International University of Professional Studies

Dissertation Manual

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WHAT IS A DISSERTATION PROJECT?

A dissertation is a formal paper presenting the results of a research project. That research project may be, for example, a quantitative study on subjects with results analyzed by statistics, or a qualitative study on subjects using a non-statistical analysis. It can also be a study on oneself using heuristic methodology or an in-depth analysis of the literature on a subject. The essential point is that the dissertation project is always a research project of some kind.

The dissertation is addressed to one's future colleagues in the profession of psychology, coaching, and so on. The essential requirement for a dissertation is that it provide a creative and valuable contribution to the field and be of use to your future colleagues.

Students should keep in mind that doing the dissertation project is a very important part of their doctoral education. Doing the research project and then writing up the results in a professional manner teaches the student many skills that one will be expected to know in later professional work. These include:

- Determining an important project to be studied;
- Developing an effective plan for completing such a project;
- Investigating the literature relating to the study and evaluating past research;
- Presenting the results clearly;
- Drawing conclusions based on the project;
- Making recommendations for further research;
- Demonstrating the ability to write in the style required by professional publications.

Even though many practitioners will not be doing formal research or writing articles and books during their careers, all professionals are expected to keep up with research in their fields and to be able to effectively evaluate research and apply it to their own work. They will need to know which studies are flawed and which results they can rely on to help their clients.

Because the dissertation project is a learning experience, students are expected to work closely with their dissertation advisors in designing the dissertation proposal and making sure all aspects of the project have been approved before the dissertation is written. The student should also expect to receive feedback that may require improvements and fine-tuning of the project and of the final paper.

The written dissertation is a formal, scholarly document that is part of the dues that one pays for the privilege of becoming a professional member of the community. The skills one obtains in writing it will also be useful throughout a student's professional career.

USING THIS MANUAL

This manual gives a comprehensive overview of the dissertation project and final dissertation. It takes the student through the steps necessary to choose a dissertation topic, prepare a proposal, obtain approval of the proposal, do the research, and write and submit the final paper.

The student is responsible for reading the manual and following the directions, using the appropriate style for the written dissertation, and producing a final paper that contains no errors. If students do not understand any part of the process, they need to check with their mentors or dissertation advisors for guidance.

It is permissible for students to hire editors to correct style and writing errors and/or proofreaders to catch inadvertent mistakes. Students may also hire consultants to help with statistical analyses or perform other tests or evaluations that are part of the dissertation research project. A student may not hire someone to research the topic, do the research project, or write the dissertation paper. Doing so will be grounds for IUPS to permanently refuse a degree. The contents of the final paper, including research and analysis, must be the student's own work.

APA STYLE

IUPS students must use APA (American Psychological Association) style in their dissertations, as this is the standard for professional writing in the social sciences. This style is found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, published by the American Psychological Association. Please refer to the latest edition.

APA style includes many aspects of writing, including organization, bias, language of bias, grammar, specific formatting and punctuation rules, capitalization, use of italics, use of abbreviations, quotations, citations, use of numbers, use of mathematical and statistical material, use of tables and figures, appendixes, and references lists. It is the student's responsibility to accurately apply all these APA style rules. IUPS has specific pages, including a title page, that are different from the style required for an APA article. These are found in the sample pages at the end of this manual. Though IUPS has a sample Table of Contents page, the style of a table of contents computer generated in Microsoft Word is also acceptable.

Every student is encouraged to purchase and study the APA manual in a hardcopy or electronic form. Some aspects of APA style, such as citation style, are available online, but that is only part of the style students must follow and will not give students the overview they will need to produce accurate dissertations.

The official dictionary for APA style is the latest edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. All dictionaries are not the same, as there are differences in preferred spellings and in the spelling of combined and hyphenated words. The dictionary provided in Microsoft Word is not the right dictionary, and may not have the correct spelling. If in doubt, look it up. You can check spelling for *Merriam-Webster's* online.

The ability to understand and follow a style guide is invaluable for anyone who intends to publish in the future. All publishers have style guides and expect writers to know how to use them accurately.

RESOURCES:

Check the IUPS website at https://www.iups.edu/ for resources for dissertation writing and APA style. They are located on the Student Resources page on the Students tab.

IUPS STYLE

See the sample pages at the end of this manual for a complete overview of how to format your document. Dissertations that do not follow these formatting guidelines will be sent back to be reformatted. This manual shows you all the pages you need to have in your dissertation and what they should look like.

Do not try to use new unusual fonts or creative headings or design for your dissertation. This is a formal document with narrow parameters, and you will have plenty of time to be creative in your writing projects during the rest of your career.

Additional Formatting Requirements

The text typeface should be a 12-point serif font such as Times New Roman. The body of the dissertation should be double-spaced, including indented quotes. There are no additional spaces after headings and subheadings. Paragraphs should be indented .5 inch, with no extra spaces between paragraphs. Do not increase the space between the paragraphs or after headings by using Before or After spacing in the Paragraph dialog box on the Home tab of Microsoft Word. Use automatic indenting in the text and a hanging indent for References so that your indents will be consistent and will not change when the text or references are edited. No running heads should be used.

The dissertation, as a formal document, does not contain informal language, including contractions that appear outside of direct quotes. Students need to read the APA manual section on use of abbreviations to find out which are acceptable in the text. For example, the standard two-letter abbreviations for states are used in the References list, but in the body of the text state names are written out in full. Students should avoid using coined words in their dissertations unless those terms are meant to be used as professional terms, such as references to new treatment techniques.

COPYRIGHT/PLAGIARISM

Creative material, including writing, photos, artwork, figures, and symbols are automatically copyrighted at the moment they are created. You may not take or use work belonging to others without proper citations or permission. This is true of material you find in books, magazines, journals, other students' dissertations, published or unpublished, and online.

