

Dissertation Guidelines (2.0)

Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences*

Nova Southeastern University

Department of Family Therapy

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Introduction

Each student is required to complete and to defend a dissertation prior to receiving his or her Ph.D. The dissertation is expected to be a scholarly work that makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge of the student's discipline. 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 his or her chosen discipline.

The dissertation should take the form either of a data based analytic study, or, with approval from the committee chair, a theoretical work considered to be an important and unique contribution to the field of study. A completed research dissertation usually consists of five chapters: Chapter I--Introduction, Chapter II--Review of the Literature, Chapter III--Methodology, Chapter IV--Data Analysis and Presentation, and Chapter V--Discussion and Implications of the Study. The number and nature of chapters for a completed theoretical dissertation, as well as with some qualitative research approaches, may differ from this format.

This document details the procedures for completing the dissertation as required by the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nova Southeastern University. The dissertation process entails the following steps:

1. Selection of the chair
2. Formation of the dissertation committee.
3. Development and writing of the dissertation proposal.
4. Submission to and approval by Institutional Review Board
5. Defense of the dissertation proposal.
6. Implementation and writing of the dissertation.
7. Defense of the dissertation.
8. Binding and submission of the dissertation.

Each of these steps is addressed in detail in this document. In addition, formatting and stylistic policies are discussed. Also included in these guidelines are copies of all forms required for the dissertation process. All of the above steps must be completed before the student will be allowed to participate in commencement ceremonies.

Formation of the Dissertation Committee

After satisfactorily completing the minimum number of graduate hours required by the individual's department (the student is referred to the catalog under which he or she entered the program for this information), the student must take and pass the Doctoral Program's qualifying exam. At that point, the student may formally begin the dissertation process and may approach faculty members to discuss chairing and committee membership.

The dissertation committee consists, minimally, of the chair and two other core members. The core committee members work closely with the student in the conceptualization, development, and writing of the proposal and the dissertation. They also make the determination whether or not to accept or to reject the proposal and the dissertation.

The criteria for all core committee members is a faculty appointment at a regionally accredited university and an earned doctorate degree from a regionally accredited university in the student's discipline or in a related field of study. The chair and at least one of the core committee members must be faculty members from the student's department within the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

A dissertation committee may also include non-voting advisory members, who may contribute significantly to the shape and content of the document. Advisory members must have a terminal degree in their discipline from a regionally accredited university and be approved by the chair. In some cases, a student may select non-voting advisory members who do not have terminal degrees in their fields. In these instances, the student must present evidence that these advisory members have exceptional scholarly or creative activities, or professional experiences. A vita, an official university transcript showing a committee member's terminal degree, and, in the case of advisory members without terminal degrees, additional supporting evidence must be submitted to the department for any committee member, core or advisory, who is not a part of Nova Southeastern University's faculty.

The Chair

Only one of the dissertation committee members is designated as chair. The student's faculty advisor may be helpful in this selection process. It is essential for a committee chair to be supportive of the student's area of research. To be supportive, a chair should have some familiarity with either the student's proposed area of research or contemplated methodology.

After the student has asked a faculty member to be chair and the faculty member has accepted, the student and the chair sign the School's Dissertation Chair Approval Form (see appendix). After the student's Program Director and Dean have signed this document, the form is filed with the student's program coordinator.

Dissertation Credits

After the Dissertation Chair Approval Form is filed, the student may register for dissertation credits. A minimum of two hours of dissertation credit must be taken each semester by the student once the dissertation process has begun. By taking two hours of dissertation, the student is considered by the School to have full-time status.

Students must continue to register for dissertation hours until they complete and successfully defend their document. Each semester before registering, the student must fill out the Dissertation Hours Record (see appendix) and have the chair sign the form. The Record must be presented to the Program Coordinator at registration.

If, for some reason, the student cannot continue working on the dissertation, a leave of absence for one semester may be requested in writing and presented to the chair. The chair will present the leave of absence request to the Program Director, who will approve or disapprove the request. Written results of this decision will be forwarded to the student by the chair. If the student requests a leave for longer than a semester, or if a second semester-long leave is requested, it may not be possible for the student to continue with the chair with whom he or she had earlier been working.

The Dissertation Committee

The student works with the 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, the student should have a firm idea of the research topic.

The chair may provide guidance in honing the dissertation topic; however, the student is responsible for the choice of research area. After a general research topic has been chosen and a preliminary literature search has been conducted, the chair and the student should begin articulating the domain of the inquiry and composing a researchable question or questions for the dissertation.

