# Ten Steps to Complete a Dissertation

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Introduction

Purpose of the Manual
This manual is designed to provide information and direction regarding the dissertation process for students enrolled in the Educational Administration and Leadership Ed.D. at St. Cloud State University (SCSU). The purpose of the guide is to direct students towards a smooth and successful completion of their dissertation and to assist in students’ timely graduation.

When a conflict exists in standards, format, or style, the manual published by the School of Graduate Studies takes precedence over any other manual approved for department use.

Candidacy
After passing the qualifying exam, the student moves on to Candidacy. Students who pass the exam can register for the dissertation research course (EDAD 899) and focus on their dissertation topic. Students may not schedule a Dissertation Proposal until they pass the qualifying exam.

After advancing to doctoral candidacy, a student must maintain continuous registration (EDAD 891) until the university confers the doctoral degree. Please refer to the continuous registration policy online.

Dissertation
A dissertation involves the design and implementation of empirical research by the student as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctorate in Educational Administration and Leadership (Ed.D.) at SCSU. This research makes an original contribution to the student’s field of study. The student designs the study, obtains and/or develops data collection tools, sets up and follows-through on the data collection procedures, processes and analyzes the data, and writes the findings, analyses, interpretations and conclusions of the study based on the data.

Dissertation Format
Doctoral dissertations are to be formatted according to the publication style recommended by the American Psychological Association (APA) Sixth Edition. The following APA style supports are available to students:

- The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition) can be purchased at the Husky Bookstore or via online vendors (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc.)
- The OWL at Purdue provides APA Style online support for basic formatting.

After you have passed your Dissertation Final Defense, you will follow additional formatting basics as required by the School of Graduate Studies.

- Dissertation format guidelines and directions can be found on the website https://www.stcloudstate.edu/graduatestudies/culminating-projects/completion-and-submission-directions.aspx
**Dissertation Course Registration**
Students who pass the qualifying exam can register for the dissertation research course (EDAD 899) and focus on their dissertation topic.

Course registration is completed online via the e-Services system. To log in e-Services, you need your SCSU HuskyNet ID and password. Directions for registration can be found through the [Online Registration Guide](#). Please ensure you register for the correct course section number based on what is listed on the course schedule for your cohort number. If you receive an error message while registering, please contact Center for Doctoral Studies and include the error code number and message in your e-mail or voice message. This will help provide you with assistance.

**EDAD 899 - Dissertation**
This course provides guidance by the major adviser for dissertation writing, including preparation and conduct of the Dissertation Proposal, and of the Dissertation Final Defense to the committee.

Students take a total of 12 credits for this course spread over three semesters. Please refer to the course sequence provided in the EDAD Doctoral Student Handbook to determine the number of credits taken per semester.

**EDAD 891 - Enrollment Continuation**
This course is intended for doctoral students who have completed all 12 dissertation credits in EDAD 899, coursework, and interdisciplinary elective credits who have not completed the Dissertation Final Defense.

This course allows a student to maintain continuous registration required by the School of Graduate Studies. Please refer to the [continuous registration policy](#) on the School of Graduate Studies website. Students take one credit a semester for a minimum of two of every three semesters (summer, fall, spring). The course is repeatable up to 10 credits.

**Note:** You must be enrolled in either EDAD 899 or EDAD 891 during the semester of your Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation Final Defense meeting.
Ten Steps to Complete a Dissertation

The journey of your dissertation may be completed in ten steps listed below:

1: Select a Topic
2: Research Your Topic
3: Select Chair and Committee Members
4: Create a Timeline and Dissertation Deadlines
5: Write Chapters 1 through 3
6: Prepare and Conduct your Dissertation Proposal
7: Obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval
8: Conduct Your Study and Analyze the Results (Chapters 4 and 5)
9: Prepare and Conduct Your Dissertation Final Defense
10: Submit Dissertation for Format Review

Step 1: Select a Topic

Dissertation research policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. First, a doctoral candidate should define a topic that meets his or her research interests. A few students know what topic they want to research right away; while others take longer to determine exactly what they want to do. It is never too early to begin selecting your topic. Consider the following as you select a research topic:

- **Select a topic you are passionate about.** Make your choice based on your highest personal and/or professional interests. It may be a topic that is compelling to you now, or it may be a topic related to your future professional career. This will keep you motivated during the entire research process.

- **Brainstorm ideas.** What topics and questions have continually interested you throughout your coursework? Was there a journal article or critical issue you learned about that struck a chord with you? Are there any topics that you could apply to your current or future professional career interests? Are there any topics in your field that research does not answer? When you find something that seems particularly interesting, write it down. Maybe that idea will become the springboard for your research, or the problem you will investigate. These signals may be broader than the research questions that make a good, focused dissertation. They are a good place to start but need further refinement.

- **Utilize resources in your library.** Utilize SCSU [library](#) resources to help you select a topic and find background information on topics at the same time.

- **Utilize HIED Subject and Course Guides on library website.** The SCSU Library has [EDAD course guides](#) specifically compiled for HIED doctoral students to assist in finding resources for your field of study.

- **Read professional journals and attend conferences in your career field.** This will help you gain insight into topics that professionals are working on or critical issues affecting your career field. This will also help you identify gaps in research that need further investigation.

- **Consult your program adviser:** Your adviser can assist you in finding a relationship between your research topic and future career that is exciting and intellectually engaging.
• **Select a topic that is original and substantial.** A dissertation involves the design and implementation of empirical research that makes a substantial contribution to the student’s field of study.

**Step 2: Research Your Topic**

Dissertation research policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. In order to increase your knowledge about the topic you have chosen and its theoretical framework, read as much as you can through scholarly research journals, books, or dissertations.

The SCSU Library put together [EDAD course guides](#) specifically compiled for EDAD doctoral students to assist in finding resources for your field of study. Reference librarians are also available to help students locate relevant literature and build their expertise.

Typically research should focus on studies published the last five or ten years, but it should also refer to landmark studies and scholarly works published prior to this time if they are significant in the development of research on the topic or in shaping the direction of your study. It may be beneficial to start with the most recent research first to help you establish what the current issues of concern are in the field.

In order to save time, read abstracts or introductory chapters first to determine if the research is relevant to your study.

As you review and synthesize the literature, you will discover the aspects of the issue that scholars seem to agree on (there is little need to study these further) and the aspects that are still unknown or in dispute. These unknown items can take many forms: For example, a process, trend, concept, or group that is under-researched and not well understood, theorized connections as yet unproven; a situation or population that a theory or model has not been tested on yet; a program, procedure or intervention that has not been fully tested and verified yet; or a study that has some design flaws that limit its inferential value, but that you can repair in another project. In areas such as these you should be able to formulate questions that guide dissertation research.

In addition, most research articles include suggestions at the end regarding gaps in research literature and questions that need further investigation. These hints by other scholars can help students define the purpose of their study and refine their statement of the problem. In the end, the goal is to narrowly focus your research into a doable and manageable project that contributes to the further development of scholarship and effective practice in the field of higher education administration.

Keep photocopies of the materials you read from books and bookmark electronic sources in a single place so you can refer back to them throughout your entire research project.

Organizing your research will prevent you from becoming overwhelmed by all the information you discover. It is wise to group the literature relevant to your study systematically by similar topic, approaches, arguments, findings, or other means. This organization may prove beneficial as you develop an outline for your literature review and map the plans for your own study.
HINT: Back up your research materials. You may want to save your information to your personal computer, and then back up your information on SCSU’s web space.

