



SHSS DCAR 2011
The DCAR Dissertation Guide:
Process, Forms, and Resources
A Guide for SHSS Doctoral Students

Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (DCAR)
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS)
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For matters regarding the dissertation that are not covered in this DCAR Dissertation Guide, you should follow the advice of your dissertation Chair. This official version of the **Dissertation Guide** will be posted and periodically updated on the School's program website: (<http://shss.nova.edu/programs/dcar/phddcar/index.htm>). *This DCAR Dissertation Guide supersedes all previous posted instructions for SHSS DCAR dissertation candidates.* All dissertation process forms and sample pages may be found and downloaded below in the Appendix to this Guide.

Scholars Before Researchers: DCAR Pre-Dissertation Coursework

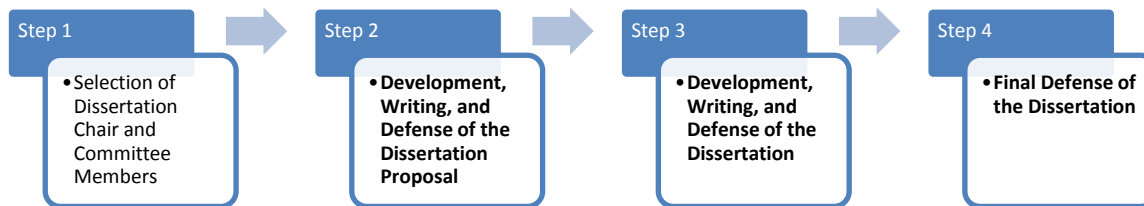
Students are expected to have expertise in their selected area, including a solid understanding of the literature in their field, before they delve into solving a specific research question within that field. Pre-dissertation DCAR courses with an emphasis on research are designed for you to develop as a scholar in your chosen field of conflict analysis and resolution (CAR), to develop knowledge of the CAR field, and to strengthen your research skills. These courses place more emphasis on your role as a researcher and are intended to prepare you for dissertation work. In these courses you will work closely with your professor to identify a specific research topic and engage in activities that will help you identify a specific research problem.

Your successful passage of the qualifying exam establishes you as a candidate for the doctoral degree. The award of the Ph.D. will signal your entry into a select group of scholars with unique qualifications and abilities. Please be aware that your post-exam work towards completion of your dissertation should demonstrate to NSU, SHSS, DCAR, and the global academic community your competence and abilities as an independent scholar and producer of original

research of significant benefit to the field of conflict analysis and resolution. The faculty, your Chair, and your Committee will support your independent scholarly efforts but will not write your dissertation for you. In the SHSS DCAR doctoral program the dissertation accounts for a substantial portion of the required degree credit hours. You are encouraged to learn about the dissertation process as early as possible in your graduate school career by reviewing this DCAR Dissertation Guide and the forms contained in the Guide's appendix.

The dissertation is the most important requirement for the Ph.D. degree. It represents a significant extrapolation of new knowledge from a base of solid experience and knowledge in your area of concentration. The dissertation should be of sufficient strength to be able to distill from it a paper worthy of publication in a journal or conference proceedings, or to use as the basis for a textbook or monograph. Although publication is not a requirement for the Ph.D., you are strongly encouraged to submit your dissertation research work for publication.

DCAR DISSERTATION PROCESS OVERVIEW



Dissertation Status: Registration and Credits

After DCAR students pass the qualifying examination, they are registered for dissertation credits and are considered to be in dissertation status, at which point they may begin formal work on their research proposal with their selected, approved dissertation Chair and Committee.

Students are required to complete 12 credits of dissertation. If a student is still in progress after completion of 12 credits, the department registers the student for 1 credit per trimester until the dissertation defense is approved. If for some reason you cannot continue working on your dissertation, you must apply in writing for a leave of absence; your dissertation Chair will present your request for approval by the department. Please note that if you request a leave for longer than a trimester, it may not be possible upon your return to continue with your original dissertation Chair.

You are advised to plan for the preparation and completion of your dissertation in accordance with the following steps in the DCAR dissertation process.

I. Step One: Selection of Dissertation Chair and Committee Members



A. Selection of Dissertation Chair

Only one dissertation Committee member is designated as Chair. The Chair must be a full-time member of the faculty in the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution. It is essential that one's dissertation Chair be supportive of a chosen topic or area of research. To be supportive, a Chair should have some familiarity with your proposed area of research, theory, or contemplated methodology.

After you have asked a faculty member to be Chair and the faculty member has accepted, both you and your Chair should sign and submit the Dissertation Chair Approval Form (see Appendix) to the department for signature of the DCAR Chair and the Dean of the School. The form is filed with the Department's Program Coordinator.

B. Selection of Dissertation Committee

The dissertation Committee for all residential and online DCAR doctoral candidates consists minimally of your dissertation Chair and two other core Committee members; one of those core Committee members must also be a full-time DCAR faculty member. Core committee members work to support you in the conceptualization, development, and writing of the proposal and the dissertation, and will ultimately determine whether to accept or reject the submitted proposal and the dissertation. The other Committee member may be from outside DCAR if methodological or substantive topical issues make such membership advisable. The outside member of the Committee must have an earned doctorate degree from a regionally accredited university in conflict resolution or a related field of study.

You are advised to choose Committee members whose expertise best fits your selected dissertation topic; consider checking with the Department's adjunct faculty for their availability. In addition to your core dissertation committee members, you may also include non-voting advisory members who may contribute significantly to the shape and content of the document. You should work with your Chair to select core and, possibly, advisory members of the Committee. The research topic may determine the membership of the Committee. Many faculty members may base their decision to serve on a Committee, at least in part, upon the nature of the research. Therefore, prior to asking faculty members to serve on a dissertation committee, you should have a firm idea of the research topic.