As the focus of the dissertation becomes clearer, the student should begin to approach other faculty members and ask them to serve as core or advisory committee members. The committee membership is recommended by the student and must be approved by the dissertation chair, Program Director, and Dean. When this process is completed, a Dissertation Committee Approval Form (see appendix) must be signed by all relevant parties (i.e., chair, student, committee members, Program Director, and Dean). This form must be filed with the student's Program Coordinator.

Any subsequent changes in committee membership must be approved by the committee chair, Program Director, and Dean. Any revised Dissertation Committee Approval Forms must also be filed with the Program Coordinator.

Institutional Review Board

The University has set standards for the conduct of research which mandate well-conceived and well-conducted research. To assist in maintaining those standards, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) has been established, and a Policy and Procedure Manual for Research with Human Subjects has been prepared for distribution to the University community. The manual is available from the office of Contracts and Grants, and also online under the administration portion of the NSU homepage, office of grants and contracts, at www.nova.edu. Once you have chosen a dissertation chair, you and your chair should review this manual before any human subjects data is collected. IRB approval is necessary before any dissertation proposal can be approved by a committee.

The manual provides detailed information to support institutional initiatives for guaranteeing compliance with federal regulations governing the protection of human subjects and to guide principal investigators in procedures relevant to the development of research protocols that include human subjects. Throughout this manual, humans whose physiologic or behavioral characteristics, or whose understanding of their lived experiences, and responses are the object of study are referred to as subjects; however, the University in no way intends to demean the humanity and individualism of such persons. Recognizing that regulations and policies and procedures are no guarantee of ethical conduct, it is the responsibility of individual researchers to make ethical considerations central in the conduct of research and to have a clear understanding of their duties to human subjects.

Any research that involves human subjects conducted by NSU faculty, staff or students, whether funded or unfunded, shall be under the jurisdiction of the IRB. The IRB is responsible for determining and assuring that 1) the welfare and rights of human subjects are adequately protected and informed consent given, if necessary; 2) human subjects are not placed at unreasonable physical, mental, or emotional risk as a result of research; 3) the necessity and importance of the research outweighs the risks to the subjects; and 4) the researcher(s) is/are qualified to conduct research involving human subjects

The IRB is responsible for determining and assuring under the auspices of NSU faculty, staff, and students that

- the welfare and rights of human subjects are adequately protected and informed consent given, if necessary
- human subjects are not placed at unreasonable physical, mental, or emotional risk as a result of research
- the necessity and importance of the research outweighs the risks to the subjects the researcher(s) is/are qualified to conduct research involving human subjects.

Criteria for Approval of Research

In order to approve human subjects research, the IRB will determine that all of the following requirements are satisfied:

- Risks to subjects are minimal
- Risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits
- Selection of subjects is reasonable
- Informed consent will be sought from each prospective subject or the subject's legally authorized representative
- Informed consent will be appropriately documented
- When appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provision for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of subjects
- When appropriate, adequate provisions exist to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of data
- Additional safeguards have been included in the study to protect the rights and welfare of vulnerable populations, such as children; prisoners; pregnant women; mentally disabled persons; or, economically or educationally disadvantaged individuals

Protocol

For all research involving human subjects, the principal investigator will be responsible for completing the Submission Form and the Research Protocol.

The IRB protocol is the formal design or plan for the proposed experiment or research activity; specifically, it is the plan submitted to the IRB for review and subsequently, to an agency for research support. The protocol includes a description of the research design or methodology to be employed, the eligibility requirements for prospective subjects and controls, the treatment regimen(s), and the proposed methods of analysis that will be performed on the collected data. The following format should be used in developing the research protocol.

Description of Study

Purpose and Potential Benefits

Summarize the background, rationale, nature, and significance of the proposed research.

of Study

Location

Identify all sites at which research will be conducted.

Dates of study

Include month/day/year of start and end dates of study.

Subjects

Include estimated number and description of types of subjects (e.g., normal volunteers, pregnant women, students), age, sex, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and source of subjects (e.g., referral sources).

Methods and Procedures

Provide details on subject recruitment, nature and type of evaluation, subject's time commitment, proposed follow-up, debriefings when indicated, and any other information necessary to evaluate the involvement of subjects in the research.