Step 3: Select Chair and Committee Members
One of the most important considerations when beginning a dissertation project is the selection of committee members. Dissertation research policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website.

Tips to select the right adviser and committee members.
- Select an adviser who will help you develop a vision for your professional research that draws on your future career goals.
- Select an adviser who has a proven success record of graduating students in a timely manner.
- Find an adviser and committee members that have expertise in your research area and/or methodology.
- Consider the availability of the committee members you choose. Be sure they will be available to meet or converse when you need and can respond in a timely manner. Faculty members may not be available in the summer or when on sabbatical.
- Select committee members that have a good reputation with other professors, students, and those in your field of study.
- Select committee members that you have a good working relationship and can provide you with constructive feedback and encouragement.

Selecting Committee Members
Each graduate student, after consulting their advisor, should ask three other graduate faculty members to serve on the committee, based on each member’s potential advisory value regarding the research project or method.

Doctoral Dissertation Committee Structure
Doctoral dissertation committees consist of four members. A minimum of two committee members, including the chair, must be active graduate faculty members in the student’s doctoral program. The remaining two committee members should be active graduate faculty members from the academic unit or a related discipline, or be a content expert eligible for temporary membership in the graduate faculty (holding a terminal degree). Fifth readers serving as content experts are not required but may be included on a student’s committee.

- Active Graduate faculty members have been recommended for a permanent appointment to the graduate faculty by their department and School and are currently employed at SCSU.
- Chair of Committee serves as the student’s primary adviser and must be rostered with the student’s graduate program.
- Academic Unit is defined as the next unit larger than the graduate program. It may be the department or School in which the graduate program is located.
- Related discipline is any discipline/academic unit having an active graduate faculty member who can provide insight to a specific student topic.
• **Content expert eligible for temporary appointment to the graduate faculty** is any individual currently employed at SCSU, an emeriti faculty member from SCSU, or an individual from another academic institution or community agency or business holding a degree equivalent or higher than the student and who brings specific content expertise to the committee. The individual must seek temporary appointment to the graduate faculty by completing the Dissertation Committee Approval form.

• **Fifth readers** are optional non-voting members of the committee proving content matter or some other expertise.

**Committee chair.**
The student’s adviser serves as the committee chair. The chair needs to be an active graduate faculty member in the Educational Administration and Leadership (EDAD) program. The student should make sure that the chair is available throughout the course of the dissertation. If the student, in consultation with the adviser, determines that her or his topic better matches the expertise of some other member of the program faculty, she or he should consider changing advisers or have co-chairs for the committee. The impact of changing advisers is relatively small provided it is done early in the process of designing the research project. The Change of Advisor form can be found online.

**Inside Committee Member**
The inside committee member must be an active graduate faculty member who has been recommended for a permanent appointment to the graduate faculty by their department and school and are currently employed at SCSU.

**Outside Committee Member**
Another committee member fills the role of an “outside reader” and must be from outside the Educational Leadership and Higher Education Department. The outside reader need not have expertise in the student’s specific topic, but should be in an area that complements the planned project or the field of higher education administration.

**Fourth Committee Member**
The fourth member can be from either inside or outside the department. If other members of the committee do not have familiarity with the planned method of the study, the student should consider choosing a member for the committee who has such knowledge and expertise. A student may also consider the membership of a higher education administrator/practitioner who might apply for membership on the graduate faculty for the purpose of serving on the committee.

**Fifth Readers**
Fifth readers are optional non-voting members of the committee proving content matter or some other expertise.

**Committee Member Approval**
The dissertation committee must be approved via the Dissertation Committee Approval form. If a potential committee member is not a member of the graduate faculty, they must be approved via the Approval of Outside Committee Member form. These forms must be completed at least 30 days prior to a proposal meeting. Please return the form to the
Center for Doctoral Studies and they will attain the signatures for you and will forward to the School of Graduate Studies for final approval. You will be notified via your SCSU email once a decision is made.

**Understanding the purpose of the committee.**

Your committee acts in the role of a reviewer, partner, and mentor in order to provide knowledge and support as you begin, execute, and complete your dissertation. A student should discuss with her or his adviser the expected role and contribution for each member of the committee. A student will need to meet with the committee at least twice in two separate semesters, once for the Dissertation Proposal and again for the Dissertation Final Defense.

During the Dissertation Proposal, the committee is looking to ensure the student is well prepared to move forward with the research and has developed a viable research structure. The committee determines whether the student passed or not, and will indicate to the student what changes will be required before final acceptance. Once the committee approves the proposed research, the student may begin the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application process by sharing the research topic and methodology. The student may complete the IRB online training and bring the IRB application form and materials to the Dissertation Proposal meeting for the adviser’s signature. After IRB application approval, the student may begin to collect and analyze data. During the Dissertation Final Defense, the committee determines whether the student passed or not and will indicate to the student what changes will be required before final acceptance. Once it is determined that the student passed, the student must follow the School of Graduate Studies process for formatting and binding of the dissertation research.

**Working with your committee.**

The student first makes all decisions in discussion with the chairperson, including the composition of the committee, IRB forms, drafts of chapters, and so on. In addition, dates for the Dissertation Proposal and the Dissertation Final Defense meetings are scheduled only after the chair has reviewed and approved the working draft of the proposal or dissertation. **Appendix A** presents lists of responsibilities for the student, committee chair, and committee members throughout the dissertation process.

**Note:** The student should be aware of the Dissertation and Graduation Deadlines set by the School of Graduate Studies before scheduling the Dissertation Final Defense with other committee members.
During the Dissertation Proposal and the Dissertation Final Defense, students will receive feedback and suggestions from committee members that will help them refine their research. Some committee members will provide editing, formatting, spelling corrections, and/or grammatical advice for students. Others may prefer to focus their attention on the content instead of the structure or mechanics.

The student should ask the chairperson and committee members about the logistics of the involvement of committee members. Some committee members prefer to see all drafts and be involved throughout the process, whereas other members may give early input in terms of conceptualizing the project or research design and then prefer to see only the final drafts. Students should have committee members clarify their preference at the outset of their work together.

Students are advised to work closely with their chair and faculty members from the very beginning and throughout the entire length of the dissertation. They may also want to seek advice about methods for their study while taking EDAD 827 (Quantitative & Qualitative Research Methods). It would not be advisable for a student to do most of the work of a proposal on her/his own and then take it to her/his chair in hopes that the chair would “sign on.” The dissertation project is intended to be a process during which the advisor and student work closely throughout.

Another logistical procedure the student, chair, and committee members should discuss and agree upon is the amount of time that the student must allow for the chair and committee members to read submitted written material. For example, how many days does the chair need in order to review materials for your next meeting? When the final draft is completed, how much time will committee members need before submitting their suggestions? These important procedural considerations should be clearly delineated at the outset of the dissertation process and updated as needed. In addition, committee members should be asked if they want hard copies or electronic copies of all drafts.
Step 4: Create a Timeline and Dissertation Deadlines

Dissertation research policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Timelines are helpful for staying focused and completing the research in a timely fashion. Students can consult with their dissertation chair to periodically review and update a timeline.