Advisory Committee members must have a terminal degree in their discipline from a regionally accredited university and be approved by your dissertation Chair. A *vita* and an official

university transcript showing a Committee member's terminal degree must be submitted to the Department for any Committee member, core or advisory, who is not a part of the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution's faculty. Committee members may be located in all parts of the continental United States or abroad.

Committee membership must be approved by your dissertation Chair, the Chair of the Department, and the Dean of the School. When this process is completed, a Dissertation Committee Approval Form (see Appendix) must be signed by all relevant parties (i.e., dissertation Chair, student, Committee members, Department Chair, and Dean). This fully signed form must be filed with the department's Program Coordinator.

If during the dissertation-writing process it appears to you or your Chair that a change in the composition of the Committee is desirable, you should consult with the Chair so that the approval of such changes can be made at any point. Any subsequent changes in committee membership must be approved by the Dissertation Chair, the Department Chair, and the SHSS Dean. Any revised Dissertation Committee Approval Forms must also be filed with the Program Coordinator.

The original signed documentation (see Appendix for forms) that establishes the approved selection of your Chair and each of your dissertation Committee members will be kept by the DCAR Program Coordinator in your student file, and the dates of the proposal presentation and dissertation defense are appended when these requirements have been completed. You are responsible for informing the dissertation Chair and the DCAR Program Coordinator of the completion of these requirements.

C. Working with Your Dissertation Chair and Committee

Smooth progress in producing a dissertation is much more likely with frequent consultation with one's Chair and, as appropriate, other members of one's Committee. Working for lengthy periods in isolation from them, only to discover that your research is going in a direction that they find unacceptable, is one of the worst and most avoidable dissertation scenarios.

Your dissertation Chair will supervise your progress and preparation of the dissertation. Your Chair is responsible for ensuring that before the documents reach the Committee members, both the dissertation proposal and the dissertation possess a unity of theme, provide evidence of originality and critical judgment, and exhibit creditable literary quality worthy of publication. The dissertation is to be prepared by you as an independent scholar and should embody the result of original research that constitutes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge within the conflict resolution and peace studies field.

Upon approval of the Chair as to your proposal and dissertation's readiness, it is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that you provide all dissertation Committee members with proposal and final dissertation drafts that demonstrate the quality and originality of the research. You therefore should provide your dissertation Chair with a clean copy of the dissertation proposal and the dissertation. It is recommended that you consult with a copy editor before submitting the draft to your Chair. All Committee members are responsible for ensuring that the final drafts presented at your proposal defense and your final dissertation defense are products of high

quality, meeting the requirements of the department. If the drafts do not meet these requirements, it is the responsibility of each Committee member to notify the dissertation Chair so that the necessary substantive changes are made.

For editorial changes, the Committee may refer final approval of the dissertation to your dissertation Chair. If approval hinges on making substantive changes, Committee members are expected to withhold their signatures of approval until required changes have been made. In cases where substantive revisions are required, the Chair on behalf of the Committee should ensure that revisions were successfully completed. At their discretion, other Committee members may participate in the oversight of the revisions as well. The final version of the dissertation, incorporating all required revisions, must be completed and approved before the proposed graduation date.

Doctoral students must obtain approval from the NSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) before beginning any dissertation research involving human participants. The student should log on to the IRB's web site URL to obtain the necessary forms: (<http://www.nova.edu/irb/manual/forms.html>). Consult with your dissertation Chair regarding which forms apply and are appropriate for your proposed research. You must obtain your Chair's approval before submitting the IRB forms.

II. Step Two: Development and Writing of the Dissertation Proposal

After the formation of the dissertation committee, you must develop a formal dissertation proposal. It is recommended but not required that the proposal's development be commenced at the end of the term following the qualifying examination, to maintain momentum, structure, continuity and connection with the program and faculty.

While different committees may function in different ways, you first should discuss the topic for the dissertation with your Committee Chair and the Committee members. You also should confer with the Committee about how to proceed with the development of the proposal. In writing the proposal, you should assume the readers to be intelligent individuals who are knowledgeable in the discipline, but who may not be experts in the particular area addressed by the proposal. Hence, while the proposal should not be written as a primer, sufficient background and definitions should be provided to enable the reader to grasp readily the concepts being addressed. The proposal should be a well written and professionally appearing document.

In producing the proposal and the dissertation, you must follow the formatting guidelines detailed below.

The dissertation proposal will be defended by you as the doctoral candidate before your full dissertation Committee. All Committee members must agree that the proposal is ready for defense before the defense can be scheduled. A proposal defense may be conducted using any appropriate and relevant technology, depending on your location and that of your Committee members. You are permitted to defend a proposal by being present at SHSS in person, or via telephone or video conferencing. For the final dissertation defense, you are expected to be present at SHSS.

Organization of the Proposal

Length: Please consult with your Chair regarding the proposal's appropriate length, as it varies depending on the scope of your inquiry and the methodology (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) you propose to use.

Sections: Section order may vary; individual students should make section content and ordering decisions in consultation with the Chair and full dissertation committee. The following is a brief synopsis of what is expected in each section of the dissertation proposal.

