



*DEPARTMENT OF*  
*COUNSELOR EDUCATION*  
*AND FAMILY STUDIES*

**Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision**  
**Dissertation Manual**

**Academic Year 2019-2020**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Ph.D. Program Director .....	4
Introduction to the Dissertation Manual .....	5
1.1 Purpose of this Dissertation Manual .....	5
1.2 The Authority of this Dissertation Manual .....	6
Overview of the Dissertation .....	6
2.1 Background to the Dissertation .....	6
2.2 History of the Dissertation .....	8
Dissertation: General Information.....	9
3.1 Planning and Budgeting of the Dissertation.....	9
3.2 The Use of Assistance in the Dissertation Process.....	10
Dissertation Writing Standards .....	11
4.1 Dissertation Writing Formatting and Style .....	11
4.2 Academic Honesty .....	12
Dissertation Process .....	12
5.1 Overview of the Dissertation Process .....	12
5.2 Step 1: Select a Topic.....	13
5.3 Step 2: Obtain a Dissertation Committee Chair.....	14
5.4 Step 3: Form a Dissertation Committee.....	15
5.5 Step 4: Complete the Proposal.....	16
5.6 Step 5: Defend the Proposal .....	17
5.7 Step 6: Obtain Approval by the Internal Review Board.....	18
5.8 Step 7: Conduct the Research.....	20
5.9 Step 8: Complete Final Chapters.....	20

5.10 Step 9: Submit the Entire Dissertation for Final Approval.....	20
5.11 Step 10: Defend the Dissertation .....	21
5.12 Step 11: Obtain a Professional Editor to Review the Dissertation for Form and Style .....	25
5.13 Step 12: Submit the Final Dissertation .....	25
Components of the Completed Dissertation.....	27
6.1 Preliminary Pages.....	27
6.2 Text .....	28
6.3 References .....	29
6.4 Appendixes.....	29
APPENDIX A: Overview of the Dissertation Format.....	30
APPENDIX B: Recommended Books for Dissertation Preparation.....	55
APPENDIX C: Petition for Establishing a Dissertation Committee.....	56
APPENDIX D: Petition for an Outside/Peer Committee Member.....	57
APPENDIX E: Dissertation Defense Meeting Announcement Format .....	58

### **From the Ph.D. Program Director**

Dear Doctoral Candidate:

Congratulations on reaching this final stage of your Doctoral journey! You began this journey several years ago and step by step completed all of your coursework, Qualifying Examination, Practicum, Internship, and Candidacy Exam. Now you face the capstone of the Doctor of Philosophy Program: the Dissertation.

Even before Students arrive at the landmark Dissertation stage, they have many questions about the Dissertation and the process by which they complete one. To address the overarching issues, the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies developed this Dissertation guide.

It is our hope that this process will prepare you for a lifetime of meaningful research and scholarship that not only evidences the knowledge and skills you've ascertained in this program, but, more importantly, reflects the Heart of Christ for justice, advocacy, mercy, and healing for all of mankind.

May God bless you with all that you need to flourish abundantly as you conduct your research and write your Dissertation. Our prayers are with you!

Dr. Lisa Sosin, with the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies

Director, Ph.D. Counselor Education and Supervision Program

## **Introduction to the Dissertation Manual**

### **1.1 Purpose of this Dissertation Manual**

The purpose of this document is to assist Counselor Education and Supervision Doctoral Students in completing their Dissertation at Liberty University. The best academic tradition and professional practice require the University to prepare Doctoral Students to conduct Doctoral Dissertation research that prepares them for a lifetime of meaningful empirical and scholarly endeavors that impact society. Because the completed Dissertation is a publication of Liberty University, the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies must maintain high standards concerning the form and appearance of Dissertations and require that all students' work meet those standards.

This guide sets forth those standards and provides a set of directives for Doctoral Students as they walk through the Dissertation process. This guide is also intended to serve as an aid to faculty involved in chairing Dissertations. It provides an overview of the Dissertation process and describes in broad terms the roles and responsibilities of the Student, Committee Chairperson, and other Committee Members.

Moreover, this guide provides pertinent information about the content and style of the Dissertation document and describes the processes for document approval and final publication of the Dissertation. Doctoral Students should refer to the guide and follow its direction as they plan for and prepare their Dissertation and whenever submitting materials to their Committee. The Committee Chairperson is responsible to the University for the structure, content, and final submission of the document for publication and has the ultimate authority in the Committee on these matters. This guide is intended to support Students and faculty at Liberty University through the essential processes of writing and defending the Student's Dissertation.

## **1.2 The Authority of this Dissertation Manual**

This version of the Dissertation guide supersedes all previous editions of the Dissertation manual. Students who are in the process of writing their final chapters, however, may continue under the former guidelines.

### **Overview of the Dissertation**

#### **2.1 Background to the Dissertation**

The Dissertation is the culminating activity of a Doctoral Student's degree and represents the Student's original contribution to the professional literature. It provides an opportunity to focus on a single, carefully defined area of interest within the Student's field of study. The Dissertation is a scholarly document intended to demonstrate the research competence of the author and to produce greater understanding of cultural, social, psychological, physical or spiritual phenomena. The Dissertation is to be written in the formal language and style of the author's discipline or field of study, and presents the results of a comprehensive, logical, and ethical investigation. The Dissertation is an extension of published research that involves the acquisition, analysis, and interpretation of new data. It is based upon the assumption that there exists one or more of these elements:

- An internal reality that can be sampled, observed, measured, and analyzed.
- An internal phenomenological reality that can be described in sufficient detail by the person experiencing it.
- A social or organizational reality that can be derived by examination of its structure or communicated through its participants' reports.

Regardless of the underlying assumption, the Dissertation should address an important problem that is feasibly studied within the Student's field. The Dissertation study must be carried

out through the application of accepted methods and procedures appropriate to the stated problem. The Dissertation is not just descriptive; it must be of a sound extant basis or a well-developed conceptual basis that leads to the question(s) under investigation. This basis serves as the origin for conclusions and inferences that lead to further research, for enhanced theoretical understanding, and for recommendations for organizational improvement.

All Doctoral Candidates must submit an approved Dissertation to satisfy part of the requirements for their degree. The Dissertation must be based on original research that has been approved by the Student's Dissertation Committee. The main aim of the Dissertation is to encourage independent study and to provide a foundation for future original research that impacts the counseling field and, ultimately, society. In terms of learning, the Dissertation should offer the opportunity to develop research skills, demonstrate mastery of a specified topic, and contribute to the body of knowledge.

Dissertations can be divided into two general classifications based upon purpose: (a) inquiry-oriented studies that have as their purpose to find out something about the problem and (b) action-oriented studies that have as their purpose to bring about change or improvement in the area of the problem.