Material may be quoted with a citation if it falls into the fair use category. A small part of another person's work, such as a paragraph or two from a book or journal article can be quoted without permission, but needs to be credited to the author through a proper citation. The same rule applies if you paraphrase, rather than quote, someone else's material. When the "voice" of the writer changes in a dissertation, this is a pretty clear indication that the student is using someone else's material. This use can be a basis for rejecting a dissertation and refusing a degree, so students must be very careful not to use other people's material as their own. If there is doubt about the originality of material the student's dissertation may be submitted to an online plagiarism search site to check for similarity to other work. It is very easy to give credit and cite other writers, so students must make sure to do this carefully.

If the material you want to use is more than just a small part of a creative project, then you will need to get the copyright owner's permission before you use it. If you want to use a whole online article in an appendix, or half of an article, you need permission first. If you want to use a photo or artwork, you will need permission, since each piece of artwork is complete in itself. The permission should be in writing.

For more information about copyright and fair use, see the US Copyright Office website. Also see the APA *Publication Manual* for information on copyrighted material and proper forms of citation.

Please also refer to the **IUPS Policy on the Ethical and Responsible Use of AI Tools in Academic Work** within the Student Handbook.

BIAS

Everyone has a bias. We might prefer to think of our own as a correct opinion rather than a bias, but it is a bias all the same. When writing a dissertation, the student is expected to recognize and then set aside their own bias in order to examine all points of view as objectively as possible.

In the first four chapters of the dissertation, the student should not be giving his or her professional opinion, but citing people who already have doctorates and who are established as experts in the area of study. All sides of controversies and disputes in the area of research need to be covered, with the full range of expert opinion reported in an objective way. The student is expected to point out problems in methodology and conclusions in studies when appropriate, but not to give the student's own professional opinion or make derogatory remarks about the experts. In a heuristic study the student may share insights and experiences, but should not use the heuristic study to express professional opinions about the subject matter. In Chapter 5 the student has an opportunity to discuss the study and give opinions about the research and suggestions for further study.

Keep in mind that the dissertation is part of the process of getting a doctoral degree. Whatever the student's experience may be, he or she does not yet have the professional degree. Once the dissertation project is completed, the dissertation is approved, and the degree granted, then the graduate can express all the professional opinions he or she desires.

SELECTING A DISSERTATION TOPIC

The first step in a dissertation project is to select a topic. Here are some FAQs related to choosing your topic.

Q. When should you start to think about your dissertation?

- The moment you begin your program at IUPS, if not sooner. Let's say that early in your educational career, you develop an acute interest in the healing and restorative capabilities of visual imagery. Start reading everything you can get your hands on. When a paper is assigned in your graduate classes, try to relate the assignment to visual imagery. Get feedback from as many of your colleagues and faculty members as possible. Write to the leading authors in the field asking for their feedback, guidance, and opinions on specific issues in the field.

Q. What if I haven't yet read much on the subject I'm interested in?

- Get thee to the library! Move your bed and belongings, because you have reading to do. It's much harder to decide about a dissertation idea when you haven't read what leading thinkers have said about it. Many students have difficulty narrowing their topic down to a specific research idea because they really aren't comfortable with the field of inquiry.

Q. What if I don't even have an idea yet?

- Welcome to the club. *Most* students enter into their final graduate year without a specific idea for their dissertation. Here is a short list of suggestions for finding a dissertation topic:
    - Go to the library and read several first chapters of dissertations.
    - Ask everyone you know to brainstorm with you. You never know from whose mouth your dissertation will spring. This includes unsuspecting faculty, colleagues, other PhDs, and fellow students. In fact, almost everyone you know who is bright, breathing, and willing may be of help in either stimulating your own thoughts or just getting the creative juices flowing.
    - Examine your own professional work for areas of particular interest. If you are going to delve deeply into a subject, it is best if it is personally interesting to you.
    - Read current journals in your areas of interest.

Q. Where do I find a library or resources?

- Some resources, most particularly professional journals, are available online if you subscribe to a provider. In the US, and probably other countries, public colleges and universities (and perhaps some private ones) allow community members and students at other schools to use the library for a fee.

Q. What are other typical problems faced in the primary stages of dissertation design?

- **Choosing a topic that is unwieldy or poorly defined**
  Try to identify a research hypothesis/question to investigate. Choosing a field of inquiry is only the *first step* toward developing a research hypothesis/question. For example, studying math anxiety is not acceptable, because that is too much to study in one dissertation. However, utilizing the *Manifest Anxiety Inventory* to measure a change in anxiety as a result of a workshop would be acceptable, if the results were compared to an equivalent control group.

- **Choosing a topic that is too broad**
  Because the dissertation process requires you to conduct a detailed analysis of your hypothesis in 100–200 pages, double-spaced, it really is not possible for you to thoroughly examine more than one or two simple questions. You will have plenty of time in your professional career to write on all the issues you want. For the dissertation, keep your focus on one or two points.

- **Choosing a topic that is designed to significantly change the world**
  Whereas it is not impossible that *your* dissertation will change the rotation of the earth, most dissertations do not necessarily have that great an impact. Remember that Einstein proposed a paper on the general theory of relativity for his doctoral dissertation and it was considered unacceptable to the faculty! Current national estimates suggest that one of every two hundred dissertations significantly impacts on the area of inquiry. Don't get attached to changing the world with your dissertation. You will have plenty of time to write and publish during your professional career.

- **Choosing a topic that is not feasible in terms of experimental subjects**
  Remember that not everyone in the world necessarily wants to be a subject for your dissertation. Some people don't care, are not available, are not accessible, are not amenable, or just don't want to participate in such endeavors. Think in advance of a way to entice/invite subjects to take part in your study.

- **Choosing a topic that is not feasible in terms of time**
  There are realistic time constraints that must be considered when designing a dissertation. Certain treatments/effects take considerable time before full impact can be assessed.