Participant Payments or Costs

Indicate whether the subjects will be offered an incentive to participate in the study and if so, in what form (e.g., cash, meals, taxi fare, etc.) and in what amount.

Subject Confidentiality

Indicate the extent to which confidentiality of records identifying subjects will be maintained. Be specific where will the records be maintained? Who will have access to the records? etc.

Potential Risks to Subjects

Specify any risks (physical, social, psychological, legal), indicate precautions instituted to minimize risks, and describe procedures to be followed in the event of problems. Specify the results of pilot work or the work of others with similar procedures.

Risk/Benefit Ratio

Specify the level of risk in relation to anticipated benefits.

Informed Consent

A copy of all proposed informed consent forms must be attached to the research protocol. Refer to the instructions in the most current version of the IRB manual for developing the informed consent form(s).

Content of the Dissertation Proposal

After the formation of the dissertation committee, the student must develop a formal dissertation proposal, which usually is the first three chapters of the dissertation. While individual committees may function in slightly different ways, the student first should discuss the research question for the dissertation with the committee chair and the committee members. The student should confer with the committee as to how to proceed with the development of the proposal.

In writing the proposal, the student 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 dissertation, the student must follow the guidelines detailed in the section of this document entitled "Format and Style of the Dissertation."

Organization of the Proposal

Dissertation proposals typically contain at least three major sections: the Introduction, the Literature Review, and the Methodology. These sections, however, may vary with the nature of the dissertation. For example, theoretical dissertations normally will not have a methodology section, but should have a chapter explaining what the nature of the work will be. In some qualitative research approaches, the literature section may appear after the Data Analysis chapter or there may be more than one literature review chapter in the completed work. In any event, the student should clarify the content and organization of the proposal with his or her chair in advance of writing it.

All of the components of the proposal are depicted in Table 1. Each is described briefly below.

Table 1: The Components of a Proposal

Preliminary Pages

Title Page
Copyright Page
Table of Contents
List of Tables
List of Figures
Abstract

Body

Chapter I--Introduction
Chapter II--Review of the Literature
Chapter III--Methodology

References

Appendices

Note: The nature of the chapters in the body typically will be different for a theoretical 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 appendix. The title should describe concisely the proposed study using the appropriate key words. Words which 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. An example is included in the appendix section of this document.

Copyright Page. The copyright page contains a copyright designation, the name of the student, and the month and the year of the proposal defense. An example is included in the appendix section of this document.

Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures. The Table of Contents and the List of Tables should be prepared similar to those in the front of this document. The List of Figures should be prepared in the same manner as the List of Tables.

Abstract The abstract should tell the reader what the dissertation proposal is about. The student should summarize the key points of the document, including the area of inquiry, the research question, and the method. The maximum length for a dissertation abstract, as specified by *Dissertation Abstracts International*, is 350 words.

Body The body of the dissertation proposal usually consists of three chapters: Introduction, Review of the Literature, and Methodology. The nature and number of these chapters may not be appropriate for all dissertation proposals. However, variations from the chapters listed should be cleared in advance with the student's committee.

Introduction. The first section of the body of the proposal should provide the introduction to the inquiry domain of the proposal. After presenting this domain, the student should then focus the study by presenting the research question or questions to be addressed by the dissertation research. In this discussion, the student should cite relevant literature as necessary to define the inquiry domain and to support the pursuit of the research question or questions. At the conclusion of the chapter, the reader should have a clear understanding of the area to be addressed in the dissertation.

Review of the Literature. The review section should be a critical discussion and examination of the literature relevant to the inquiry domain and the dissertation question(s) and should logically flow out of the Introduction. The extent of the review is, in part, determined by the committee, but all relevant research which articulates the inquiry domain and bears on the dissertation question(s) should be included. Every effort should be made to include the most recent relevant literature. Historic literature should be included only to the extent that it is directly relevant or necessary to place the research question or questions in context.

At the conclusion of the literature review, there should be a section in which the student makes a statement that brings the singular focus of the study to light. This statement should be something to the effect of, "Given the preceding discussion, the question (or questions) addressed by the proposed research is . . ." This statement should be logically related to the inquiry domain, (articulated in the Introduction), and to the literature review.