- **Title Page**

The title page contains the title of the proposal, the name of the student, and other information. An example of a proposal title page is included in the Dissertation Guide appendix. The title should describe concisely the proposed study using the appropriate key words. Words that contribute nothing to the description should be omitted. For example, phrases such as "A Study of . . ." contribute nothing and should not be used. The number of words in the title should not exceed 15.

- **Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures**

The Table of Contents, the List of Tables and the List of Figures should be prepared following the requirements of your selected formatting style (see section entitled *Format and Style of the Dissertation*, below).

- **Abstract**

The abstract should briefly tell the reader what the dissertation proposal is about. As specified by Dissertation Abstracts International, the maximum length for a dissertation abstract is 350 words.

This section should highlight topic, purpose, major theories/concepts to be explored, proposed research questions/hypotheses, methods – sample, instruments, procedures – proposed data analysis methods, and expected contribution to the field (theoretical, praxis, methodology).

- **Introduction (Justification, Purpose and Goals)**

The justification section of your proposal introduction should present and support the justification for your envisioned research study. It should also provide a brief synopsis of the context or background to the study. The topic can concern a domain of behavior, a theory, or an important concept/phenomenon/case study to be researched. The objective of this section is to offer a clear rationale for why your selected topic merits exploration over time in a sustained and systematic manner. Good reasons include social needs, cultural needs, introduction of a concept that is valuable for research, and advancement of the field. The fact that something has been understudied is not by itself a good reason. Make certain to define all relevant terms as necessary.

The Purpose and Goals section of the introduction should outline the purpose of the study and several goals that the research will accomplish. Underscore why these goals are

important as well. For example, begin by stating: “The first goal of this research is ...”, and so on. There will generally be from 3 to 6 goals. Be very specific in outlining what the goals are and how they differ from goals pursued in past research.

- **Literature Review & Theoretical Framework of Inquiry**

The literature review can be one section, or alternatively can be subdivided into Context and Theory. Please note it may be appropriate to address theoretical perspectives that frame your inquiry in a separate chapter altogether: consult early on in the dissertation process with your Chair, for guidance on the substance of each of your proposal’s chapters to establish whether you should devote a separate chapter to theory.

The review of literature provides arguments for the exploration of research questions and/or hypotheses; it includes cited support. The review will be state-of-the-art (that is, completely up-to-date at the time of proposal submission) and focus on the proposed research.

Think of this review as a funnel, in which the broader topic you have selected to research in the literature becomes more and more specific and focused, narrowing the scope of your inquiry to specific research questions and hypotheses that you propose to explore in your dissertation. This portion of the proposal is not meant to be a review of individual papers. The literature review instead should synthesize what has been done to provide insight into the topic. While you synthesize past research think about building an argument for your own research. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of past research, and present an argument for your research choices. The review of literature should reflect your explicit critical examination of past research. Extensive assistance for your research efforts is available through your faculty Chair, dissertation Committee members, and NSU’s library, accessible at: http://webctce.nova.edu/SCRIPT/Alvin_Sherman_Library_4/scripts/serve_home

When this section of your proposal is later expanded into a chapter in the dissertation, a full review of each referenced article, chapter or book cited will be incorporated. It is therefore recommended that you keep notes when you read relevant articles, so that you can reference them appropriately in the proposal’s synthesis and later in your dissertation.

Integrate hypotheses and research questions (as appropriate to your proposed quantitative and/or qualitative research) in this section of the proposal. For example, hypotheses and research questions should be numbered systematically (e.g., H1, H2, H3, and RQ1, RQ2, etc.), placed in appropriate sections of the literature after you have provided a justification for them. If hypotheses or research questions are related or comparable they may be included in sets such as H1a, H1b or RQ1a, RQ1b. Make sure that you build a good argument in the literature review for your research questions and hypotheses.

Alternatively, you can conclude your review of the literature with a section that sets forth your research questions/hypotheses. You would then begin this section with a sentence like the following: “Based on the above, the questions that will drive this study are...” Along with EACH research question and/or hypothesis, you must present the rationale for its selection.

- **Methodology**

This section presents a description and critical examination of method(s) that have traditionally been used to investigate the topic you are proposing to research. Here you should discuss not only what types of methodologies have been used to examine your topic in related research, but also critique the strengths and weaknesses of methodologies that have been previously employed. The idea is to make a strong case for your methodology. A solid methodology comes from learning about the types of methodologies that have been employed by researchers in previous work related to your topic. It is important that you not only describe the methodology but also cite specific studies that have applied the methodology. For example, if you propose performing a phenomenological interview you should cite studies that have used phenomenological methodology and describe them. You need to be very specific in this section.

Include all of the following relevant sections:

Sample: discuss what kind of sampling procedure is proposed, why it is chosen, who is in the sample, and important selection criteria (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, life experiences, location, etc.)

Instruments/ data collection methods: e.g., surveys, semi-structured interviews, participant observations, etc. Include information about instrument reliability/validity if it is known. It is also recommended to include a few sample questions in order to give the reader a sense of the instrument to be used. Explain why you have chosen these instruments – why are they relevant for your study?

Proposed Process/Procedures: give as detailed a description as possible with regard to how the research will proceed. Describe your research design components specifically (e.g., if this is an experiment in a quantitative study, what kind of experiment; if this is a survey/correlation study, what is the design? Pre/post, etc.)

- **Analysis of Data:** how do you propose to analyze your data? Be as specific as you can at this early date to lay out your proposed ideas for analyzing your raw data. For example, if this is a quantitative study, will you be using analysis of variance, factor analysis, etc? If this is a qualitative study, will you be doing a content and thematic analysis, etc? For qualitative research proposals it is also suggested that you provide a short example of how material might be analyzed. Use the jargon that is specific to your methodology, but be very clear and define the terms you use.