Regardless of the type of Dissertation chosen, completing a Dissertation tests many of the talents expected of Doctoral Candidates such as independent thought, judgment, critical thinking faculties, knowledge of their field, research ability, organization, writing style, and verbal presentation. The Dissertation requires the Student to research and evaluate relevant reference materials to formulate pertinent question and/or hypotheses, to design an appropriate research study to answer those questions and/or hypotheses, and to present findings in the form of a coherent scholarly manuscript of appropriate format. There are many aids to this process

available to the Student, but in the final analysis the Doctoral Student is ultimately responsible for successfully completing all steps of the Dissertation process.

The decision as to whether the Student has met the necessary qualifications to earn the degree rests with the Committee and them alone. The selection and working relationship with the Committee is crucial to the successful outcome of the Dissertation process. It is critical, therefore, that the Student understands the desires and demands of each Committee member and adheres to the standards in this guide.

## **2.2 History of the Dissertation**

The tradition of writing a Dissertation as part of Doctoral study dates back to the late Middle Ages in European universities that were at the forefront of academic and scientific thought. Many of their traditions surrounding Dissertation writing are still followed today.

The Dissertation as a genre emerged from the oral culture of medieval graduate education, which emphasized mastery of ancient philosophies, and evolved into a public recognition of original scientific investigation in pre- World War I Germany. University scholars enlisted graduate Students to facilitate and record their research. Modeled from the original research report, the Dissertation became a *sine qua non*, an essential element, for acquiring the Doctoral degree.

James Morris Whiton wrote the first Dissertation in the United States at Yale University in 1861. His study of the proverb “*Brevis vita, ars longa*” contained six pages written in Latin. Fifteen years later, a total of 83 Dissertations had been written in the US. The rate of Dissertations rose modestly from the turn of the twentieth century until the early 1950s, when the number of Dissertations recorded increased exponentially. In 2004, over 32,000 Dissertations were recorded in the University Microfiche Incorporated (UMI) Proquest database. Among the two million



Dissertations written since Whiton's, the structure and expectation of the Dissertation remains an instantiation of the scientific method: background, method, analysis, and conclusions.

### **Dissertation: General Information**

#### **3.1 Planning and Budgeting of the Dissertation**

The Dissertation is a major undertaking, and there are several general considerations and expenses that the Student should keep in mind when planning. These include time, money, and additional skills (such as test administration, statistical analysis, editing, or transcription for qualitative research) that the Student may need to learn/pay for in order to complete the Dissertation research. The Student is advised to begin financial planning as soon as possible.

Managing time appropriately is important if Doctoral Candidates want to graduate on a certain date. In planning a timeline for the completion of the Dissertation, Students need to consider their personal time limitations and the time constraints of Committee Members. Normally, a Committee member needs at least two weeks in order to turn around Student submissions. This timeline, however, can be influenced by a number of events. In other words, it is important to keep faculty schedules in mind when submitting materials for review. If the Student believes that the Committee Chair or other Committee Members are being negligent in responsibilities, it is the Student's responsibility to discuss the matter with them. If satisfaction is not obtained, the Student may then go to the Ph.D. Director, the Department Chair, or the College of Behavioral Sciences Dean.

Students submit chapters as they are completed in order to allow the Chair or Committee Members to provide timely feedback. While waiting, the Student can continue to work.

Ultimately, the Committee will decide when the document is finished and ready to defend. Their decision is based on the quality of all parts of the manuscript. No other deadlines

or priorities will supersede this responsibility.

### **3.2 The Use of Assistance in the Dissertation Process**

It is not unusual for the Doctoral Candidate to enlist the assistance of others in the course of Dissertation research and document preparation. In fact, some Students “outsource” particular tasks such as running statistical analysis, or administering tests, transcribing interviews due to the time involvement and need for expertise. Although Candidates must make decisions on how to best utilize their time, and how much to use the skills of others, they never relinquish the responsibility for the process or the product of the research.

The Student is responsible for knowing every aspect of the research and is answerable to the Committee for the ethical behavior, procedures, accuracy, interpretation, and integrity of the results. The Student must not include anything in the Dissertation that s/he cannot describe, understand, justify, and explain to the Committee. The Student must be in control of the research and Dissertation and cannot defer to experts or hired assistants without a complete understanding of the reasons, procedures to be used, and appropriate interpretation of the results from these outside efforts. The Committee must be confidently convinced that the Student has a total grasp of the research and Dissertation and has taken measures to ensure accuracy.

Many Doctoral Students find it helpful to employ a statistics consultant at various points throughout their research and Dissertation. Statistical consultants can assist Students with the research questions, design, data collection procedures, and statistical procedures necessary for the Dissertation proposal. Statistical consultants can also assist Students in statistical analysis and interpretation. If Students wish to use a consultant they should discuss this with the Committee Chair first, and then with other Members of the Committee.

One consultant Students **must** employ is a professional editor who is also an expert in APA

writing style. Your Committee Members need to be able to review your work without being distracted by spelling, grammar, and writing errors. Remember that the Dissertation will be published in the Student's name, but will also include the names of Committee Members. Each person's reputation is tied to the quality of the completed Dissertation. Students are responsible to pay for this service. The use of an editor will be money well spent in order to ensure that the Dissertation is both well-written and consistent with APA format writing standards. Students are free to ascertain an editor of their choice or to consult with one of the editors listed in the Ph.D. C.E.S. Center.

### **Dissertation Writing Standards**

#### **4.1 Dissertation Writing Formatting and Style**

The margins for all chapters of the Dissertation are: 1 inch at the top and bottom, 1 inch on the right side, and 1 inch on the left side. Text should be Times New Roman, 12-point font. Text within the body of the manuscript should be left justified and double spaced throughout the document with page numbers in the upper right hand corner. Page numbering should be Arabic, with no number on the title page. A running head is not necessary for the Dissertation. Orphaned headers (headers appearing at the bottom of a page with the corresponding text beginning on the next page) and widowed text (a final line of a paragraph appearing alone at the top of a page) should be avoided. All manuscripts should follow the latest version of the APA style manual. For further information consult the Thesis and Dissertation and Publishing Guides at:

<http://libguides.liberty.edu/content.php?pid=229367&sid=1956460>

Students are responsible to give one bound copy of their Dissertation to the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies. Information about binding and publication is available at: <http://libguides.liberty.edu/content.php?pid=229367&sid=1956460>

## **4.2 Academic Honesty**

Liberty University considers academic honesty and integrity to be one of its highest values. The Dissertation should represent an original contribution to the knowledge base of the Student's field of study. Students are accountable for conducting original research that leads to the discovery of new information or theories. Thus, they are expected to submit original work. The reuse of end-of- course essays or reports, master's theses, or Doctoral research conducted elsewhere is prohibited. If citing their previous work, Students treat it as they would any other work cited according to the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, which is described in greater detail below.

