

Applied Research Center
Nova Southeastern University
Fischler School of Education and Human Services

Applied Dissertation Guide

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The Applied Dissertation

Overview

The applied dissertation is an important component of your doctoral experience at the Fischler School of Education and Human Services (FSEHS) at Nova Southeastern University (NSU). This aspect of the program affords you the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and skills gained in the various courses to become a competent scientist and practitioner. This programmatic dimension will permit you to address research questions in your work setting. During your applied dissertation experience in the program, you will move from a guided learning experience to a self-directed experience. The requirements associated with the applied dissertation and its firm timelines have been planned to assist in your success.

The Applied Research Center (ARC) manages all aspects of the applied dissertation process. A wealth of information pertaining to the ARC, including faculty and staff information, policies and procedures, and salient documents are available at the ARC Web site (http://www.schoolofed.nova.edu/arc/arc_home.htm). It is important that doctoral students visit this site on a regular basis to insure that they have current information.

Questions pertaining to the applied dissertation should be directed to your committee chair. If you have any difficulties with your committee or questions that you feel have not been adequately addressed by your committee chair you should contact your team leader. The team leaders and the students they are responsible for can be accessed through the following ARC Web page: http://www.schoolofed.nova.edu/arc/about/committee_chairs.htm.

Definition of Applied Research

The term *applied research* refers to research that examines the relationship and applicability of scientific theories to the resolution of practical problems. Gall, Gall, and Borg

(2005) explicated the difference between basic and applied research. Basic research is intended to “understand basic processes and structures that underlie observed behavior” while applied research seeks to “develop and test predictions and interventions that can be used directly to improve practice” (p. 6).

Definition of an Applied Dissertation

The applied dissertation entails the completion and writing of an applied research study; thus, the applied dissertation is a process and a product. The process will require you to identify a research question or questions in your work setting or field of interest and employ the scientific method to conduct a research study to address your research question or questions. Your applied dissertation committee will guide you in identifying an appropriate applied dissertation topic and in developing a relevant and significant study.

The major outcomes of the applied dissertation are the mastery of the scientific method and the research process as well as the demonstration of doctoral-level competencies. In addition, your applied dissertation should reflect the knowledge, skills, and dispositions gained from the various courses that you have taken.

Applied Dissertation Overview

You must complete an applied dissertation as part of your doctoral degree requirements. The applied dissertation is developed and implemented concurrently with your course work. Specific timelines and corresponding responsibilities are described later in this guide. Twelve credits are associated with the applied dissertation component of your program. Two credits are earned upon the successful completion of the concept paper, five credits are earned upon approval of the applied dissertation proposal, and five credits are awarded upon final approval of the applied dissertation report.

During the beginning of your first term in the doctoral program it is very important to complete and submit a Dissertation Interest Form (available at <http://www.schoolfed.nova.edu/arc/seminar/interest.htm>). This form is sent to your team leader who will, by the end of your first term in the doctoral program, assign you an applied dissertation committee. You will formally begin working with your committee on your applied dissertation at the beginning of your second term in the program.

Your applied dissertation committee will consist of a committee chair and a committee member (their roles are discussed in detail later in this document). The committee chair will be the primary person who will assist you with your applied dissertation concept paper, proposal, and report. When your committee is assigned, the ARC will send an e-mail to your NSU e-mail address providing you with your committee chair and committee member contact information. When assigning you a committee, an attempt will be made to match your interests with the expertise of the applied dissertation committee chair and member.

Expectations

Because the interaction between you and your committee is of such importance, the relationship between the three of you should be based upon a set of expectations and responsibilities. The basic expectations for you, your committee chair, and your committee member are delineated below.

Student. Your committee chair will expect you to

1. abide by the FSEHS student code of conduct.
2. follow the policies and procedures established by NSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research with Human Subjects and the regulations of your own district and school concerning the protection of human subjects in research.

3. contact your committee chair via telephone or e-mail at least once each month.

Effective communication is a “two-way street” and you are responsible to maintain open lines of communication with your committee chair.

4. conform to the guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 5th ed.) and the *Style Guide for the Applied Dissertation* (SGAD, available at http://www.schoolofed.nova.edu/arc/online_guides/index.htm) for the submission of all applied dissertation documents. Aspects of form and style not covered in the SGAD are to be found in the APA manual.

5. submit only original scholarly work that conforms to program policies (e.g., plagiarism, original work) and applicable laws and regulations (e.g., copyright laws), and comply with established timelines for your applied dissertation.

6. follow the highest standards of scholarly and intellectual integrity and honesty throughout the entire dissertation process. Plagiarism is defined as taking or appropriating the ideas or writings of others and using them as one’s own. This is a serious academic offense, particularly in a doctoral program. If, after an investigation, it is determined that a student has committed plagiarism, he or she may be dismissed from the program.

7. make all organizational, developmental, format, and style changes recommended by your committee chair.

8. keep in mind that the working relationship between you and your committee chair is unique and personal and is based upon the trusting interaction between professionals. Therefore, contact your committee chair for clarification on any points in question or for advice, information, and procedures, rather than obtaining information from colleagues, students, other faculty, or other committee chairs.

9. inform your committee chair of any major changes in your professional and personal life that might affect your applied dissertation progress.

10. inform your committee chair and the ARC in reference to any changes in position, addresses, telephone numbers, and so forth as soon as possible to maintain open lines of communication.