With regard to both methodology and data analysis, be very specific by including a rationale for the choices you made. For example, when a person states s/he will involve participants in the study, the immediate question is why? Similarly, be very clear on why you propose to analyze the data you expect to find in the manner you describe. Based on past research and theory, you should explain why you made the methodological choices you have. Everything must be justified; otherwise your work merely offers an opinion that you will not be able to defend during a dissertation defense or at a scholarly conference.

The most important question that you need to address throughout the entire research project is “why.” Specifically, why did you make the choices you did? What are the sample, instruments, idea, and data analyses, and how do you support the choices you have made? Different criteria are involved with different forms of research, so you should address these in your proposal.

Criteria for good scholarship in qualitative research include:

- Confirmability: established through the use of pilot tests, reflexive journals and collecting recorded data;
- Trustworthiness: a form of qualitative research validity, such as verification by participants in the study or the findings in similar research;
- Dependability: through the overlap of techniques and the use of an auditor;
- Member-checking: e.g., in the form of an amendment phase for the participants;
- Credibility: e.g., exemplified by people from diverse backgrounds who are knowledgeable, and/or the researcher’s knowledge regarding the site through prolonged engagement in the field.

Criteria for good research in quantitative research can include:

- Explanation: why a social phenomenon occurs;
- Predictability: predicting social behaviors in the future;
- Control: demonstrating your use of controls for extraneous and intervening variables/artifacts;
- Generalizability: from the random sample we can generalize to the larger population;
- Falsifiability: ability to check whether findings can be falsified;
- Replicability: methodology and data operations are transparent and can be replicated and performed by other researchers (a test for reliability);
- Validity: accuracy, testing for what you want actually mean to test. There are many types of validity; in consultation with your Chair and/or Committee members, choose the ones relevant to your study;
- Reliability: e.g., demonstrating consistency in the findings & survey responses. There are many strategies for evaluating reliability; please choose the ones relevant to your study;
- Heuristic: your research is easy to understand and can be replicated;
- Value neutral: explaining how you as researcher will not contaminate the findings. The findings are external to you as the research investigator; they should be objectively uncovered and analyzed.

Dissertation Research Design Criteria include:

- Pragmatic: practical & relevant to current social concerns;
- In-depth: e.g., provides sufficient detail about a topic so that social injustices can be uncovered;

- Culturally appropriate: describes cultural concepts accurately according to participant (emic) point of views;
- Creates understanding: in general, critical social sciences research seeks not to predict but instead to promote understanding about a topic;
- Clarify values: e.g., reveals the nature and causative reasons for values and/or views of the population studies;
- Historical context: reveals the explanation and influence that history brings to an understanding of the topic studied;
- Stimulates agreement: contributes to enhanced understanding between parties of a social issues, problem, case study, etc.;
- Potential for social change : promotes change, recognition, and empowerment;
- Improves the *status quo*: proposed and conducted research contributes to the betterment of lives and standards for one or more particular population.

Note: It is important to take the foregoing criteria in consideration and to discuss them with your dissertation Chair as you are designing your research. For example, were you selecting an instrument for quantitative research, in your methodology section it would be important to discuss the reliability and validity of that instrument in prior research that you have identified.

Data Analysis

Here you will present a thorough description of the types of analysis you plan to perform in your research. Whether they are qualitative or quantitative analyses, you should supply the reader with a detailed description of the types of analyses you will perform. You should organize this section of your paper around each research question and/ or hypothesis. Each hypothesis or research question should be followed up with a detailed description of the data analysis or analyses you plan to perform.

7. Ethics and Reflexivity

If this is a qualitative or quantitative study and your research will involve human participants (i.e. you do not plan on solely focusing on documents, written texts, etc.), explain how you will carry out an ethical study. How will you assure that no harm will come to your participants as a result of your study? Are there potential benefits – if so, what are they? Will the participants receive some kind of payment for their participation (if yes, explain the form of payment and why this is necessary, as well as how this will not lead to coercion to participate. What is the place or role of participants in your research study? If this is a qualitative study, discuss where you are in this research – what are the biases, prejudices, or perspectives on life that may impact your work? Discuss how you plan to address these as you carry out your research. Like the above, this section’s content should be very specific to your proposed study.

8. Expected Contributions of the Proposed Research

Present an argument about what you expect to find after you collect your data and why you anticipate these findings. Discuss the importance of the research and the expected contributions of the research. In your dissertation proposal this section should be relatively short since you will not yet have collected your data. In your dissertation this may very well be one of the longer sections. There you should present a logical summary of why your findings relate and may be distinguished from past research you have described in your literature review. Your discussion may here also include the expected limitations and strengths of your research.

9. References

Use either APA or Chicago style formatting (see *Format and Style of the Dissertation*, below). Be uniform in your choice throughout the text and throughout the reference list.

10. Appendices

In addition to your references, you should include as appendices any related materials as appropriate. Examples include your survey instrument (quantitative study) and sample interview questions (qualitative study).

III. Step Three: Development, Writing, and Defense of the Dissertation

Each student is required to successfully complete and defend a dissertation prior to receiving his or her Ph.D. The dissertation is expected to be scholarly work that makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge of the field of conflict resolution. The dissertation constitutes an original work deemed to demonstrate a level of learning and scholarship commensurate with the awarding of the Doctor of Philosophy degree. As such, the successful completion of the dissertation process represents the culmination of the student's formal education and a level of expertise within the field of conflict resolution.

