Dissertation Completion Project for
ABD students

Abraham S. Fischler College of Education
and
School of Criminal Justice

Winter, 2020
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The purpose of this manual is to assist doctoral students enrolled in the Dissertation Completion Project as they move through the dissertation process at the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education (FCE) at Nova Southeastern University (NSU).

Dissertation Completion Project

The Dissertation Completion Project (DCP) at Abraham S. Fischler College of Education was designed to respond to students who have completed all coursework but did not complete the dissertation. This is considered the “All-But-Dissertation” (ABD) phase. The DCP will focus on those ABD students who have completed their coursework, achieved doctoral candidacy, and left their program in good academic and financial standing. The DCP is a highly structured program that will provide students with intensive advising services to assist them through the complexities of the dissertation. Students interested in entering the DCP program will first complete a needs assessment and entrance survey.

Upon entry into the DCP, students will be matched with a team of academic professionals who all have extensive experience working with ABD students. This team will include: (a) an academic advisor, (b) a DCP faculty mentor, and (c) a dissertation committee consisting of a dissertation chair and member. All students will be entered into virtual cohorts. The initial phase of the program will require each student meet with his or her faculty mentor and complete a learning agreement contract. The contract will include the specific milestones, timelines, and courses that must be followed in order for the student to complete the dissertation and earn the doctoral degree. At this point, the student will also be assigned a dissertation supervisory committee and an academic advisor.

Virtual Cohorts (DCP 9500)

Each student will be part of a virtual cohort. This cohort will be considered the student’s DCP home base. The cohort will be housed within NSU’s current online-learning platform, Canvas. Within the DCP home base, students will have direct access to their academic advisor, dissertation committee, and faculty mentor. In addition, relevant information and documents such as dissertation templates, IRB materials, and research-related lectures will be made available. Students will also be encouraged to network with other students in the cohort. Periodically the faculty mentor will offer live sessions to the entire group as well as one-on-one consultation. This also includes the initial meeting between the faculty mentor and student to
establish a learning agreement.

**Learning agreement contract.** Once the DCP student is enrolled into the program, he or she will be placed in a virtual cohort and assigned a faculty mentor, dissertation chair and member, and academic advisor. The student’s faculty mentor will set up an initial one-on-one consult where the student will complete a learning agreement contract. This contract will detail the student’s specific program of study, which includes courses to be taken and benchmarks to be completed. A timeline will be associated with each benchmark and course along with other details such as expectations for the student as well as the dissertation committee.

The student will be expected to adhere to the agreement. As part of this agreement, the student will be required to participate in periodic check-ins (at least once per week) with the faculty mentor to determine if he or she is still on track. The student will also participate in mandatory online meetings either individually or as a group with both the dissertation chair and his or her faculty mentor.

**DCP Dissertation Benchmarks**

During the application process, each student will complete an entrance survey which will serve as a needs assessment. Although all students are considered ABD, some have already developed and created elements of the dissertation. Some may only have an idea, and some may have a fully developed literature review and methodology. Regardless, each student will be required to submit each component or benchmark of the dissertation, in sequence, for review and approval. The dissertation process at FCE is broken into three major benchmarks and is detailed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissertation Benchmarks</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISR 8966: Prospectus</td>
<td>Ch. 1-2 (abbreviated lit review)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISR 8968: Proposal</td>
<td>Ch. 1-3 (exhaustive lit review)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISR 8969: Final Report</td>
<td>Ch. 1-5</td>
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</table>
Curriculum

The DCP is considered a 5-term initiative. The student must complete, at a minimum, 27 credits across the 5 terms. This includes 9 credits of research courses, 9 credits of concentration courses and 9 credits of dissertation benchmarks. In addition, each term the student will be required to register for their virtual cohort (DCP 9500) at 1 credit each. Students who go beyond 5 terms will incur continuing dissertation fees (ADS 8091: Applied Dissertation Services).