Year Two-Fall:  
Select Research Topic and Read Research Materials  
Select Chair and Committee Members  
Write Chapters 1 through 3

Year Two-Spring:  
Take the Qualifying Examination (Oral & Written)  
Complete Chapters 1 through 3  
Schedule Dissertation Proposal after passing qualifying exam  
Register for EDAD 899 after passing qualifying exam

Year Two-Summer:  
Complete IRB Training and Application Materials  
Conduct the Dissertation Proposal

Year Three-Fall Semester:  
Collect and Analyze Data after IRB Approval  
Write Chapters 4 and 5

Year Three-Spring Semester:  
Apply for Graduation  
Complete Chapters 4 and 5  
Conduct Dissertation Final Defense  
Attain Committee Member signatures on Dissertation Abstract  
Complete Dissertation Format and Graduation requirements

Notes: Some things to consider when developing a realistic timeline:
- If you get behind at any point in your research, it will delay your graduation.
- Set aside a lot of time to work on your research. The work takes longer than one realizes. Use the time you attended courses and did homework as time to work on your research.
- Your timeline will be uniquely determined by your own circumstances and may not be completely predictable or under your control. Plan for unexpected delays associated with the research itself and your family and employment obligations.
- Your timeline should allow two weeks or more for your advisor to read and respond to drafts.
- Create a structure where you set aside several hours every week to work on your dissertation.
- Consider meeting with your cohort members and provide support for each other.
- The dissertation committee must be approved via the Dissertation Committee Approval form. Submit at least one month prior to your Dissertation Proposal meeting.
- If a potential committee member is not a member of the graduate faculty, they must be approved via the Approval of Outside Committee Member form. Submit at least 1 month prior to Dissertation Proposal meeting.
- Complete Dissertation Meeting Request at least 2 weeks prior to Proposal and Final Defense.
- Complete the IRB online training and bring IRB application materials to the Dissertation Proposal meeting for your adviser’s signature. The IRB approval may take 4 weeks or more.
- The format review approval process may take 3 weeks or more.
- Select a date you want to be done with the dissertation process and then work backward from that point. Consider using a Dissertation Calculator such as the one at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.
Dissertation Deadlines.
The Dissertation Proposal meeting is conducted at least one semester prior to the Dissertation Final Defense. Doctoral students will obtain their official diploma at the commencement ceremony. Therefore, the **Dissertation Deadlines** established by the School of Graduate Studies must be adhered to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select Chair &amp; Committee Members</td>
<td>Complete <a href="#">Dissertation Committee Approval</a> and <a href="#">Approval of Outside Committee Member</a> forms at least one month prior to proposal meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain approval for committee members not on roster</td>
<td>Complete <a href="#">Dissertation Meeting Request</a> at least one month prior to the proposal meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Dissertation Proposal Meeting</td>
<td>Complete <a href="#">Dissertation Meeting Request</a> at least one month prior to the proposal meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send committee members copy of proposal</td>
<td>At least 2 weeks prior to the Dissertation Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Proposal</td>
<td>At least 1 semester prior to the Dissertation Final Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval</td>
<td>Process takes approximately 1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Dissertation Final Defense Meeting</td>
<td>Complete <a href="#">Dissertation Meeting Request</a> at least one month prior to the Dissertation Final Defense meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send committee members final copy</td>
<td>At least 2 weeks prior to the Dissertation Final Defense meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Final Defense</td>
<td>Meeting no later than mid-semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Final Revisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit for Format Review</td>
<td>Please allow at least three weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Approval Received from Committee</td>
<td>Signature sheets submitted to Graduate Studies at least two weeks in advance of commencement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Formatted and Approved Copies for Binding</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Official Graduation Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible to Participate in Commencement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 5: Write Chapters 1 through 3

Dissertation research policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Now that you have conducted comprehensive research regarding your topic, it is time to organize your ideas to complete Chapters 1 through 3 of your research study. This includes an introduction to your research, literature review, and methodology. Tips to consider include:

- You may want to start by defining your purpose of your study and statement of the problem in Chapter 1. These sections will lead the researcher throughout the entire dissertation.
- The literature review in Chapter 2 helps you understand what has been done in relation to the chosen issue before your research. It guides you towards stating the problem in more concrete terms and the significance of your study.

- In Chapter 3, define research questions and the methodology of your study (quantitative, qualitative or mixed) that best suits the scope of your research, your world view, and your abilities. Appendix B provides an overview of the difference between qualitative and quantitative research design. Appendix C provides an outline of the research method(s) that may be used to answer the research questions and/or hypotheses.
- Be sure to narrowly focus your research into a doable and manageable project.
- Give your research project a title as soon as possible. You can refine it later, but keep it as your guide. Put the most important words in the beginning and keep it short.
- As you develop your chapters, send drafts to your adviser in order to receive constructive feedback for improving your research. You may also want to have classmates, or people inside or outside your field review your materials.
- Remember to use the latest version of APA style. Check APA Style online, or order it at Husky Bookstore.
- Look at samples of previous dissertations using a similar methodology in the SCSU Library.
- Tip: Students may want to consider providing a presentation during the Student Research Colloquium held in April each year. This presentation could cover Chapters 1, 2, and 3 as a way to prepare for the Dissertation Proposal conference.
- Tip: For online assistance on how to add citations in a Word documents, or to Utilize APA to Automatically Format Bibliographies.

For details about what to include in Chapters 1 through 3, please see Appendix D.

Original Work
Students are required to complete an individual project. If two students pursue a similar topic, it must be clear that the “products,” are separate and unique, ensuring each person’s work is original.
Some committee chairs will provide editing, formatting, spelling correction, and/or grammatical advice for students, whereas other chairs prefer to focus their attention on the content rather than the structure or mechanics of student work. Students are advised to discuss this aspect of their dissertation with their committee chair. Resources and consultation for editing and formatting are available from SCSU’s WritePlace. Services, hours and location are available on their website. Some students find it helpful to engage someone to provide editorial assistance with their dissertation writing. It is the student’s responsibility to persist with the writing and revision process until the final document is satisfactory to the chair and, then, each committee member.

Statistical Consulting and Research Support
If you are looking for help in drawing on the power of statistics or to develop survey questions to support your research, turn to the Statistical Consulting & Research Center in St. Cloud State University's Integrated Science & Engineering Laboratory Facility (ISELF). This free service is available to graduate and undergraduate students, faculty members and staff.

SPSS
For those conducting quantitative research, SPSS is available through the SCSU Virtual Lab:
- Login the Virtual Lab at https://appsanywhere.stcloudstate.edu/vpn/index.html using your SCSU username and password (also known as your HuskyNet). First time you login, you may be asked to install certain software.

Step 6: Prepare and Conduct the Dissertation Proposal
Dissertation research policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. The next step in the thesis process is the development of a dissertation proposal. The proposal is required for the dissertation proposal with your committee. A student will work with the chair on the proposal prior to disseminating to other committee members.

A dissertation proposal is a comprehensive presentation of the plan for the dissertation project. It should include an introduction, the main research problem, research questions/hypotheses, a review of relevant literature, and the proposed methodology. It should also include a proposed timeline for the project. Proposals for the dissertation proposal defense are expected to represent a complete draft of the first three chapters for the dissertation. It is important that the details of the research plan be specified in the proposal and IRB approved before the data are collected.

It is recommended that the proposal defense take place during the summer of year three of the cohort schedule. The dissertation proposal conference must occur at least one semester prior to the final dissertation defense. These conferences are not typically scheduled during final examination week.

TIPS:
- You should not set or announce the proposal meeting until your advisor says that your research material is acceptable.
Deadlines
Deadlines are found online and are established by the School of Graduate Studies.