11. utilize only your NSU e-mail address when e-mailing with your committee chair and *all* other NSU faculty and staff. The use of your NSU e-mail account is the only official e-mail communication with NSU faculty and staff and is the only acceptable form of e-mail communication.

12. submit documents to the dissertation committee using Microsoft Word. You should also become proficient with the reviewing feature in Microsoft Word (for further assistance see the help menu in Word and http://continuinged.uml.edu/online/tutorial/word_trackingxp/). Your dissertation chair will provide feedback to you using this feature.

Again, it is essential that you establish a good working relationship with your committee chair. You should also keep in mind that your failure to plan will not be considered an emergency by your committee chair. The frequency and quality of contact between you and your committee chair will serve to establish the professional relationship that will be necessary for the successful completion of the applied dissertation.

Committee chair. It is expected that your committee chair will

1. provide clear, written, and verbal feedback to you, as appropriate, regarding the development and implementation of the concept paper, proposal, and applied dissertation.
2. evaluate the concept paper, proposal, and applied dissertation.
3. maintain a collaborative relationship and good rapport with you.

4. maintain regular (monthly, at a minimum) contact with you by either e-mail or telephone.
5. provide timely feedback (within 14 days) to your document submissions.
6. ensure that you follow the guidelines of the APA manual and the SGAD for the presentation of all written work; however, your chair is not your editor.
7. provide appropriate suggestions for improvement to you if you have deficient writing skills.
8. assist you in gaining access to ARC and university resources, such as publications, policies, and persons who might assist students in the applied dissertation process.
9. review the IRB materials that you will submit to the ARC.
10. utilize only NSU e-mail for correspondence with you.

Committee member. The committee member provides three reviews of student work in the following order: at the concept paper stage, at the proposal stage, and at the applied dissertation stage. The committee chair determines which submission of the concept paper, proposal, and applied dissertation should be reviewed by the committee member. Occasionally, the chair may decide to obtain the initial input of the committee member on a document that is not fully developed.

If concurrence between chair and member is not achieved, the discrepancy will be resolved by the team leader. When concurrence is reached between the chair and committee member, and after the student responds effectively to all required changes, the chair will assign a grade for the course that is related to the document (see below); the committee member will also indicate approval.

It is expected that your committee member will

1. evaluate the concept paper, proposal, and applied dissertation. The committee chair determines which submission of the concept paper, proposal, and applied dissertation the committee member should review.

2. provide a thorough written analysis (within 14 days of receipt) after a careful reading of the document (concept paper, proposal, or applied dissertation), based upon the categories outlined in the rubrics, with annotations on pages of the document as needed.

3. provide feedback to the chair only, not directly to you.

4. ensure that you follow the guidelines of the APA manual and the SGAD for the presentation of all written work. However, the committee member does not function as your editor.

5. utilize only NSU e-mail when corresponding with NSU students, faculty, and staff.

Applied Dissertation Courses

The applied dissertation component of your doctoral program consists of three courses that follow in sequence: Seminar 1–Concept Paper (2 credits); Seminar 2–Proposal (5 credits); and Seminar 3–Dissertation (5 credits). You will receive a grade of pass or fail for each of these courses. The grade for each course depends upon the document (also referred to as *benchmark*) that is produced by the student (i.e., concept paper, proposal, and applied dissertation).

An overview of the three courses and their accompanying workshops is provided below. In addition, the content of the chapters that comprise the concept paper, proposal and applied dissertation are elaborated upon later in this document. The applied dissertation course numbers and their respective credits are indicated at http://www.schoolofed.nova.edu/arc/research_courses/index.htm.

Overview of Workshops

Three workshops have been developed to facilitate the completion of the applied dissertation (see <http://www.schoolofed.nova.edu/arc/seminars/index.htm>). Each workshop is associated with one of the applied dissertation courses (i.e., concept paper, proposal, and applied dissertation). The workshops are delivered in online and face-to-face formats and are facilitated by the committee chair. The concept paper workshop is also delivered at the Doctoral Studies Orientation in a face-to-face format. In addition, the workshops are typically delivered face to face at the FSEHS Conference on Global Leadership, Learning, and Research held annually during the summer term.

Students should register for the following courses during their doctoral program: Seminar 1–Concept Paper, Seminar 2–Proposal, and Seminar 3–Dissertation during Terms 2, 3, and 5, respectively. Grades for each of the seminars will be "PR" (in progress) until the grade is assigned by the committee chair for the respective benchmark (concept paper for Seminar 1, proposal for Seminar 2, and applied dissertation for Seminar 3). A pass grade can only be submitted upon full committee approval of a given benchmark. It is important to note that students may register for Seminars 2 and 3 before completing the activities for the previous seminar. Completion of a dissertation course is not a requirement for registration in a subsequent seminar; therefore, in some cases students may be simultaneously registered for up to three seminars. Moreover, it is expected that all students complete their dissertation within the 36-month time frame. Students must register for continuing dissertation services at the 36th month in the program if the applied dissertation has not been completed (see next page for additional information).

Seminar 1–Concept Paper. The content of the Seminar 1–Concept Paper workshop focuses on formulating research questions and writing the concept paper. The committee chair and member roles, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the ARC faculty and staff are discussed. This seminar will culminate in the completion of the first corresponding benchmark, the concept paper. Two credit hours for this seminar will be assigned following applied dissertation committee approval of the concept paper.

