

# **Applied Dissertation Procedures Manual**



July 2010

**Contents**

Purpose.....1

Definition of an Applied Dissertation.....1

Recommended Research and Methods for an Applied Dissertation .....1

Interventions, Developmental Research, and Program Evaluation .....2

The Doctoral Program 2

    Concentration Areas.....2

    Applied Dissertation Services.....3

    Minors.....3

    Electives.....3

    Research Courses.....3

The Dissertation Committee 4

    Assignment of Dissertation Committee.....4

    Communication Protocol.....4

    Role of the Doctoral Student.....5

    Role of the Committee Chair.....6

    Role of the Committee Member.....6

Student Access to ADRIANA (ARC Dissertation Services Database) 6

    Dissertation Student Request System.....7

    Procedure for Requesting a Change of Committee Chair.....7

    Procedure for Addressing Other Issues.....7

Selecting an Applied Dissertation Topic 7

    Texts.....7

    Courses.....8

    Literature.....8

    Conferences and Workshops.....8

Dissertation Benchmarks, Credits, and Submission Procedures 9

    Concept Paper (ARC 8966, 2 Credits).....9

        Description.....9

        Submission Procedures.....9

    Proposal (ARC 8967, 5 Credits), ARC Review, and IRB Submission.....9

        Description.....9

        Submission Procedures for ARC Review.....9

        Submission Procedures for IRB Review.....10

    Final Report (ARC 8968, 5 Credits) and Final Approval.....10

        Description.....10

        Submission Procedures.....10

Applied Dissertation Format and Templates .....	10
Dissertation Editors and Typists .....	11
Publishing Your Dissertation .....	11
References .....	12

Figure

Communication Protocol for the Doctoral Student and the Dissertation Committee.....	5
---	---

Appendices

- A Frequently Asked Questions
- B Completion Checklist for Your Applied Dissertation
- C ARC Dissertation Proposal Assessment Form
- D Sample Template for the Concept Paper, Proposal, and Final Report

# Applied Dissertation Procedures Manual

## Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to assist doctoral students as they move through the dissertation process at the Fischler School of Education and Human Services at Nova Southeastern University (NSU). You will find in this manual the recommended sequence of courses and dissertation activities, the role of the dissertation committee, and an explanation of the benchmarks required to complete the doctorate. The doctoral research courses and all dissertation activities are under the purview of the Applied Research Center (ARC).

## Definition of an Applied Dissertation

Through the years, Fischler School students who received the doctoral degree typically investigated problems connected with the workplace; thus, the final products have been *applied* dissertations. Other than that distinction, Fischler School applied dissertations are similar to dissertations found at other universities. The applied dissertation study should follow the scientific method and should contribute to the literature in your concentration area.

The applied dissertation entails a series of independent writing and research activities (with supervision) following the tenets of the scientific method. Thus, the applied dissertation is a process that concludes with a product. The process will require you to identify a research question or set of questions in your work setting or field of interest and employ the scientific method to conduct an appropriately designed study to address your research question or 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. Initially, the introductory research course (EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry) will help you develop the research foundation for your applied dissertation. Your dissertation committee will then guide you through a synthesis of your research and advise you in developing a relevant and significant study.

## Recommended Research and Methods for an Applied Dissertation

Students can utilize experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental research for their dissertations. The research can be either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. The following are *examples* that are considered acceptable for an applied dissertation:

### Quantitative Methods

- Correlational
- Survey
- Within-Subjects
- Between-Subjects

### Qualitative Methods

- Case Study
- Ethnographic
- Grounded Theory
- Narrative Research

### Mixed Methods

- Triangulation
- Embedded
- Explanatory

## **Interventions, Developmental Research, and Program Evaluation**

An intervention-based research approach combined with one of the ARC-recommended research methods may be used for the applied dissertation, but an intervention is not a requirement. If utilized, the implementation process of an intervention must include the assessment of its relevant outcomes.