  Studying the impact of the elementary school education system may be rewarding, but waiting for a child to complete the sixth grade would take several years. Most graduate students prefer to design experiments where data can be completely collected within several months to one year.

- **Choosing a topic that is not feasible in terms of cost**
  Equipment, tests, facilities all cost money. Most students pay for their dissertations on their own and it is not unusual for students to spend from $600 to $1,000 or more to complete the preparation of the material for their dissertations. Students should anticipate the following partial list of potential expenses:
    - Typing expenses;
      - Photocopying expenses;
      - Equipment expenses;
    - Computerized literature reviews and community library user fees; Statistical expenses, (e.g. computer time and statistical consultants);
      - Postage expenses;
      - Telephone expenses;
      - Test scoring fees.

  The student may also choose to hire an editor and/or proofreader to help correct errors and ensure that APA style is followed correctly. This can cost from around $600 to a $1,500 or more, depending on the quality of the work and the length of the dissertation.

- **Choosing a topic that is not feasible in terms of equipment**
  Equipment costs a great deal of money. It must be maintained, serviced, warehoused, etc., and you have to learn how to use it. It is important to bear these constraints in mind when evaluating potential equipment.

  Measuring the presence of alpha waves using an EEG Biofeedback machine may yield more accurate results than using an EMG Biofeedback instrument. However, the EEG machine may cost several hundred dollars, while the EMG instrument may cost less than fifty dollars. Research is oftentimes a function of the caliber of the equipment chosen to assess changes. The choice is up to the student, as is the cost.

CHOOSING THE METHODOLOGY

After choosing an area of research the student needs to choose the methodology for the study. The general categories are quantitative studies, qualitative studies, and mixed studies. There are several subgroups within those categories. The most commonly used methodologies will be discussed here. Students may research other methodologies and propose them in the dissertation proposal process. Students need to keep in mind that the methodology must be based in research.

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is generally about testing a theory. A student chooses a topic, forms a hypothesis, designs a study to test the hypothesis, evaluates the results of the study, often with statistical analysis, and evaluates the results. The study may use test groups and control groups, or a single case study evaluated over time. This approach is discussed in more detail in the material on writing Chapter 3.

Students who make this choice are encouraged to research quantitative research methods to decide on the best design for their projects. These research sources on methodology will be cited in the section of Chapter 3 where the student defends the choice of methodology.

To get started students can check out:

Kazdin, A. E. (2002). *Methodological issues and strategies in clinical research* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Kazdin, A. (2003). *Research design in clinical psychology* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Meyers, L. S., Gamst, G., & Guarino, A. J. (2006). *Applied multivariate research: Design and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Millsap, R. E., & Maydeu-Olivares, A. (Eds.). (2009). *The SAGE handbook of quantitative methods in psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage/

Wolf, F. M. (1986). *Meta-analysis: Quantitative methods for research synthesis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Qualitative Research

This form of research looks at human experience, rather than at measurable results. For example, the effectiveness of a treatment technique could be studied in a quantitative study by administering a psychological test to clients after they received the treatment and to a control group and analyzing the results. In a qualitative study, the clients' experience with the treatment might be studied by interviews, questionnaires, and feedback recorded in treatment notes.

Some specific forms of qualitative research include:

Phenomenological Approaches:
A phenomenological perspective can mean either or both:

- The researcher focuses on what people experience and how they interpret the world (in which case one can use interviews without actually experiencing the phenomenon oneself); or
- The researcher undertakes to actually experience the phenomenon being investigated (so observation of other participants would be unnecessary).

There is one additional dimension to a phenomenological approach, and that is the assumption that there is an essence or essences to shared experience. These essences are the core meanings, mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced.

The experiences of different people are bracketed (put in the same category or group), analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon. This could include issues like the essence of loneliness, the essence of being a mother, or the essence of being a participant in a particular program. The assumption of essence, like the ethnographer's assumption that culture exists and is important, becomes the defining characteristic of a purely phenomenological study.

Phenomenologists are rigorous in their analysis of the experience, so that basic elements of the experience that are common to members of a specific society, or all human beings, can be identified. This is essential to understanding the philosophical basis of phenomenology.

On the other hand, each person has a unique set of experiences that they treat as truth and which determine that individual's behavior. In this sense, truth (and associate behavior) is totally unique to each individual.

A phenomenologist assumes a commonality in human experiences and must rigorously use the method of bracketing to search for those commonalities. Results obtained from a phenomenological study can then be related to, and integrated with, those of other phenomenologists studying the same experience or phenomenon.

In short, a phenomenological study (i.e., getting at the essence of the experience of some phenomenon) is one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience.

Heuristic Inquiry:
Heuristics is a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher. Heuristic inquiry asks, "What is my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience this phenomenon intensely?"

There are two focusing or narrowing elements of heuristic inquiry within the larger framework of phenomenology. The researcher must have personal experience with *and* intense interest in the phenomenon.

Heuristics is not inquiry into casual experience. Heuristic inquiry focuses on intense human experiences, intense from the point of view of the investigator and co-researchers. It is the combination of personal experience and intensity that yield an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon. Heuristics is concerned with meanings, not measurements; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with experience, not behavior.

The focus in a heuristic quest is on recreating the lived experience, fully and completely from the frame of reference of the experiencing person. Examples, narrative descriptions, dialogues, stories, poems, works of art, journals, and diaries, can all be utilized in the depiction of that which one has subjectively experienced.

Quantitative methodologies must also be researched to choose the best design and the methodology must be described and justified, with cites to appropriate experts, in Chapter 3.

Here are some sources the student might use to begin the research:

Camic, P., Rhodes, J. E., & Yardley, L. (Eds.). (2003). *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2003). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fischer, C. (Ed.). (2006). *Qualitative research methods for psychologists*. Waltham, MA: Academic Press.

