The Dissertation Process

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

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Program Professors

Nydia Cummings, PhD, Executive Director
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Tom Kennedy, PhD
James Pann, PhD
• Acts as liaison between students, chairs, and ARC

• Reviews and helps resolve student concerns regarding dissertation committees and process

• Assigns students to dissertation committees based on Dissertation Match results

• Completes the reassignment of students should the need arise

DISSEMINATION SERVICES ASSOCIATE (DSA)
ARC Advising Framework

Program Professor

Dissertation Services Associate

AD Committee Chair & Member

AD Committee Chair & Member

AD Committee Chair & Member

AD Committee Chair & Member

Student

Student

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Student
You will be invited to complete the *Dissertation Match*. 

Your DSA will use the information from the *Dissertation Match* to assign you to a committee chair and member who have expertise in the your expressed area of interest.
Initial Contact With Committee Chair

- Be prepared to share with chair a draft problem statement.
- Share current professional role and where study will be conducted.
- Discuss progress in *Methods of Inquiry* class.
- Be candid about concerns relative to the upcoming process.
- Engage in a positive ongoing relationship.
Dissertation Flow Chart

1. **Dissertation Match**
   - Conduct Research

2. **Committee Assigned**
   - Enroll in Methods of Inquiry
   - Proposal
   - Concept Paper

3. **Initial Contact**
   - IRB
   - Applied Dissertation Report

4. **Final Review**
Iterative Review Process

1. Chair reviews the paper

2. Student makes corrections

3. Repeat Steps 1 and 2 as needed

4. Chair sends the paper to the member

5. Member reviews paper and sends it back to the chair

6. Repeat Steps 4 and 5 until both are satisfied

7. Both chair and member approve benchmark
Major Dissertation Benchmarks

I - Concept Paper

II - Proposal

III - Applied Dissertation Final Report
Creating A Calendar Plan

The plan should include the following items with dates:

1. Make first contact with committee chair
2. Identify the problem
3. Write the concept paper
4. Expand the concept paper into a proposal
5. Prepare Institutional Review Board paperwork
6. Conduct the research
7. Analyze the data
8. Write the final applied dissertation report
9. Submit the paper for final review
Chapter by Chapter

The Concept Paper and Proposal
Chapter 1

• **Statement of the Problem** should have
  • a brief description of proposed area of study, moving from broad to very focused.
  • evidence of the problem and its relevance from the literature and experience.
  • a list of deficiencies in the evidence—What else do we need to know?
  • a clear description of setting and student’s role.
  • a description of the audience who may benefit from the study.
  • a clear and representative picture of the proposed study.
Chapter 1 (cont.)

- Definitions of Major Concepts and Terms
- Purpose of the Study
  - Begins with “The purpose of this study is . . .”
  - Clearly identifies and defines central concepts of study, variables and relationships, and participants and setting
  - Refers to the purpose of the study, not just a change or a wish of the student
Chapter 2: Literature Review

- Notes theoretical or conceptual framework for the study
- Offers “state-of-knowledge” summary regarding problem area
- Covers all main concepts from problem statement
- Has a clear discussion of how further studies should extend, differ from, or replicate past studies
- Notes strengths and weaknesses of prior studies
- Give a literature base for chosen methodology
Research questions are:
- based on theory, literature, and experience
- stated in the form of a question
- specific, feasible, and have measurable variables
- notes participants and research site
Chapter 2 Suggestions

- Separate each topic by heading
- Use multiple citations to support important points
- Use direct quotes and secondary citations sparingly
- Use mostly peer-reviewed material from within last 5 years (more recent for technology topics)
Chapter 3: Methodology

- Participants
  - Target population or sample defined
  - Population specified, including demographics
  - Sampling procedure identified

- Instruments
  - Source or developers of instruments
  - Validity and reliability information
  - Relevant details, including number of items in scale, subscales
  - Use of established, published instruments when possible
Chapter 3 (cont.)

- Procedures
  - Based on research questions and design
  - Presents specific procedures for coding data
  - Presents specific statistical analyses for quantitative research
  - Presents specific procedures for qualitative research
• Data Analysis
  • Based on research questions and design
  • Explains specific procedures for coding data
  • For quantitative studies, indicates specific statistical analyses
  • For qualitative studies, indicates specific procedures
• Limitations
  › Well conceptualized and written--not just an afterthought
  › Internal validity (quasi- and experimental designs) is noted
  › External validity/generalizability is noted
Proposal is preapproved.

Student sends proposal to ARC for Program Professor Review and for feedback on APA style.

ARC approves or communicates with committee for revisions. Student makes revisions. Chair approves proposal.
It is suggested that the student begin preparing the IRB documents when the chair states that the proposal is near approval. Doing this will save time.

The chair must review all IRB documents before submission. Each submission must have the chair’s signature on the last page.

After the applied dissertation committee has approved the proposal and the IRB package, the student electronically submits, via ADRIANA, a copy of the approved proposal together with the completed IRB submission package to the ARC for review.
Applied Dissertation (Final Report) Components Written After the Research Has Been Done

- Title Page
- Approval Page
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
Applied Dissertation Components (cont.)

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Methodology
- Chapter 4: Results
- Chapter 5: Discussion
- References
- Appendices

From the proposal -- with change to past tense where required

Added chapters
Chapter 4

- Results prepared in sequence as related to each research question
- Results are presented without rationale
- Relevant tables and figures are included
- Statistics or qualitative data appropriate to the study are used
Chapter 5

- Introduction
- Results are elaborated and interpreted
- Conclusions and summaries are presented
- Findings are linked to relevant research
- Limitations of the study are presented
- Recommendations are made for future research
**ARC Review of AD**

- Applied dissertation is preapproved

- Student sends applied dissertation to ARC for Program Professor Review and Format Review

- ARC approves or asks for revisions. Student makes changes and resubmits to chair and ARC for approval.
Student Responsibilities

- Contact your chair at least once a month
- Make all developmental, formatting, or style changes required by chair
- Inform your chair of any job changes
- Be candid about your expectations
Chair Responsibilities

- Provide clear and detailed feedback on both content and form
- Review submissions within 10 business days
- Provide suggestions to assist student with writing, APA style, and Fischler School style matters. Chair is not the student’s editor.
- Assist student in gaining access to ARC and university resources and procedures, such as the library, IRB documents, and format review.
- Be the conduit between the student and committee member
The ARC Website

- Become familiar with the ARC website
- http://www.fischlerschool.nova.edu/
- applied-research/arc

The website contains

- academic resources
- links to IRB and ADRIANA
- contact information

BOOKMARK IT!