

# **Applied Dissertation Procedures Manual for Students in the 69-Credit Program**



NOVA SOUTHEASTERN  
UNIVERSITY

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**Abraham S. Fischler  
College of Education**

**2017**

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## **Applied Dissertation Procedures Manual**

The purpose of this manual is to assist doctoral students as they move through the dissertation process at the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education (FCE) at Nova Southeastern University (NSU). The major components include an overview of Dissertation Support Services, the research course sequence, the role of the dissertation committee, and an explanation of the dissertation benchmarks.

### **Dissertation Support Services**

Dissertation Support Services (DSS) is a service arm housed within FCE designed to assist and serve students as they navigate the dissertation process and their research sequence. The DSS website (<http://education.nova.edu/applied-research/dissertation-support-services.html>) contains all the pertinent information on the faculty and staff associated with the process in addition to the necessary resources available to help you finish your dissertation such as contact information, dissertation templates, and supporting materials.

### **Definition of an Applied Dissertation**

Through the years, FCE students who earned the doctoral degree typically investigated problems connected with the workplace; thus, the final products have been *applied* in nature. Other than that distinction, FCE applied dissertations are similar to dissertations found at other universities. The general outline includes the typical 5-chapter format and includes Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Literature Review, Chapter 3: Methodology, Chapter 4: Results, and Chapter 5: Discussion. The dissertation should follow the scientific method and contribute to the literature in the respective concentration area.

The applied dissertation entails a series of independent writing and research activities (with supervision), thus concluding with a product. The process requires the student to identify an area of need or problem in a work setting or field of interest, develop a set of research questions to address the problem, and employ the scientific method to conduct an appropriately designed study to answer the research questions.

The general steps in the scientific method are to (a) identify a problem, (b) review the related literature, (c) specify the purpose and research questions, (d) collect data, (e) analyze and interpret the data, and (f) evaluate and report the findings. The research course sequence and Summer Institute will help the student to develop the research foundation for the applied dissertation. The designated dissertation committee will guide the student through a synthesis of

the research and provide advice in developing a relevant and significant study. The dissertation is broken down into the following benchmarks. Further elaboration on these benchmarks are provided later in this document.

Table

*Dissertation Benchmarks*

Dissertation Benchmarks	
Title	Description
ARC 8966: Concept Paper	Ch. 1-2 (abbreviated lit review)
ARC 8967: Proposal	Ch. 1-3
ARC 8968: Final Report	Ch. 1-5

### Recommended Research Approaches and Methods

Students can utilize experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental research for their dissertations. The research methods can be either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. The following are *examples* that are considered acceptable for an applied dissertation (*Note*: this list is not exhaustive).

#### Quantitative Methods

- Correlational
- Survey
- Experimental
- Quasi-Experimental

#### Qualitative Methods

- Case Study
- Ethnography
- Phenomenology
- Narrative Research

#### Mixed Methods

- Convergent (concurrent)
- Embedded (nested)
- Explanatory (sequential)
- Exploratory (sequential)

Based on the list above, it is evident that not all dissertations include the application and assessment of an intervention. Therefore, implementing an intervention is not a requirement of an applied dissertation. However, if an intervention is utilized, the implementation process of the intervention must include the assessment of its relevant outcomes (i.e., treatment fidelity and manipulation checks) and be approved by the research site. Students are also encouraged to utilize other variants to the research process that include program evaluations and action research.

Program evaluation or evaluating a program is acceptable *only if the scientific method is employed* (i.e., the student collects data, analyzes data, and reports findings), and includes a relevant research design (e.g., sequential, explanatory mixed methods design; multiple group pre- and posttest design) that is based on a valid program evaluation model. For students utilizing

evaluation research for their dissertations, we suggest implementing either a *process evaluation* (i.e., to determine whether the program is being implemented with fidelity) and/or an *outcome evaluation* (i.e., to identify and assess the outcomes, short and/or long term) using any relevant evaluation model.

The DSS offers additional support for program evaluations, action research, and single-case designs outside of the research curriculum. An in-depth overview of these approaches and designs is covered in RES 9300: Methods of Inquiry, RES 8911: Quantitative Research Designs, and RES 8916: Qualitative Research Designs.

### Research Courses

As seen in Figure 1, all students enrolled in the doctoral program take a minimum of 12-research credits, which is equivalent to four research courses. All research courses are designed to aid students in planning, conducting, and writing their dissertation.