Developmental research is defined as a method of examining definable trends or observing existing phenomena over an extended period of time. Due to the time constraints of doctoral studies, this type of research is not recommended. Developmental research is not to be confused with program development. Developing and/or evaluating a program (i.e., program evaluation) is acceptable *only if the scientific method is employed* (i.e., collect data, analyze, report findings), and it includes a relevant research design (e.g., correlational predictive 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, at a minimum, the *outcome evaluation* stage (i.e., identify and assess the outcomes, short and long term) using any relevant outcome-based evaluation model. Again, it is important to note that, the appropriate research design should be embedded within the outcome evaluation stage (correlational or survey approaches are commonly used).

An in-depth overview of these approaches and designs is covered in the first required research course, EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry; the designs are derived from the Creswell (2008) text, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. The major outcomes of the applied dissertation are to (a) utilize an appropriate research design, (b) employ the scientific method, and (c) demonstrate doctoral-level research and writing competencies.

## **The Doctoral Program**

### **Concentration Areas**

Students enrolled in the doctoral program select one of 11 concentration areas:

- Educational Leadership
- Health Care Education
- Higher Education Leadership
- Human Services Administration
- Instructional Leadership
- Instructional Technology and Distance Education
- Organizational Leadership
- Nursing Education
- Reading
- Special Education
- Speech-Language Pathology (both SLPD and EdD programs)

### **Applied Dissertation Services**

Students who have completed all doctoral course work in 2 years will register for ADS 8090: Applied Dissertation Services I for the three terms in Year 3. Students who have not completed course work will still be required to register for ADS. If the applied dissertation has not been completed by the 36th month in the program, the student must register for ADS 8091: Applied Dissertation Services II. All doctoral students are subject to the Continuing Dissertation Services fee if they have not achieved final approval for their applied dissertation by the time they have completed their regular academic (course work) schedule. A student must be registered to receive services from the dissertation committee and ARC.

### **Minors**

Students have the option to select a five-course minor (15 credits) as a part of their program. The 13 minors are Adult Education, Autism, Applied Behavior Analysis, Brain-Based Leadership, Charter School Education Leadership, Community College Leadership, Conflict Resolution, Curriculum Development, Early Childhood Education, Gerontology, Human Resource Development, School Business Leadership, and Urban Education. Descriptions of each of these minors can be found in the Fischler School's *Catalog & Student Handbook*.

### **Electives**

Students who do not include an education minor in their program will take up to 15, 18, 21, or 24 credits (depending on the concentration) of their choosing from the education minor areas, the concentration areas, and the research courses.

### **Research Courses**

All students enrolled in the doctoral program take a minimum of nine semester hours (9 credits) of research courses. EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry (6 credits), the first research course, is a requirement. All research courses are designed to aid students in planning, conducting, and writing their dissertation. Thus, students select research courses to learn about research methods they will use in their research activities and their dissertations. Following are the research courses offered in the doctoral program (refer to the Fischler School's *Catalog & Student Handbook* for complete descriptions).

EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry—The initial research course introduces the various types of research and teaches students how to develop research problems to investigate for their dissertation. During this course, three certificate exercises must be completed: (a) Plagiarism; (b) Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), the federal requirement for Institutional Review Board (IRB) submissions; and (c) Format and Style.

ARC 8912: Statistical Methods—Collecting and managing data, tables, figures, descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and hypothesis testing. Prerequisite—EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry.

ARC 8913: Program Evaluation–Planning and conducting a program evaluation; reporting evaluation results. Prerequisite–EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry.

ARC 8914: Educational Assessment–Educational measurement procedures for tests and other assessments. Prerequisite–EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry.

ARC 8915: Survey Research–Planning and conducting survey research. Prerequisite–EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry.

ARC 8916: Qualitative Research–Planning and conducting qualitative investigations. Prerequisite–EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry.

ARC 8917: Advanced Program Evaluation–Builds on ARC 8913 to include more extensive evaluation activities. Prerequisite–ARC 8913: Program Evaluation.

ARC 8918: Advanced Statistical Methods–Builds on ARC 8912 to include additional univariate and multivariate procedures. Prerequisite–ARC 8912: Statistical Methods.

ARC 8919: Single Subject Research–Design used mostly in special education research. Prerequisite–EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry.

ARC 8920: Mixed Methods Research–Conducting research investigations using both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. Prerequisite–ARC 8912: Statistical Methods or ARC 8916: Qualitative Research.