Gain Adviser Approval
Please work with your chair to gain approval to hold your meeting. After gaining approval, students can arrange a Dissertation Proposal meeting date with the adviser and committee members.

Complete Dissertation Meeting Forms
Several forms are completed for the dissertation proposal meeting approval process. Please return all forms to Michele Braun-Heurung in the Center for Doctoral Studies Office. She will attain appropriate signatures, verify eligibility to hold your meeting, and notify you of meeting approval and location.

- **Dissertation Committee Approval** This form is used to gain approval for an external committee member or those from SCSU who are fixed-term or adjunct faculty members and is due 1 month prior to holding a meeting.
- **Approval of Outside Committee Member** This form is used to gain temporary approval for an outside committee member.
- **Dissertation Meeting Request** (This form is used to schedule the meeting space and is due 2 weeks prior to proposal or defense)

School of Graduate Studies Dissertation Proposal Eligibility Requirements
In order to be eligible to hold your dissertation proposal meeting, students must follow the School of Graduate Studies eligibility requirements listed below:
- Student is fully admitted to a graduate program.
- Student has an approved program of study on file.
- Student has a GPA of 3.00 or higher in the graduate program.
- Student maintained continuous enrollment following doctoral candidacy.
- Committee Approval form has been approved by the School of Graduate Studies.
- Student meets program specific requirements for eligibility to hold dissertation proposal conference (if applicable).

Educational Administration & Leadership Dissertation Proposal Eligibility Requirements
In order to be eligible to hold your dissertation proposal meeting, students must follow the Educational Administration & Leadership eligibility requirements listed below:
- Student must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the EDAD doctoral program.
- Student may not have any course grade of IP-incomplete.
- Student must be enrolled in a minimum of 1 credit the semester of the proposal.
- Student must pass the EDAD doctoral program qualifying exam and attain candidacy.
- The student’s DARS report must indicate the same advisor as the dissertation chair.
- The dissertation proposal meeting must be conducted with the student present in person. Meetings via other formats must be approved by the committee chair.
- The dissertation proposal meeting will be held on the St. Cloud or Twin Cities Graduate Center campus. Meetings at other locations must be approved by the committee chair.
• All voting committee members or their proxies must attend the meeting in person, online, or via phone.

Send Proposal to Committee
Students are advised to provide Chapters 1 through 3 to committee members at least two weeks prior to the Dissertation Proposal meeting. Please ask your committee members whether they prefer the proposal be sent to them electronically, printed, or both.

Prepare for and Attend Dissertation Proposal Meeting.
The dissertation proposal defense is considered a working meeting and is not open to the public. The meeting usually lasts 1½ to 2 hours. Typically, the student is asked to make a brief presentation to highlight the key points of the proposal. However, students should keep in mind that all members of the committee will have read the proposal recently, so the presentation can be relatively brief (about 15 minutes). It is common (but not required unless your chair says so) for students to use presentation software during their presentations. These presentations can be displayed on the TV monitor in the room.

During the Dissertation Proposal meeting, the student presents the planned dissertation research and provides rationale for the research to the committee. The student presents Chapters 1, 2, and 3 including the introduction and research questions, literature review, and proposed methodology. The committee is looks to ensure the student is well prepared to move forward with the research and has developed a viable research structure.

Typically, students will provide a brief presentation (15-20 minutes) where they highlight the pivotal studies and research related to their topic and an outline of how they propose to conduct their dissertation study. The information about the presentation is just a guide and individual committees may vary this process depending on the topic and committee interest in the research.

Committee members will ask questions to assess the student’s understanding of the pertinent research grounding their study and gain the rationale the student has used in developing the study. Following the presentation, committee members will ask questions and make comments regarding various elements the proposal. Written notes of what is discussed and agreed upon in the proposal defense are very helpful in keeping the chair, committee members, and student on track with timely completion of the proposal and dissertation study. A student may continue with the dissertation project when each committee member approves the proposed project by signing and returning the Report of Preliminary Evaluation Committee form to the Center for Doctoral Studies office. If a student does not pass the proposal defense, she/he may revise the proposal and arrange for another meeting of the committee. A student may have up to three attempts to defend a proposal. If the third attempt at a proposal defense is not successful, the student will be withdrawn from the EdD program.

The purpose of the dissertation proposal defense is to elicit committee members’ input and insight related to the research problem and the proposed method of inquiry in order to improve the plan for the research and enhance the likelihood of success. Students
should be prepared to be open minded about receiving suggestions and criticisms, and be prepared to accept changes that are reasonable and promise to add value to the study. However, students do not have to accept all suggestions made by committee members. Sometimes, a polite, “That is not the focus of my study” can be an appropriate response.

To save time, the student may complete the IRB online training prior to the Dissertation Proposal meeting. Please bring your IRB application materials to the Dissertation Proposal meeting for the adviser’s signature. Following your meeting, make any necessary changes to the IRB application materials based on feedback from the meeting. If everything is in order, you may turn in your IRB application materials. Please see Step 7 below for more information.

**Step 7: Obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval**

Dissertation research policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Once the committee approves the proposed research, all students and faculty conducting the research that involves human subjects must receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects at SCSU prior to commencing the dissertation research. Please work with and obtain approval from your adviser prior to submitting your application.

SCSU requires all research activities involving human subjects—whether or not they are supported by Federal funds—to comply with the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46). According to this policy, research activities that (1) intervene in people’s lives, observe human behavior, or (2) use data obtained directly or indirectly from living individuals must be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board to ensure:

- Risks to subjects will be minimized and reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits,
- Informed consent will be obtained from subjects and appropriately documented, and
- The privacy and safety of subjects will be maintained.

Application materials include:

- IRB Training completed;
- Completed IRB Application;
- Copies of Data Collection Instruments (surveys or questionnaires);
- Copies of Consent Forms. Approvals from participating institutions or organizations must be obtained on letterhead prior to submitting a completed proposal;
- Copies of Written Support (letters of support from cooperating institutions);
- Copies of Debriefing Statement (if applicable).

IRB applications may receive either full or expedited review. Research that does not fit Expedited Review categories or that involves more than minimal risk will receive full review by the entire IRB at a regularly scheduled, biweekly meeting. Applications must be submitted at least two weeks before a meeting to be considered for full review. Research that involves no more than minimal risk and falls into one or more of the IRB’s Expedited Review categories may
be reviewed by a subcommittee of the IRB. Expedited Review is usually completed within 5 to 10 working days after applications have been submitted.

**Changes in the Research Plan/Project**

It is anticipated that the research design may need to be modified over the course of the project. Revisions to the proposal are not necessary under such circumstances. However, if the committee chair determines that major changes in the research design are necessary or if a new topic is selected, the student must submit a new proposal and repeat the dissertation proposal as described above.

If changes to the procedures of the research project effect the experiences of the research subjects, for example, changes to a questionnaire or changes in the criteria for participation, those changes must be reported to the IRB.

**Step 8: Conduct Your Study and Analyze Results (Chapter 4 and 5)**

*Dissertation research* policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Once your Dissertation Proposal has been approved, it is time to collect and analyze the data. During this step you will write Chapters 4 and 5.