Following a successful proposal defense you should begin your research, incorporating any modifications resulting from the defense. It is important that you follow the procedures and modifications required by your Chair and Committee. You should maintain frequent contact with your Chair and your Committee members as appropriate throughout the dissertation process, to obtain ongoing feedback regarding the progress of the study. In the event that you find it necessary to make additional modifications in your ongoing research, it is important that such changes be cleared with your Chair to avoid problems in your final defense.

The dissertation should be a complete but concise document that establishes your credentials as an expert in the domain of your study. Although your successfully defended proposal served as the springboard for your dissertation research study, you must do more than just change the verb tense of research plans you described in the earlier document. In almost all cases, a lengthy period of time has elapsed between the literature review developed for the proposal and the completion of the dissertation study. It is vital that you continue to stay current in the literature germane to the study you are conducting, and update your Literature Review

chapter accordingly. It is also a very rare study that is executed exactly as planned; frequently changes to the research questions and the methods proposed to derive answers to them must be made as the study progresses. These changes must be discussed with your dissertation Chair before being implemented and, if approved, must be reflected in the applicable sections of Introduction and Methodology chapters.

Structure and Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation should take the form of a data based analytic study or, with approval you're your Chair, a theoretical work considered to be an important and unique contribution to the field of study. Bearing in mind that **the following stated order, content, and structure of the dissertation should be designed in consultation with one's Chair and therefore may vary**, a completed research dissertation typically consists of at least five chapters:

Chapter I: Introduction

[Possible additional Chapter on Theory, as instructed by your Chair]

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Chapter III: Methodology

Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Presentation

Chapter V: Discussion and Implications of the Study

The chapters and content of the dissertation should be as complete and thorough as is necessary to cover the topic. At the end of the study, the student should be an expert on the topic, perhaps the foremost expert in the field. The writing of the document should reflect that it has been prepared by such an expert. Further, the student should provide sufficient detail to permit the independent replication of the research. In its final form the dissertation should be a well written and professionally appearing document. It is the student's responsibility to work with a copy editor to make sure that the dissertation manuscript is well written to meet professional academic standards. In producing the final dissertation document, the student must follow the guidelines detailed below in the section entitled *Format and Style of the Dissertation*.

Components of the Dissertation

The typical dissertation consists of several specific components, organized as follows:

Preliminary Pages

Title Page

Approval Page

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

Body:

Chapter I --- Introduction

Chapter II (if appropriate) --- Theory

Chapter II or III--- Review of the Literature

Chapter III or IV --- Methodology

Chapter IV or V ---Data Analysis and Presentation
Chapter V or IV ---Discussion and Implications of the Study
References
Appendices
Biographical Sketch

Note: The nature of the chapters in the body typically will be different for a theoretical dissertation.

Title Page. The title page contains the title of the dissertation, your name, and other information. An example is included in the Appendix to this Guide.

Approval Page. The approval page is the sheet signed by the Committee indicating their acceptance of the dissertation (see Appendix for sample). The approval page should not be in the dissertation; it is provided to the Committee at the defense. The student should have an approval sheet so that the Committee members can sign their approval. Copies of the approval page should be included in all bound copies of the dissertation.

Acknowledgments. Acknowledgments in a dissertation are traditional but optional. Here students customarily thank those individuals who have helped them to complete the dissertation, and perhaps those who have assisted in other ways. Who is thanked is a personal matter for each student. It is not necessary to have the Acknowledgments section included in the copies provided to your Committee for the defense of your proposal and dissertation.

Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures. The Table of Contents and the Lists of Tables and Figures should be prepared according to the requirements of your selected formatting style (see *Format and Style of the Dissertation* section, below).

Abstract. The abstract should briefly tell the reader what the dissertation is about. The student should summarize the key points of the document, including the problem, the method, the results, and the conclusions. The maximum length for a dissertation abstract is 350 words, as specified by *Dissertation Abstracts International*.

Body. The body of the research dissertation usually consists of five chapters:

Chapter I: Introduction
Chapter II: Theory/ Review of the Literature
Chapter III: Methodology
Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Presentation
Chapter V: Discussion and Implications of the Study.

The nature and number of these chapters may not be appropriate for all dissertations. However, variations from the chapters listed should be cleared in advance with the student's committee.

Introduction, Review of the Literature, Methodology. These three chapters may appear much as they were written for the proposal, incorporating significant additions and revisions. Rewrites of the proposal may be necessary if new and/or relevant

literature was discovered after the proposal was defended. Also, the Methodology chapter may need rewriting if it was decided during the study that the method needed to be changed or altered. Finally, the future tenses of the verbs in the proposal must be changed to past or present tenses in the final version of the dissertation to reflect the fact that the study has now been completed.

Data Analysis and Presentation. This chapter is quite often the longest of the dissertation. In it you present the results of your study. The chapters begin with an introduction describing the organization of the analysis and presentation. The results of the analysis, such as themes, categories, central tendencies, ranges, and/or inferences, are presented. In quantitative research studies, the data is usually presented as tables, graphs, and/or figures. In qualitative research studies, considerable amounts of data are presented along with your descriptions, interpretations, and/or explanations. This data may consist of excerpts from transcribed interviews or conversations, fleshed-out field notes, and/or historical documents.

Discussion and Implications of the Study. In the concluding chapter of the dissertation, you reflect upon the completed research and discusses limitations of the study, contributions made to the field, and future directions for research in the area of study covered in the dissertation. This chapter may also include prescriptive sections in which you suggest certain policy or behavioral changes based upon your analysis of the data.