### **The Dissertation Committee**

Each doctoral student is assigned a doctoral committee that consists of a chair and member. This committee will guide the student through the dissertation process.

#### **Assignment of Dissertation Committee**

During the term in which the student takes EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry, he or she is instructed to complete ARC Dissertation Match, an online survey (usually within the 10th week of the course). Likewise, adjunct and full-time faculty members eligible to serve on dissertation committees will take this survey. The responses to the survey help match a student's background and research interests to a dissertation committee chair and a dissertation committee member.

#### **Communication Protocol**

The chart shown in the figure illustrates that the main avenue of communication for the student regarding the dissertation is with the committee chair. There is no *direct* communication between the student and the committee member. The committee member will communicate with the committee chair.



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

### Role of the Doctoral Student

Throughout the dissertation process, the student is expected to

- be enrolled in order to receive advising and other dissertation services.
- abide by the Fischler School Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.schoolofed.nova.edu/fgshome/fgscatalogs.htm>). The student must follow the highest standards of scholarly and intellectual integrity and honesty throughout the dissertation process. To this end, the student should submit only original, scholarly work that conforms to Fischler School policies on plagiarism and original work and to applicable laws and regulations (e.g., copyright laws).
- submit documents to the dissertation 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 Fischler School guidelines for format and style as described in the *Style Guide for the Applied Dissertation* found on the ARC website.
- use only an NSU account for any e-mail correspondence with the dissertation chair.
- maintain contact and communication with the dissertation 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 on points in questions concerning research and writing and for advice and information regarding the dissertation process.
- utilize the information received from the dissertation chair and member to make the recommended organizational, content, format, and style changes in the concept paper, dissertation proposal, and final report.
- inform the dissertation 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.
- follow the policies and procedures established by the university's IRB for research with human subjects and the regulations that the student's own agency or institution may have concerning the protection of human subjects in research.
- be current with CITI certification.



### **Role of the Committee Chair**

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 of the concept paper, dissertation 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).
- ensure that student submissions follow Fischler School guidelines for format and style as described in the *Style Guide for the Applied Dissertation*.
- maintain a professional and collaborative relationship with the student.
- assist the student in identifying resources, such as those for improving writing skills, that may help in the dissertation process.
- use only an NSU account for any e-mail correspondence with the student and member.
- record all correspondence and evaluations with the ARC by using the ADRIANA database.

### **Role of the Committee Member**

The dissertation committee member interacts only with the dissertation 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 IRB submission, and final report.
- provide feedback within 10 business days after receipt of document submissions from the dissertation chair (or notify the chair in this time frame if a delay is necessary).
- use only an NSU account for any e-mail correspondence with the dissertation chair.
- ensure that student submissions follow Fischler School guidelines for format and style as described in the *Style Guide for the Applied Dissertation*.

### **Student Access to ADRIANA (ARC's Dissertation Services Database)**

The ADRIANA database is used to track the progress of Fischler School doctoral students through 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 ARC website and by logging in using the student's 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 in error, only the student can make corrections. If any of the contact information is in error, the student must go to the NSU WebStar site to make the needed corrections. Also provided on the opening page is contact information for both the dissertation committee chair and member.

### **Dissertation Student Request System**

At the top of ADRIANA's opening page is a link to the Dissertation Student Request System (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.

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

If the interaction between the student and dissertation committee chair is 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 dissertation chair is made by using the DSRS. To approve the request, the ARC will need to know the nature and history of the circumstances and the name of the currently assigned committee chair.

If the request for a new dissertation committee chair is granted, the student will be instructed to retake the online ARC Dissertation Match survey. The student and the newly assigned committee chair will be informed of the reassignment by e-mail.

### **Procedure for Addressing Other Issues**

When difficulties arise or the student believes that questions have not been adequately addressed by the committee chair, the student may contact the ARC by communicating the issue or problem through the DSRS. Students may also utilize ADRIANA to update their contact information and to monitor their progress through the dissertation benchmarks.