Seminar 2–Proposal. The content of the Seminar 2–Proposal workshop emphasizes the formulation and writing of the dissertation proposal and the process for IRB approval. Methodology and content for each of the proposal chapters are defined, including a thorough discussion of the role of the literature review to support or refute the dissertation topic. This seminar, focusing on scientific inquiry, will culminate in the completion of the second corresponding benchmark, the proposal. Five credit hours for this seminar will be assigned following approval of the proposal by the committee.

Seminar 3–Dissertation. The Seminar 3–Dissertation workshop reviews data collection and implementation, the applied dissertation, and the final-approval process. Content and format issues, as well as recommendations for further research, are highlighted. Dissemination of the dissertation and possible outlets for publication are also covered. This seminar will culminate in the completion of the third corresponding benchmark, the applied dissertation. Five credit hours for this seminar will be assigned following final approval of the applied dissertation.

Continuing Services

It is important to note that all FSEHS doctoral students are subject to a continuing services fee if they have not achieved final approval for their applied dissertation by the time they have completed their regular academic schedule. Final approval includes approval by the

applied dissertation committee, meeting all requirements of the final format review, and ARC approval by the program professor and the executive dean. Additionally, the final-approval process continues after the executive dean's final approval until you obtain the necessary signatures on the applied dissertation approval page and submit the required copies of your applied dissertation along with the required disk and submission form to the ARC. Refer to the ARC's Web page (http://www.schoolfed.nova.edu/arc/academic_resources/index.htm) for information about continuing services.

Applied Dissertation Timelines

To successfully complete the applied dissertation process, students must set goals and follow a timeline. The timelines presented below allow for completion of the program in 2 or 3 years. There may be some minor variations due to the month in which you begin. To take these variations into account, and to stay within the timeline, develop (with the guidance of your committee chair) an individual timeline plan with your own submission targets.

Note that these target dates are for planning; they are not official deadlines. It is important to plan and balance aspects of your life to ensure progress through the applied dissertation process. Communicate regularly with your committee chair to help focus on your submission targets.

Two-year plan. These guidelines assume a 2-year graduation plan for students when referring to timeline-related issues:

1. The expected date of completion of the *concept paper* is the 6th month of the program, beginning from your start date.
2. The expected date of committee and IRB approval of the *proposal* is the 12th month of the program, beginning from your start date.

3. The expected date for final approval of the *applied dissertation* is the 23rd month of the program, beginning from your start date.

Three-year plan. These guidelines assume a 3-year graduation plan:

1. The expected date of completion of the *concept paper* is the 12th month of the program, beginning from your start date.

2. The expected date of committee and IRB approval of the *proposal* is the 24th month of the program, beginning from your start date.

3. The expected date for final approval of the *applied dissertation* is the 35th month of the program, beginning from your start date.

Applied Dissertation Resources

It is recommended that you review the required and supplementary material for the applied research courses in order to assist you in formulating and writing your applied dissertation. In addition, writing resources are listed on the following ARC Web page:
http://www.schoolfed.nova.edu/arc/res_writing_and_preparing/index.htm.

Organization of This Guide

The concept paper, proposal, and applied dissertation, respectively, are reviewed in the following three sections of this guide. Subsequently, the five chapters that comprise the applied dissertation are reviewed in the next five sections. The three chapters of the proposal essentially become the first three chapters of the applied dissertation (see Applied Dissertation chapter for clarification).

Concept Paper

Overview

The first phase of the applied dissertation process is the concept paper, which will lay the foundation for the applied dissertation. This critical step will provide the cornerstone for the research that you will conduct for your applied dissertation. The concept paper (approximately 10 to 12 pages in length, excluding the title page and references section) should represent a significant attempt to define the research agenda for completion of the doctoral degree. It provides a foundation for the next step, the development of the proposal. The approved concept paper allows you to move forward with confidence in a credible direction.

You should consider that your work at a doctoral level will require you to meet certain criteria of quality. As an intelligent and competent professional, your applied dissertation efforts will need to produce high quality applied dissertation documents. You will need to draw upon the knowledge, skills, and competencies that were developed in the various research courses that you have completed.

Work on the concept paper is initiated by you with the guidance of the committee chair soon after you are assigned an applied dissertation committee. Once the committee chair is satisfied that your concept paper meets content and format standards, the committee chair will have the committee member review the document. Comments from the committee member will be shared with you through the committee chair. If revisions are required, these will be communicated to the student by the committee chair, who will receive the revised work and assess the changes. If there is a disagreement at any part of this process, the committee chair will arrange an e-mail discussion or teleconference between the student, the chair, and the committee member. Once the committee is in agreement that the concept paper should be approved, both

the committee chair and the committee member will document the agreement in accordance with ARC procedures, and the committee chair will assign a grade. A similar process occurs for the proposal and applied dissertation.

Concept Paper Components

Rubrics have been developed for the concept paper, proposal, and applied dissertation (see Appendix). It is strongly recommended that you use these rubrics to guide the development of your documents. The concept paper is the first in a series of concept papers that reflect, as guided by the committee chair, your exploration of possible research topics. The concept paper's length, excluding title page and references, should be about 10 to 12 pages. The various components are listed below in sequence.

Title page. The first page of the concept paper should consist of a title page consistent with SGAD style bearing the tentative title of the applied dissertation.

Statement of the problem and purpose. This section of the concept paper should introduce the statement of the problem to be addressed in the investigation. The statement of the problem should be supported by trend data to support why the research is being undertaken and how it will help the work setting. You should provide supporting evidence indicating the possible or probable causes of the problem should be addressed. You should also provide a clear and succinct indication of the purpose of the study. This section should also contain appropriate information to familiarize the committee with the setting of the research, if applicable.