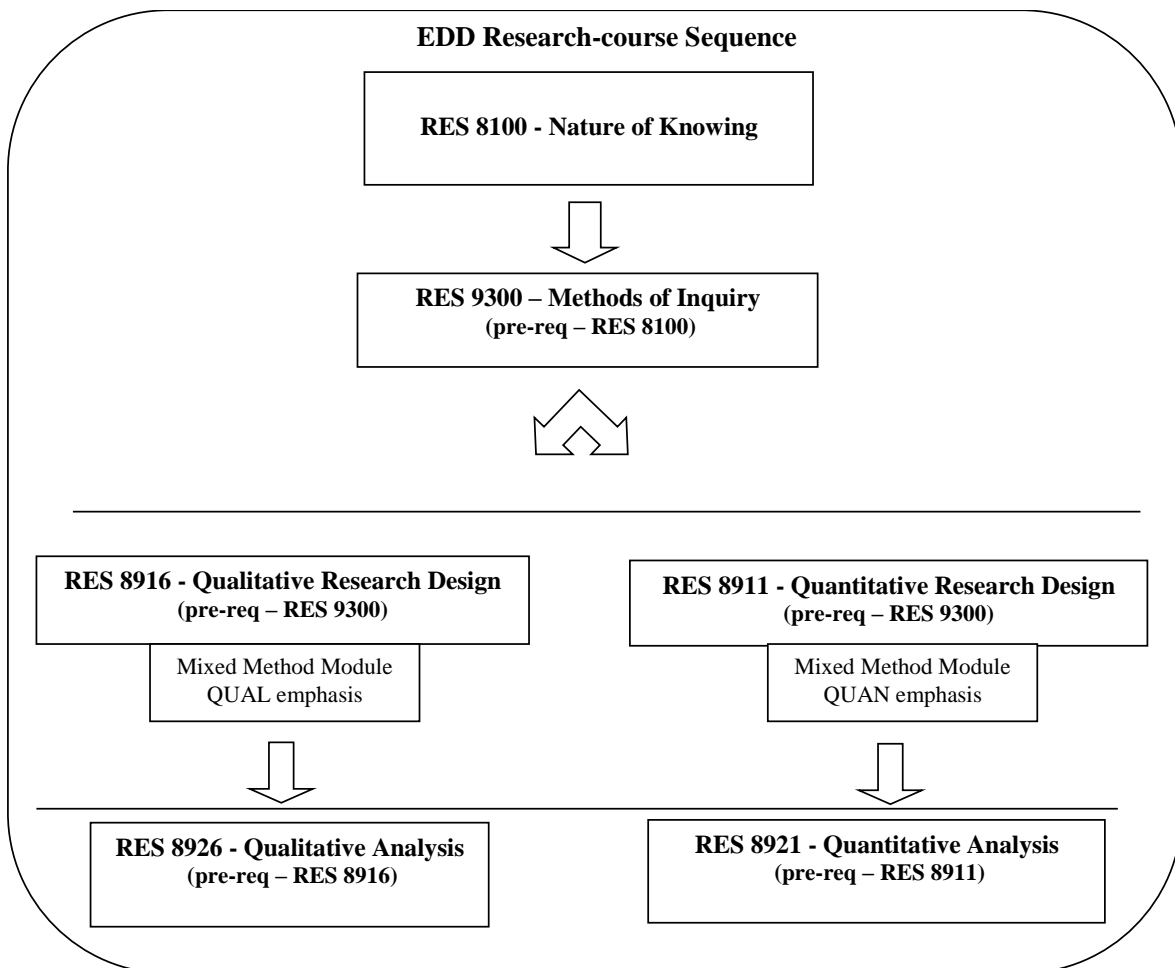


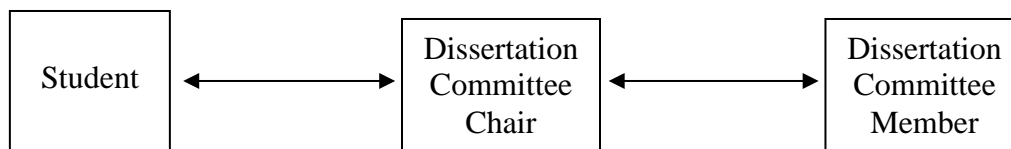
Figure 1. Research Course Sequence and Dissertation Benchmarks

The first research course, RES 8100: Nature of Knowing, should be taken in the student's first semester of the program. Upon successful completion of approximately seven concentration courses (around the fifth semester in the program), students will take RES 9300: Methods of Inquiry and ARC 8966: The Concept Paper (the first benchmark of the dissertation) concurrently. Near the conclusion of RES 9300, students will be guided into the appropriate research track: The Quantitative Research Track (RES 8911: Quantitative Research Design and RES 8921: Quantitative Data Analysis) or The Qualitative Research Track (RES 8916: Qualitative Research Design and RES 8926: Qualitative Data Analysis). Students will begin the appropriate research track upon successful completion of RES 9300.

### **The Dissertation Committee**

At the beginning of RES 9300, students will complete a *Dissertation Interest Form* that will be used to help match a student's research interests to a dissertation committee chair and member with expertise in the student's area of interest. The student should also be registered for the first dissertation benchmark ARC 8966: Concept Paper. The committee will guide the student through the dissertation process.

Figure 2 illustrates that the main avenue of communication for the student regarding the dissertation is with the committee chair. Under most circumstances, the committee chair will act as a liaison between the committee member and the student.



*Figure 2.* Communication protocol for the doctoral student and the dissertation committee.