### **Selecting an Applied Dissertation Topic**

Identifying an appropriate applied dissertation topic with related research questions is probably the most difficult task in the dissertation process. This activity requires insight, a strong literature background, and creativity. A number of resources are suggested here to help the student in this aspect of the dissertation journey.

### **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, 2008). This text is required in the first research

course (EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry). Of particular importance in the Creswell text are Chapter 3 (“Identifying a Research Problem”) and Chapter 5 (“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, 2005) and *Using Sources Effectively: Strengthening Your Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism* (Harris, 2005). These texts are required for EDD 9200: Trends and Issues, the first course taken by Fischler School doctoral students.

### **Courses**

In doctoral courses, students are exposed to many ideas that can transcend into an appropriate topic for the applied dissertation. This exposure should prove to be useful in courses the student takes in the concentration area, in the introductory research course (EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry), and in other research courses (particularly, ARC 8912: Statistical Methods and ARC 8916: Qualitative Research).

### **Literature**

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 EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry course; via a toll-free number, e-mail, and chat sessions; at the Summer Conference; and in person. Visit the Alvin Sherman Library website (<http://www.nova.edu/library/main>) for more information.

### **Conferences and Workshops**

Students are required to attend a Summer Conference. Students have the opportunity at the Summer Conference to meet face to face with their assigned committee chairs and to attend workshops and training sessions related to all aspects of the applied dissertation.

Regional dissertation workshops are offered to all doctoral students at various locations throughout the United States. At these dissertation workshops, Fischler School doctoral students have the opportunity to attend sessions related to the applied dissertation and to meet one on one with Fischler School faculty and staff who are knowledgeable about specific aspects of the dissertation process.

Students may also attend professional conferences in their chosen field that will be valuable in identifying potential dissertation topics. At 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 Benchmarks, Credits, and Submission Procedures**

In completing the applied dissertation requirement, students must sequentially pass three benchmarks totaling 12 credits. Benchmarks are graded as “pass” or “fail”; however, the grade is not posted until the benchmark has been approved. A “pass” grade can be recorded only when the full committee has approved the benchmark. An entry of “PR” is posted at the end of each term for benchmarks that are not completed but in which progress is substantiated.

Completion of a particular benchmark is not a requirement for registration for a subsequent level; students, in some cases, may be simultaneously registered for all three benchmarks. Students can work with their chairs utilizing the sample timeline provided in Appendix B. A description of each of the three dissertation benchmarks follows.

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

**Description.** The concept paper is typically 10-12 pages in length, presents the student’s proposed research agenda, and represents the first three chapters of the dissertation. To meet this benchmark, the concept paper must receive full committee approval, after which the committee chair posts a grade.

**Submission procedures.** The student submits the concept paper electronically to the committee chair as an attachment using Microsoft Word and e-mail. The chair reviews the submission, and after careful review and multiple iterations, forwards the document to the committee member for review.

#### **Proposal (ARC 8967, 5 Credits), ARC Review, and IRB Submission**

**Description.** The proposal builds on the concept paper and represents the first three chapters of the applied dissertation (including the problem, a review of the literature, and the methodology). The literature review in Chapter 2 of the Proposal must be exhaustive. Most literature reviews contain, at a minimum, **30 references from recent peer-reviewed research articles**. Exhaustive literature reviews usually exceed 25-30 pages in length. To meet this benchmark, the proposal must receive full committee approval. Students are highly encouraged to use NSU Library Help to conduct a comprehensive search for recent published articles.

**Submission procedures for ARC review.** Once the student receives preliminary approval from his or her dissertation committee, the proposal should be sent (by the student) to the ARC for review. The submission is completed through an online procedure located on the student page of ADRIANA. The ARC will review the proposal utilizing an electronic assessment form (see Appendix C). The student and dissertation committee will receive feedback from the ARC; if additional changes are required after the review the student should work with his or her committee, address the deficiencies, and resubmit the proposal. After receiving approval, the student can move forward to the IRB review process.

**Submission procedures for IRB review.** After receiving ARC approval, the dissertation committee will submit an approval date in ADRIANA. Next, the committee chair (named co-investigator on the IRB submission) will direct the student to submit the study for IRB approval. The submission is completed through an online procedure located in ADRIANA. 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., collecting data), the student must have a recent CITI certificate and IRB approval.

