

10 Steps to Completing a Successful Dissertation

Earning a doctoral degree will be one of the most challenging and rewarding accomplishments of your professional life. Many highly qualified candidates, however, struggle with their dissertation – typically with process and personal issues that, in reality, are easily overcome. The 10 steps below, as summarized by NSU Doctoral alumni, M.L. Munroe, Ed.D., are the foundation for a dissertation strategy that any doctoral student can use to work confidently through the process. This outline shows you how to leverage resources, find solutions and, most importantly, enlist emotional support to help you succeed on your path to your doctoral degree.

You can accomplish this. NSU is here to help.



1

Acknowledge Your Fears

- What are you afraid of?
 - The dissertation process?
 - The amount of work involved?
 - The possibility of failing?
 - The possibility of succeeding?



2

What is Your Research Interest?

- What intrigues you so much that you are willing to spend the next year or more researching an answer?
- What questions would you like to answer?
- What moves you?
- What are your passions?



3

Establish a Rapport with Your Professors and Dissertation Chair

- Remember your role: You are the student, not the dissertation coach
- Listen to everything you're told
- Ask questions / take notes during each meeting
- Maintain an open line of communication (weekly contact)



4

Utilize the Services of NSU's Alvin Sherman Library

- Request reading / research materials
- Make copies of articles
- Schedule appointments with a librarian (online, face-to-face, by phone)
 - Phone: 954-262-4613
 - Appointment request form available online
 - sherman.library.nova.edu

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Read Other Dissertations

- Read other dissertations written about your research topic
- Read those written by former students of your dissertation chair
- Read dissertations that were selected as Dissertations of Distinction

6

Read, Write; Read, Write...

- As a doctoral student you should be reading and writing daily
- Read as much literature as you can about your research topic. This prepares you for the development of the literature review
- Create a folder of your work and save EVERYTHING: Assignments, papers, e-mails...

7

APA and Research Methods

- Key Books for APA Style Writing and Research Methods
 - Publication Manual of the APA
 - APA Style Guide to Electronic References
 - Research Methods (Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods) *Creswell, J.*

8

Find a Mentor

- Don't be afraid to get a second or third opinion about your writing. Remember you are the student. Your role is to listen and learn from others.
- Share research ideas and listen to suggestions

9

Join a Productive Support Group

- Support groups are essential to the success of the doctoral student. No one truly understands your journey the way other doctoral students do
- Social network groups are awesome!
- This is not the time to join the group that is the most popular; join the group that is the most productive!

10

Don't Forget About YOU

- Allow yourself the freedom of living the human experience
 - During this journey, there will be a need to take a break, reevaluate, cry, scream, complain, threaten to give up, question your intellect and your ability to complete the program.
 - These emotions are NOT an indicator of weakness; they are simply reminders that you're human. This is a good thing because the alternative is not favorable.