Students must cite the ideas and work of others appropriately and according to current APA format. Properly crediting others' scholarly work is an ethical imperative for all academics and one that demonstrates an author's own integrity. The same principles that guide expectations of academic honesty and integrity in coursework and the Qualifying and Candidacy Examinations hold true for the Dissertation.

The Chair of the Doctoral Committee may require a Student to submit his/her Dissertation, at any stage of the writing process, through Blackboard's plagiarism software, SafeAssign. Any consequences of apparent academic dishonesty will be up to the Doctoral Committee Chair and the Committee. For more information on the University's policies regarding academic dishonesty, please refer to <https://www.liberty.edu/studentaffairs/communitylife/index.cfm?PID=38032>.

## **Dissertation Process**

### **5.1 Overview of the Dissertation Process**

The idea of completing a Dissertation can be overwhelming. In fact, the process seems so

threatening to some Doctoral Students that they never start or complete their Dissertation.

It is helpful to not think of the Dissertation as one enormous journey, but as a series of steps. For practical purposes, the DCEFS conceptualizes the Dissertation process as having 12 major progressions or steps:

1. Select a topic
2. Select a Chair
3. Form the Dissertation Committee
4. Complete the proposal
5. Defend the proposal
6. Obtain approval by the Internal Review Board (IRB)
7. Conduct the research
8. Complete the final chapters
9. Submit the entire Dissertation for final approval
10. Defend the Dissertation
11. Obtain a professional editor to review for form and style
12. Submit the final Dissertation

## **5.2 Step 1: Select a Topic**

Without a doubt, selecting a topic is one of the most difficult aspects of the Dissertation process. The key is choosing a topic that will sustain the Student's interest and attention over a period of six to 18 months—the average length of time to complete most Dissertations.

Moreover, topics should not be too broad, too vague, too grand, or too global. Once a topic is selected, the Student will create a one-page, succinct summary of the research question and method to present to a potential Chair. Finally, topics should be relevant to the field of

counseling with the goal of extending the empirical literature in meaningful ways that impact real people, policies, and society at large.

### **5.3 Step 2: Obtain a Dissertation Committee Chair**

The second step in the Dissertation process is for the Doctoral Student to choose a Dissertation Committee Chairperson (if not already done). The research interests of each professor in the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision Program may be found on the department web-site at: <https://www.liberty.edu/behavioral-sciences/counselor-ed/faculty/>.

Given the importance of the Chairperson to the success of a Dissertation, the Doctoral Student should discuss their research ideas with their prospective Chair and potential Committee Members before the Student approaches other Members. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee is comprised of three Members: the faculty Chairperson from the department and two faculty Readers.

**5.3a Faculty chairperson's role and responsibilities.** Faculty Chairpersons are vitally important to the success of Students working on their Dissertation. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee is the liaison for the Student, Committee, and the school. Using the Dissertation Grading Rubric, the Chair guides and supports the Doctoral Candidate as he or she develops and demonstrates competencies in critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, and integration of relevant theories and research.

The Chair reviews and guides the Student in the nomination and selection of the remaining Committee positions, supervises the design and research, and oversees the completion of the Dissertation manuscript. The Chair provides feedback on the Student's writing and research skills and refers the Student to additional support and resources when those skills need further development.

During the Dissertation process, the Student and Chair will be engaged in collaborative efforts involving the communication skills of writing, discussing, and negotiating.

The Chair must ensure that the Proposal and the completed Dissertation comply with all criteria used to evaluate acceptable scholar-practitioner work at the Doctoral level. This includes, but is not limited to: the content, structure, format, style, and ethical guidelines. The Chair is the focal point for communication between the Committee Members and the Student and facilitates the pace and flow of all meetings. The Chair should clearly communicate to the Student all University and DCEFS expectations concerning procedures for completing the Dissertation research project and the Doctoral degree.

**5.3b Committee member role and responsibilities.** It is the Committee Members' responsibility to encourage, support, and reflect the core values of Liberty University (e.g., Christ-likeness, respect, trust, commitment to a positive learning experience and excellence). It is expected that all Committee Members maintain appropriate communication with each other and the Student and respond to all Student requests in a timely manner. Barring unforeseen circumstances, Committee Members should read and respond to all Student submissions within a one-month period.

#### **5.4 Step 3: Form a Dissertation Committee**

The Dissertation Committee has the sole authority and responsibility for accepting and endorsing all aspects of the Dissertation, prior to the final approval by the Ph.D. Program Director or designee. Ultimately, the Committee is responsible for the academic progress of the Student and the scholarly quality of the Dissertation. The Committee approves the Dissertation based upon satisfactory performance on the Dissertation defense. The Dissertation Committee has overall responsibility for providing content, technical, organizational, ethical, and

administrative guidance for the Student in the Dissertation process. The Dissertation Committee Members work collaboratively with the Committee Chairperson to guide the Student in the development and advancement of academic skills.

Once the Committee Members have been approved by the Dissertation Committee Chair and the Members have agreed to participate on the Committee, the Student will need to complete the Petition for the Dissertation Committee form (See Appendix C). No Student should assume that a Committee member is on his or her Committee until the Petition has been signed.

To this end, the Dissertation Committee should form a collective of subject matter and methodological experts that coincide with the topic under investigation and the methods proposed. Committee Members are available to Students throughout the Dissertation process to provide counsel relevant to the study and consistent with their expertise. The Committee Members must hold earned doctorates. The Committee Members evaluate the Dissertation proposal and manuscript to ensure that the work meets rigorous academic standards for quality and that the Student meets the guidelines for ethical research, academic honesty, and academic writing and presentation.

#### **5.5 Step 4: Complete the Proposal**

The process of completing the Dissertation leading to Committee approval is an iterative process that culminates in the Dissertation defense. This iterative process typically takes place for each chapter and involves the Chairperson's initial endorsement of each submission before distribution to other Committee Members. This entire process begins with the Dissertation proposal.

Typically, a Dissertation proposal is comprised of Chapters One through Three (e.g., Introduction, Review of the Literature, and Method) of the entire Dissertation. The Chapters,



References, and Appendixes may be updated throughout the Dissertation process, but should be written with a final draft in mind. The submission of the proposal should include the Title Page, Abstract, Table of Contents, References, and Appendices. The actual format of the Dissertation, however, will be determined by the nature of the research and in collaboration with the Committee.

As for the submissions of the Dissertation proposal, several revisions are likely. This process is usually done through the development of outlines, identification of reference sources, the submission of drafts, the receipt of feedback, and the revision of drafts. At the discretion of the Committee Chair, this process may be supplemented with face to face or teleconference meetings as necessary.