- For those conducting quantitative research, SPSS is available through the *SCSU Virtual Lab*. Just log into the Virtual Lab using your SCSU username and password. The first time you log into the system, you may be asked to install some software. Once the system comes up, click on the Campus Lab Desktop. Once the desktop comes up, select the Start button, choose All Programs, choose the SPSS Inc. Folder, and select the PASW Statistics 18 (or other version) software. You can then run a tutorial by selecting which tutorial you wish to take or you can start using SPSS and incorporate your data and analyze reports.

- For those conducting quantitative research, you may find it helpful to utilize the *Statistical Consulting Center*.

For details about what to include in Chapters 4 through 5, please see *Appendix D*. 


Step 9: Prepare and Conduct the Dissertation Final Defense

Dissertation research policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Please work with your chair to gain approval to hold your meeting. After gaining approval, students can arrange a Dissertation Final Defense meeting with the adviser and committee members.

Some tips you may want to consider include:

- Students may want to provide a presentation during the Student Research Colloquium held in April each year. This presentation could cover Chapters 1 through 5 to prepare for the Dissertation Final Defense.
- You may want to attend 1-2 other Dissertation Final Defenses before taking your own. You may also want to share your findings, problems and issues with peers prior to your Dissertation Final Defense and gain feedback from them.
- You should not set or announce the defense meeting to committee members until your advisor says that your research material is acceptable.

Gain Adviser Approval
Please work with your chair to gain approval to hold your meeting. After gaining approval, students can arrange a Dissertation Final Defense meeting date with the adviser and committee members.

Complete Dissertation Meeting Forms
Several forms are completed for the dissertation final defense meeting approval process. Please return all forms to Michele Braun-Heurung in the Center for Doctoral Studies Office. She will attain appropriate signatures, verify eligibility to hold your meeting, and notify you of meeting approval and location.

- **Dissertation Meeting Request** (This form is used to schedule the meeting space and is due 2 weeks prior to proposal or defense)
- **Petition** – If any of your committee members have changed since your dissertation proposal, you will need to complete the Petition to gain approval of your new committee structure.
School of Graduate Studies Dissertation Final Defense Eligibility Requirements
In order to be eligible to hold your dissertation final defense meeting, students must follow the School of Graduate Studies eligibility requirements listed below:

- Student has a GPA of 3.00 or higher in the graduate program.
- Student passed a dissertation proposal conference in a prior semester.
- Student maintained continuous enrollment following doctoral candidacy.
- Student is enrolled in a minimum of 1 credit the semester of dissertation final defense conference.
- Committee Approval form has been approved by the School of Graduate Studies. Any changes to committee have been approved by the School of Graduate Studies through a Petition.
- Student meets program specific requirements for eligibility to hold dissertation proposal conference (if applicable).

Educational Administration & Leadership Dissertation Final Defense Eligibility Requirements
In order to be eligible to hold your dissertation final defense meeting, students must follow the Educational Administration & Leadership eligibility requirements listed below:

- Student must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the EDAD doctoral program.
- Student may not have any course grade of IP-incomplete.
- The student’s DARS report must indicate the same advisor as the dissertation chair.
- Dissertation final defense meeting must be conducted with the student present in person. Meetings via other formats must be approved by the committee chair.
- The dissertation final defense meeting will be held on the St. Cloud or Twin Cities Graduate Center campus. Meetings at other locations must be approved by the committee chair.
- All voting committee members or their proxies must attend the meeting in person, online, or via phone.
- All doctoral program coursework must be completed prior to or during the semester of the dissertation final defense.

Send dissertation research to committee.
Students are advised to provide Chapters 1 through 5 to committee members at least 2 weeks prior to the Dissertation Final Defense meeting. Please ask your committee members whether they prefer the proposal be sent to them electronically, printed, or both.

Prepare for and attend the Dissertation Final Defense meeting.
A dissertation final defense meeting is required of all students and is given orally. The student’s advisor presides over the defense meeting. The dissertation final defense is not a perfunctory event. It is a formal occasion for discussion, dialogue, and defense of the project the students has completed.

Students will register for credits of HIED 899 (Dissertation Research) or HIED 891 (Continuous Enrollment) during the semester of the dissertation proposal meeting. The
Dissertation Final Defense cannot be held in the same semester as the Dissertation Proposal meeting.

You will receive your real diploma at the commencement ceremony. Therefore, all dissertation formatting requirements for your dissertation must be completed prior to commencement. Deadlines established by the School of Graduate Studies must be adhered to.

It is the student’s responsibility to schedule the dissertation final defense with their committee members and reserve a room. Membership consists of the same committee that served on the dissertation proposal, unless the committee membership is altered in the interim.

The dissertation final defense is open to the public and notice of the meeting will be emailed to students in the program, posted on the Center for Doctoral Studies bulletin board, and e-mailed to the School of Education listserv. If a student wishes they may invite their family and friends to attend the defense. Only members of the dissertation committee are allowed to comment or pose questions during the defense. The specific format and requirements of the dissertation final defense vary according to the nature of the project.

Generally, at least two weeks prior to the final defense the student must distribute a final draft copy of the dissertation to each member of his/her committee. It is the student’s responsibility to deliver a copy to all committee members in the formats (online or paper) they prefer. Much like the proposal defense meeting, dissertation final defense meetings usually last 1½ to 2 hours. Typically, the student makes a brief presentation focusing on the findings, implications and significance of the dissertation research. It is common (but not required unless your chair says so) for students to use presentation software during their presentations. All members of the dissertation committee are afforded the opportunity to ask questions and make comments regarding the dissertation and research project. Once questions and comments are exhausted, the student and all observers will leave the room while the committee deliberates. The committee will vote to approve, approve with revisions, or reject. A majority vote of the final evaluation committee is required to pass the final defense. If the student has passed the defense, the committee signs the appropriate forms and the chair returns it to the Center for Doctoral Studies.

A candidate who fails the dissertation final defense in the first attempt may, with the approval of the advisor, attempt a second defense of the dissertation, but the candidate may not undertake a second final defense during the same semester in which the original defense was failed. A third chance to pass the dissertation final defense is not permitted.
Step 10: Submit Dissertation for Format Review

Dissertation research policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the program website. Once it is determined that the student passed the Dissertation Final Defense, students need to make the necessary modifications based on the suggestions of the committee members. Next, the student must follow the School of Graduate Studies process to format the dissertation research.

- A good point to start with the formatting requirements is the Graduate Studies Culminating Project website which provides guidelines and directions for the electronic submission of your dissertation.
- Tip: Keep your dissertation in APA format, utilizing the general specifications from the School of Graduate Studies below. When APA provides format guidelines (i.e. headlines, fonts) utilize APA format. When no format guidelines are provided through APA, utilize the general specifications below.
School of Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures

Doctoral Dissertation Requirements
To participate in commencement and receive the graduation date for the application term, doctoral students must have completed all School of Graduate Studies requirements for the degree including final submission of the doctoral dissertation prior to the deadline for submission of the culminating project. Please see the recommended timeline and the doctoral completion checklist as well as the electronic submission of culminating projects.

Dissertation Support Services
Dissertation research policies, guidelines, deadlines, research resources, and dissertation samples can be found online on the Higher Education Administration dissertation research website. These resources include:

- Dissertation Manual;
- Meeting forms to approve your dissertation committee and request your dissertation proposal and final defense meeting;
- Policies and procedures related to dissertation research;
- Institutional Review Board (IRB);
- Link to dissertation deadlines;
- Time management tips and calculator;
- Library research tips and citation guidelines;
- Higher Education research guides;
- SCSU electronic dissertation examples;
- The Write Place;

Student Research Colloquium
The annual campus-wide Student Research Colloquium (SRC) https://www.stcloudstate.edu/src/default.asp promotes research, scholarship and creative work in collaboration with faculty as a vital component of higher education.