References. The references appear after the text. The references should be formatted according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) or Chicago style (see section below entitled *Form and Style of the Dissertation*).

Appendices. A dissertation must be documented completely to permit independent replication. This usually requires the inclusion of appendices. Appendices typically contain materials which help to explain what has been done, but are either too bulky or too tangential to incorporate in the text. The instructions given to the participants, consent forms, and original instruments or questionnaires are some materials which may appear in appendices. Some committees may require you to include raw data such as transcripts or field notes in an appendix.

Biographical Sketch. This is a brief, one or two page, biographical sketch of you, the student. It is written in prose form and not as a *curriculum vita*. A typical biographical sketch will provide some information about your personal life, educational background, and work experiences.

IV. Step Four: Final Defense of the Dissertation

Following completion of your research, the preparation of the written dissertation (i.e., the complete text, including title page, references, appendices, etc.), the approval of the dissertation Committee, and the signing of a Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form by your Chair, you are ready to schedule the dissertation defense. The defense is open to all faculty, staff, and students.

All final dissertation defenses must proceed according to the following guidelines:

1. The defense will include all the Committee members. In consultation with your dissertation Chair, it is your responsibility to schedule the defense with the Committee members.

2. You must produce the dissertation in final form (but not bound) and distribute it to the Committee **at least two weeks prior to the defense**. Normally, changes will be made following the defense; it therefore is not necessary to produce the dissertation on bond paper (see section below entitled *Binding and Submission of the Dissertation*) at this time.
3. After presenting a signed Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form and the dissertation abstract to the Program Coordinator, the Program Coordinator will prepare an official notice of the dissertation defense and distribute it and the abstract of the dissertation to all School of Humanities and Social Sciences faculty, professional staff, and doctoral students. The notice should be submitted for posting two weeks prior to the defense date.
4. Your dissertation Committee Chair will preside over the defense proceedings.
5. During the defense you will make a presentation describing the dissertation in detail. You should be prepared to answer any relevant questions.
6. The defense must provide an opportunity for the faculty and students to ask questions.
7. After the presentation, the faculty present and the Committee will exit the room and reconvene in private for discussion. Faculty and the Committee will be polled for comments. Any decision about modifications remains with the Committee members.
8. After this deliberation, the Committee will reconvene with you and the results of the final defense (i.e., pass or fail, modifications, and revisions) will be discussed.
9. If the Committee accepts both the dissertation and your defense, each member will sign the Dissertation Approval Sheet. The sheet should be dated the day of the defense. You are responsible for having the approval sheet available (see Appendix for sample).
10. Your dissertation Chair will hold the approval sheet until any revisions are completed. When all revisions are completed, your Chair will date and sign the final approval section of the approval sheet. The date of the Dissertation Chair's signature will constitute the official date of completion of the dissertation.
11. When the Chair of the dissertation Committee is satisfied that all revisions (if any) have been made and that the dissertation is ready for binding, he or she will submit a memo to the DCAR Chair, the Executive Director for Academic Affairs, and the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences indicating that the dissertation is completed (see Appendix for sample memo).
12. You shall make any revisions indicated by the Committee, preparing the document in its final form. As part of this revision process, you should check the Reference section, update any "in press" sources, and supply the correct publication information, if available. It is advisable that the dissertation be carefully reviewed for style and format prior to submission for binding.

POST-DEFENSE RESPONSIBILITIES

Binding and Submission of the Dissertation

Following the defense of your dissertation, the following tasks must be completed.

Binding

Once your dissertation Chair has signed the final approval, you should arrange for binding of the final version of the dissertation. A local company that provides such binding services is:

Dobbs & Brodeur Inc.
1030 East 14th St.
Hialeah, Florida 33010
(305) 885-5215
fax (305) 882-0407

Dissertations submitted from students in the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution should be:

- Bound in the standard dark red used by SHSS
- The title and author's name should be printed on the front of the bound copy
- The word "Dissertation" and the author's name must appear on the spine

Submission of the Bound Dissertations

Bound copies of the dissertation are required before your degree will be conferred by the University. Each of the following must receive one bound copy of the dissertation:

- Program Coordinator for delivery to the circulation desk in the East Campus
- Nova Southeastern University Alvin Sherman Library, Main Campus
- Dean of the School (for the SHSS library)
- Dissertation Committee Chair
- Each Dissertation Committee member

You may make additional bound copies at your own discretion.

After the copies are distributed, the dissertation Chair will submit a memo to the DCAR Chair, the Executive Director for Academic Affairs, and the Dean of the School indicating that all aspects of the dissertation have been completed, and will sign the degree application form indicating that all requirements for the degree have been completed. Until receipt of the required bound copies, the University will hold your transcripts and will not issue the diploma.

Registering Dissertations

You are responsible for registering your dissertation with University Microfilms International (UMI) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. For a fee, UMI will microfilm and publish the dissertation, store the negative in the vault, and print the abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International*. The student should contact UMI and request materials for the individual manuscript service for *Dissertation Abstracts International*. There are many advantages to purchasing this service. This data base is a computerized index containing citations to over one

million doctoral dissertations dating back to 1861. By having the dissertation listed with *Dissertation Abstracts International*, the student's research will be widely disseminated and other interested researchers can order copies of the document from UMI.