### **Student Expectations**

Below is a list of items that indicate the role or expectations of the student throughout the dissertation process. The student is expected to

- be enrolled in order to receive advising and other dissertation services.
- abide by the FCE Student Code of Conduct (<http://education.nova.edu/students/current-students/studentcataloghandbook.html>). The student must follow the highest standards of scholarly and intellectual integrity and honesty throughout the dissertation process. The student must submit only original, scholarly work that conforms to NSU and FCE

policies on plagiarism and original work and to applicable laws and regulations (e.g., copyright laws).

- submit documents to the committee chair using Microsoft Word. If the dissertation chair uses the reviewing and tracking features in Microsoft Word, the student should become proficient with those features.
- submit work that conforms to FCE guidelines for format and style as described in the *Format Guide for the Applied Dissertation (FGAD)*.
- submit work that conforms to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*, 6th edition.
- return emails and phone calls within 48 hours.
- use only the messaging system in ADRIANA for any e-mail correspondence with the committee chair.
- maintain contact and communication with the committee chair at least once a month.
- understand that the working relationship between student and chair is unique and based on a trusting interaction between professionals. The student should contact the dissertation chair for clarification or questions concerning research and writing and for advice and information regarding the dissertation process.
- utilize the information received from the committee chair and member to make the recommended organizational, content, format, and style changes in the Concept Paper, Proposal and IRB submission, and Final Report.
- inform the committee chair of any changes in position, address, and other contact information, as well as professional and personal changes that might affect the student's progress.
- submit at least one document per semester that shows sufficient evidence for Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- follow the policies and procedures established by the university's IRB for research with human subjects and any regulations that the student's own agency or institution may have concerning the protection of human subjects in research.
- be current with CITI certification.
- ensure the final applied dissertation adheres to the components of the FCE Applied Dissertation Format Review Checklist.



### **Dissertation Chair Expectations**

It is the role of the committee chair to encourage the student and to review and make recommendations on the work submitted for the applied dissertation. The committee chair is expected to

- maintain regular communication with the student (at least once a month).
- evaluate and provide written and oral feedback to the student regarding the development Concept Paper, Proposal and IRB submission, and Final Report.
- provide feedback to the student within *10 business days* after receipt of document submissions (or notify the student in this time frame if a delay is necessary).
- return emails and phone calls within 48 hours.
- ensure student submissions follow FCE guidelines for format and style as described in the FGAD.
- ensure student submissions conform to the APA Manual, 6th edition.
- maintain a professional and collaborative relationship with the student.
- be the conduit between the student and committee member.
- assist the student in identifying resources, such as those for improving writing skills, that may help in the dissertation process.
- use the messaging system in ADRIANA for correspondence with the student and member.
- record all other correspondence (e.g., phone calls, videoconferencing, etc.) as a journal entry in ADRIANA.
- complete all required professional development offered by the FCE.
- enter a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) grade for the student each semester.
- ensure the final applied dissertation adheres to the components of the FCE Applied Dissertation Format Review Checklist.

### **Committee Member Expectations**

The committee member interacts only with the committee chair. The committee member does not interact directly with the student. The dissertation committee member is expected to

- evaluate and provide written feedback to the dissertation chair regarding the development of the student's Concept Paper, Proposal, and Final Report.

- return emails and phone calls within 48 hours.
- provide feedback within 10 business days after receipt of document submissions from the committee chair (or notify the chair in this time frame if a delay is necessary).
- use only the messaging system in ADRIANA for any correspondence with the committee chair or student.
- ensure student submissions follow FCE guidelines for format and style as described in the FGAD.
- ensure student submissions conform to the APA Manual, 6th edition.

### **Student Access to ADRIANA (Dissertation Support Services Database)**

The ADRIANA database is used to track the progress of FCE doctoral students throughout the dissertation process, to provide students with a dissertation support link, and to work as a depository to upload documents. Students may access ADRIANA through the DSS website and by logging in using their NSU username and password.

On the student's home page, contact information is displayed on the left-hand side of the page. If any of this information is incorrect, the student must go to the NSU WebStar site to make the necessary corrections. Also provided on the opening page is contact information for both the committee chair and member.

### **Dissertation Services Associates**

Each student is automatically assigned a Dissertation Services Associate (DSA) who can answer questions about dissertation procedures or help to resolve any issues that may arise within the dissertation committee. In order to contact the DSA, the student should submit a request through the Dissertation Student Request System (DSRS).

### **Dissertation Student Request System**

At the top of ADRIANA's opening page is a link to the DSRS. The purpose of the DSRS is to provide dissertation students with access to a portal where descriptions of individual student problems and issues may be entered and then addressed. Within the DSRS, the dissertation student will be asked to enter the type of request and a description of the problem. This request will then be recorded, addressed, tracked, and resolved by the assigned DSA.

### **Procedure for Requesting a Change of Committee Chair**

If the student considers the interaction with the committee chair to be no longer viable, the student may request reassignment to a new committee chair. However, in doing so, *the*

*student must understand* that this action could result in the development of a new dissertation topic.