Required Courses

Cohort (up to 5 Credits)
DCP 9500 – Dissertation Cohort Services (1 credit)

Research Courses (9 Credits)
RES 9300 – Methods of Inquiry (3 credits)
RES 8911 – Research Methods: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods (3 credits)
RES 8921 – Data Analysis for Qualitative and Quantitative Methods (3 credits)

Concertation Courses (9 Credits)
EDD 8200: Leadership, Communication, and Technology (3 credits)
IDT 7000: Research in Instructional Technology and Distance Education (3 credits)
ORGL 8730: Virtual and Global Leadership (3 credits)

Dissertation Benchmarks (9 Credits)
DISR 8966: Prospectus (3 credits)
DISR 8968: Proposal w/ IRB (3 credits)
DISR 8969: Final AD (3 credits)
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Winter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Fall</td>
<td>DCP 9500 – 1cr</td>
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<td>EDD 8200 – 3cr</td>
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<td>5 Winter</td>
<td>DCP 9500 – 1cr</td>
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<td>RES 8921 – 3cr</td>
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<td>6*</td>
<td>ADS 8091 – Applied Dissertation Services</td>
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<td>ADS 8091 – Applied Dissertation Services</td>
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</table>

*Students will incur continuing dissertation services fees beyond 5 terms

**Overview of the FCE 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 a 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.

**Research Approaches and Methods**

Students can utilize experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental research for their dissertations (see Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017 for a complete overview). The research methods can be either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. The following are examples considered acceptable for an applied dissertation (*Note: this list is not exhaustive*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative Methods</th>
<th>Qualitative Methods</th>
<th>Mixed Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlational</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Convergent (concurrent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>Embedded (nested)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>Explanatory (sequential)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quasi-Experimental</td>
<td>Narrative Research</td>
<td>Exploratory (sequential)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students who don’t have direct access to research participants may opt to conduct research on publicly-accessible data sets. Students may also utilize a data acquisition service, such as Survey Monkey’s Audience product. These decisions will be made in conjunction with the student’s faculty mentor dissertation chair, and dissertation committee member.

**The Dissertation Committee**

Upon entry into the program, the student will complete a Dissertation Interest Form that will be used to match a student’s research interests to a dissertation committee chair and member with expertise in the student’s area of interest.

**Student expectations.** Along with the expectations set forth with the faculty mentor, there are also required expectations that the student is 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) found on the DSS website.


- 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 and faculty mentor at least once a week.

- understand that the working relationship between student and chair is unique and based on a trusting interaction between professionals.

- utilize the information received from the faculty mentor, committee chair and member to make the recommended organizational, content, format, and style changes in the Concept Paper; Proposal and IRB submission; and Applied Dissertation, Final Report.

- inform the committee chair and faculty mentor 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 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 committee 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.
• evaluate and provide written and oral feedback to the student
• provide feedback to the student within 3 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.
• 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.
• ensure the final applied dissertation adheres to the components of the FCE Applied Dissertation Format Review Checklist.

Dissertation Benchmarks

Concept Paper (DISR 8966)

Description. The concept paper is typically 8-10 pages in length, presents the student’s proposed research agenda, and represents the preliminary stages 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 w IRB (DISR 8968)

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 (i.e., primary sources), but often include many more. 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 relevant and recently published articles.

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 (DISCR 8969)

The Applied Dissertation, 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, 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 dissertation benchmarks 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, 2019).

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 (see Galvan, 2017 for more on writing). 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).

**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).

**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://www.etdadmin.com/novaed). 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.
References


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?

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 length, excluding title page and references, should be about 3 to 5 pages. This includes Chapters 1 and 2. It can be considered an abbreviated version of the Proposal Development 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
Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the Student Handbook of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

Where another author’s ideas have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author’s ideas by citing them in the required style.

Where another author’s words have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author’s words by using appropriate quotation devices and citations in the required style.

I have obtained permission from the author or publisher—in accordance with the required guidelines—to include any copyrighted material (e.g., tables, figures, survey instruments, large portions of text) in this applied dissertation manuscript.

___________________________
Name >above the rule, type your name<

___________________________
Date >above the rule, type the current date, e.g., May 31, 2016<
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 and Proposal Development and leave only the heading “Abstract.”
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**Tip**

- Leave Table of Contents in the document and fill in and complete for the final Applied Dissertation. You do not have to complete sections here until the Final Dissertation Report. Guidelines for formatting the Table of Contents are contained in the FGAD.
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, (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.

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:
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review should be built from the literature review exercise from EDD 9300 and should contain the following elements: (a) a discussion of the theoretical perspective which the study will be grounded; (b) a synthesis of the findings in a “state-of-knowledge” summary in regard to the problem area 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).
Chapter 3: Methodology

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.

**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

FCE Applied Dissertation Format Review Checklist
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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).