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

**Description.** The final applied dissertation report includes the research plan and design (as described in the first three chapters of the proposal and IRB submission), followed by the Results section (Chapter 4) and the Discussion section (Chapter 5). Refer to Appendix A for answers to specific questions related to the final report.

**Submission procedures.** After receiving a recommendation of the final report from the dissertation committee, the student submits the applied dissertation manuscript to the ARC for final approval. The steps in the final-approval process are described at the ARC website. Final approval includes the following: content review by an ARC program professor, format review by ARC staff, and the approval of the executive dean. The ARC will notify the student of the final approval. The notification will include instructions for the paper and electronic manuscript copies and for signatures on the approval page.

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

All doctoral course assignments, as well as the concept paper, the proposal, and the final report, should conform to the format and style guidelines found in the *Style Guide for the Applied Dissertation* and the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2010).

To become familiar with APA style, students should study *Mastering APA Style: Student's Workbook and Training Guide* (Gelfand, Walker, & APA, 2010). This reference is used in conjunction with the Format and Style Exercises, a requirement of the introductory research course, EDD 9300: Methods of Inquiry.

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 concept paper is located in Appendix D.

### **Dissertation Editors and Typists**

Students are expected to study the Fischler School 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 *Style Guide for the Applied Dissertation*. 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 ARC 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 ARC. 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 ARC website for advice about finding a capable editor or typist.

### **Publishing Your Dissertation**

Fischler School dissertations are made available on an NSU library database. To disseminate their results on a wider basis, students should submit the applied dissertation to the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. The electronic version of the approved applied dissertation is submitted by the ARC to the MARPs, Practicums, and Applied Dissertations database of the NSU library. Only individuals with valid NSU identification numbers have access to this 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 Fischler School or the ARC. If you have any questions about the submission process, call ProQuest at 1-800-521-0600, extension 7020.

## References

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Galvan, J. L. (2005). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences* (3rd ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyczak.
- Gelfand, H., Walker, C. J., & The American Psychological Association. (2010). *Mastering APA style: Student's workbook and training guide*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Harris, R. A. (2005). *Using sources effectively: Strengthening your writing and avoiding plagiarism* (2nd ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyczak.

## Appendix A

### 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 Fischler School's *Style 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 Fischler School’s *Style 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 manuscript’s submitted to journals; the dissertation title may be slightly longer.

Appendix B

**Completion Checklist for Your FSEHS Applied Dissertation**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Steps to Complete	Check if Complete	Anticipated Completion	Notes
<b>Concept Paper</b>			
Capstone Completed for MOI			
Merge Problem and Purpose (Ch 1)			
Expand Literature Review (Ch 2)			
Complete Research Questions (Ch 2)			
Expand Methods (Ch 3)			
Submit Initial CP to Chair			
Revise and Resubmit			
<b>Concept Paper Approved</b>			
<b>Proposal</b>			
Complete Introduction (Ch 1)			
Complete Literature Review (Ch 2)			
Complete Methodology (Ch 3)			
Write Intro Pages (e.g., Abstract)			
Submit Initial Proposal to Chair			
Revise and Resubmit			
ARC Review			
Revise and Resubmit			
<b>Proposal Approved</b>			
<b>IRB</b>			
Obtain Administration Letter			
Pass CITI			
Obtain Instruments and Measures			
Create Flyers & Recruitment Materials			
Draft Consent and/or Assent Forms			
Complete Submission Form			
Obtain Chair Approval & Signature			
Submit to IRB			
Revise and Resubmit			
<b>IRB Approved</b>			
<b>Final Report</b>			
Collect Data			
Analyze Data			
Write Results (Ch 4)			
Finish Discussion (Ch 5)			
Finalize APA and FSEHS Style			
Finalize Intro Pages (e.g., Abstract)			
Finish Reference Section			
Finish Appendices			
Change First 3 Chapters to Past Tense			
Submit AD to Chair			
Revise and Resubmit			
Submit for Final Review			
Revise and Resubmit			
<b>Applied Dissertation Approved</b>			