A student's request for a change of committee chair is made by using the DSRS, as described above. Once the request is submitted, the student's DSA will gather information from the student, the dissertation chair, and the ADRIANA records in order to determine the appropriate course of action. Change of chair requests are not always approved and are dependent on the specific circumstances surrounding the student's concerns. If the request for a new committee chair is granted, the student and the newly assigned committee chair will be informed of the reassignment by e-mail.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

The federal government, under the Higher Education Act, has instituted guidelines relating to Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for students receiving federal financial aid. Effective with the 2011-2012 academic year, SAP must be met in order for students to receive federal financial aid. Students will not receive federal financial aid under Title IV programs if the student does not demonstrate SAP.

In completing the applied dissertation requirement, students must sequentially pass four benchmarks totaling 12 credits. Students will receive a "pass" (P) grade once the benchmark has been approved. An entry of "PR" is posted at the end of each term for benchmarks that are not completed, but in which progress is substantiated. If a student fails to submit at least one document showing measurable progress during the term, an entry of "NPR," or no progress, will be posted at the end of the term. A "pass" grade can be recorded only when the full committee has approved the benchmark.

Each term, all students enrolled in a dissertation benchmark or Applied Dissertation Services are required to work with their dissertation committee to demonstrate SAP. Students are expected to submit at least one document by the 10th week of each semester that shows sufficient evidence for SAP. All dissertation chairs are required to report their students' SAP progress to the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) and enter the status of the progress in ADRIANA. Students can work with their committee chairs by utilizing the sample timeline provided in Appendix C.

### **Dissertation Benchmarks for Students in the 69-Credit Program**

The dissertation consists of three benchmarks: ARC 8966: Concept Paper, ARC 8967:

Proposal, and ARC 8968: Final Report. The expectations and submission procedures for each benchmark are detailed below.

### **Concept Paper (ARC 8966, 2 credits)**

The body of the Concept Paper is approximately 3-5 pages in length, presents the student's proposed research agenda, and represents the preliminary stages of the dissertation. The Concept Paper includes two chapters: Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter 2: Literature Review. Chapter 1 encompasses the Statement of the Problem, which includes a brief introduction to the Topic, a clear problem statement, preliminary evidence for the existence of the problem; and a preliminary purpose statement. Chapter 2 of the Concept Paper includes a very brief review of the literature and the preliminary research questions. Citations in the text should be included in a Reference list and adhere to correct APA style (*Note: references not cited in the text should be excluded from the Reference list.*)

Students should take ARC 8966: Concept Paper and RES 9300: Methods of Inquiry (MOI) concurrently, as students will learn to write problem statements, purpose statements, and research questions in MOI.

The student sends the Concept Paper to the committee chair via the internal messaging system in ADRIANA. The chair reviews the submission, and after careful review and (potentially) several iterations, forwards the document to the committee member for review. The student must upload the approved document within the Concept Paper tab of ADRIANA in order for the dissertation committee to enter their final approval. The Concept Paper should adhere to the guidelines in the APA Manual and the FGAD. The student should utilize the Applied Dissertation template for successful completion of this benchmark. The Applied Dissertation templates is located on the DSS website (<http://education.nova.edu/applied-research/research-and-dissertation-resources.html>).

### **Proposal (ARC 8967, 5 credits)**

The Proposal builds on the Concept Paper and represents the first three chapters of the applied dissertation (Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Literature Review, and Chapter 3: Methodology). During the Proposal stage, the student will refine the statement of the problem, purpose statement, and research questions developed in the Concept Paper; and exhaust the literature review. Most literature reviews contain, at a minimum, **30 references from recent peer-reviewed research articles (i.e., primary sources)**, as well as additional resources (e.g.,

books, dissertations, scholarly research articles, etc.). Exhaustive literature reviews usually exceed 25-30 pages in length.

Chapter 3: Methodology should overview the proposed participants; data collection instruments; procedures, including the data collection procedures and data analysis procedures; and potential limitations of the study. Citations in the text should be included in a Reference list and adhere to correct APA style (*Note: References not cited in the text should be excluded from the Reference list.*)

**Proposal submission procedures.** The student sends the Proposal to the committee chair via the internal messaging system in ADRIANA. The chair reviews the submission, and after careful review and multiple iterations, forwards the document to the committee member for review. The student must upload the approved document within the Proposal tab of ADRIANA in order for the dissertation committee to enter their final approval. The Proposal should adhere to the guidelines in the APA Manual and the FGAD. The student should utilize the appropriate dissertation template for successful completion of this benchmark. Dissertation templates can be found on the DSS website (<http://education.nova.edu/applied-research/research-and-dissertation-resources.html>).

**IRB approval.** After receiving Proposal approval, the committee chair (named co-investigator on the IRB submission) will direct the student to submit the study for IRB approval. The student will submit a Researcher Qualification xForm and a New Protocol Submission Form via IRB Manager (<https://nova.my.irbmanager.com>). Students can view additional information, including required documentation and templates, on the IRB website (<http://education.nova.edu/applied-research/irb-resources.html>). Approval by the IRB to conduct research is a federal requirement for the protection of human subjects. Before any dissertation research is conducted (i.e., before data is collected), the student must have a recent CITI certificate, site approval, and NSU IRB approval.