The address for this service is:

Dissertation Publishing
University Microfilms International
1490 Eisenhower Place, P.O. Box 975
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
(800) 521-0600

Publications from the Dissertation

You are strongly encouraged to write papers and to make presentations based upon your dissertation research. For many beginning researchers, scholars, and faculty, the process of becoming established as a writer begins by turning one's dissertation into one or more publishable manuscripts. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) presents some very helpful advice on this process.

Publications and presentations arising out of the dissertation may or may not include the Chair and/or Committee members as coauthors or co-presenters, depending on the nature of their involvement. If a faculty member's ideas were used extensively in the development of the project, his or her inclusion as second author or presenter may be appropriate. As noted in the Student Handbook, it is best to discuss publication and presentation issues early in the process. In addition, publications or presentations resulting from the dissertation should include an acknowledgment of your affiliation (or former affiliation) with Nova Southeastern University, the School of Humanities & Social Sciences, and the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

FORMAT AND STYLE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation is to be written and produced as a completed document in a consistent format. Except for binding, it must be in final form prior to the dissertation defense. However, since revisions can be anticipated following the defense, it is not necessary for the dissertation to be produced on bond paper at this time. In preparing your dissertation document you must adhere to the guidelines in this section.

It is advisable that you have someone else (*e.g.*, a colleague, spouse, friend) critically read the proposal and the dissertation prior to submitting them to the Committee members. The submitted dissertation should not have typographical errors, spelling mistakes, incorrect grammar, or other style problems.

Style

The dissertation, including the proposal, must be consistent as to style throughout each individual document. DCAR doctoral students may choose either APA style or Chicago style.

APA style formatting should conform to the current *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.)*. The APA Manual is usually available at the NSU Bookstore, downloaded from the APA website (<http://www.apastyle.org/>), or ordered directly from APA at the following address:

American Psychological Association
Publications Department
P.O. Box 92984
Washington, DC 20090-2984

The Chicago Manual of Style is another formatting style standard employed at many universities and in the conflict resolution and peace studies field. It may be accessed at: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

While both the above formatting style manuals address some elements of grammar and punctuation, students who are not accomplished writers may find it useful to refer to a standard reference source on grammar and punctuation. The dissertation should be well written and adhere to standards of modern English usage. The student may want to consult with a professional editor before submitting the dissertation proposal and chapters of the dissertation to the Chair and the Committee.

When using the APA style manual you should be aware that many of the manuscript preparation guidelines therein are intended for authors who are submitting articles for publication and are not for the production of a final document such as the dissertation. For example, in a dissertation the student should place a table at the appropriate location in the document, rather than indicate to the type setter "Insert table 1 here" as directed in the style manual. There is an appendix in the APA style manual that addresses some of these publication requirement differences.

It is your responsibility to see that the final dissertation document is in the proper format.

Figures, Tables, and Footnotes. Tables and figures should be placed as closely as possible to the place in the text where they are first referenced. Short tables and figures look better if they appear on a page with text. Larger tables and figures may have to be placed on a separate page without text. Titles are placed above the tables. Figure captions are placed below the figures.

Footnotes (not references) to the text are positioned at the bottom of the page on which they are referenced (see APA style manual). Footnotes can be distracting and should be used sparingly.

Writing Conventions

You should carefully review your selected style manual before producing the dissertation document. These guidelines are intended to complement and not replace those manuals. This particular section is included to highlight several writing conventions frequently overlooked or not followed in student documents.

Nonsexist Language. Authors should avoid sexist language in all professional writing. To do so often requires some thought and perhaps some rewrites. The APA manual discusses this issue and provides a set of guidelines. Attempting to avoid sexist pronouns, writers sometimes use "he/she" or "s/he." Both uses are incorrect. The use of the slash ("/") implies "and/or" and so "he/she" literally means "he and/or she," which is not what most writers mean to say. If the pronoun cannot be avoided, it is correct to use "he or she" or "his or her."

Plurals. The plural of some nouns, particularly those that end in "a," may appear to be singular. Consequently, some authors use a verb that does not agree with the noun. Common nouns of this type are "data" and "phenomena." It is *correct* to say, "The data are indicative of a positive trend," and *incorrect* to say, "The data is indicative of a positive trend."

Commas in a Series. In professional writing, a comma is used before "and" and "or" in a series of three or more items. Hence, correct usage is "red, white, and blue."

Quotation Marks. Quotation marks are placed after punctuation marks such as commas and periods. For example: Jason said, "I went to the laboratory."

Latin Abbreviations. Some Latin abbreviations are misused and incorrectly punctuated. The following are correct:

i.e., that is

e.g., for example

etc. and so forth

vs. versus

viz., namely

et al. and others (A common mistake is to place a period after *et* which is incorrect because *et* is not an abbreviation).

Plagiarism. While the vast majority of doctoral candidates do their own original work, and carefully document the use of other people's words and ideas, plagiarism occasionally occurs. As with all student and professional writing, it is imperative that the writer give appropriate credit to the works of others. If the language used is taken from another source, it should be set off in quotation marks and conscientiously referenced. If the ideas used are taken from another source, they also should be conscientiously referenced. Such care is important even in rough drafts of the dissertation. Nova Southeastern University and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences regard all forms of academic misconduct as serious offenses. In the event a student is guilty of plagiarism, the maximum and usual sanction is dismissal from the program and from the University.

Document Production

It is your responsibility to produce and bind the required copies of the final approved dissertation. Any costs incurred with the production are your obligation.

Paper. The dissertation should be produced on a high quality, white bond, of standard letter size (8 ½ by 11 inches). Specifically, the final copy of the dissertation must be produced on good quality 20lb. bond paper with at least 25% rag content. Requirements for the rag content and weight of paper are established to provide durable copies of dissertations for the library and the School. Higher rag content is desirable. Erasable bond is not acceptable.