### **5.6 Step 5: Defend the Proposal**

Generally speaking, it is preferable for the proposal defense to take place face to face with the Committee. However, due to the geographic dispersion of the University's Student body, a teleconference defense may be permitted at the discretion of the Committee. This will be granted when the quality of the previous work and demonstrated ability of the Candidate indicate that this format will not interfere with the successful presentation of the proposal.

The defense of the proposal is not just a formality. Issues that require clarification or changes that must be made may emerge from the defense. The Candidate is expected to demonstrate a mastery of the proposed study, the related literature, and adequately answer Committee member questions.

Questions about the proposal may include:

1. Does the design clearly relate to the purpose of the study?
2. Does the design adequately address the research questions?

3. What are the data sources? Are they useful, reliable, and sufficient?
4. Is the design feasible within the stated limitations and delimitations?
5. Does the design attend to the protection of human subjects?
6. Is a realistic timeline established?
7. Is the sample clearly defined?
8. Do the research methods reflect the literature?
9. Is this the “best” design for the study and the subject area?
10. Are the theoretical frameworks appropriate to the study?

Three possible outcomes may result from the Dissertation proposal defense. First, the Committee may approve the Candidate’s proposal. If the proposal is successfully defended, the Committee will sign the cover page of the proposal and it will be placed in the Candidate’s file. The Candidate will be given permission to begin Step Six of the Dissertation process.

Second, the Committee may accept the proposal with modifications. The Committee will not approve the proposal until such changes are made. The Candidate should submit these modifications to the Chair for review.

Third, the Committee may not approve the proposal. Rescheduling and recommendations for a second attempt will be determined on a case-by-case basis by each Committee. A successful proposal defense must be accomplished before the Candidate can move forward with any aspect of conducting the research or evaluation.

### **5.7 Step 6: Obtain Approval by the Internal Review Board**

The federal government requires that all institutions, whether university, company, or agency ensure that all state and federal regulations are observed by researchers in their community. The Internal Review Board (IRB) examines all research to ensure that the welfare of

human research participants is protected. Data collection cannot begin until IRB approval has been obtained. The IRB's current guidelines and application forms can be found on their webpage: <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=12606>. The Student's Doctoral Committee Chair serves as the faculty sponsor and works with the Student to ensure that proper ethical standards are applied to the project and that informed consent is used when appropriate. Consider the following guidelines in obtaining IRB approval:

First, determine which IRB application form to use (see the Guidelines and Forms the IRB website: <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=12606>). If the project involves minimal risk, the exempt research application is appropriate. Guidelines for expedited and full research are also found in the IRB handbook: [https://www.liberty.edu/media/9997/IRB\\_Handbook.pdf](https://www.liberty.edu/media/9997/IRB_Handbook.pdf).

Once the appropriate form has been chosen, view the "avoiding pitfalls section" of the IRB homepage: <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=23392>. This section provides application hints based upon the study's design. Many times, simple modifications to a design can prevent delay (or the need for resubmittal) in the application process.

Once the Student is aware of the particular issues his or her design might pose for approval, he or she should proceed with completing the application form. The form will require the Student's signature as Primary Investigator and the Faculty Sponsor's signature in order to be considered complete. Prior to submission to the IRB, the Student's Chair must review and approve the application.

The Student should submit the appropriate and completed IRB application form to the IRB after obtaining review and permission from the Chair to submit the approved application form. For exempt or expedited submissions, the IRB should render a decision within two weeks. For full review submissions, which require a more thorough review process, the IRB should be able to

render a decision within one month. No IRB application can be submitted without Chair review and approval. No data can be collected without IRB approval.

### **5.8 Step 7: Conduct the Research**

After the successful defense of the Proposal and approval of the IRB, the Candidate can proceed to implement the investigation as designed and agreed upon by the Committee. The responsibility of the Candidate is to implement the study as presented in the Proposal. Any deviations from the Proposal need both Committee and IRB approval.

### **5.9 Step 8: Complete Final Chapters**

In the approved research Proposal, the Candidate typically has completed Chapters One through Three. After the research is completed and Chapters Four and Five are being written, the first three chapters should be changed to the past tense (reflecting completed action). The remaining chapters present the results, summarize and interpret the data, draw conclusions, discuss practical implications, and make recommendations for future research. Further, the Candidate must complete the entire Dissertation document (e.g., Abstract, Appendixes, Table of Contents, Transition Paragraphs, etc.).

### **5.10 Step 9: Submit the Entire Dissertation for Final Approval**

Once the Doctoral Student has completed the final draft Dissertation, it should be submitted to the Committee. Typically the Committee will provide feedback to the Candidate within 30 days. Any required changes to the document should be made and resubmitted to the Committee. This process will continue until all of the Committee Members approve the document. At that time, the Student and the Committee should schedule the Dissertation defense. The defense will be scheduled no sooner than 30 days following approval of the final draft.

The Student must create a Dissertation announcement (see Appendix E) and forward it to

the Ph.D. Program Director (Dr. Lisa Sosin: [lssosin@liberty.edu](mailto:lssosin@liberty.edu)) and the Office Administrator (Ms. Lauren Aroniss: [laroniss@liberty.edu](mailto:laroniss@liberty.edu)). A copy of the announcement will be placed on a bulletin board in the DCEFS and e-mailed to all Faculty and fellow Doctoral Students.

### **5.11 Step 10: Defend the Dissertation**

**5.11a Purpose of the dissertation defense.** The oral defense of the Dissertation is open to the public. It should be approached seriously and with dignity because it is the culminating event of a Student's Doctoral degree. Members of the Committee will evaluate the Student's ability to present his or her research in a scholarly manner. Committee Members will assess the Student on his or her ability to: (a) share knowledge with the academic community, (b) be innovative and creative in applications of scholarship and practice, (c) interact with the academic community, and (d) logically and adequately present ideas when undergoing scrutiny.

The Student's Chair coordinates the meeting and the procedures for conducting the defense. If the Candidate wishes to graduate at the upcoming commencement, he or she must schedule the defense early in the semester. Each Committee member must approve the final draft before the defense can be scheduled. The defense may be scheduled 30 or more days following final acceptance of the document by all Committee Members.

The elements of the defense should be negotiated with the Student's Committee Chair prior to the defense meeting. Some Chairs may wish for the Student to develop a PowerPoint presentation and handouts that reviews the study and results.

**5.11b The defense proper.** While presentations may vary in length, most reviews can be accomplished in approximately 20 minutes. Following the presentation, questions will be addressed to the Doctoral Student. Questions may relate directly to the research, its theoretical underpinnings, or be of a more general nature to test the qualifications of the Student to receive

the Doctoral degree. Following a period of questioning by Committee Members, other attendees may question the Candidate.