Methodology While all aspects of the proposal are important, the methodology section is critical, as it presents the details of the research process. Although the exact content of this section will vary as a function of the nature of the particular research, generally the methodology section should include the following topics:

1. Participants and/or Sites (include detailed descriptions: who or what are they?; where are they located?; why were they selected?; how were they chosen?; how will access be obtained?; what are the ethical concerns regarding access (such as confidentiality)?; when and how often will you meet with participants?; etc.).
2. Self of the Researcher (include detailed description of what posture(s) you will take as a researcher, for example, participant-observer, clinical interviewer, researching therapist, etc. Answer such questions as: how do these roles fit with the research questions and theoretical framework?; what is your prior experience, research or otherwise, that affects this study [such as researcher bias]?; etc.).
3. Data Gathering or Data Generation Techniques (include detailed rationale and descriptions of what will be done, when, how, for how long, why, etc.).
4. Procedures or Data Processing (give sufficient detail for an independent researcher to replicate the study).
5. Data Analyses (describe the rationale for, and the various steps of, the proposed analytic process, whether qualitative, graphical, statistical, or other).
6. Trustworthiness of the Method (discuss issues such as validity, reliability, ethics, and generalizability).

References. The references appear after the text. They should be formatted according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.), which, along with other relevant style guides, is discussed further in the "Form and Style of the Dissertation" section in these guidelines.

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

Defense of the Dissertation Proposal

Following the completion of the proposal (i.e., the first three chapters plus references), the student must receive written approval of the dissertation text from each dissertation committee member. When each committee member has approved the written dissertation, the Chair will then sign the Proposal Defense Scheduling Form (see appendix). When these tasks are accomplished, the student is ready to schedule the proposal defense. The dissertation proposal must be defended before the members of the dissertation committee. In addition, this defense is open to all faculty members, staff, and students of the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Others may attend at the discretion of the dissertation chair.

When the proposed study involves research, it may be desirable for the student to have run pilot studies, to have conducted preliminary data analysis or, at least, to have tested the method, prior to the public defense. In some cases, the committee may *require* a pilot study, some preliminary data analysis, or analysis exemplar. The purpose of these activities is to familiarize the student with the participants, data generation, data collection, data processing, and data analysis, and to demonstrate the feasibility of the analysis plan. It is not uncommon for a proposal to be modified after running one of these procedures.

The following guidelines are to be observed in the proposal defense process:

1. The defense will include all the committee members. It is the student's responsibility to schedule the defense with the committee members.
2. The student must produce the proposal in final form and distribute it to the committee at least two weeks prior to the proposal defense.
3. After presenting the signed Proposal Defense Scheduling Form to the Program Coordinator, the student and the Program Coordinator shall prepare an official

notice of the proposal defense and distribute it and an abstract of the proposal to all Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences faculty, professional staff, and doctoral students. The notice must be submitted to the Dean's office for posting two weeks prior to the defense date.

4. Two weeks prior to the defense, the student will give the Program Coordinator a complete copy of the proposal, which will then be placed in the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences' library for interested persons to read. During this time period it is advisable for the student and the chair to meet and to discuss the particulars of the dissertation defense proceedings.
5. The chair will preside over the defense proceedings.
6. During the defense, the student will make a 30 to 45 minute presentation and will describe the proposal in detail. After the oral presentation, the student should be prepared to answer any relevant questions.
7. The defense must provide an opportunity for the faculty and students to ask questions and to offer constructive criticism.
8. After the presentation and question sections are completed, the faculty present and the committee will exit the room and reconvene in the chair's office. All others, including the dissertation student, may stay in the room. The chair will poll the faculty, including the committee, for comments. The committee members alone will have the final determination regarding the status of the proposal (i.e., pass or fail) and any modifications and/or revisions to be made to the dissertation.
9. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to see that any modification and/or revision agreed upon by the committee is accurately recorded.
10. The proposal must be unanimously accepted by the members of the committee.
11. After this deliberation, the student is called into the committee and faculty meeting and the results of the proposal defense (i.e., pass or fail, modifications, and revisions) are discussed.
12. If the proposal and the defense are accepted, a memo from the chair should be written to the Dean of the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences stating that the proposal has been accepted. A copy of this memo should be distributed to the committee members and the student.
13. A file copy of the proposal, with any modifications, should be maintained by the chair of the dissertation committee.

14. If the written proposal and/or the defense are not acceptable to the committee, the student must make all requested revisions in the proposal and schedule a new defense, repeating the above steps.