Preliminary literature review. The review of the research literature is an essential element of any dissertation. The concept paper should identify the major literature that assisted in validating and supporting the proposed dissertation topic. This initial review of the research and literature for the concept paper is a preliminary step to the completion of a more

comprehensive review required for the dissertation. In the preliminary review, you should focus on a few “major” lines of literature that offer general support for the proposed research. All available library resources should be considered when completing the brief literature review. A wide variety of scholarly writings should be reviewed including books, journal articles, dissertations, and conference proceedings. Though no minimum or maximum number of sources to be reviewed is applicable to all research projects, the review should reflect a significant effort to analyze and synthesize the scholarly writing related to the research question or questions. The review should sustain the connection between the literature and the statement of the problem.

Research question or questions. Research questions are formulated to describe the particular questions that investigators would like to address in their studies. A research study may have one or more research questions. The research question reflects the problem that the researcher wants to investigate. Research questions are formulated based on theories, past research, previous experience, or the practical need to make data-driven decisions in a work environment. They are vitally important because they drive the research methodology that will be employed in the study.

Abridged methodology. This section describes the primary elements of the proposed method for conducting the investigation as well as an overview of data-analytic strategies. The purpose of the methods section is to define how you are going to answer the research question or questions. While this section will likely require several reviews and conceptualizations, the concept paper should include your best thoughts as to how the research will proceed.

Timeline. The concept paper includes a proposed timeline of events leading to the completion of the research. The timeline should demonstrate that the scope of the proposed research is reasonable for completion within the doctoral program (i.e., significant enough to be

considered doctoral-level work, yet manageable enough to be completed within the program time frame). The expectation is that the length of time for implementation will be suited to the nature of the problem and the scope of the study. Your applied dissertation committee will provide you with guidance as to the appropriate duration of your study. Please keep these timeline issues in mind when you plan your applied dissertation calendar. For example, if you are planning to look at issues involving state testing, you will need to plan time for the state testing results to be returned for your analysis.

References. The last section of the concept paper is the References section. This list of references cited in the concept paper should be formatted according to APA style guidelines.

Proposal

Overview

The concept paper serves as a foundation for the proposal. You should be ready to begin the development of a proposal based upon the knowledge, skills, and dispositions you attained from your experiences in the research courses. Elements from the research courses may include the identified problem, the use of quantitative and qualitative data from the site to support the existence of the problem, and a review of the research and literature to support your efforts. Generally speaking, a proposal should provide all the details necessary for a reader to understand exactly the applied dissertation project you intend to implement.

The approved proposal (including approval from the IRB) becomes a contract between you and the university regarding the exact nature of the project. Once agreed upon, the proposal cannot be altered without the agreement of all parties, including the IRB. The proposal serves as a concrete plan for action and a comprehensive description of what the applied dissertation involves.

Proposal Components

The proposal will build upon the ideas and direction indicated in the approved concept paper. It contains the elements detailed below.

Title page and title. Titles should be brief yet informative, and should reflect the problem, the solution strategies, and the age range of those involved (if appropriate). The title should begin with a noun signifying some form of action such as “Development of ...,” “Evaluation of ...,” and “Formation of ...” Appropriate title words may be "solving," "increasing," "reducing," or "improving." A sample title page appears in the SGAD.

Table of contents. The Table of Contents should identify key headings of the proposal,

including the Introduction, Review of the Related Literature, and Methodology. In addition, the titles of all tables and figures that are included in the proposal should also appear in the Table of Contents. Guidelines for formatting the Table of Contents are contained in the SGAD.

Abstract. An abstract may be included with the proposal. It should be a single-spaced, single-page summary of your proposal that permits the reader to discover quickly what is in your proposal. It is very important that it be clear, accurate, and specific.

The abstract should be

1. informative rather than descriptive.
2. approximately 200 words in length for the applied dissertation proposal and 220 to 270 words for the report.
3. as concise as possible.
4. neither critical nor evaluative.

The abstract should include

1. a statement of the problem and the purpose of the project.
2. research question or questions.
3. research methodologies employed and a summary of procedures.

The abstract should not include a

1. discussion of, or reference to, the literature review.
2. detailed elaboration on the purpose of the applied dissertation and development of research questions.
3. rationale for the treatment or procedures selected.
4. detailed descriptions of project procedures or their application.
5. detailed discussion of the implications of results.

Tables and figures. A proposal usually contains few tables or figures, because these are usually used to display findings or results in the final dissertation. It may sometimes be useful, however, to display a table or figure in the introduction (expanding upon the background or significance of the problem) or to include a plan for data analysis or statistical summary. See the APA manual and the SGAD for the formatting of tables and figures.

Chapter 1: Introduction. This section provides a rationale for the applied dissertation by explaining the nature of the problem as well as its background and significance. Furthermore, the statement of the purpose of the study will also be included in this chapter. Also elucidated within are the research questions and the definition of terms used in the applied dissertation. An understanding of the history, background, details, limitations, resources, and context of your applied dissertation within the cultural setting should be included. The specific contents of this chapter are outlined in detail later in this guide.

