Program. A list of all committee members is attached.

Your responsibilities will include the following:

1. To serve as the dissertation advisor, assuming primary responsibility for overall supervision of the dissertation process.
2. To assure the dissertation topic is meaningful and will add to the body of knowledge of *program*.
3. To give substantive and organizational recommendations for sections for which you are the expert.
4. To approve the idea paper (committee member input not necessary).
5. To coordinate submission to and feedback from other committee members.
6. To have the final word in areas of disagreement among members and /or between members.
7. To read and approve the final draft.
8. To participate in the oral defense and sign off on it.
9. To notify the Program Director when a change of committee members may be indicated.

Please sign below indicating your willingness to serve in this capacity. Nova Southeastern University will pay an honorarium to you after the dissertation has been successfully defended. If you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (954) 262-1282 or 1-800-356-0026 ext. 21282.

Sincerely,

Program Chair

Signature

Date

Appendix B**Form for Certification of Authorship**

Form for Certification of Authorship

Nova Southeastern University**HPD****Doctor of Philosophy****CERTIFICATION OF AUTHORSHIP OF DISSERTATION WORK**

Submitted to (Advisor's Name): _____

Student's Name: _____

Title of Submission: _____

- Idea Paper/Draft Proposal
- Formal Dissertation Proposal
- Final Dissertation Report

Certification of Authorship: I hereby certify that I am the author of this document and that any assistance I received in its preparation is fully acknowledged and disclosed in the document. I have also cited all sources from which I obtained data, ideas, or words that are copied directly or paraphrased in the document. Sources are properly credited, according to accepted standards for professional publications. I also certify that this paper was prepared by me for this purpose.

Student's Signature: _____

Date of Submission: _____

Appendix C

Dissertation Tracking Form

Nova Southeastern University
Doctor of Philosophy Program (insert individual program)

PhD DISSERTATION TRACKING FORM

Candidate's Name: _____ ID#: N _____

Dissertation Topic: _____

Please indicate below the status of your dissertation work:

1. Discussed the topic with the following faculty members: _____

2. Submitted idea paper to the following:

_____ Approved: Yes ___ No ___
Committee Chair **Date**

3. Dissertation Committee formed with the following members:

_____ **Date** **Chair**

_____ **Committee Member** **Committee Member**

4. Submitted formal proposal for approval:

_____ Approved: Yes ___ No ___
Committee Chair **Date**

5. Submitted final dissertation report for approval:

_____ Approved: Yes ___ No ___
Committee Chair **Date**

Other comments: _____

Candidate's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix D

Signature (Approval) Page

Use NSU letterhead

Signature (Approval) Page

We hereby certify that this dissertation, submitted by name, conforms to acceptable standards and is fully adequate in scope and quality to fulfill the dissertation requirement for the degree of Program.

Name and credentials

Date

Chairperson of Dissertation Committee

Name and credentials

Date

Dissertation Committee Member

Name and credentials

Date

Dissertation Committee Member

Approved:

Program Director

Date

Chair of the Department

Date

Dean of the College

Date

Appendix E

Letter of Agreement (External Committee member)

Use NSU letterhead

Letter of Agreement (External Committee member)

Date

Dear Dr.

This letter of agreement serves to confirm that you have agreed to serve as a member of the Dissertation Committee for *Name*, a PhD student at Nova Southeastern University *Program Name* Doctoral Program. A list of all committee members is attached.

Your responsibilities will include the following:

1. To offer expertise in methodology or topic area.
2. To give substantive and organizational recommendations for sections for which you are the expert.
3. To read and approve portions of the dissertation as directed by the committee Chair.
4. To read and approve the final draft.
5. To participate in the oral defense and sign on the dissertation approval signature sheet.

Nova Southeastern University will pay you an honorarium (\$\$\$) after the dissertation has been successfully defended. In addition, following approval of the Program Director, your travel expenses and lodging necessary to attend and participate in the defense will be arranged for and paid by NSU.

Please sign below indicating your willingness to serve in this capacity, and return this letter via fax at (954) ###-####. If you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (954) ###-####

Sincerely,

Program Director

Signature

Date

References for Writing Dissertations

The way a dissertation is organized and written up varies somewhat, depending upon the type of research undertaken. Each student works closely with her/his chairperson and also should utilize some of the numerous books available on the dissertation process. A few recommendations include the following:

Becker, H. (1986). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book or article*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (2000). *Proposals that work: A guide to planning dissertations and grants proposals* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mauch, J. E., & Park, N. (2003). *Guide to the successful thesis and dissertation* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Marcel Dekker, Inc.

Rudenstam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2001). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Terrell S.R. (2016). *Writing a proposal for your dissertation: guidelines and examples*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Thomas, R. M., & Brubaker, D. L. (2000). *Theses and dissertations: A guide to planning, research, and writing*. Westport, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Editor's note: This document is not written in APA or AMA style. It is written in a "syllabus" style to convey the information.

Last revised 7-29-17