### **Final Report (ARC 8968, 5 credits) and Final Approval**

The Final Report includes three chapters from the Proposal (i.e., Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Literature Review, and Chapter 3: Methodology) changed to past tense (since the study has already been conducted), followed by the Results section (Chapter 4) and the Discussion section (Chapter 5). Chapter 5 should tie the findings back to Chapter 2 and typically includes **10-15 additional references from peer-reviewed research**. A sound and exhaustive

Discussion chapter usually exceeds 10-15 pages. Refer to Appendix A for answers to specific questions related to the final report. Citations in the text should be included in a Reference list and adhere to correct APA style (*Note:* References not cited in the text should be excluded from the Reference list.)

**Submission procedures.** The student sends the Applied Dissertation to the committee chair via the internal messaging system in ADRIANA. The chair reviews the submission, and after careful review and multiple iterations, forwards the document to the committee member for review. The student must upload the approved document within the Applied Dissertation tab of ADRIANA in order for the dissertation committee to enter their final approval. The student is encouraged to use the FCE Applied Dissertation Format Review Checklist (see Appendix D) to ensure the dissertation adheres to all elements of format and style.

**Format review and final approval.** Once the student receives approval from his or her dissertation committee, the student will be sent a notification via email, which will include instructions for format review and degree completion. The student will receive notification as to whether the document is approved, approved with minor revisions, or if major recommended revisions require the student to revise and resubmit. It is highly encouraged that the student use the APA manual, the FGAD, the FCE Applied Dissertation templates (<http://education.nova.edu/applied-research/research-and-dissertation-resources.html>), and the FCE Applied Dissertation Format Review Checklist for successful completion of the format review stage. Upon format approval, the student will be sent a notification via email, which will include instructions for the electronic manuscript submission.

### **Applied Dissertation Format and Templates**

All doctoral course assignments, as well as the Concept Paper, Proposal, and Final Report, should conform to the format and style guidelines found in the FGAD and the sixth edition of the APA Manual. To become familiar with APA style, students should study *Mastering APA Style: Student's Workbook and Training Guide* (Gelfand, Walker, & APA, 2010).

A template has been developed for the preliminary pages and for chapter format and content to aid students in producing documents consistent with the required guidelines. The sample template displaying the topics, sequence, and suggestions for successful completion of the Applied Dissertation is located in Appendix B. Method-specific templates for qualitative,

mixed method, and program evaluations have also been developed and can be found on the DSS website (<http://education.nova.edu/applied-research/research-and-dissertation-resources.html>).

### **Additional Information**

#### **Texts**

Along with this procedures manual, the following text should prove helpful to the doctoral student in identifying the research problem, developing the proposal, conducting the research, and writing the final report: *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (Creswell, 2015). This text is required in the second research course (RES 9300: Methods of Inquiry). Of particular importance in the Creswell text are the chapters on “Identifying a Research Problem,” “Reviewing the Literature,” and “Specifying a Purpose and Research Questions or Hypotheses.”

Two texts that address the literature review and citing sources correctly (to avoid plagiarism) are *Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Galvan, 2017) and *Using Sources Effectively: Strengthening Your Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism* (Harris, 2017). These texts are recommended resources in RES 8100: The Nature of Knowing, the first research course taken by FCE doctoral students.

#### **Literature and the Library**

Resources for the dissertation literature review must be scholarly in nature, relying heavily on empirically based, peer-reviewed primary sources. The Alvin Sherman Library at NSU offers over 300 databases that contain references to journal articles, books, conference papers, government documents, tests and measurements, and dissertations. Many items are available in full text, and students can order materials that are not available electronically by using Document Delivery Services.

Librarians at the Alvin Sherman Library offer assistance in conducting literature searches in a variety of modalities, including instruction sessions during the RES 8100 and RES 9300 courses; via a toll-free number, e-mail, and one-on-one chat sessions; at the Summer Institute; and in person. Visit the Alvin Sherman Library website (<http://www.nova.edu/library/main>) for more information or to schedule a one-on-one appointment (<http://systems.library.nova.edu/form/view.php?id=22>).

#### **Conferences**

Students are required to attend Summer Institute. Students have the opportunity at the

Summer Institute to attend workshops and training sessions related to all aspects of the applied dissertation. Students are also encouraged to attend professional conferences in their chosen field that will be valuable in identifying potential dissertation topics. At professional conferences, students should attend research paper and poster presentation sessions and meet and interact with experienced researchers as they present the results of their investigations.

### **Dissertation Editors and Typists**

Students are expected to study the FCE guidelines (including APA style) for format and style from the beginning of their academic program. Any student who is having difficulty in the preparation of the applied dissertation manuscript should discuss the issue with his or her committee chair. Students who hire an editor or typist should provide that person with the FGAD. Editors must be proficient in the application of APA style to a dissertation manuscript.