Herr, K., & Anderson, G. L. (2005). *The action research dissertation.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Howell, D. C. (2012). Statistical methods for psychology (PSY 613 qualitative research and analysis in psychology). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Wertz, F., & Charmaz, K. (2011). Five ways of doing qualitative analysis: Phenomenological psychology, grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative research and intuitive inquiry. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

The dissertation proposal contains proposed overviews of Chapters 1–3, as outlined in the **Guidelines for Dissertation Chapters** section of this manual. Please format the proposal in APA style.

In Chapter 1 of the dissertation proposal the student will identify the problem to be studied, demonstrate why addressing it will be a worthwhile contribution to the profession, identify the hypothesis/research question, identify the purpose of the study, and indicate limitations of the design.

In Chapter 2 the student will write a review of the literature in the area of study. Though this does not need to be the complete review that will be used in the final paper, it should demonstrate that the student has done sufficient research to understand the area of study and to have designed the dissertation project in a way that will contribute to existing knowledge in the area.

In Chapter 3 of the dissertation proposal the student will give a full description of the study, including a description of human subjects, details of the methodology to be used, instrumentation, and data collection and data analysis procedures. The student should justify the choice of methodology.

When students are using human subjects they need to check with their advisors to make sure they comply with all ethical requirements for using human subjects, such as confidentiality, privacy, and ethical treatment.

Completed dissertation proposals should be given to the student's mentor. If the mentor approves the proposal it will be forwarded to the Chancellor for final approval. Once the proposal has been finally approved the student can begin the dissertation research project and begin writing the final draft of the dissertation.

GUIDELINES FOR DISSERTATION CHAPTERS

This outline will provide structure and consistency for the dissertation, but IUPS allows some variations. If students want to deviate from this outline, they should include a description of what they want to do in their dissertation proposals and get approval for their proposed organization from the university before they write the dissertation.

Students who do not get prior approval may be required to rewrite their dissertations, so they need to be sure to read this carefully and confer with their mentors.

There are usually five chapters in the dissertation. The following concise summary identifies the titles and general contents of each chapter. The minimum length of a dissertation is 100 pages, including appendixes.

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM FORMULATION

- Introduction
- Background of the Study
- Statement of the Problem
- Purpose of the Study
- Research Hypothesis/Questions
- Limitations of the Study
- Definitions

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

- Review and evaluation of the relevant literature
    - Presentation of history of literature on the issue
    - Review of literature on all sides of a controversy
    - Evaluation of the sufficiency of studies and other literature
    - Identification of methodological or other problems in the existing literature

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

- Research Approach
- Research Design
- Subjects
- Instrumentation
- Data Collection Procedures
- Data Analysis Procedures

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

- Summary
- Subjects
- Hypothesis/Questions

- Results

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Summary
- Discussion
- Recommendations

The following is a narrative description of the chapter subheadings:

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM FORMULATION

All the information contained in this outline must be included in the chapter for any study, including a heuristic study. The student needs, for example, to give background and explain why the proposed contribution is needed, state the problem being addressed, outline the narrow question(s) the dissertation will address, and discuss the importance and limitations of the study.

INTRODUCTION

This section provides a brief overview of the dissertation project.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This section gives a brief outline of the research and key theoretical positions in the field necessary for the reader to understand what the problem is and why the research being proposed is important. This section does not include personal opinions from the student, but is limited to citations of expert opinion and results of studies. Relevant material cited here should be covered in more detail in the review of the literature in Chapter 2. If there is little directly relevant literature, then related research must be cited that supports the premises of the study. It is the student's responsibility to illustrate/explain the development of the research premise by citing other scholars.

The essence of this section is *justification* for the dissertation. What is the situation that makes this dissertation a valuable contribution to the profession? For example, the prevalence of family violence, recidivism of offenders, and professional disagreement about the best treatments for offenders will make a study of the effectiveness of certain treatments on offenders an important contribution.

It is the student's responsibility to provide a convincing argument that the study is justified and helpful. What is going on in the world to justify the study, e.g., marriages are failing, health issues need to be addressed, many people are suffering from a condition for which there is no effective treatment. This is typically the longest section of the first chapter. (Usual length is 3–8 pages.)

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This section represents a conclusion to the previous section. Whereas the **Background**

of the Study section attempts to justify the research project, this section provides a concluding argument, focusing specifically upon the need for further research in a specific area.

For example, the need for further research in a particular case may be a reflection of a lack of research in the field, an absence of quantitative studies, an existing dispute in the field, insufficient or non-existent treatment for a serious problem, and so on.

The student may attempt to support either side of an existing conflict or opt to pursue a new and entirely unique direction, or just attempt to provide relevant data. It's a good idea to save the best quote that is found in the literature that "demands new research" for this section of the proposal.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This section contains a concise, specific statement of the particulars of the study, including:

- What issue(s) will be investigated?
- How will this be accomplished?
    - Subjects
    - Methodology
    - Topic of inquiry
    - Evaluation instruments and procedures

A reader who reviews this section should know beyond a shadow of a doubt exactly what the research premise is and how it will be evaluated. (Usual page length is 1 page.)

HYPOTHESIS/ RESEARCH QUESTIONS
The specific issues discussed provide the essence of the research hypotheses and/or research questions.

Hypotheses
Most dissertations in the field of psychology—and this would apply to the burgeoning field of coaching—contain research hypotheses. These are specific predictions of a single research outcome usually involving quantitative analysis. A typical hypothesis might be:

> *There will be a significant difference /correlation between (pretest and posttest scores) OR (Group A and Group B) for variable/characteristic C as measured by instrument D.*

The hypotheses are basically guesses concerning the outcome of the research. They should be measurable and should allow a definite judgment to be made once the data

have been collected.

Hypotheses should be listed in directional form in Chapter 1. When evaluating hypotheses in Chapters 4 and 5, the null form of the hypothesis is typically used. Here is an example of a directional hypothesis and a hypothesis written in the null form:

Directional Hypothesis:

There will be a significant difference between Group A and Group B scores of depression as measured by the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale.