When the questioning is completed, typically the Student and observers will be excused so that the Committee can deliberate privately. From these deliberations three results are possible:

1. The Candidate passes, though minor editing changes may be necessary and the Committee Members, except the Chair sign the signature page. The Chair will sign the signature page once the changes have been completed.
2. The Candidate is provisionally passed pending the submission of changes, review, and approval by the Candidate's Committee. The Committee Members will not sign the signature page until all changes have been approved. The Candidate will not be required to defend again.
3. The Student is not passed. In this case the Candidate must meet with the Chair (or Committee) to develop a plan to be completed before the resubmission of the document and the rescheduling of a defense.

The successful defense of the Dissertation concludes the work of the Committee. Each Committee Member will sign the signature form, which indicates that their work has been completed. In addition, each Committee Member must sign the Jerry Falwell Library Deposit Form that must be submitted in order to have the Dissertation uploaded to the ProQuest/UMI. This deposit form is available on the JFL webpage: <https://www.liberty.edu/library/submitting-Dissertations-and-theses/>.

Committee Members should use black ink when signing the signature page of the original copy of the Dissertation. The work of the Chair and the Student is not completed until all

changes have been made, all signatures are present, and all documents are delivered to their appropriate sources.

**5.11c Dissertation evaluation criteria.** The evaluation of a Dissertation is guided by a common set of standards and benchmarks that assist the Committee in evaluating and providing constructive formative feedback on each chapter of the Dissertation. Though the exact number of chapters may vary as determined by the research and the Committee, the following provides an idea of how Committee Members will evaluate the Dissertation.

Chapter One. Introduction: (a) the introduction adequately establishes the background and context of the study; (b) the problem statement is adequately articulated, supported with research, and amenable to the investigation; (c) the justification of purpose and significance is integrated with the problem statement and makes an adequate case for conducting the research; (d) the nature of the research design adequately describes and is appropriate to the stated problem; (e) the research questions and/or hypotheses are stated in answerable or testable form and are appropriate to the stated problem; (f) the relevant assumptions and limitations have been identified; (g) all technical terms have been adequately defined and explained, and (h) summary.

Chapter Two. Literature Review: (a) the literature review establishes an adequate theoretical framework for the study; (b) the literature review examines current empirical, theoretical, and relevant literature associated with key variables of the problem; (c) in areas where literature that directly addresses the topic is limited, current literature in related fields is used to build a rationale for the problem; (d) the literature review cites appropriate research literature to defend the selection of research design and procedures for this study; and (e) summary.

Chapter Three. Method: (a) the research design is adequately described and justified; (b)

the relationships between the problem, the research questions/hypotheses, design and methods are defended; (c) the description of the population/sample and/or participant selection procedures is adequate; (d) all the constructs involved are operationalized; (e) the data processing and analysis procedures are appropriate in light of the study's design and hypotheses; and (e) summary.

Chapter Four. Data Analysis and Results: (a) the data have been analyzed using the appropriate techniques as described in the method chapter; (b) the analyses are performed and presented correctly; (c) the results address the hypotheses and/or questions; and (d) summary.

Chapter Five. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations: (a) the findings are discussed in terms of research problem, conceptual framework, and research questions/hypotheses; (b) all the relevant conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis are identified; (c) findings are clearly placed within the context of the current literature (d) the recommendations for future research directions and practice are identified and justified; (e) the general conclusions are warranted in light of the results and current literature; (f) the ramifications and implications for practice are appropriate; and (g) summary.

APA Format: The current APA standards will be followed: (a) the orderly presentation of ideas; (b) the smoothness of expression; (c) for the economy of expression; (d) for precision and clarity; (e) for expressing ideas without biased language; (f) for the grammar; (g) for punctuation; (h) for citations; (i) for presenting the reference list; and (j) general Dissertation format is followed including title page, copyright page/ signature page, abstract, dedication, acknowledgments, table of contents, text, references, appendixes, list of tables, and list of figures (when applicable). Students should read several examples of excellent quantitative or qualitative (depending on which method they are using) Dissertations to get a clear idea of the required



format and organization of the Dissertation project.

*The COUC 989 syllabus contains a Dissertation Organization Template and Grading Rubric to insure proper formatting and appropriate scholarship for the Dissertation.*

#### **5.12 Step 11: Obtain a Professional Editor to Review the Dissertation for Form and Style**

After the successful defense of the Dissertation, the Student will make corrections as required by the Committee. If the Student has not done so already, he or she needs to carefully review the Dissertation guide for compliance with the DCEFS form and style. **All Students are required to obtain an editor to have their Dissertation carefully reviewed to ensure excellence in style, format, grammar, spelling, syntax, and APA (most recent edition) standards.** The Student will be required to make all the necessary changes and resubmit the corrected Dissertation for review. The Student is responsible for the costs associated with obtaining the editor. Contact information for approved editors can be found in the C.E.S. Center.

#### **5.13 Step 12: Submit the Final Dissertation**

Once compliance has been verified, the Student is then ready to submit the Dissertation for publication. The following submission guidelines must be strictly followed and can be reviewed in more detail on the Jerry Falwell Library website:

<https://www.liberty.edu/library/submitting-Dissertations-and-theses/>.

1. Ensure that all required pages are present: Signature Page, Cover Page, Table of Contents, Abstract, List of Tables, and List of Figures.
2. Ensure accuracy with all page numbering, Table of Contents and Reference list.
3. Ensure that any reprinted material conforms to copyright regulations. Failure to comply

with copyright regulations will prevent the Dissertation from being accepted. Please see additional help at <https://www.liberty.edu/library/submitting-Dissertations-and-theses/>.

4. Liberty University has adopted the Microsoft® Office software bundle as the standard for its operations. The Dissertation must be submitted in Microsoft® Office Word or PDF format. It is important that the Dissertation template found in the Dissertation guide's appendixes be followed in order to prevent problems from converting the Dissertation to a PDF format.
5. Each Student will need follow the instructions to upload the completed and approved Dissertation to the Jerry Falwell Library Scholars Crossing:  
<https://www.liberty.edu/library/submitting-Dissertations-and-theses/>. Dissertation requirements will not be considered complete until receipt of an acceptable copy of the approved thesis or Dissertation is confirmed by the Jerry Falwell Library in accordance with current library deposit policies. Once the Dissertation has been deposited the Student will receive an email confirming the submission has been received. The Office of Scholarly Communications will review the work submitted for publishing. The Student will then receive an email requesting revisions or acceptance.
6. Once approval has been obtained from the Office of Scholarly Communications, the Dissertation must be submitted for binding. Since the University no longer binds Dissertations it is the Student's responsibility to provide a bound copy for the Department. If you wish additional copies, you may also order them. The binding company suggested on the Jerry Falwell Library website is <https://www.thesisondemand.com/>. Office supply stores also offer printing of bound copies. One bound copy of the Dissertation should be submitted to the DCEFS for

inclusion in the Department's library. Additional bound copies might be requested by the Student's Committee members. Of course, most Students also choose to have a bound copy for themselves. The cost of binding these copies is the responsibility of the student.