Tip: Students can provide their dissertation research during this event even if only part of the process is complete. For instance, students could present Chapters 1, 2, and 3 as one way to prepare for the Dissertation Proposal meeting. Alternatively, students may choose to present Chapters 1 through 5 to prepare for the Dissertation Final Defense.
Appendix A

Student and Dissertation Member Responsibilities

Student: It is the responsibility of the student to:

1. Select an adviser and committee members who meet program and Graduate School requirements.
2. Work with the chair to develop realistic timelines for completion of the dissertation and abide by all program and Graduate School deadlines.
3. Obtain editorial help if necessary to meet the standards of the program and University for quality and presentation of the dissertation.
4. Ensure that a high standard of writing quality is maintained throughout the project using APA writing principles and to adhere to the guidelines outlined by this program manual and the School of Graduate Studies Guidelines for Electronic Submission.
5. Uphold the ethical and scholarly standards of research, including the protection of human subjects and the probation against plagiarism.
6. Complete and submit all required forms appropriately and on time.
7. Decide, in consultation with the committee chair, an appropriate and worthy topic for research study or project that meets a high standard of quality for originality, significance, research, analysis, accuracy, and overall scholarship.
8. After approval from the chair, schedule the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation Final Defense committee meetings, providing the date, time, and location to all members.
9. After approval from the chair, the student will complete the appropriate paperwork within appropriate deadlines to meet program and Graduate School requirements to attain approval for Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation Final Defense meetings.
10. Work with adviser and committee members to schedule consultation, Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation Final Defense meeting times. Consider the availability of the committee members you choose. Be sure they will be available to meet or converse when you need and can respond in a timely manner. Many committee members are not available during the summer.
11. Determine in consultation with the committee the roles and needs of the committee members in working through the approval process and the timelines and deadlines for submitting written work for approval.
12. Understand that re-writes will probably be necessary and that the guidance of the committee is to be taken seriously if the work is to be satisfactorily completed and approved.
13. Provide the chair, committee members, and Center for Doctoral Studies accurate contact information (i.e. e-mail, phone) and provide updates as necessary.
14. Complete the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application, training, and other requirements and attain IRB approval prior to conducting the research study.
15. Propose and defend the dissertation; understand that final acceptance of the dissertation is determined by the student’s committee and the School of Graduate Studies.
16. Follow all program and University dissertation policies and procedures including continuous enrollment.
17. There may be additional responsibilities as determined by the student’s dissertation chair.
Dissertation Chair: It is the responsibility of the chair to:

1. Determine the appropriateness of the topic selected by the student.
2. Determine the adequacy of the project design before the student begins work.
3. Assist the student in the selection of other committee members and provide guidance on the Graduate School requirements for an outside reader eligibility.
4. To determine the readiness of a student to conduct a Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation Final Defense and to provide the student with feedback and approval regarding when it is appropriate to schedule committee meetings and forward a draft of the dissertation to committee members.
5. To advise the student on the completion of appropriate paperwork to meet program and Graduate School requirements to attain approval for dissertation proposal and final defense meetings.
6. To advise the student on the protocols and process to ensure the students are adequately prepared for the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation Final Defense meetings.
7. Work effectively with the student to set realistic timelines for completion of the dissertation and to provide guidance on the program and Graduate School deadlines.
8. Review, approve, and sign the student’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) application.
9. Ensure that the student has obtained the required clearances from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research involving human subjects before the research study or project begins.
10. To be accessible to students for dialogue and formal meetings throughout the dissertation process, review the study, and provide timely and thorough guidance to a student on the various elements necessary for the planning and execution of a scholarly dissertation study.
11. Inform students and assure that all procedures and continuous enrollment are carried out fairly and according to the guidelines of the doctoral program and Graduate School.
12. To attain and maintain graduate faculty status and human subjects research certification.
13. Review the student’s work, evaluate, and make a final determination of the acceptability of the dissertation study assuring it meets a high standard of quality of originality, significance, research, analysis, accuracy, and overall scholarship.
14. Provide guidance and ensure that a high standard of writing quality is maintained throughout the project using APA writing principles.
15. Chair the dissertation proposal and final defense meetings and submit all required paperwork to the Center for Doctoral Studies once the proposal is approved.
16. Review the final format of the dissertation and ensure all necessary changes have been incorporated before providing final approval.
17. To ensure that the grade on the dissertation courses are properly recorded. A mark of “RC” (research continuing) is recorded for 899 until approval of the dissertation final defense. A mark of “R” (registered) is recorded for 891 until approval of the dissertation final defense. Upon approval of the dissertation final defense, the grade changes to an “S”.
18. To be present at graduation to hood the student unless alternative arrangements are made.
19. Follow all program and University dissertation policies and procedures.
20. There may be additional responsibilities not listed above.
Committee Members: It is the responsibility of the committee members to:

2. In collaboration with the dissertation chair, to provide timely and thorough guidance to a student on the various elements necessary for planning and execution of a scholarly dissertation study. (i.e. topic selection, appropriateness, and academic value)
3. Review the student’s work, evaluate, and make a determination of the acceptability of the dissertation study assuring it meets a high standard of quality of originality, significance, research, analysis, accuracy, and overall scholarship.
4. Hold a terminal degree and attain and maintain graduate faculty status and human subjects research certification.
5. Provide guidance and ensure that a high standard of writing quality is maintained throughout the project using APA writing principles.
6. Complete all paperwork associated with the dissertation proposal and final defense.
7. In collaboration with the dissertation chair, a committee methodologist guides and assists the student in the selection of methods (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) and/or procedures and appropriate software to collect and analyze data.
8. The outside reader is typically someone outside the university or in another department that serves as a content expert which complements the program discipline or may provide expertise in the student’s research topic.
9. Follow all program and University dissertation policies and procedures.
10. There may be additional responsibilities not listed above.
Appendix B

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Methodology

Qualitative Methods.
Qualitative methods aim to understand the phenomenon empirically and to see how opinions, threats, feelings, behaviors, experiences and so on are formed or expressed. The main objective of qualitative methods is to explore, describe and explain the phenomenon or experiences in terms of its qualities or properties.

They are generally based on research questions that are open-ended and express the identification of the study focus. For instance “I would like to know whether….?” Or “I would like to understand …”. There is an abundance of qualitative methods such as self-reports, observer reports, interviews, focus groups, participant observations and so on. The choice of the methodology depends upon the focus of the study and how the researcher defines the approach to answer the research questions. The adviser is a good person to turn whenever in doubt.

The process of applying qualitative methods takes the form of a cycle strategy. First, research to get pre-knowledge on the topic and the most appropriate method to be used. Then decide on the procedures to be followed. Define the participants. Collect the data that help in the development of theory. Analyze the data and return to the choice of further procedures based on the findings and start it over again until the research questions get answered.

Quantitative Methods.
Quantitative methods aim to find the correlation between variables so that the research hypotheses can be answered. The main objective of these methods is to quantify the variation or to predict causal relationships.

Quantitative methods are generally based on research hypotheses that are close-ended and aim to define causal relationships. For instance, “I would find out the effects of …”, or “I would determine which approach is more beneficial…”. Both seek to quantify the relationship between the variables. A hypothesis is a statement that provides a guessed solution or unproven proposition to the problem until the facts or the research results confirm it.