Null Form:

There will be *no* significant difference between Group A and Group B scores of depression as measured by the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale.

Research Questions

Research questions are appropriate when the dissertation is more of an information gathering effort, rather than an attempt to test a particular hypothesis or where qualitative methodology, such as questionnaires and interviews, are used to obtain feedback from subjects. In areas of inquiry with minimal previous research, the purpose of the dissertation might be to illuminate the field, rather than assess and evaluate differences. For instance, an investigation of faith healers might utilize some of the following research questions to provide a focus for the study:

- What is the definition of *healing* used by faith healers?
- According to the faith healers' own description, how does the healing occur?
- What events precede and follow healing experiences?

The field of inquiry must be refined so that only one or two specific issues are investigated in the dissertation. This provides focus for the researcher so that sights can be clearly set on the data necessary to answer the research question.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This section begins with a statement concerning the gap of information to be filled by the dissertation. This gap may have been created by a lack of literature in the field or by conflicting research. In either case, the typical dissertation is unlikely to *prove* or *disprove* any existing theory. It may *support or oppose* existing theoretical positions.

Additionally, a statement should be made concerning the potential value of the results of the dissertation. Specifically:

- Which groups will likely benefit from the research?
- In what specific way will this research assist practitioners in the field?

This should not be a statement about the need for general research in the field; it should be a specific statement about the merits of the research proposed for this dissertation. (Usual length is 1–2 pages.)

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This section provides a clear statement of how the results of the study are limited. Each research method has inherent strengths and weaknesses. Each methodology has its own inherent limitations. Consequently, there are limits that must be imposed upon interpretation of the results of the study. Listed below are some typical limitations of studies:

- **Geographical Differences**
  Would people in San Diego, Honolulu, or Dallas react in the same way as people in New York City?
- **Subject Bias**
  Did the subject respond the way he/she honestly felt or as he/she thought the researcher expected?
- **Lack of Corroborating Evidence**
  If only one test or indicator was used, was another independent check made to ascertain whether the test measured what it claimed to measure (validity)? Is it possible that the results were a function of the test utilized and not a function of the treatment that was administered?

It is the author's responsibility to alert the reader to possible unavoidable (or avoidable) factors that may have influenced the research outcomes. Since most research is not perfect, this section summarizes the most glaring of the imperfections. (Usual length is 1– 2 pages.)

DEFINITIONS

The dissertation is written for a broad range of practitioners in the field who may not be familiar with terminology used in the area being studied. Hence, all new and pertinent vocabulary must be defined and referenced. This is accomplished by citing experts in the field. Webster's (and other non-psychological) dictionaries should be avoided, if at all possible, since they offer non-technical definitions. Wikipedia and other sites where information is provided by unknown writers should also be avoided. Authors may *NOT* create own definitions of terms. (Length depends on the number of definitions.)

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is required for all types of dissertations. Students must demonstrate both the ability to research an issue and the ability to evaluate research done by others.

You need to describe and evaluate the literature available in your field, including books, magazines, and other media. Remember that a description is not enough. You also need

to effectively evaluate that literature, identifying methodological and other problems.

This chapter is not a list of references described and evaluated one by one. It is an organized discussion of the research in your area of study. Students have some leeway in organizing the material, but they need to cover the history of the literature on their issues, any major controversies in the field, key theoretical positions, and the kind and number of studies that have been done.

This chapter is not the place for the student to discuss personal opinion about the topic, the experts, or the field, but the student should evaluate the sufficiency and methodology of studies. This chapter needs to be written in objective, unbiased language, presenting all points of view with equal fairness.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

INFORMED CONSENT

When conducting research with human subjects we require you to provide participants with a detailed consent form in order to protect the subject. This is outlined in the "Consent to Participate in Approved Research Form" (see below).

Updated Federal regulations require certain research to be reviewed by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), however, IUPS requires exemption by fulfilling one of the following qualifications within your study:

1. Research interactions only involve educational tests, survey/interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.

2. Research involves benign behavioral interventions and the subject agrees to the intervention and information to be collected.

Please evaluate your study to make sure that you stay within these parameters. Please also let the University know before you begin interviewing subjects for your study. We also require that you send us your completed consent forms (be sure that they are anonymous so that the identities of the subjects are secured).

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN APPROVED RESEARCH FORM

The following is a structure for creating the consent form to be signed by all participants in approved research.

Dissertation Title:

Place dissertation title here

Name of Participant:
Type in the name of the participant here, along with contact information.

Name of Mentor:
Place your faculty advisor's name and contact information here.

Description:
Include a description of the research you intend to perform, and the purpose of the research. This description should contain enough detail that your subjects can make an intelligent, informed decision about their participation in your project. Identify any procedures which are experimental.

Time Commitment:
Each subject should be provided with a general expectation of the duration of the subject's participation for completing the research.

Payment:
If subjects are to receive compensation for their time and effort, that should also be explicitly stated. If compensation is to be provided, a record of receipt signed by both parties.

Risks:
Every situation may come with risks. Include a description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject. If these risks can be considered minimal, include the following statement: "I do not anticipate any risk to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day to day life."

Benefits:
Include a description of any benefits to the subject or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research.

Disclosure:
Include a disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the subject.

Special Populations:
If your project requires the use of minors or other special populations, then implied consent MAY NOT be used. Any research involving minors must have informed consent addressed to the parent or guardian and include a signature line for them.

Confidentiality:
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Describe coding procedures and plans to safeguard data if subject

identities will be kept confidential. (If participants will remain anonymous, then reword the above to reflect that and state how the information will be kept anonymous.) State any additional entities to whom the information will be released, the nature of the information, and the purpose of the disclosure.

Questions and Contact Information:

Explain whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of any negative effects or research-related injury to the subject.