## Appendix C

### ARC Dissertation Proposal Assessment Form

1. Is the Problem Statement clear and representative of the proposed study?  
**Yes** or **No**. *If No, Provide Details*
2. Does the Literature Review reflect the Problem Statement?  
**Yes** or **No**. *If No, Provide Details*
3. Is the Literature Review Exhaustive?  
**Yes** or **No**. *If No, Provide Details*
4. Are the Research Questions adequate (clear, feasible, and measurable)?  
**Yes** or **No**. *If No, Provide Details*
5. Does the Methodology accurately reflect the proposed Research Questions?  
**Yes** or **No**. *If No, Provide Details*
6. Does the Methodology include an appropriate research approach and design?  
**Yes** or **No**. *If No, Provide Details*
7. Are the general steps in the Scientific Method to be employed (i.e., identify a problem, review the related literature, specify the purpose, collect data, analyze and interpret the data, and evaluate and report the findings).  
**Yes** or **No**. *If No, Provide Details*
8. Is the proposal a doctoral-level study?  
**Yes** or **No**. *If No, Provide Details*
9. Does the proposal follow FSEHS guidelines (i.e., correct style and format; template used)?  
**Yes** or **No**. *If No, Provide Details*

General comments regarding the overall proposal will be provided here (e.g., the study contributes to the field)

## Appendix D

### Sample Template for the Concept Paper, Proposal, and Final Report

#### Directions

The following template has been developed specifically to help the doctoral student format and type the dissertation document to comply with the writing and style guidelines of the APA *Publication Manual* (6th ed.) and the Fischler School's Applied Research Center. The template includes the sections needed for the final dissertation report that are not needed for the concept paper or proposal. In creating the document, use only the sections indicated (√) in the following chart.

<b>Sections of Template Used for Dissertation Benchmark Submissions</b>			
<i>Template Section</i>	<i>Concept Paper</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Final Report</i>
Cover Page	√	√	√
Approval Page	*	*	√
Abstract	*	√	√
Table of Contents	*	√	√
Chapters	√ (1-3)	√ (1-3)	√ (1-5)

\* These sections may be included as part of the concept paper and proposal but should be blank.

*Note.* The complete MS Word template can be downloaded from the ARC website.

[Insert Title Here]

**Comment [e1]:** 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 Style Guide for the Applied Dissertation (SGAD).

by  
[Insert Name Here]

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the  
Fischler School of Education and Human Services  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

**Comment [e2]:** The concept paper's length, excluding title page and references, should be about 10 to 12 pages. The concept paper includes Chapters 1, 2, and 3. It can be considered an abbreviated version of the Proposal and follows the same format as the Proposal.

**Comment [e3]:** The Final Report will include Chapters 4 and 5.

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 Fischler School of Education and Human Services and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

**Comment [e4]:** This page may be included in the concept paper and proposal, without signatures, but it must be included in the final report.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
[INSERT NAME AND DEGREE] Date  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Professor Review Date  
Applied Research Center

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Scott Mills, PhD Date  
Executive Dean

## **Abstract**

[INSERT TITLE OF DISSERTATION]. [INSERT NAME, e.g., Richard Dadier, 2010]: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Fischler School of Education and Human Services. [INSERT 4 or 5 ERIC DESCRIPTORS, e.g., ERIC Descriptors: 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.

**Comment [e5]:** 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."

## Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
XXXXXXXXXX xx XXXXXXXXX .....	1
XXXXXXXX XXX XXXXX .....	2
XXXXXXXX XXXX .....	4
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	6
XXXXXX XXXXXXXX .....	6
XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX .....	9
XXXXX xx xxx XXX .....	11
XXXXXXXXXXXX xx xxx XXXXXXX xx xxx XXXXXXX .....	14
Chapter 3: Methodology .....	24
XXXXXX .....	24
XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX .....	25
XXXXXXXXXXXX xx XXXXXXX .....	27
Chapter 4: Results .....	29
XXXXXXXXXX xxx XXXXXXXX xx XXXXXXXX .....	29
XXXXXXXXXXXX xx XXXXXXX XXXXXXXX .....	39
XXXXX xx XXXXXXX XXXXXXX .....	43
Chapter 5: Discussion .....	46
XXXXXXX .....	46
XXXXXXXXXX .....	50
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX .....	54
XXXXXXX xx XXX .....	57
References .....	59
Appendices	
A Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case—Begin a Second Line Directly Below the First Line .....	60
B Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....	62
Tables	
1 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....	10
2 Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....	48
Figure	
Title in Initial Caps and Lower Case .....	47

**Comment [e6]:** Leave Table of Contents in the document and fill in and complete for the final report. You do not have to complete sections here until the Final Dissertation Report. Guidelines for formatting the Table of Contents are contained in the SGAD.