Chapter 2: Review of the Related Literature. A critical analysis of the research and literature regarding the problem, probable causes, and potential solutions will be required in this section. Research and literature reviews will help you focus your actions, sharpen your questions and approaches, and lead to a defensible thesis. Your literature review will be most effective if you have developed a clear indication of the problem and questions that you will explore. In this section, describe the possible causes and contributors of the problem. The contents of this chapter are detailed later in this guide.

Chapter 3: Methodology. The purpose of this chapter is to explain in detail the methodology or combination of methodologies that will be utilized in your applied dissertation. Furthermore, in this section you will attempt to justify the appropriateness of the chosen methodologies to address the problems and answer the research questions. You will include a

detailed presentation of the overall intervention design, planned activities, research design, and data-analytic strategy of your applied dissertation project. You must also include a timeline of your research activities. Although a distinction was made in your research courses between quantitative and qualitative methods, many applied dissertations are action research projects that involve both quantitative and qualitative methods. Hence, you will likely need to be familiar with both methodological approaches and be able to apply the methodology that best addresses your research questions. This chapter is written in the future tense as the implementation of the applied dissertation is being proposed and has not yet occurred. The specific contents of this chapter are reviewed later in this guide.

References. A reference list should be included in the concept paper, the proposal, and the applied dissertation. The list should include only references cited in the body of the paper, and vice versa. Follow the instructions for preparing a reference list described in the APA manual and the SGAD.

Appendixes. Forms, questionnaires, test instruments, and documents that you plan to use should be included as appendixes. In this way, pertinent documentation will be available, without impeding your presentation, if someone else wishes to replicate your work. Each appendix must be referred to in the body of the text of the proposal so that its relevance to the project is clear. Title each appendix, assign it a letter, and continue sequential pagination. No copyrighted material may be included in the appendixes without permission. Refer to the APA manual for information on referring to appendix material in the text. The sequence of appendixes should match the order in which they are discussed in your document. Refer to the SGAD for additional formatting guidelines.

FSEHS's Institutional Review Board (IRB) Process

The IRB is a committee established to protect the rights, welfare, and physical well being of human research subjects. Federal regulations set forward by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services define human subjects as “a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains data through intervention or interaction with the individual and/or identifiable private information” (HHSS Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects). These same regulations define research as “a systemic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” (HHSS Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects, 2004).

You should submit IRB documents to the committee chair for review prior to submittal to the ARC. The chair will then review the documents to guarantee that the student is using the correct version of each form and that the content mirrors that of the proposal. Once the chair has determined the IRB documents to be in good order, the student should then submit all required forms to the ARC.

Upon receipt of these documents, the ARC has the responsibility to determine whether the research should be reviewed by the entire IRB via Full Review, reviewed by the chair of the IRB (or designee) at the Expedited Review level, or reviewed at the Center Review level by the FSEHS center representative to the IRB (or designee).

To assist students and their committee chairs in adhering to university policies and procedures, the ARC has developed the *Navigating the Institutional Review Board Process* manual (available at http://www.schoolofed.nova.edu/arc/online_guides/index.htm). This manual is intended to provide FSEHS students with a concise guide to the IRB process, and it is a source for all related documents. It is critical that students and committee chairs understand

that no facet of implementation (e.g., the solicitation of human subjects, the dissemination of informed consent forms, the examination of records, and activities related to implementation) may be done prior to successfully completing the IRB process and receiving approval by the IRB and the site or sites where research is to be conducted. Failure to comply with this policy could result in serious repercussions for all parties involved, including, but not limited to (a) destruction of all data collected, (b) inability to access and approach any human subjects solicited prior to IRB approval, (c) complete reimplementing of dissertation activities, and (d) expulsion from the academic program. The information below is excerpted from the IRB manual.

To ensure that proposed research projects will be evaluated in a timely fashion, students should submit all required materials simultaneously with a minimum of 2 months lead time from the desired start date of the study. The required materials are the following:

1. Completion page from the online CITI Training Program (instructions on registration and completion can be found on the Web site listed above)
2. Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects Submission Form *with principal investigator's signature*
3. Research Protocol
4. An Informed Consent Form checklist for *each* consent form
5. If applicable, Informed Consent Form or Child Assent Form and Parent Consent Form
6. All data-collecting instruments for which the student has received approval from the chair or committee
7. All letters and/or bulletins that may be used to communicate with potential subjects in the study

8. One copy of the approved research proposal (chair and member must have indicated approval before IRB process can begin)

9. A letter, or documentation, attesting that an individual in an administrative capacity (or a research review/governance board) is (a) aware of the project, its parameters, and its implementation timeline and (b) authorizes the student to complete the study at the specified site or sites. This authorization should come from an individual at a district/central level for students proposing to conduct research in a school system.

Once the ARC has received the submission it will be reviewed within 15 business days of receipt. Once reviewed, the student will be contacted (via NSU e-mail) about any revisions that need to be made. This e-mail will also notify the student if a higher level of review is necessary. The student should then resubmit any documents that required revision. This process will continue until all revisions have been made. The study will either be approved at the Center Level or, in certain cases, forwarded to the chair of the IRB for an Expedited Level review. Studies requiring a higher level of scrutiny will be forwarded to the entire IRB voting body for Full Review.

The student must receive a letter from the ARC indicating approval of the IRB forms *before* implementation of the applied dissertation study begins. It is recommended that students check the ARC Web site to be sure they are using the latest version of the *Navigating the Institutional Review Board Process* prior to submitting their IRB materials so that their submission follows the most current policies and procedures.