7. Once the bound copies are received, the Student should forward them to the DCEFS for signatures. The Student is responsible for any costs associated with mailing.

### **Components of the Completed Dissertation**

Although Dissertations can vary in number of chapters and organization, in essence all Dissertations consist of four major components or parts: (a) Preliminary pages; (b) Text; (c) References; and (d) Appendixes. These components are detailed below.

#### **6.1 Preliminary Pages**

Preliminary pages must appear in the order described below.

##### **Title Page (Required)**

Each copy of the Dissertation must include a title page prepared exactly in accordance with the EXAMPLE. This is the only page among the preliminary pages that does not bear a page number; it is page "1" but the "1" is not printed on the page. The Student's full legal name should be used on the title page.

##### **Signature/Approval Page (Required)**

All copies must include a signature page that has been signed in black ink by each Committee member. The page number appears on the bottom of this page as "2". The author may include a copyright statement on the signature page.

It should be centered and appear after the author's full legal name as follows: ©

Copyright, YEAR.

##### **Abstract (Required)**

All Dissertations must have an abstract that briefly describes the problem, purpose, methods, and summary of findings. Abstract should adhere to current APA Manual word count (150-250 words).

#### Dedication (Optional)

The Student may wish to include a dedication.

#### Acknowledgement (Optional)

Many authors include an acknowledgement page to express their appreciation to those who have assisted in the Dissertation.

#### Table of Contents (Required)

The Table of Contents (TOC) lists the chapter and section headings with concomitant page numbers. Only Chapter headings, Level 1, and Level 2 headings should appear in the TOC. All entries in the TOC should be made in precisely the same wording as the headings appear in the text. It is also critical that page numbers are accurate (this needs to be checked every time a change is made to even one word). Main headings in the TOC should be written in all capitals. Each Chair may have a particular preference for where tables, figures, and illustrations are printed in the document. Some prefer that all tables, figures, and illustrations be listed separately on their own pages whereas others prefer them at the end in an appendix.

## **6.2 Text**

All Dissertations by Students in the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies must comply with the writing format of the most recent version of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. The Dissertation text is typically divided

into Five Chapters (Introduction, Review of the Literature, Method, Results, and Summary of Findings and Recommendations).

### **6.3 References**

The third major section of the Dissertation is the reference list, which directly follows the last page of the text. References must comply with APA format style. For the Dissertation, however, spacing of each reference should be single spaced with double spacing in between each full reference.

### **6.4 Appendixes**

A final section of the Dissertation, the Appendix contains all supporting materials. If there is more than one appendix, each should be lettered in alphabetical sequence (e.g., Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C). Supporting materials include such documents as letters of permission to use instruments, the instruments, participant recruitment letters, copies of informed consent, and other information that supports the Dissertation.

## **APPENDIX A: Overview of the Dissertation Format**

In order to prepare a quality Dissertation document, the following overview provides detailed information on the format and general content of each component of the Dissertation.

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE TITLE PAGE OF YOUR DISSERTATION: THE TITLE OF YOUR  
DISSERTATION SHOULD GO HERE (ALL CAPS)

by

Student's Full Legal Name Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University Month, Year

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SIGNATURE PAGE: THE TITLE SHOULD GO HERE

(ALL CAPS)

by Student's Full Legal Name

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

Year

APPROVED BY:

---

Name and degree, Committee Chair

---

Name and degree, Committee Member

---

Name and degree, Committee Member



## ABSTRACT

The abstract summarizes the contents of the manuscript, including the importance of the study, purpose of the study, the research questions, the methodology, results, conclusions, and recommendations for further research. Descriptions of the methodology should include the design, the sample, setting, and data collection and analysis methods. Approximately 250 words or less is recommended; however, some Dissertation abstracts are a little longer. No more than one page is allowable, and the abstract should be written as one, double-spaced paragraph. The abstract should include results of the study but should not include statistics. The word “ABSTRACT” should be in all caps and centered. Begin the abstract here, justify left with no indentation, double space.

Keywords should be located at the end of the Abstract. Indent and italicize the work *Keyword* followed by a colon, then a list of the words in lower case separated by a comma.

*Keywords:* This is a list of 4-7 words (separated by commas) that are central to your study.

**Copyright Page**  
(Optional)

**Dedication** (Optional)

The dedication page is a page in which the candidate dedicates the manuscript. This page is optional.

### **Acknowledgments (Optional)**

The acknowledgments page provides the opportunity for the candidate to acknowledge individuals who influenced the writing and completion of the Dissertation. This page is optional.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Table of Contents lists the various chapters and subsections of the manuscript along with their page numbers. The Table of Contents should include the Acknowledgement, List of Tables, List of Figures, CHAPTER TITLES (all caps), REFERENCES (all caps), and APPENDIX or APPENDICES (all caps). These should be left justified. The subsections included should only be APA level 1 and level 2 headings within the manuscript. Level 1 headings should be left justified and Level 2 headings should be indented one-half inch. Chapter titles are not considered level 1 headings. Entries should be double-spaced.

Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	???
List of Tables .....	???
List of Figures .....	???
 CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM .....	 1
Background to the Problem .....	3
Purpose of the Study .....	25
Research Questions.....	27
Limitations/Delimitations .....	32
Definitions .....	33
Significance of the Study.....	36
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework .....	37
Organization of Remaining Chapters .....	40
Summary.....	40
 CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	 41
Introduction .....	41

First Main Heading.....	41
Subsection Heading.....	42
Subheading Heading.....	45
Second Main Heading.....	52
Third Main Heading .....	60
Summary.....	67
 CHAPTER THREE: METHOD.....	 68
Research Design .....	68
Selection of Participants.....	70
Instrumentation.....	74
Assumptions .....	80
Procedures .....	82
Data Processing and Analysis.....	89
Summary.....	91
 CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS.....	 92
Restatement of the Purpose .....	92
Research Question One.....	94
Research Question Two.....	9
Research Question Three .....	101
Subquestion A .....	102
Subquestion B.....	104
Summary.....	108
 CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS .....	 109
Summary.....	109
Conclusions .....	110

Major question related to purpose .....	110
Major question related to purpose .....	114
Implications for Practice .....	120
Implications for Research .....	126
Recommendations .....	132
Limitations of the Study.....	132
Summary.....	132
 REFERENCES .....	 134
Appendixes	
Appendix A: Name of Appendix.....	142
 Appendix B: Name of Appendix .....	 143

## **List of Tables**

The List of Tables cites the tables and the corresponding pages of each table.