Editors and typists must communicate with the student and not with university personnel. The university does not assume responsibility for a student's contractual agreement with an editor or typist or for the quality of work and turnaround time. The FCE does not employ dissertation editors or typists, nor can it recommend specific editors or typists. An editor or typist should not send a manuscript to the dissertation chair. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the applied dissertation is correct prior to submission. *Editors and typists must not make changes that affect the content of the applied dissertation; they must not assist in conducting the investigation or writing the report (but correction of grammar and syntax is permissible).* Refer to the DSS website for advice about finding a capable editor or typist.

### **Publishing Your Dissertation**

The FCE dissertations are made available on an NSU library database. The electronic version of the approved applied dissertation is submitted by FCE to ProQuest Dissertations & Theses @ Nova Southeastern University. Only individuals with valid NSU identification numbers have access to this database.

To disseminate their results on a wider basis, students should submit the applied dissertation to the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. To publish the applied dissertation through the ProQuest database, students may find complete instructions at the ProQuest website (<http://il.proquest.com/dissertationagree>). For the username, type *dissertations*; for the password, type *publish*. Materials for the ProQuest database should not be sent to the FCE. If you have any questions about the submission process, call ProQuest at 1-800-521-0600,



extension 7020.

**Questions or Concerns**

Students should visit the DSS website (<http://education.nova.edu/applied-research/dissertation-support-services.html>) for additional information regarding the dissertation process or research courses, or for contact information for the DSS Team.

## References

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
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- Galvan, J. L. (2017). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences* (7th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.
- Gelfand, H., Walker, C. J., & American Psychological Association. (2010). *Mastering APA style: Student's workbook and training guide*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Harris, R. A. (2017). *Using sources effectively: Strengthening your writing and avoiding plagiarism* (5th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak.

Appendix A  
Frequently Asked Questions

## Frequently Asked Questions

Q – *Should I include the survey or scale that I used for my study in the appendices?*

A - Copyrighted material should not be included in the appendices without permission. Authors of survey instruments often give permission to *use* a survey in a study but not necessarily to *include* it in the dissertation manuscript. Forms, questionnaires, test instruments, and documents that you produced for the study should be included in the appendix section. Refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for additional information relating to appendix material and to the FCE's *Format Guide for the Applied Dissertation* for format requirements.

Q – *Should I be concerned with issues pertaining to copyright?*

A- Yes, in general, every student is responsible for ensuring that the doctrine of fair use under the U.S. copyright law is observed. The author of an applied dissertation is responsible for ensuring that the use of any previously copyrighted material in the manuscript beyond fair use has the written permission of the copyright owner. In general, fair use allows an author to quote excerpts from copyrighted work if the excerpts do not constitute a major portion of the original work and if a full reference with a citation is included in the text. Purchased tests or measurement instruments should never be included without specific and written permission from the copyright owner. When in doubt, seek permission. For additional information pertaining to copyright, see *Copyright Law & Graduate Research* by Kenneth D. Crews (<http://www.umi.com/en-US/products/dissertations/copyright/>).

Q – *I submitted a letter to the IRB from the individual providing approval for me to conduct research in a school or organizational system. Should I include this in the appendices?*

A- No, do not include this letter anywhere in the dissertation. The letter is kept on file at the IRB office.

Q – *How should I refer to my school, agency, or organization in the dissertation where I'm conducting research?*

A – Refer to the setting in general terms (e.g., “the research was conducted at a high school in south Georgia”). When referring to a school or organization do not use pseudo names, such as “School A” and “University X.”

Q – *Should I cite documents from internal sources at my work setting?*

A – No, do not cite the information in a formal manner. Only refer to the school or organization using general descriptions within the text.

Q – *What should I write in the dissertation's abstract?*

A – Refer to section 2.04 of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*

for a description of appropriate content and to the FCE's *Format Guide for the Applied Dissertation* for format requirements.

*Q – Does the dissertation title require specific content or a particular number of words?*

*A – Refer to section 2.01 of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for guidelines pertaining to a concise and fully explanatory title. The manual's word-length recommendation (12 words or fewer) is intended mainly for manuscripts submitted to journals; the dissertation title may be slightly longer.*

## Appendix B

### Applied Dissertation Template with Tips

[Insert Title Here]

**Tip**

Titles should be brief yet informative, and should reflect the problem, the solution strategies, and the age range of those involved (if appropriate). The title should begin with a noun signifying some form of action such as “Development of ...,” “Evaluation of ...,” and “Formation of ...” Appropriate title words may be "solving," "increasing," "reducing," or "improving." A sample title page appears in the *Format Guide for the Applied Dissertation* (FGAD).

by

[Insert Name Here]

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the  
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

**Tip**

- The Concept Paper length, excluding title page and references, should be about 3 to 5 pages. The Concept Paper includes Chapters 1 and 2. It can be considered an abbreviated version of the Proposal and follows the same format.
- The Final Report will include Chapters 4 and 5.
- The DSS website has templates specific for Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods.