Implementation and Writing of the Dissertation

Following a successful proposal defense and IRB approval, the student may begin his or her research, incorporating any modifications resulting from the defense. It is important that the student follow the proposed procedures. It is advisable that the student maintain frequent contact with the committee chair and with the committee members throughout the dissertation process in order to obtain ongoing feedback regarding the progress of the study. In the event that the student finds it necessary to make modifications in the research, it is important that such changes be cleared with the committee to avoid problems and confusion in the final defense. Modifications may also need to be submitted to the and approved by the IRB.

The 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.

As was the case for the proposal, the dissertation, in its final form, should be a well written and professionally appearing document. In producing the dissertation, the student must follow the guidelines detailed in the section of this document entitled "Format and Style of the Dissertation."

Organization of the Dissertation

The typical dissertation consists of a number of components organized as shown in Table 2. Each of these is described briefly below.

Table 2: The Components of a Dissertation

Preliminary Pages

- Title Page
- Copyright Page
- Approval Page
- Acknowledgments
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables
- List of Figures
- Abstract

Body

Chapter I--Introduction
Chapter II--Review of the Literature
Chapter III--Methodology
Chapter IV--Data Analysis and Presentation
Chapter V--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, the name of the student, and other information. An example is included in the appendix of this document.

Copyright Page. The copyright page contains a copyright designation, the name of the student, and the month and the year of the final defense. An example is included in the appendix section of this document.

Approval Page. The approval page is the sheet signed by the committee indicating their acceptance of the dissertation (an example of an approval page is in the appendix). The approval page should not be in the dissertation provided to the committee for the defense, but the student should have an approval sheet so that the committee can sign their approval. Copies of the signed approval page then should be included in all bound copies of the dissertation.

Acknowledgments Acknowledgments in a dissertation are traditional but optional. Here the student customarily thanks those individuals who have helped him or her in completing 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 included in the dissertation copies provided to the committee for the defense.

Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures The Table of Contents and the List of Tables should be prepared similarly to those in the front of this document. The List of Figures is prepared in the same manner as the List of Tables.

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

Body. The body of the research dissertation usually consists of five chapters: the three chapters from the proposal: (“Introduction,” “Review of the Literature,” and “Methodology”) and the two new chapters, “Data Analysis and Presentation,” and “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, or they may incorporate significant revisions. Rewrites of the proposal chapters 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, the student presents the results of the study. The chapter begins with an introduction in which the student lays out 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 are usually presented in the form of tables, graphs, and figures. In qualitative research studies, considerable amounts of data are presented along with the descriptions, interpretations, and/or explanations offered by the student. 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, the student reflects 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 the student suggests certain policy or behavioral changes based upon the 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* (4th ed), which, along with other relevant style guides, is discussed further in the "Form and Style of the Dissertation" section in these guidelines.

Appendices. The need for a dissertation to be documented completely so as to permit independent replication usually requires the inclusion of appendices. Appendices typically contain materials that help to explain what has been done but which are either too bulky or too tangential to incorporate in the text. The instructions given to the subjects, consent forms, and original instruments or questionnaires are some of the materials that may appear in appendices. Some committees may require the student 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 the student. It is written in prose form and not as a *curriculum vita*. A typical biographical sketch will provide some information about the student's personal life, educational background, and work experiences.

Defense of the Dissertation

Following the completion of the research and the preparation of the written dissertation (i.e., the complete text, including title page, references, appendices, etc.), the student next must receive written approval on the dissertation text from each dissertation committee member. When each committee member has approved the written dissertation, the Chair will then sign the Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form (see appendix). When these tasks are accomplished, the student is ready to schedule the dissertation defense. The defense is open to all faculty, staff, and students.

All defenses must proceed according to the following guidelines:

1. The defense will include all the committee members. It is the student's responsibility to schedule the defense with the committee members.
2. The student 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; therefore, it is not necessary to produce the dissertation on bond paper at this time.
3. After presenting the signed Dissertation Defense Scheduling Form to the Program Coordinator, the student and the Program Coordinator shall prepare an official notice of the dissertation defense and distribute it and the abstract of the dissertation to all Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences faculty, professional

staff, and doctoral students. The notice must be submitted to the Dean's office for posting two weeks prior to the defense date.