Right to Withdraw:

*No one should ever feel obligated to participate or continue participation in a project with which they are uncomfortable. A right to withdraw statement would include the following: "*Your participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled."

IUPS Approval:

Once you have had your form approved, you should include the following information so that the participant knows that the study has met the ethical standards and requirements of the International University of Professional Studies:

"This research proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Academic Committee of International University of Professional Studies, and it has been determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by University policies."

Participant Signature:

Ask the participant to sign and date this agreement:
"My signature below formally acknowledges that I have read this document and understand the information contained herein. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher."

Participant Signature:

Date:

RESEARCH APPROACH

This section presents and provides a justification for the methodology of the dissertation. One dissertation might utilize a personality test, another a questionnaire, and another might utilize an in-depth interview. In essence, the first question is: Why was this approach adopted? Quotes from other authors and texts to provide support for the choice are often desirable to indicate that the dissertation author is not alone in

one's belief in the appropriateness of the chosen design.

The rationale for the research design used should be given. Questions to consider include:

- Which research approaches have been used in previous research?
- Which approaches were considered for this dissertation?
- What methodological problems were overcome by using this approach?
    - What methodological problems were *NOT* overcome by using this approach? (Usual length is 1–2 pages.)

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section, a brief explanation of the research design is presented. A discussion of how and when the data was gathered is included. Often a diagram illustrating the design is helpful. One example of a design would be as follows:

Randomized Control Group Pretest – Posttest Design

Group	**Pretest**		**Treatment**	**Posttest**
Experimental Group (R)*	T1	X	T2	
Control Group (R)	T1		T2	

* R = Random Assignment

In this type of study, each group would be pretested on Variable A. The experimental group would then receive Treatment X (designed to impact on Variable A). They would then be retested to assess any changes that may have occurred in Variable A. The control group would also receive the pretest and posttest, but would not receive the treatment.

Significant differences between the two groups would then be compared and contrasted.

This section of the proposal is typically a more technical section. It is often filled with references from other authors corroborating the choice of design. It is good practice to try to reference other experts in attempts at justifying the research methodology.

A study using a qualitative analysis, such as interview and questionnaires, would involve a different methodology, and heuristic study of the student's own experience would use another. A heuristic study, for example would cite sources for the nature of heuristic methodology. At the end of this section the reader should have a clear picture of exactly how the study was conducted. (Usual length is 1–2 pages.)

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES / RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research hypotheses / questions that were stated in Chapter 1 should be restated here in the context of the research methodology. If hypotheses were used, they should appear in the **null form**, as they will be statistically evaluated in the null form. If

research questions were used, they should be repeated in exactly the same form as they appeared in Chapter 1. (Usual length is 1 paragraph.)

SUBJECTS

This section contains a brief description of the individuals who participated in the study. The relevant demographic characteristics of the population are described. Other specific factors that describe this population are also identified, while maintaining privacy and subject confidentiality.

A pressing question among dissertation writers is: "How many subjects should I use?" Whereas the specific answer for each dissertation should be decided by the student, the academic committee, and the mentor or dissertation advisor, the following guideline may be of help. In most statistical dissertations, 30 subjects or more are typically required for most conventional parametric statistics (Chi-Square analysis, Analysis of Variance, etc.). However, there are advantages to using more or fewer subjects in any study, so this number should not be automatically chosen, unless it can be specifically justified for the study. (Usual length is 1–2 pages.)

INSTRUMENTATION

In this section, all tests, questionnaires, interviews, or other assessment techniques that have been used in the study must be identified. Each assessment measure must be identified and described (e.g., number of items, nature of items, relevant subscales, etc.). References should be offered to substantiate the validity and reliability of each instrument, if such data exist. Other studies that utilized these instruments may be cited in the dissertation to support usage in the study.

If there is no existing instrument that directly pertains to the primary area of inquiry, then a questionnaire or scale may be created by the student. In this case, the student should explain in great detail the creation of the questionnaire. The theoretical underpinning of the questions should be referenced. The experts who participated in the creation of the tests should be cited and acknowledged. Pilot tests that were conducted should be described. If the student has created his or her own instrument, a more detailed justification for the instrument should be offered.

It is easier to use an existing reliable and valid test. However, in many areas of student interest, there are no existing reliable and valid tests. Hence, a new test must be occasionally created. (Usual length is 3–5 pages.)

NOTE: If the instrument has a copyright and the student intends to publish it in an appendix to the dissertation, the student must first have the author's permission.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

This section describes the methodology that was utilized in accumulating data for the dissertation. The exact procedure of interview or test administration (including a

description of the facilities, instructions, etc.) must be offered. All significant tools, instruments, or laboratory conditions must be fully explained. Follow-up procedures for data collection should also be identified (if appropriate).

When nonstatistical dissertations are attempted, the methodology section usually identifies the alternative methods for data collection. For instance, when describing a field study, the dependent variable(s) and environmental conditions should be described in great detail. When describing a biographical study, pertinent details concerning the subject, secondary and tertiary sources that were consulted are described. The essential idea is that whatever methodology was utilized in the dissertation must be *fully* and *completely* explained. The standard for completion of this section is that after reading, another researcher should be able to replicate the study. (Usual length is 1–3 pages.)

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

This section describes the form of analysis that will be used to evaluate the research hypotheses/questions. In a quantitative study this will be a statistical analysis. In the case of research questions, the methods for comparing and contrasting the data should be discussed. Whereas the specific formula utilized need not be listed in the text (it is often listed in an appendix), a description of the statistic and chosen levels of confidence should be included in this section.

Frequency tables, or other groupings of data, may be more appropriate for nonstatistical dissertations. The interesting rule of thumb is that statistical dissertations are often shorter than nonstatistical dissertations. Many students feel that a nonstatistical dissertation is somewhat easier to complete. This may not necessarily be true, because data will have to be analyzed using one method or another.