The most common quantitative methods are questionnaires and surveys. However, the choice depends on the researcher’s problem statement and on the scope of the study. Remember that the adviser is a good person to turn whenever in doubt.

The process of quantitative methods takes the form of a linear strategy. It starts with the hypotheses formulation after pre-research. It continues with the choice of procedures. Then, the researcher chooses the participants. He or she moves on to data collection. After collecting the necessary data, the researcher analyzes the findings and draws conclusions by testing the hypotheses.
Appendix C

Methodology
The choice of the methodology depends largely on the answer to four basic elements of the question: What is the (a) most practical, (b) most efficient, (c) most promising, (d) most readily available way to solve the research problem? The list of methodology types below include but are not limited to eighteen most frequently used methods. For the specific procedures of each method, please consult detailed literature based on your research needs.

Analytical.
It discerns and explicates underlying principles based on the analyses at micro-, mezzo-, macro-, or policy level.

Case Study.
This methodology provides background information, the development, current conditions and environment interactions between individuals, groups or institutions chosen in the study in relation to their internal and external influences.

Comparative.
It studies two or more existing situations to determine and explicate the commonalities and differences between them.

Correlational-Predictive.
It studies the correlation between phenomena that is statistically correlated.

Design and Demonstration.
It designs and describes a new created system, curricula, program and so on.

Evaluation.
It evaluates the conduct of a particular project or program that is carried out to produce a certain result by determining whether the goals were reached or not.

Developmental.
It studies the changes over time (growth or decline) in one or more factors and patterns.

Experimental.
It presents one or more variables that may be manipulated in the experimental group and the results are analyzed by comparing them with the control group.
Exploratory.
It explores a new or unknown territory and phenomenon to better understand it.

Historical.
It studies individuals or activities to reconstruct the past without bias and interpret their influences.

Meta-Analytical.
It combines results of research across areas to answer the research questions or hypotheses.

Methodological.
It examines new approaches for potential advantages over present approaches. It includes both the development and evaluation of the approaches.

Opinion Polling.
It studies behaviors, beliefs, or intentions of certain groups.

Status.
It focuses on the identifications and examinations of a representative sample of the phenomena.

Theoretical.
It collects, describes, and develops inclusive explanatory principles.

Trend Analysis.
It analyzes the phenomena in the process of change to see the trends.

20-20 Analysis.
It compares the extremes of the population to determine whether and to what extent actions intended do so.

Quasi-Experimental.
It compares the effects of the treatment versus non-treatment conditions that were made.
Appendix D

Chapter 1: Introduction.
This chapter introduces and provides an overall rationale of the research that is to be undertaken. This chapter includes the following headings in bold type below. You may add or modify the structure as a result of information needed for your topic. Prior to leading up to the Conceptual Framework, you should provide an overview of the literature explaining the topic well enough so that your committee, subsequently any reader, can understand the nature of your study – giving them the background to understand it.

Conceptual Framework.
In this section, please provide a brief summary about the research constructs and theories pertinent to your research study.

Statement of the Problem.
This section provides a clear and brief statement of the research problem that will be addressed in the study. It explains what you intend to accomplish and describes who, what, when, where, how, and why of the study. It leads the reader to the next section.

Purpose of the Study.
In this section, it is essential to state the importance, significance, and rationale of the study and how it will benefit the field. It should acquire knowledge to address the problem or certain aspects of it. It should clearly state the purpose of the study by answering questions or testing certain hypotheses (quantitative), exploring certain themes (qualitative), or both (mixed-methods).

Assumptions of the Study.
This section describes the things that you have assumed to be true throughout the study. These things can be put in a numbered or bulleted list. Samples of assumptions are honesty in completing responses, representative sample, or claims that most or all people in your field would assert to be true.

Objectives of the Study.
This section describes the short-term problems or activities required to complete the study such as securing transcription software or other technologies, acquiring specialized training, securing funds, or seeking permissions beyond what is normal for the field. These things can be put in a numbered or bulleted list.

Delimitations.
Delimitations include the parameters of the study, what variables are considered, what variables are not considered for the purpose of the research and why. These delimitations are typically stated in a numbered or bulleted list.

Delimitations are different from the limitations of Chapter Five. Limitations are the conditions that you encountered as problematic in the conduct of your research as you went along the way. The willingness of participants is a good example of limitations. Limitations are factors that affect your study, but are not under the control of the researcher.
Delimitations are the factors that are under control of the researcher as he or she defines and uses them in his or her study. The size and nature of participants is a good example of delimitations. For example, boundaries to make the study manageable such as studying only one sub-population of interest or addressing only parts of a problem.

**Research questions/hypotheses.**
This section clearly defines the research questions/hypotheses that will drive your study. You will answer these questions/hypotheses at the conclusion of your study. Each question/hypothesis seeks answers to a specific problem described in your study. Typically, you will have two to three research questions/hypotheses. Avoid “yes” or “no” responses. These questions/hypotheses may be presented in a numbered or bulleted list.

Depending on the type of research (qualitative, quantitative or mixed), define the research question or hypothesis as related to specific parts of the problem under investigation. Specify the exploratory research questions for a qualitative, state questions or hypothesis for a quantitative study, or both for a mixed study. Appendix B provides an overview of the difference between qualitative and quantitative research design. Appendix C provides an outline of the research method(s) that may be used to answer the research questions and/or hypotheses.

The hypothesis clearly states the expected relationship or difference between two variables and defines those variables in measurable terms. It is a statement that provides a guessed solution or unproved proposition to the problem until the facts or the research results confirm or reject it.

**Definition of the Terms.**
This section defines each expression or term used in a precise way for your study or that might not be well understood by the readers. These definitions should be based on scholarly research or other scholarly work. They should be defined both conceptually and in terms of how they will be measured. When a definition can be defined in different ways, indicate the definition that will be adopted for the study and why.

For example, school quality can be measured by the expenditure per child, the education level of the teachers, the year of teaching experience and the pupils’ scores on a specific test.

**Summary.**
This section is a summary of the first chapter which provides a bridging statement that links to the next chapter.
Chapter 2: Literature Review.
The purpose of the literature review is to explore research on the issues that are relevant to the proposed study. It provides an overview of what has been researched so far on the chosen topic or more research that is needed.

The headings in this chapter depend on your topic and how it is organized. You may add or modify the structure as a result of information needed for your specific study.

Begin with a brief description of your study, purposes of the review, and databases and search engines that will be used to identify relevant literature. Next describe the outline of the literature review involving the critical issues in the order in which they will be discussed in the review. The subheadings of the subsequent sections of the review should reflect the critical topics identified.

For problems not well researched, the literature review may address closely related information that might assist in the study. If the literature review is voluminous, you will need to be selective in using the most applicable literature based on the focus of your study.

Include a short description of the proposed study, a general review of the literature, and indicate the critical issues.

Review of the research on issues relevant to the study.
Organize and present the literature or sets of literature that is applicable to the focus of your study including critical issues for the problem and the research done to build a conceptual framework for understanding and researching the problem.

It is important that the literature review is based primarily around scholarly journal articles that report the results of empirical studies rather than secondary sources such as textbooks. In addition, it should discuss the major findings of the studies and pertinent information about how each study was conducted such as the number of subject/participants, relevant characteristics of the subjects, types of instruments and/or methodology used. It should also include any major strengths or weaknesses in the study design.