4. Two weeks prior to the defense, the student will give the Program Coordinator a complete copy of the dissertation, which will then be placed in the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences' library for interested persons to read. During this time period it is advisable for the student and the chair to meet and to discuss the particulars of the dissertation defense proceedings.
5. The chair will preside over the defense proceedings.
6. During the defense, the student will make a 30 to 45 minute presentation and will describe the dissertation in detail. A majority of this time should be spent detailing the material from Chapters Four and Five. After the oral presentation, the student should be prepared to answer any relevant questions.
7. The defense must provide an opportunity for the faculty and students to ask questions and to offer constructive criticism.
8. After the presentation and question sections, the faculty present and the committee will exit the room and reconvene in the chair's office. All others, including the dissertation student, may stay in the room. Faculty, including the committee, will be polled for comments. Any decision regarding the status of the dissertation (i.e., pass or fail) and any modifications and/or revisions to be made to the text remains with the committee members.
9. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to see that any modification and/or revision agreed upon by the committee is accurately recorded.
10. The proposal must be unanimously accepted by the members of the committee.
11. After this deliberation, the student is called into the committee and faculty meeting and the results of the final defense (i.e., pass or fail, modifications, and revisions) are discussed.
12. If the committee accepts both the dissertation and the student's defense of it, each member will sign the dissertation approval sheet. The sheet should be dated the day of the defense. The student is responsible for having the approval sheet available (a sample approval sheet is contained in the Appendix).
13. The chair of the committee will hold the approval sheet until any revisions or modifications are completed. At that time, the chair should date and sign the final approval section of the approval sheet. The date of the chair's final signature will constitute the official date of completion of the dissertation.

14. When the chair of the dissertation committee is satisfied that all revisions or modifications (if any) have been made and that the dissertation is ready for binding, he or she will submit a memo to the Dean of the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences indicating that the dissertation is completed (see appendix for a sample of this memo).
15. The student shall make any revisions indicated by the committee, preparing the document in its final form. As part of this revision process, the student should check the Reference section and update any "in press" sources and supply the correct publication information, if available. It is advisable that the dissertation be reviewed for style and format by the Office of the Dean prior to submission for binding.

Post-Defense Responsibilities

After the defense of the dissertation, the following tasks must be completed:

Binding

Once the chair has signed the final approval, the student should arrange to have three copies of the final version bound (see section on "Submission" below for distribution). The chair will submit a memo to the Dean of the School indicating that all aspects of the dissertation have been completed (as discussed in #14 above). The following are instructions for the binding process:

1. The School's dissertations are bound at Dobbs and Brodeur, Inc. Book Binders, at 1030 East 14th Street in Hialeah, Florida 33010. Their telephone number is (305) 885-5215, and their fax number is (305) 882-0407.
2. The dissertation must be bound in Dark Red (check with the Dean's office).
3. The title and author's name is to be printed on the front of the bound copy.
4. The word "Dissertation" and the author's name must appear on the spine.

Registering Dissertations

The student is responsible for registering his or her 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*. Their phone number is (800) 5210600 and their URL on the Internet is <http://www.umi.com/>.

Registration of the dissertation through UMI is a requirement for graduation from the program. There are many advantages for the student in buying 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.

Another advantage to this service is that UMI offers to register the copyright of your dissertation with the Library of Congress Copyright Office. Although you do not have to make any formal notification of copyright in order to be protected under the law, you do gain additional protections when you have your dissertation registered, as can be done through UMI or through other such services.

The address for this service is

Dissertation Publishing
University Microfilms International
1490 Eisenhower Place, P.O. Box 975
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

You may also reach this service through their Web site:
<http://www.umi.com/hp/Support/DServices/>

Copyright law involves many complex issues that are relevant to the graduate student both in protecting his or her own work and in referencing the work of others. Discussion of copyright in this publication is not meant to substitute for the legal advice of qualified attorneys.

Submission of the Bound Dissertations

Three bound copies of the dissertation are required. The student delivers one copy to the circulation desk at the Nova Southeastern University Library, one copy to the Assistant to the Dean for the School's professional library, and one copy to the chair of the dissertation committee. The student may make additional bound copies at his or her discretion. For example, bound copies may be made for the dissertation committee members.

After the copies are distributed, the student's Program Director and the Dean of the School will sign the degree application form indicating that all requirements for the degree have been completed. Prior to the receipt of the bound copies, the University will hold the student's transcripts and will not issue the diploma.

Publications from the Dissertation

The student is strongly encouraged to write papers and to make presentations based

upon his or her dissertation research. For many beginning researchers, scholars, and faculty, the process of becoming established as a writer begins by turning his or her dissertation into a publishable manuscript(s). The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.) presents some very helpful advice on this conversion process.