Investigators (you and the committee chair) are responsible for notifying the IRB immediately of any unforeseen events in relation to human subjects (e.g., injury, loss of confidentiality). It is also the responsibility of the investigators to notify the IRB if there are

changes to the employment status of the primary investigator when such a change impacts the location where the research is to be conducted. The investigators must also notify the IRB if there is going to be a change to the research site or method of collection that was originally stated. If a study reviewed at the Expedited or Full Level extends past the 1-year approval granted by the IRB, investigators must notify the IRB at least 2 months in advance of the end of the 1-year period via the Continuation/Revision form available at the ARC Web site (<http://www.schoolofed.nova.edu/arc/irb/index.htm>). No research may be conducted after the 1-year period until the continuation has been granted.

Applied Dissertation

Overview

The final phase of the dissertation process is the applied dissertation final report, referred to as the applied dissertation. The applied dissertation will represent the results of your efforts and will provide the findings related to your study. The writing of the applied dissertation takes place after the implementation phase is complete.

The report should be focused, although its exact length will vary from dissertation to dissertation. The report must be written so that it provides the reader with a full account of the applied dissertation study. The report provides the applied dissertation committee with a means of assessing your ability to use the scientific method. However, one of the primary purposes of the applied dissertation is to serve as a vehicle for sharing information of value with your professional community.

The applied dissertation is written after the completion of the implementation of the proposal's procedures. The applied dissertation is based on the proposal and the findings or results that emerged from the implementation. Indeed, the first three chapters of the proposal become the first three chapters of the applied dissertation. Thus, the applied dissertation includes the entire proposal, with the verb tenses changed, where necessary, to the past. In the applied dissertation, chapter 4 presents the results and chapter 5 contains the discussion.

Applied Dissertation Components

Each of the components that follow should be included in your applied dissertation report. Furthermore, these general guidelines for an applied dissertation should be observed: (a) tables and figures must be titled and labeled well enough to be understood on their own and must be discussed in the text; (b) by reading the applied dissertation (and particularly the methods

section), a person should be able to replicate the study; and (c) appropriate standards of inquiry (quantitative or qualitative) must be observed for the study or the discipline (i.e., there should be adequate discussion of validity, bias, reliability, and limitations).

The applied dissertation should be assembled in the order discussed below.

Title page. The title page displays the title of the project and other information in the format shown in the SGAD.

Approval page. The format of the approval page is shown in the SGAD. The page contains the names and degrees of the committee chair and committee member, as well as the executive dean for research and evaluation, and spaces for their signatures and date signed (see “Guidelines for the Approval Page” at the ARC Web site). Refer also to the *Steps in the Final-Approval Process* subsection of this guide for an explanation of when signatures are obtained.

Acknowledgments. This optional section provides an opportunity for you to express appreciation for the guidance and assistance received from others during the dissertation process and the doctoral program. Mention may be made about contributions from the committee, colleagues who offered help, and family and friends who provided encouragement and support.

Abstract. The abstract in the applied dissertation is similar to the one in the proposal except that it shows not only the problem and methodology, but also presents the outcomes or results, the conclusions drawn, recommendations for action and further research, and plans for dissemination. It should also be written in the past tense, where appropriate. The abstract is limited to one page of 220 to 270 words and should capture the very essence of the project. In addition to elements delineated in the previous chapter the abstract should also contain a brief summary of results, conclusions and recommendations.

Table of Contents. The format guidelines for a Table of Contents for the applied

dissertation can be found in the SGAD. Tables and figures are listed by number and title after the appendixes in the Table of Contents.

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter will be almost identical to chapter 1 in the proposal. The verb tense must be altered to the past tense, where appropriate. You may expand and work on improving the writing of the chapter, if needed, and should consult with your committee for guidance in this regard. This section is detailed later in this guide.

Chapter 2: Review of the Related Literature. This chapter will be nearly identical to chapter 2 in the proposal. Refer to the research problem and its causes in the past tense. Continue your literature review during the implementation phase, and include any relevant new information in the applied dissertation. The use of subheadings and other organizational devices are suggested in order to present the research in a meaningful manner. The student must present a coherent and complete picture of the problem and related issues as documented by the relevant literature. Students should refrain from using an excessive number of quotations from sources. This chapter is expanded upon later in this guide.

Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter is also nearly identical to the proposal but should reflect any departure from the original plan. The one or more methodologies used to address the problem and accomplish the purpose of the project are explained. Expand this section if necessary, depending on the amount of information available at the time of proposal writing. Make certain that the tense is changed to past tense, where appropriate. Also, be sure that the *Limitations* subsection in this chapter is moved to chapter 5 for the applied dissertation. This chapter is expanded upon later in this guide.

Chapter 4: Results. This chapter is about the presentation of the results, but it should *not* include any discussion or interpretation of the findings, that will come in the following chapter.

The findings from the data analysis should be presented by research question. The content of this chapter is expanded upon later in this guide.

Chapter 5: Discussion. Chapter 5 can be conceptualized as a reflection on the total applied dissertation implementation. In this chapter, it is appropriate (and necessary) to provide some context to the findings presented in chapter 4. Implications and limitations as well as recommendations are presented. This section is elaborated upon in detail later in this guide.

References. As mentioned previously, a References section should be included in the concept paper, the proposal, and the applied dissertation. The list should include only references cited in the body of the paper, and vice versa. The guidelines for preparing a reference list are described in the APA manual and the SGAD.