Organizing the literature view can be a challenge. Often the best strategy is to organize the studies under major topics, theories, constructs, research questions, chronologically, or methodologies. When a study addresses more than one organizational category, you may include it under the first or main category while briefly referring to it under a subsequent applicable category. When significant literature falls within an organizational category, it may be organized within subcategories.
Synthesis of the review of the research.
In this section you will synthesize the major findings of the research and draw inferences as it relates to the proposed study. Does the research:

- Support the development of the proposed dissertation?
- Indicate how your study should be designed and/or implemented?
- Identify other studies that are similar to the proposed study? If so, how would the proposed study differ from or improve upon existing similar studies?

You may find it helpful to synthesize the research into a matrix which discusses the researcher, organization category, and how it applies to your proposed study.

Summary.
Provide a summary of the chapter along with a bridging statement to the next chapter.
Chapter 3: Methodology.
This chapter describes how you plan to gather, organize, and treat your data. Briefly describe your study in one or two sentences in the opening paragraph prior to presenting your specific research methodology. Your methodology should be clear, detailed, and related to the focus of the study. Anyone should be able to read this information in order to replicate your study without speaking with you.

Research Questions/Hypothesis.
The descriptions should be restated in exact language from your chapter one.

Participants.
Describe in detail the studies’ population or participants, the sampling procedures used for selecting the population or participants (random, intact group, and so on), the characteristics of the group (age, gender, ethnicity, psychological condition, and so on), the group size (number of surveys sent out), and how the selection was made.

Human Subject Approval - Institutional Review Board (IRB).
This section outlines how the rights of human subjects will be protected throughout the study. For more information, training, and application materials, please visit the Institutional Review Board website.

Instrument(s) for data collection and analysis.
Describe thoroughly the methods and tools that will be used to collect the data to ensure validity and reliability. It should indicate how the method or tool was developed or how the instrument will be designed or piloted. For a qualitative study, indicate the technique to be used for interviews, observations, videotaping, and what protocols will be applied. Describe the type of procedures, ethics, and confidentiality participants will be given.

Research design.
Describe in detail the research design (qualitative, quantitative or mixed) that will be used, what the comparison groups will be, how the research method addresses the hypotheses, and what methods will be used to establish reliability and validity. Appendix B provides an overview of the difference between qualitative and quantitative research design. Appendix C provides an outline of the research method(s) that may be used to answer the research questions and/or hypotheses.

Treatment of Data.
Describe in detail what type of statistical (or qualitative) analysis you will use to treat your data. These might include use of basic descriptive statistics, correlations, t-tests, regressions, etc., if using a quantitative approach. If using a qualitative approach, discuss what strategies you will use to analyze your textual data as a coding, classifying, use of software, use of constant comparative methods, and other types of content analyses.

Procedures and timeline.
Provide an outline of the tasks or procedures that will be undertaken and the timeline of the study including but is not limited to when, who will be included, how the participants were selected, how they will be contacted, when the study will be conducted, how and the data will be collected, processed, analyzed and so on.
For a quantitative study, state what statistical procedures will be used for each research question or hypotheses. For a qualitative study, describe how the data will be coded and compiled and how it will be integrated into themes or interpretations. Be detailed and chronological in describing the logistics and timeline for the study.

**Summary.**
Provide a summary of the chapter along with a bridging statement to the next chapter.

**Chapter 4: Results.**
This section describes the findings from the study which provide answers to the research questions outlined earlier in the student’s dissertation. Tables are a good way to present many results in a condensed format. Graphs and tables should be relevant and highlight the main results. All tables must be explained to the reader in detail; the researcher must do the analysis and present results to the reader. Raw data is usually not reported as it may contain identifying information but may be included as an Appendix if approved prior by the IRB application process.

Begin by providing a brief overview of your study in one or two sentences. Describe the organizational nature of this chapter. This section is typically organized by the order of each research question or hypothesis presented. Under each research question or hypothesis.

**Results for Each Research Question/Hypothesis.**
Reiterate each research question or hypothesis and describe how it was analyzed based on the selected method, the instruments, and the participants. Use subheadings describing the type of data analysis or treatment used in your study, for example:

- Descriptive Results
- Factor Analysis Results
- Correlation Results
- Reliability Results
- Interview Results

Discuss objectively the findings using either numerical or “rich” narrative descriptions. If posing hypotheses, you will directly reject or support these based on the results of the probability statistics used. However, you will wait to directly answer your research questions in Chapter five. In this chapter, do not provide your own personal opinion or explanation for the results. Do not speculate or interject your thoughts. Comments and conclusions on the findings will be provided in Chapter five.

**Summary.**
This section is a summary of the fourth chapter which provides a bridging statement that links to the next chapter.
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, Discussion, Limitations, and Recommendations.
In this chapter you will provide the overall meaning for the results. Use these headings in this order of discussion.

Summarize the preceding four chapters starting with the purpose of the study. This includes a brief summary of the purpose of the study and an overview of the main research results including whether the hypotheses were supported or not. State the organizational structure of this chapter.

Conclusions.
Restate your original research questions and/or hypothesis and answer directly and emphatically. Revisit the theoretical framework and the literature review. Compare the findings with your own research results. Consider the commonalities and differences between them, especially the contradictory and new findings. Point out new findings that are supported by your research data and findings that contradict or expend upon existing research studies. What do the results mean or not mean? What are the possible causes or consequences of the results? What was learned with reasonable assurance, what was not learned, and what was only suggested? Your conclusion should provide generalizations that relate back to the existing theory, conceptual framework, policy, practice, or research. It should indicate what is now known based on this research study and previous literature when considered together.

Discussion.
In this section, you can add your opinions as supported by data and/or review of the literature review. Present your own perspective on the results, comment on the effects the results imply, and reflect on the learned lessons. You can say “I think…” or “I feel…” This is your opportunity to tell the reader what you think is really going on.

Limitations.
Define the factors that affected the research and that were out of the researcher’s control. Indicate any problems you encountered in your study that you had not anticipated such as low survey return rate. The willingness of the participants is a good example of limitations. Present them in a numbered-list. Make recommendations for further research based upon the limitations.

Recommendations for Further Research.
All studies tend to create more questions than answered. In a number list, you will essentially make a series of recommendations for additional needed research based on your own research conclusions. These may take the form of mini statements of the problem. You may suggest a replication of the study, adding variables, changing the context, or using another inquiry approach, etc.

Recommendations for Practice.
Again, using a numbered list format, and based on the conclusions drawn from your study, make a series of recommendations back to your field of practice. Suggest to practitioners in the field how to overcome problems or issues that were identified in your study. Essentially, make recommendations for how to improve practice, leadership, and organizational development.
References.
Provide a complete list of all the items cited in the dissertation. Do not include items that were reviewed, but not cited in the body of the dissertation. Start at the beginning and carefully read through the entire dissertation to make sure all your citations and tables are referenced correctly.

Appendix/Appendices.
The Appendix/Appendices section includes items that were briefly referred in the body of the dissertation, but need detailed descriptions or explanations such as original approved Human Subjects protocols, interview reports, self-report, participant’s reports, survey instruments, and so on. Organize them in the order as they appear in the body of the dissertation. Each appendix should be listed A, B, C and so on.

Miscellaneous
After completing the writing of your findings go back and turn the future tenses into the past.
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