Margins. The left-hand margin must be 1.5 inches; the top, side, and bottom margins must be a minimum of one inch. The top margin on the first page of a new chapter or section may be larger than other margins. The margins of this document comply with these guidelines. It is necessary that you carefully adhere to the minimum margin requirements since some of each margin is trimmed in the binding process.

Pagination. Two sets of page numbers are to be used in the dissertation. The preliminary pages (from the title page up to the body of the study) should be numbered with lowercase Roman numerals (*i.e.*, i, ii, iii, etc.). The second set of numbers, Arabic numbers (*i.e.*, 1, 2, 3, etc.), begins with the first page of Chapter I and continues throughout the document including the References, Appendices, and Biographical Sketch.

Every page of the dissertation must be assigned a number, although on some pages the number will not appear. In using the Roman numerals, the title and approval pages are assigned numbers (I and ii), but they do not appear on the pages. Each of the other preliminary pages must show a number. In using Arabic numerals, the page of any major subdivision (the first page of Chapter I, the first page of Chapter II, the first pages of References, etc.) does not have the number written on it. The small lowercase Roman numerals beginning with "iii" are centered and placed one inch from the bottom edge of the paper. The Arabic numbered pages are numbered consecutively in the right-hand corner, one inch from the top edge and one inch from the right edge of the paper. Arabic numbers are never shown at the bottom of the page.

Spacing. The dissertation must be prepared as a double-spaced document. In some cases, triple spacing may improve the appearance and readability of the document. Such spacing is appropriate after chapter titles, before and after major subheadings, before footnotes, and before and after tables in the text.

As with double-spacing, there are situations in which single spacing would improve readability. Examples of efficient use of single spacing are found in table titles and headings in figure captions, in references (but double spacing between references), and in footnotes.

Display quotations of 40 or more words in a double-spaced block of typewritten lines with no quotation marks. Do not single-space. Indent five to seven spaces from the left margin without the usual opening paragraph indent. If the quotation is more than one paragraph, indent the first line of second and additional paragraphs five to seven spaces from the new margin.

Paragraphs. In scientific and professional writing, paragraphs should be a minimum of two sentences long. Single-sentence paragraphs are usually seen as too abrupt, and perhaps too devoid of content to stand alone. Paragraphs that are too long should also be avoided. Long

paragraphs are tiresome to read. In general, a paragraph should not exceed five sentences or a page in length.

Continuity. To maintain continuity and readability in producing the dissertation, avoid isolating words or lines at the beginning or end of a page. There should always be at least two lines of a paragraph at the bottom of a page, and at least one and a half lines at the top of the following page. Never leave a single line of a paragraph at the bottom or top of a page (*i.e.*, avoid "widows and orphans"). Also, a word should never be hyphenated and carried over to the next page. Most word processing programs have a format option that can handle widow and orphan problems.

Printing and Reproducing

Dissertations must be produced on a computer (word processing or desk top publishing). Word processing programs usually provide a wide range of font options. Fonts selected should be professional looking such as those that appear in texts or journals. Proportionally spaced fonts, if available, are preferable. For example, the font used in the present document is Times New Roman 12 point. Script or other atypical fonts should not be used.

Italics must be used in place of underlining. Bold fonts may be used in headings or titles. The size of the font for the body of the text should be 12 point, or a comparable font that produces an average of ten to fourteen words per line within the specified margins.

Other sized fonts may be used in special situations, such as titles, tables, and notes. However, fonts smaller than 8 point and larger than 16 point normally should not be used.

The printer used must be of letter quality. Laser and laser jet printers are recommended for this purpose. Dot matrix printers, including those considered "near letter quality," are not acceptable.

Figure Preparation. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.)* discusses the preparation of figures. Although the APA guidelines are very useful and thorough, they do not address the preparation of figures using graphics software on computers. If figures are prepared on a computer, the software and the printer used should be of sufficient quality to produce professional looking graphics. Dot matrix printers should not be used to produce figures.

Production of Copies. The copies of the dissertation may be produced by photocopying or, with word processors, by printing the required number. Like the original, copies of the dissertation should be produced on a top quality 20 lb. bond paper with at least 25% rag content. Photocopies must be sharp and clean in appearance

DCAR DISSERTATION GUIDE

APPENDIX

**Nova Southeastern University
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Dissertation Committee Chair Approval Form

Student ID#: N0 _____

Date: _____

I, _____, have successfully completed all the necessary requirements in order to select the chair for my dissertation committee. The following faculty member has agreed to serve as my dissertation committee chair:

Committee Chair: _____

Committee Chair's Signature: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Department Chair

Honggang Yang, Ph.D.
Dean

Date: _____

cc: Student
Dissertation Committee Members
Program Coordinator/Student File

**Nova Southeastern University
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Dissertation Committee Approval Form

Student ID#: N0 _____

Date: _____

I, _____, have successfully completed all the necessary requirements in order to formulate my dissertation committee. The title of my proposed dissertation is:

My proposed dissertation committee is as follows:

Chair _____

Member _____

Member _____

Member _____

Each of the above faculty members has agreed to serve on my dissertation committee.

_____ Date: _____
Student's Signature

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Committee Chair's Signature

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Department Chair

Approved: _____ Date: _____
Honggang Yang, Ph.D.
Dean

cc: Student
Dissertation Committee Members
Program Coordinator/Student File