Many students choose to hire a statistical consultant to facilitate this process. This individual will assist the student in selecting the most appropriate statistical analysis and will then have access to a computer that can perform the required calculations. Most social science software packages will be suitable for most simple statistical dissertations. It should be remembered, however, that the student must understand the statistical procedures used, be able to discuss them in the oral defense, and be ultimately responsible for the appropriate choice. (Usual length is one to two pages.)

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

SUMMARY

This chapter begins with an opening paragraph describing what will be covered in the chapter.

SUBJECTS

This sections includes a detailed description of the subjects including all relevant

details for evaluating the study, such as demographics, history of relevant problems or experiences (e.g., arrest history in a study of treatment for abusers; pregnancy history in a fertility treatment study), treatment history, and so on. Be sure to maintain subject privacy and confidentiality.

HYPOTHESIS/RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Results are presented according to research hypotheses/research questions. The hypotheses/questions are restated and the results of the investigation are presented. Tables and figures (when appropriate) should accompany the narrative account of the results.

RESULTS
The results of the study are presented here. In this section, each hypothesis/research question should be addressed individually. If the results are significant, more narrative should be offered than if the results are nonsignificant. This section should begin with the most important results and should conclude with less important results. A summary is not necessary at the end of the chapter.

In a qualitative study the results of questionnaires, interviews, and so on are discussed in relation to each research question. The focus here is to relate the results of the study to each hypothesis/question. Any additional findings of the study, i.e. anecdotal comments or observations, should be presented following the research hypotheses/questions. These comments and anecdotes should relate to the process of the study, not to the topic in general. A more general discussion follows in Chapter 5.

Tables and figures are used in this section, if possible, to illustrate results.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
There are three sections in Chapter *5*, as the title indicates.

SUMMARY
The first section of the chapter contains a summary of the dissertation. This summary is comprised of three parts:

- PROBLEM: An overview of the research issue investigated;
- METHOD: How the study was conducted;
- RESULTS: A review of the findings.

In essence, this is a summary of the dissertation in journal form. (Usual length is 2,000–3,000 words.)

DISCUSSION
The next section of the chapter includes a discussion of both the significant and nonsignificant findings. An in-depth discussion of each of the findings is presented. The material presented in Chapter 4 should not be repeated here. Rather, a discussion and

assessment of the findings should be presented. If the results are nonsignificant, potential reasons explaining the findings may also be briefly offered. The relationship between the research findings and the current literature (cited in Chapter 2) is discussed. A discussion of issues that were discovered during the course of the dissertation is also presented. This is the point where the student can offer an opinion on the results of the study and on how the results fit into the current professional literature. Language in this section should be unbiased, and students should not make derogatory remarks. Students should also be careful not to claim too much significance for the study. For example, a short study on the effectiveness of a treatment on 10 subjects is not conclusive proof that this treatment is effective. It indicates a possibility that the treatment is effective and calls for larger and longer studies with more controls.

Nonsignificant findings or findings indicating trends should also be discussed, but in considerably less detail. Explanations for all results should be offered. There are circumstances where nonsignificant findings can afford as much rich commentary as more significant data. It is the responsibility of the student, along with the guiding mentor, to determine the extent to which discussion should be offered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The final section includes recommendations for further research. Students often suffer DB (Dissertation Burnout) by this point and neglect to end their dissertations with this look to future research. So, keep in mind that it is important to remember that each piece of research potentially extends the field into new directions. Each dissertation plays its own unique role in this process. With the completion of this research, what improvements could be made in the current design to further investigate the research premise? Should the same issue be reinvestigated? What further research should spring from the findings? What are the implications of this research for the field of inquiry and for your professional discipline? What other kinds of studies could be done?

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A biographical sketch is required of all candidates. The biographical sketch should be in narrative form and typically includes the educational background and work history of the candidate. It is written in the third person. For example: Eleanor Topper received her bachelor degree in psychology from the University of Michigan in 2001. She received her master's degree . . . She worked as a marriage and family counselor at the Beecham Family Center in Milwaukee from 2005 through 2008 . . .She assisted Dr. X in a study of . . . She is the author of . . .

The Biographical Sketch should not repeat information covered in the body of the dissertation. [Length is not more than 1 page.]

COMPLETION OF THE DISSERTATION

Once the five chapters of the dissertation are completed, the balance of the dissertation must be compiled. The dissertation should be sequenced in the following order:

- **TITLE PAGE**
- **COPYRIGHT PAGE**
- **DEDICATION PAGE** *(optional)*
- **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS PAGE** *(optional)*
- **ABSTRACT**
- **TABLE OF CONTENTS**
- **LIST OF TABLES** *(as required)*
- **LIST OF FIGURES** *(as required)*
- **BODY OF DISSERTATION**
- **REFERENCES**
- **APPENDIX** *(optional)*
- **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

The page numbers of the *preliminary* pages are printed in lowercase Roman numerals, but the page numbers do not appear on the first pages. For purposes of counting, the Title Page is the first page that is counted in lower case Roman numerals, the Copyright Page is second, and so forth. Though these pages (and the optional Dedication Page) are counted, the Roman numeral page numbers do not appear on those pages. Page numbers begin to be shown with the optional Acknowledgments Page (for example, page v), and such page numbers appear in the upper-right corner of the page.

The body of Chapter 1 of the dissertation text is considered page 1 (the start of using Arabic numbers, i.e., 1, 2, 3). Page numbers appear in the upper right corner of the page, as described in the APA style manual.