Nova Southeastern University

[Enter Year Here]

### Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by [INSERT NAME] under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

[INSERT NAME AND DEGREE, e.g., Al Smith, EdD]  
Committee Chair

[INSERT NAME AND DEGREE]  
Committee Member

Kimberly Durham, PsyD  
Interim Dean



## Abstract

[INSERT TITLE OF DISSERTATION]. [INSERT NAME, e.g., Richard Dadier, 2010]: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. College School of Education. [INSERT 4 or 5 KEYWORDS, e.g., Keywords: Databases, Internet, media selection, middle schools, teacher education]

[INSERT DESCRIPTION OF DISSERTATION- Example Follows]: This applied dissertation was designed to provide better access to current information for the students and staff in a middle school. The printed materials located in the school's media center were outdated, scarce, or inadequate. Electronic databases were available in the media center for online searching and information retrieval. However, the students did not know how to use databases as a source for completing class assignments or how to browse within these online services to find additional information. Teachers also did not know to use electronic information to enrich their lessons.

The writer developed lesson plans and strategies to train students and teach on how two online services available in the media center. Daily sessions on these databases provided students and teachers with training in (a) e-mail usage, (b) searching and locating current events information, (c) printing from the screen, (d) saving messages, and (e) dialing into the online services. Teachers were encouraged to continue to use these services for curriculum enrichment and as an additional source for future lesson plans.

An analysis of the data revealed that students were more likely than teachers to use the online databases. The most successful activities were those that involved students in research information about current events. Although teachers planned assignments that required the use of online services, they did not want to provide additional time for students to be in the media center.

### Tip

The Abstract doesn't have to be completed until the final report. An abbreviated Abstract is recommended for the Proposal. Leave a blank page for the Concept Paper and leave only the heading "Abstract."



## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Statement of the Problem

This should include (a) a clear statement that the problem exists, (b) evidence that supports the existence of the problem, (c) evidence that led to the problem, (d) definition of the problem, (e) a clear statement of the problem, and (g) a specific and feasible solution. **Background** showing that the problem exists and experience with the problem.

**Tip**

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** is APA Level 1 heading. Do not adjust the format of the listed headings.
- According to the FGAD, SINGLE SPACE after all punctuation throughout the document.
- Starting in Chapter 1 the document should be **double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman or Courier New type face**. See FGAD and APA manuals for complete details.
- Make proper use of APA Level 2 and 3 headings.

**Deficiencies in the evidence.** Include a brief discussion that details the area of need in relation to the problem and the deficiency or lack of evidence in the literature.

**Audience.** Discuss who is affected and who benefits.

### Definition of Terms

**Term or variable.** Provide the complete scientific definition and appropriate reference if necessary. Include as many terms or variables as needed.

### Purpose of the Study

“The purpose statement should provide a specific and accurate synopsis of the overall purpose of the study” (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987, p. 5).

Key points to keep in mind when preparing a purpose statement are as follows:



## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Participants

This section should include the following elements: (a) the target population or sample (to which it is homogeneous); (b) procedures for selecting the sample (to which it is homogeneous); and (c) procedures for selecting the sample should be outlined, including justification for the sampling method (i.e., sampling procedure).

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**Tip**  
Write this section in future tense for the Proposal. Convert to past tense where appropriate once data have been collected. And yes, “data” are plural.

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### Instruments

This section will detail each data-collection instrument. The relevant information pertaining to each instrument should include (a) the source or developers of the instrument, (b) validity and reliability information, and (c) other salient information (e.g., number of items in each scale, subscales).

### Procedures

**Design.** The *design* is the actual structure or framework which provides the “when,” or time in which data will be collected (e.g., correlational approach with a predictive design). The specific type of design should be written in the first sentences of this section then followed up by the details of how the data will be collected (i.e., the methodological steps). Write this section in future tense. Convert to past tense where appropriate once data have been collected.

**Data collection procedures.** The data collection procedures section is based directly on the research questions and the design of choice (i.e., this is the “how to” section of the examination) and should be written step by step in a linear fashion with a time line. Steps

pertaining to the *control* of issues related to internal and external validity should be discussed here.

**Data analysis procedures.** Indicate the appropriate data analyses that will be used in the investigation. These data analyses should be based on the research questions and the research design selected for the study. Specify the procedures for reducing and coding the data. For quantitative studies, subsequent data analyses should include summary descriptive statistics and inferential statistical tests (e.g., independent or dependent *t* test, ANOVA, and chi-square). For qualitative studies, the procedures to be followed for the analyses must also be addressed.

### **Limitations**

Include any limitations, restrictions, or constraints that may affect the validity (i.e., internal or external) of the dissertation's outcome.

## Chapter 4: Results

- results presented in sequence and relative to each research question
- only the results are presented without a rationale or discussion
- includes relevant tables and figures
- appropriate use of statistical or qualitative language to present data

**Tip**

Chapter 4 should only be included in the final Applied Dissertation and should include the elements listed here. Additional components and subheadings will be necessary and unique to your study (all written in past tense).