Appendixes. Forms, questionnaires, test instruments, and documents you designed and have used in your applied dissertation should be included in appendixes. In this way, pertinent documentation will be available, without impeding your presentation, if someone else wishes to replicate your work. Every appendix must be referred to in the body of the text of the applied dissertation so that its relevance to the project is clear. Title each appendix, assign it a letter, and continue sequential pagination. No copyrighted material may be included in the appendixes without permission. Refer to the APA manual for information on referring to appendixes in the text of the applied dissertation. The alphabetical sequence of appendixes should match the order in which they are discussed in your document. Refer to the SGAD for guidelines pertaining to format.

Steps in the Final-Approval Process

After your applied dissertation is approved by your committee, your committee chair will recommend that you submit it for the Final Format Review as the initial step in the final-

approval process. Applied dissertations must be prepared according to the format described in the SGAD. Refer to “Notice to Students Concerning the Process for Submission of Applied Dissertation for the Final Format Review” at the ARC Web site (see: http://www.schoolofed.nova.edu/arc/academic_resources/processffr.htm).

The following is a description of the final-approval process:

1. After the dissertation committee approves the applied dissertation, the student must send a complete copy of the dissertation by regular mail to the attention of “Final Format Review” at the ARC. The receipt of the document initiates the final-approval process.

2. The ARC staff verifies that committee approval has been officially granted and that a completed and signed Format Checklist is attached to the dissertation. Additionally, the ARC staff verifies that registration and financial records are in order and that a grade recommendation has been received. This process may take several days. After the committee approval and student records are verified, the document is given to the format review coordinator.

3. The dissertation is reviewed for format in the order in which it is received. Most documents are reviewed within 10 business days of receipt; however, students should expect a longer turnaround time in the months preceding the deadline for commencement participation and during other busy periods. If revisions are required, the format review will be sent to the student's NSU e-mail account. The format-review phase continues until all format issues have been resolved.

4. Upon the resolution of all format issues (whether by the first submission or by a subsequent revision), the student will receive notification that the format-review phase has been completed. The notification is sent to the student's NSU e-mail address. After completion of the format review, the document is referred to the academic program's professor of applied research.

5. The professor's review may take up to 10 business days. In some cases, the professor may communicate with the student's committee chair to suggest changes or revisions. The professor's review process will continue until all specified issues have been resolved.

6. After the professor's review has been completed, the executive dean for research and evaluation will notify the student (by e-mail and regular mail) of the final approval of the applied dissertation. The notification will include directions to send final copies, a disk, and required paperwork. Upon receipt of the notification, the student should secure the signatures of the committee chair and committee member (if applicable) for the approval page.

7. When all required documents are received by the ARC, notification of the fulfillment of requirements will be sent to the school's degree conferral office (Academic Progress Oversight). The official completion date of applied research requirements is the date that all completed and required documents are received by the ARC.

8. The university registrar will post a grade for the applied dissertation within approximately 2 weeks of receipt by the ARC of the required documents.

Using Copyrighted Material

In general, every student is responsible for ensuring that the doctrine of fair use under the U.S. copyright law is observed. The author of an applied dissertation is responsible for ensuring that the use of any previously copyrighted material in the manuscript beyond *fair use* has the written permission of the copyright owner. In general, fair use allows an author to quote excerpts from copyrighted work if the excerpts do not constitute a major portion of the original work and if a full reference including page numbers is cited in the text. If you plan to include a lengthy quotation from a copyrighted source, you will have to obtain written permission from the copyright owner (see the APA manual for guidance). Purchased tests or measurement

instruments should never be included without specific and written permission from the copyright owner. When in doubt, seek permission.

Protecting Your Work

The APA manual has several sections on copyright issues. For questions about copyright registration contact Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20559.

Publication in UMI's ProQuest Digital Dissertations Database

Students who wish to submit their applied dissertations for publication and inclusion in the UMI ProQuest Digital Dissertations database should contact UMI's dissertations publishing staff (e-mail: disspub@umi.com; phone: 800-521-0600, Ext. 7020; phone, outside the U.S. and Canada: 734-761-4700, Ext. 7020).

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter should help the reader understand the purpose of the applied dissertation. This chapter may be divided into four parts: the problem statement, the purpose statement, the research question or questions, and the definition of terms.

Statement of the Problem

The problem statement will describe the problem addressed by your research. This section lays the foundation for the issues being explored in the project. Creswell (2005) discussed five factors to consider when determining if a problem should be researched. Support for undertaking a study for your applied dissertation should occur if the study (a) “will fill a gap or void in the existing literature”; (b) “replicates a past study, but examines different participants and different research sites”; (c) “extends past research or examines the topic more thoroughly”; (d) “gives voice to people not heard, silenced, or rejected in society”; and “informs practice” (p. 64).

The *Statement of the Problem* subsection should begin by providing an introduction to the topic to be researched. It is important to provide background information about the work setting in which the problem is occurring, if applicable. Describe the setting in general terms that make it similar to other programs, then provide specific factors that make it unique. Present factors about the community that give the reader an understanding of the setting. Do not provide the name of the research setting utilized; instead refer to it in generic terms. For example, rather than indicating the name of a school in which you conducted your research you would refer to as “a large urban elementary school in the southeast.” Describe geographic references, community size, socioeconomic factors, and any other relevant information that places the work setting in context. If you are conducting a study in your work setting describe your role and

responsibilities in your work setting as they apply to the applied dissertation problem. Do not identify the name of the research setting. Then the research problem should be presented in detail. Expand on the information presented in the concept paper to prove that the problem exists.