• Title Page	i	(Roman page # not shown)
• Copyright Page	ii	(page # not shown)
• Signature Approval Page	iii	(page # not shown)

- Dedication Page (*Optional*) (page # not shown)
- Acknowledgments Page (*Optional*) (begin showing page #s)
- Table of Contents (Roman page # shown)
- List of Tables (*As Necessary*) (Roman page # shown)
- List of Figures (*As Necessary*) (page # shown)
- Abstract (page # shown)
- Body of Dissertation 1 (begin showing "Arabic" page #s)
- References (page # shown)
- Appendix (Appendices) (*Optional*) (page # shown)

SUBMITTING THE DISSERTATION

When you feel that the manuscript of the dissertation is in good shape, send an electronic copy of the draft to your mentor for content review. Take your mentor's comments into consideration and rewrite and edit as necessary. Most dissertations are not approved the first time through, so students should not be discouraged if theirs is not. Remember that this is a learning process and part of the value is for students to receive feedback so they can improve their professional writing and research skills.

When your mentor has approved your dissertation draft* in content, please forward it to the IUPS Academic Committee for the next tier of review. The Committee will give you feedback which will usually require formatting and/or content changes. If changes are required, make the necessary changes and resubmit an electronic copy (Word document) to IUPS. Students will be notified when their dissertation has been officially approved, which typically takes a few weeks.

Once approved, the student will be given instructions on how to submit the finalized version, in addition to graduation requirements.

Please note that your initial submission to the IUPS Academic Committee is a **draft. Edits will need to be made, as the manuscript must comply fully with all requirements of APA and IUPS styles.*

You have the option of hiring an independent editor before you submit your first draft (which we highly recommend), or once you receive initial editing suggestions from the Academic Committee. Please be sure that your editor is highly competent in APA style, as many editors advertise as experts and are not. We have had a number of students who needed to hire a second editor. Please contact us for our recommendations (university@iups.edu).

In addition, we require you to submit this first draft no later than one month before your intended graduation date or current extension time frame. If submitted after the one month mark, you will be required to pay for an academic extension.

SAMPLE PAGES

The following are sample pages that demonstrate and describe IUPS style and many aspects of APA style. These are arranged in alphabetical order.

- Text is 12-point serif (Times New Roman). Capitalize as indicated.
-
- Page number (Roman numeral) is shown at bottom center of page.
- Left Page margin is 1.5 inches, with right, top, and bottom at 1 inch.

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to
International University of Professional Studies in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

EFFECTS OF SITUATIONAL AND SUBJECT VARIABLES ON MMPI RESPONSES OF ALCOHOLICS

By

Robin A. Doe

January 2018

Chair: (Chair's name)
Major Department: (e.g., Transpersonal Psychology)

The double-spaced text of the abstract begins here. Note that the headings above should be typed single-spaced as shown in this sample. Single-space the title if it runs more than one line. Single-space the lines above for Chair and Major Department.

The abstract should be a concise summary of the content and purpose of the dissertation, fully understandable without reference to the text. It should not contain parenthetical or bracketed references.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my parents for providing me with the opportunity to gain this tremendous education and the necessary tools to succeed in life.

APPENDIXES

- Text is 12-point serif (Times New Roman). Capitalize as indicated.
- Arabic page numbers are used at bottom center of page.
- Left page margin is 1.5 inches, with right, top, and bottom at 1 inch.

APPENDIX A

TITLE OF APPENDIX A

If you have only one appendix, call it APPENDIX, not APPENDIX A. If you have more than one appendix, simply name them consecutively (APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B, APPENDIX C, etc.).

- Text is 12-point serif (Times New Roman). Capitalize as indicated.
- Arabic page numbers are used at bottom center of page.
- Left page margin is 1.5 inches, with right, top, and bottom at 1 inch.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A biographical sketch is required of all candidates. The biographical sketch should be in narrative form and typically includes the educational background of the candidate.

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER TITLE

Chapter 1 begins after an extra line space from the Chapter Title. Below is an explanation of the types of subheadings and the formatting used in each. Pages are numbered at the bottom center.

First-Level Subheading

The first-level subheading is centered, in bold, and must have the first letters of principal words capitalized. This subheading is not followed by an extra line space.

Another First-Level Subheading

If you have a subheading of a certain level, you must have at least two in each section. So, for example, you cannot use only one first-level subheading in a chapter; you must have two or more. If you only have one, then you do not use a subheading in the chapter. You must have at least two second-level subheadings under each first-level, two third-level under each second-level, and so on. Your first-level subheadings do not need to come next to each other, just be in the same chapter.

Second-Level Subheading

The second-level subheading is left aligned (flush-left) and in bold. The first letters of principal words must be capitalized. The subheading system will be most effective if you really think through the organization of each chapter.

Another Second-Level Subheading

Remember that you must have at least two of every level of subheading in each

section, or not use that level at all. You must have two second-level headings under each first level, two third level-under each second-level, and so on.

Third-level subheading. The third-level subheading is indented, in bold, and for the third-level subheading, only the first letter of the first word and proper nouns are capitalized. This heading ends with a period, and the body of the text begins after the period.

Another third-level subheading. The heading above shows that if you have a subheading of a certain level, you must have more than one. The rationale is that you cannot have a list of only one item.

Fourth-level heading. Text starts here…

A fourth-level heading is formatted like a third-level, only it is in italics. These are indented, boldfaced, italicized, and followed by periods; only the first letter of the first word and proper nouns are capitalized.

Another fourth-level heading. Text…

Fifth-level heading. Text starts here…

This level of heading is indented, italicized, lowercase only the first letter of the first word and proper nouns are capitalized, with a period. The text for a fifth-level heading begins on the same line.

Another fifth-level heading.

Here are a few special points to keep in mind when reviewing your dissertation:

- Heading levels must be used in the order listed above. Levels must be ordered consistently from chapter to chapter.

- Do not underline or bold the chapter number or the chapter title.
- Do not leave a blank line after any subheading, as displayed in this sample file.

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ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

This dissertation is dedicated to all those who have supported my educational growth over the years. Without you I would not have had the inner strength to persevere through the …

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EFFECTS OF SITUATIONAL AND SUBJECT VARIABLES ON MMPI RESPONSES OF ALCOHOLICS

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International University of Professional Studies

Maui, 2018

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