**Comment [e7]:** Concept paper and proposal will contain Chapters 1-3. Concept paper is considered an abbreviated version of the proposal and follows the same format.



## 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 of an existing trend that has led to the problem, (d) definitions of major concepts and terms (this can be provided below in a sub-section), (e) a clear description of the setting, (f) probable causes related to the problem, and (g) a specific and feasible statement. Specific subtopics may include the following.

**The topic.** This is a brief description of the proposed area of study.

**The research problem.** This is an area of conflict, concern, or controversy (a gap between what is wanted and what is observed).

**Background and justification.** Provide evidence from the literature and experience showing that the problem exists and the relevance. Include at least two references.

**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:

1. Create a sentence that begins with “The purpose of this study is . . .”
2. Clearly identify and define the central concepts or ideas of the study.

**Comment [e8]:** APA Level 1 heading. Do not adjust the format of the listed headings.

**Comment [e9]:** According to the SGAD, SINGLE SPACE after all punctuation throughout the document.

**Comment [e10]:** Starting in Chapter 1 the document should be **double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman or Courier New type face**. See SGAD and APA manuals for complete details.

**Comment [e11]:** APA Level 2 heading

**Comment [e12]:** APA Level 3 heading. Writing starts after the period for Level 3 headings.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review should be built from the annotated bibliography assignment from EDD 9300 and should contain the following elements: (a) a discussion of the theoretical or conceptual framework within which the study will be grounded; (b) a synthesis of the findings in a “state-of-knowledge” summary in regard to the problem area, including additional evidence as to the nature and the importance of the problem; (c) a clear discussion of how further research should extend, differ from, or replicate past studies, including the identification of critical variables in the problem area and important questions to be tested; (d) an indication of shortcomings that should be avoided in the design of prior research, as well as strengths to be repeated in conducting another study; and (e) a critique of the literature as a basis for any controversial methodological decisions to be presented in the proposal.

### Research Questions

The research questions are based on the problem or area of need and on the research reviewed. The research questions should adhere to the following guidelines: (a) formation of question or questions based on theory, previous research (i.e., the literature review), and experience; (b) stated in the form of a question; and (c) focused and clear (i.e., specific, feasible, and measurable).

**Comment [e13]:** An abbreviated literature review is presented in the concept paper. Students taking EDD 9300 can build the lit review from their Annotated Bibliography. An exhaustive lit review should be presented in the proposal (to be exhaustive, a minimum of 30 pages with up to 30 peer-reviewed articles).

**Comment [e14]:** Indent the beginning of each paragraph with one touch of the Tab button (1/2 “).

**Comment [e15]:** Various headings and subheadings can and should be used within the lit review

## Chapter 3: Methodology

**Comment [e16]:** Write this section in future tense because it is a proposal. Convert to past tense where appropriate once data have been collected.

### Participants

This section should include the following elements: (a) the target population or sample (to which it is hoped the findings will be applicable) should be defined, consistent with the Statement of the Problem and the Research Question(s) sections; (b) the population from which the sample will actually be drawn should be specified (this should also include demographic information such as age, gender, and ethnicity); and (c) procedures for selecting the sample should be outlined, including justification for the sampling method (i.e., sampling procedure).

### 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. The 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.** 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

**Comment [e17]:** Chapter 4 should only be included for the final report 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

**Comment [e18]:** The Discussion section should only be included for the Final Dissertation Report and should include the elements listed here. Additional subheadings will be required for this chapter that are unique to your study.

## References

**Comment [e19]:** All sources cited in text must appear in the References section and vice versa. Follow APA and SGAD guidelines.