## Chapter 5: Discussion

- introductory paragraphs provide overview of the study
- results are elaborated and interpreted in sequence and relative to each research question
- conclusions and summaries regarding the findings are offered
- findings are linked to relevant research
- implications of findings are discussed
- limitations are indicated
- recommendations for future research are offered

**Tip**

The Discussion section should only be included for the Final Applied Dissertation and should include the elements listed here. Additional subheadings will be required for this chapter that are unique to your study.



## References

**Tip**

All sources cited in text must appear in the References section and vice versa. Follow APA and FGAD guidelines. They should be double-spaced throughout.

Appendix C

Applied Dissertation Timeline

## Applied Dissertation Timeline

Steps to Complete	Anticipated Benchmark Registration*	Anticipated Completion	Check if Complete
<b>ARC 8966: Concept Paper</b> <i>(Note: Student must be registered for ARC 8966 in order to complete this benchmark)</i>			
Identify Research Problem and Preliminary Evidence			
Draft Initial Purpose Statement			
Write an Abbreviated Literature Review			
Draft Preliminary Research Questions			
Submit Initial Concept Paper to Chair			
Revise and Resubmit			
<b>Concept Paper Approved</b>			
<b>ARC 8967: Proposal</b> <i>(Note: Student must be registered for ARC 8967 in order to complete this benchmark)</i>			
Refine the Problem, Justification, and Purpose (Ch 1)			
Write an Exhaustive Literature Review (Ch 2)			
Locate and Embed a Theoretical Framework (Ch 2)			
Refine the Research Questions (Ch 2)			
Complete Methodology (Ch 3)			
Write Intro Pages (e.g., Abstract)			
Submit Initial Proposal to Chair			
Revise and Resubmit			
<b>Proposal Approved</b>			
<b>IRB (start upon approval of Proposal)</b>			
Obtain Administration Letter			
Pass CITI			
Obtain Instruments and Measures			
Create Flyers & Recruitment Materials			
Draft Consent and/or Assent Forms			
Complete Submission Form			
Chair Review & Approval			
Submit to IRB Manager			
Revise and Resubmit			
<b>IRB Approved</b>			

<b>ARC 8968: Final Report</b> <i>(Note: Student must be registered for ARC 8968 in order to complete this benchmark)</i>	<b>Anticipated Benchmark Registration*</b>	<b>Anticipated Completion</b>	<b>Check if Complete</b>
Collect Data			
Analyze Data			
Write Results (Ch 4)			
Finish Discussion (Ch 5)			
Change First 3 Chapters to Past Tense			
Finalize APA and FCE Style			
Finalize Intro Pages (e.g., Abstract)			
Finish Reference Section			
Finish Appendices			
Submit AD to Chair			
Revise and Resubmit			
Submit for Final Review			
Revise and Resubmit			
<b>Applied Dissertation Approved</b>			

*\*Note: Students must register for the ARC benchmark in order for benchmark approval to be entered into ADRIANA*

Appendix D

FCE Applied Dissertation Format Review Checklist

### FCE Applied Dissertation Format Review Checklist

Refer to the Format Guide for the Applied Dissertation (FGAD; 2016) and the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA; 6th ed.). Check all items after you have verified correctness.

- The FCE-approved dissertation template is utilized (FGAD p. 3).
- Text is double-spaced, with single-spacing where required or allowed (FGAD p. 3).
- Spacing after punctuation is correct (FGAD p. 3).
- Margins are correct (FGAD p. 2).
- Right margins are unjustified (ragged) except for table of contents (FGAD p. 2).
- Appropriate typeface, size, and color are used (FGAD p. 2).
- Preliminary pages are in the correct order (FGAD pp. 4-5).
- Title, name, and year are identical throughout the preliminary pages (FGAD p. 5).
- Format of title page is correct (FGAD p. 5).
- Format of approval page is correct (FGAD p. 5).
- Format of acknowledgments page, if included, is correct (FGAD p. 5).
- Format of abstract is correct (FGAD pp. 5-6).
- Format of table of contents is correct (FGAD p. 6).
- Listings in the table of contents match the text's headings and titles (FGAD p. 6).
- Page numbers in table of contents correspond to pages in text (FGAD p. 6).
- Headings and subheadings are correctly formatted (FGAD p. 3).
- Pagination is correct (FGAD p. 3).
- Tables and figures are formatted according to the guidelines of the APA manual (FGAD p. 4).
- Black and white are the only colors used in figures and appendices. (FGAD p. 2).
- References cited in text are formatted according to the guidelines of the APA manual and included in the Reference list (FGAD p. 4).
- Reference list is formatted according to the FGAD and each entry must follow the guidelines of the APA manual (FGAD p. 4).
- Appendix material is appropriate; format of cover pages is correct (FGAD p. 4).
- Manuscript is free of typographical errors.
- APA guidelines are used for all other aspects of style (FGAD p. 1).