This enables the reader to easily locate the tables in the manuscript. The title of this page should be a Level 1 heading, centered, 1 inch from the top of the page. Entries should be double spaced.

Table I .....	95
Table 2.....	97



## List of Figures

The List of Figures cites the figures and the corresponding pages of each figure.

This enables the reader to easily locate the figures in the manuscript. The title of this page should be a Level 1 heading, centered, 1 inch from the top of the page. Entries should be double-spaced.

Figure 1 .....	45
Figure 2 .....	52

### **List of Abbreviations**

The title of this page should be a Level 1 heading, centered, 1 inch from the top of the page. Entries should be double-spaced. Examples are provided below.

American Counseling Association (ACA)

Counsel for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

[Double Spaced]

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.

Special note: This is how Chapter Headings should appear in actual Dissertation. Also, a new chapter begins with a new page

The Dissertation begins with a clear, succinct but general presentation of the problem area or need to be addressed in the research. The statements should orient the Committee's thinking to the topic and they should be satisfied after reading the Problem section that: (a) A case is made for the existence of a problem and it is clearly delineated, and (b) The problem has intellectual merit worthy of Dissertation research. Remember that what sections are included in the Dissertation will vary based upon the nature of the research (e.g., qualitative or quantitative) and the Committee's preferences.

### Background of the Problem

New Heading Level 1

This section provides the historical, social, and theoretical contexts for the problem that is to be addressed. It is a distillation or summary of the most relevant background literature. After reading this section, Committee Members should be able to understand: (a) how the problem has evolved over time, (b) what are the contexts of the problem, and (c) what theories support the research area to be explored.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This section of the chapter is brief, but important. Here is where the Candidate states clearly and succinctly the focus and intentions of this current research effort. All previous writing funnels to this specific statement of the purpose of the Dissertation, and all subsequent chapters illuminate, support, or describe efforts to implement a design and interpret findings related to this specific purpose. There may be several sub goals of the Dissertation stated along with the purpose, but after reading these statements, the Committee should be able to: (a) give support to the worthiness of the study, (b) have a clear understanding of the essential goals or products of the Dissertation, and (c) see a clear interrelationship between the problem statement, the background and essential literature, and the statement of the purpose.

### **Research Questions or Research Hypotheses**

In order to accomplish the stated purpose of the study, there are several conceptual questions or hypotheses that are developed whose answers will allow the researcher to interpret his/her results in relationship to the reason(s) for this study. These are often general questions that are later operationalized with specific measures and statistical parameters in the form of null hypotheses (if appropriate) in Chapter Three. After reading the research questions or hypotheses, the Committee should: (a) be able to understand what is being asked or explored by the author of the research, and (b) see the clear link between the questions and the statement of the purpose.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

This section is a clear summary of the assumptions and limitations of the research. It is the author's responsibility to alert the reader to unavoidable and avoidable factors that may influence the research outcome. The significance of this section is that it deals with the

generalizability of the study's findings.

Assumptions are premises taken to be true without proof or demonstration. They are not tested; rather, they are accepted on the basis of logic or reason. The author briefly discusses only those select assumptions that are strongly relevant to the proposed study.

Limitations include boundaries, exceptions, and qualifications that are inherent in every research and restrict the interpretation and generalizability of the findings. The author includes statements that clarify, qualify, or restrict aspects of the research decisions made to give the reader introductory information about the actual scope of the study.

Each research study has inherent strengths and weaknesses. Particular methods have their own limitations. Subsequently, these limits must be imposed upon the interpretation of the results of the study.

Included in the section are any fundamental assumptions about the methods employed in the study, or threats to validity (e.g., instrumentation issues), design problems (e.g., lack of randomization, participant bias), and other factors that may have an impact on interpretation of the data. The limitations of the study might be due, for example, to "self-imposed" limits (e.g., selecting a particular gender, age group, ethnicity, geographic region) related to the particular sample for a quantitative study. After reading this section, the Committee should be able to: (a) judge whether the limitations are too restrictive to be useful in reaching the goals of the study, realistic, completely described, or too broad and (b) ascertain whether the assumptions and/or limitations threaten the quality of the research or evaluation, thereby nullifying the value of the project.

### **Definition of Terms**

Key terms must be clearly understood among Committee Members so that all of the contributors to the Dissertation process, and all subsequent readers, understand the author's intended meaning. Often there is new terminology related to a current research problem. There are also terms or constructs that have different meanings depending on the context or theoretical orientation of the author. The section of definitions puts all readers "on the same page" and develops a fundamental agreement about what is meant when a particular term is used in the Dissertation. This alphabetical listing should reflect definitions of terms most commonly used in the field and be supported by appropriate citation. If the term is to be operationalized with a scale, score, or specific product, then this should also be included in the definition statement. After reading the definitions, the Committee should: (a) be able to clearly understand and comprehend each definition, (b) judge that the definitions are consistent with research standards and the literature of the field, and (c) be able to reach agreement on the appropriateness of each definition for the present study.

### **Significance of the Study**

The researcher must state what potential impact the study will have on the current thinking about the research questions, its potential for contributing to existing theory or practice, its application to other venues, and/or its potential for bringing about change in existing practice. The Committee must decide if the importance of the study is congruent with scholarly expectations, and that the Student has a realistic and clear view of the potential impact of the results from this study.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

This section includes a succinct description of the framework, discussion of concepts that are relevant to the proposed study, and explanation of the relationship among the concepts. In a qualitative design, the philosophical underpinnings of the approach to the study are discussed instead. Since qualitative research may be theory-generating, a priori concepts and theories are not the focus and presenting a conceptual or theoretical framework may not be appropriate. The nature of the research questions and its associated methods, however, may be based on a theoretical perspective, tradition, or philosophy and it is often useful to describe that theory (e.g., symbolic interactionism) or philosophy (e.g., Heideggerian phenomenology) as it relates to the proposed research question. The underlying theory/philosophy of the study can be presented in this section or in Chapter Three wherever it is deemed appropriate by the Dissertation Committee.

### **Organization of the Remaining Chapters**

The final section is a brief description of each subsequent chapter.

#### **Summary**

Each chapter should have a summary.

[Double Space]

New Chapter, new page

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The bulk of the review of the literature, a critical developmental component in the entire Dissertation process, is presented in this section. The review for the literature must be a selective and analytical summary of essential research, presented in a logical manner to support the researcher's claim as to the merit of the inquiry. After reading the Review section, the Committee should be able to be confident that: (a) the essential literature supports the existence of the problem; (b) they understand the patterns of inquiry presented in the literature related to the topic; and (c) proposed methodological directions reflect the patterns in the literature and fill a need or gap in our understanding of the problem area.