Publications and presentations arising out of the dissertation may or may not include the chair and/or committee members as co-authors 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 well 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, and your department. For any further questions, the student is directed to consult the "Faculty/Student Writing Collaborations" section in the Student Handbook. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.) is also a good source for guidance in these areas.

Format and Style of the Dissertation

The dissertation is to be written and produced as a completed document in a specified 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 the dissertation document, the student must adhere to the guidelines in this section. It is advisable for the student to have someone else (e.g, a colleague, spouse, friend) critically read the proposal and the dissertation prior to submitting them to the committee members. Typically, faculty are annoyed and distracted when a document is poorly written, has typographical errors, spelling mistakes, incorrect grammar, or other style problems.

Style

APA Style. The dissertation, including the proposal, must be written in APA style in accordance with the current *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.) Many of the guidelines in this document have been adapted from that manual. The APA Manual is usually available at the Nova Southeastern University Bookstore, or it can be ordered directly from APA at the following address:

APA Order Department
P.O. Box 2710
Hyattsville, MD 20784

or by visiting the APA's home page on the World Wide Web. The URL for that page is <http://www.apa.org/>.

The Chicago Manual of Style. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, a standard at many universities, should be used for style issues that are not addressed by the APA Manual. Copies may be purchased by contacting the University of Chicago Press' World Wide Wb Home Page. The URL is <http://press-gopher.uchicago.edu:70/> . Also see the section in this style manual entitled "Format and Style of the Dissertation."

Although both the above 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.

Electronic Sources. As a complement to the above-mentioned style guides, *Electronic Style: A Guide to Citing Electronic Information* by Xia Li and Nancy B. Crane should be used for referencing electronic sources of information on the Internet, such as e-mail, listserv discussion groups, electronic journals, and full-text data bases. The manual is usually available at the Nova Southeastern University Books as well as other commercial bookstores.

In using the APA style manual, the student should be aware that many of the manuscript preparation guidelines 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 about here," as directed in the style manual. There is an appendix in the APA style manual that addresses some of the differences required for final manuscripts.

It is the student's responsibility to see that the dissertation is in the proper format. References to previous dissertations usually will be helpful, but the final authorities are the style manuals.

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 (see examples in this document). 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

The student should carefully review the style manuals before producing the dissertation document. These guidelines are intended to complement and not replace those manuals. However, this 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.

Writers, attempting to avoid sexist pronouns, 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 which 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 mispunctuated. The following are correct:

<i>i.e.</i> ,	that is	<i>e.g.</i> ,	for example
<i>etc.</i>	and so forth	<i>vs.</i>	versus
<i>et al.</i>	and others	<i>viz.</i> ,	namely

A common mistake is to place a period after *et* which is incorrect because *et* is not an abbreviation. Abbreviations are not used in the running text.

Plagiarism While the vast majority of doctoral candidates do their own, original work, carefully documenting 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 Graduate 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 the responsibility of the student to produce and bind the three required copies of the dissertation. Any costs incurred with the production are the obligation of the student.

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 printed on good quality 20 lb bond paper with at least 25% rag content. "Electronic" versions of this paper type are available and are used for laser printing and photocopying. 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 one and one-half 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 the student 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 lower case 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 even though 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 first 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 lower case 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 in table titles and headings in figure captions, in references (but double spacing between references), in footnotes, and in long quotations (in addition, every line in long quotations should be indented five to seven spaces from each 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 never exceed a page in length.

Continuity. In order to maintain continuity and readability in producing the dissertation, avoid isolating words or lines at the beginning or end of a page. There always should 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 which can handle widow and orphan problems.

Printing and Reproducing

Dissertations may be produced on a computer (word processing or desk top publishing), or on a stand alone word processor. A document produced by word processing can be readily changed as revisions are made. This is particularly important, since revisions are commonly required after the final defense.

Word processing usually provides 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. The font used in the present document is Universal 12 point. Another common font is Times Roman. 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.

Table 3: Examples of Different Sized Type Fonts

This line is written in 8 point.
This line is written in 10 point.
This line is written in 12 point.
This line is written in 14 point.
This line is written in 16 point.

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. This document is produced in 12 point type.

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 document may be full justified, or not, depending upon the desires of the student and the capability of the software. In general, full justified documents have a more professional look than documents with a ragged right edge.

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

Figure Preparation. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th 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.

Appendix

Download the updated Apendices (Dissertation Forms) at: <http://shss.nova.edu/Downloads>