Summary



[Double Space]

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHOD**

New Chapter,  
new page.

In this chapter of the proposal, the researcher presents the design, procedures, and analysis plan for carrying out the purpose of the study. When it is revised for the final Dissertation, this chapter will include all aspects of the methodology, both proposed and what actually occurred during the course of the research, in replicable detail. Although there will be different headings for studies of various approaches, the following are examples of sections most commonly found in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method Dissertations.

The chapter may begin with a brief introduction, which can include the general type of methodology employed in the research or evaluation (i.e., experimental, survey, descriptive, etc.) and a brief restatement of the nature and purpose of the study.

### **Research Design**

In this section, the researcher describes the specific design used in his/her study. Variables and classifications are clearly spelled out and are consistent with the definitions in Chapter One. This section will often have several subsections or subheadings.

### **Selection of Participants**

In this section, the researcher should provide a complete description:  
(a) of the process by which participants were included in the study and (b) of the individuals who participated in the study.

### **Instrumentation**

In this section, a complete description of the instruments, tests, surveys, questionnaires,

observational protocols, or measures used in the study is presented. This includes information on reliability, validity, origin, and appropriateness or rationale for inclusion in the study. Any instruments created for this study should be included in an appendix, along with information on instrument development.

### **Research Procedures**

Since the work done for the Dissertation must be replicable, the procedures section of Chapter Three must be very detailed. It must include all of the information necessary for others to implement this same research, from securing institutional permission to conduct the investigation (if necessary), the first contact with participants, instructions or materials used in the study, setting, development of special instruments, conducting pilot studies, and any other information that would take the reader from start to finish. All appropriate and supporting materials (e.g., protocol, training manual) should be included in an appendix. This section will include information about data gathering and recording procedures.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

Some studies may not involve statistically analyzed results. Regardless of whether the study is quantitative or qualitative, however, each study must explain how data was processed and analyzed. The processing and analysis of the data will depend on the design of the study, type of data collected, and the research hypotheses (which were stated in Chapter One). In a quantitative study, research hypotheses should be reiterated with the applicable null hypotheses along with the level of significance and statistical methods used to test it. Any other processes for presenting the data, including figures, charts, and graphs should also be listed with each

hypothesis of the study.

In the proposal phase of writing, not all conditions can be anticipated. For the completed Dissertation, the researcher will report what was actually done, any deviations from the proposal, and why these decisions were made.

### Summary

[Double Space]

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS**

The results of the data collection and analysis of the data is presented in Chapter Four of the Dissertation. There are several methods of presenting this information. The one thing in common for all data in Chapter Four is that it is factually presented and free of interpretation. Data may be presented in charts, graphs, tables, or as a statistic, or in any combination of these methods, according to the guidelines in the APA Publication Manual.

The chapter should begin with a brief restatement of the Purpose of the study, and an introduction to the content of the chapter. Data should be presented in the order in which the research questions appeared in Chapter One. The research questions provide the best guidance as to the number, level, and title of subheadings within this chapter. Analysis that is included subsequent to the initial planning of the research should be given its own heading following the initial presentation of the research questions. Each section should present the question or hypothesis, the analysis or graphic display, and the results before moving on to the next question. The chapter should conclude with a summary of all the findings, often as a table, and provide a transition paragraph to the final chapter of the Dissertation.

Summary

[Double Space]

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The final chapter begins with a brief summary of what was presented in previous chapters. This includes a brief and accurate statement of the problem, methodology, and the findings. The researcher should discuss how these findings interact with the hypotheses and also with the current literature. For example, in a quantitative study, care should be taken to identify how the study's findings support or contradict previous similar studies in the area. Thoughtful potential explanations should be proposed to account for these differences. Once the study has been placed within the literature, the researcher should discuss what can be accurately concluded from the findings, and the implications of these results on future research. Relevant conclusions about design, measurement, or other methodological considerations should be fully discussed. The researcher also elaborates on recommendations for future research or the application of the findings to the Dissertation topic. The Committee will be particularly interested in the extent to which: (a) the summary is clear and comprehensive; (b) the study is presented in the broader context of the previous literature; (c) the recommendations are practical and a logical extension of the completed research; and (d) the implications are related to the procedures and findings.

Summary

## REFERENCES

All the references cited within the text should be listed in accordance with the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of APA*. The reference title should be capitalized and centered.

## **APPENDIX B: Recommended Books for Dissertation Preparation**

The most up to date texts will be those recommended in your research courses throughout the program.

## APPENDIX C: Petition for Establishing a Dissertation Committee

Liberty University  
Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies  
1971 University Blvd., Lynchburg, VA 24502  
434-592-4049

### Petition for Establishing a Dissertation Committee

Please complete the following section and return it to the DCEFS office. A status sheet that identified the courses that must be completed prior to beginning the Dissertation must be attached for this form to be processed. Questions about this form should be directed to your advisor. Please print clearly.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Specialization: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I am nominating the following faculty Members to serve on my Dissertation Committee. Each member has reviewed my prospectus and agreed to participate on my Committee. I understand that it is my responsibility to obtain signatures and that no member is considered to be on the Committee until he or she has initialed and the director has also approved the nomination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

				Faculty Director Initial	Name of Nominee Initial
Chair	Co-Chair	Member	_____	_____	_____
Chair	Co-Chair	Member	_____	_____	_____
Chair	Co-Chair	Member	_____	_____	_____
Chair	Co-Chair	Member	_____	_____	_____

The above Student has completed all the necessary requirements and is able to begin work on his or her Dissertation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ph.D. Program Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## APPENDIX D: Petition for an Outside/Peer Committee Member

Liberty University  
Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies  
1971 University Blvd., Lynchburg, VA 24502  
434-592-4049

### Petition for an Outside/Peer Committee Member

Please complete the following section and return it to the DCEFS office. Questions about this form should be directed to your advisor. Please print clearly.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Specialization: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I am nominating the following faculty Members to serve on my Dissertation Committee. Each member has reviewed my prospectus and agreed to participate on my Committee. I understand that it is my responsibility to obtain signatures and that no member is considered to be on the Committee until he or she has initialed and the director has also approved the nomination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Nominee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Credentials: \_\_\_\_\_

Rationale for Nomination: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Committee Chair Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ph.D. Program Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX E: Dissertation Defense Meeting Announcement Format**

DISSERTATION DEFENSE MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE TITLE PAGE OF YOUR DISSERTATION:

THE TITLE OF YOUR DISSERTATION SHOULD GO HERE

by

Full Student Legal Name

Liberty University Doctoral Student

Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies

**INSERT YOUR ABSTRACT HERE**

Open to the Public

Date and Time of the Dissertation

Room in which the Dissertation Defense will be held