Do not provide research data that are not related to the situation. To introduce the reader to the applied dissertation setting and to place the problem and research question in perspective, develop a brief narrative of the history, demographics, and geography of the problem setting or situation leading to the applied dissertation. If tables or figures are utilized to present data, there should be a logical purpose to their inclusion (i.e., the table or figure should be attempting to answer a question). Tables and figures are efficient means to present a large amount of data in a small amount of space. However, the data in the table must be discussed in the text of the applied dissertation before presentation of the table.

Subsequently, justification that the problem is of significant import needs to be provided. The impact of the problem should be clearly stated and the evidence can come from a variety of sources including personal experience, findings from researchers, and workplace experiences from others (Creswell, 2005). Regardless of the type of problem, it is essential to provide compelling evidence that the problem exists.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project is a brief statement that provides the reader with notice as to the direction of the study. Once the problem is clearly stated, the purpose of the project must be stated clearly and succinctly, such as, “The purpose of this study is to” You should be careful not to suggest a preconceived solution to the problem in the purpose statement before the project is undertaken.

Research Question or Questions

The research question or questions that were presented in the concept paper should be noted in this subsection. It is recommended that they be numbered (if there is more than one research question) and they can be subsequently referred to in abbreviated form as RQ1, RQ2, and so on.

Definition of Terms

Terms that are technical, acronyms, jargon, used in a special sense, or that may be assumed to be new to the reader are defined clearly in this subsection. This is especially important where the terms apply to independent and dependent variables, and these should be defined operationally. If there are no unique terms, this section may be omitted.

Chapter 2: Review of the Related Literature

You are expected to write a thorough and comprehensive literature review for your applied dissertation. Although you have communicated background information about the problem in the Introduction section, that section does not present the possible causes of the problem. In this section, describe the possible causes and contributors of the problem as well as all of the variables that have been implicated to be of import to your study. Literature reviews are conducted to elucidate that previous studies have not addressed your topic in precisely the same manner in which you do. It may help to conceptualize this portion of your applied dissertation as one in which you are presenting your “case” for your project. Much like an attorney who draws upon precedent set in past cases to construct a logical argument to support a case, you want to logically organize a comprehensive and cohesive literature review to provide support for your research study.

Comprehensive literature reviews cite numerous published works, the majority of which have been peer reviewed and written within the last 10 years. A thorough literature review is essential to contextualizing the problem and identifying strategies others have utilized to address similar problems. Rarely, if ever, does a student find a problem that is so unique it has not been studied in another context. In fact, in most instances, you will be working on problems that have been faced and are presently being addressed on a local, state, regional, or national stage. Hence, you should become familiar with the research and literature that relate to your problem if the applied dissertation is going to add to the knowledge base (i.e., the research literature).

Keep in mind that you will carry out your literature review in order to (a) narrow the focus of your problem, (b) elucidate streams of research, (c) avoid approaches to your applied dissertation that have proven fruitless in earlier studies, (d) provoke ideas about promising

research methods, (e) learn what others have recommended regarding further research, and (f) contribute to the process of building theory and sound practice.

This chapter will typically contain three major subsections: an introduction and purpose, research of literature by subject or topical area, and summary and conclusions. However, it should be noted that this chapter does not have specific recommended subheadings. Subheadings should be particular to your applied dissertation and employed to effectuate organizational integrity and a smooth narrative transition.

The introduction and purpose subsections will identify the areas of research to be found in the chapter and provide an indication as to why the areas will be reviewed. The discussion of the research literature should cover the areas that are related to the research problem or to the research question or questions. The purpose of a literature review is not to identify as many pieces of literature as you can about a particular topic, but rather to develop and support your thesis. Try to provide a sense of the history of the research on the questions you have posed (i.e., a “line” or “stream” of research). It should be organized around themes or major points. Therefore, as you search for applicable literature, read with breadth and from domains other than just education. It is important to review and critically evaluate several different types of primary and secondary sources, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, electronic sources, reviews, indexes, and databases.

Please note that if you have not reviewed any primary references that relate to your central thesis, you probably have not adequately reviewed the literature. In addition, you will have read and understood a study when you (a) know the question addressed in the piece of literature, (b) understand the argument developed regarding that question, (c) know the nature of any evidence adduced in support of that argument, (d) comprehend the conclusion reached on the

basis of the argument and evidence, and (e) understand the strengths and weaknesses of the study and the relevance to your thesis. Furthermore, you should question what you read and challenge conventional wisdom. Look for material that is both “pro” and “con” to your position, evaluate it, and include it in your review.

Finally, the review of the literature should not read like an annotated bibliography (e.g., the “he said, she said” syndrome). Instead, this section should read like a continuous and integrated flow of thoughts from one topical point to another, substantiated by literature citations. This may help to avoid the “Smith stated,” “Jones found,” and so forth at the start of each paragraph. Draw upon the knowledge, tools, skills, and competencies developed in your applied research courses to complete this chapter. Is it critical that you refrain from providing too many quotes from sources.

The summary subsection should contain the conclusions of your literature review and a summary of your thesis (i.e., a defensible argument about the course of action regarding your applied dissertation). Furthermore, based upon your thesis, your summary should identify the approaches, strategies, or interventions you will attempt during your applied dissertation. These approaches, strategies, or interventions should have some relationship to the problem setting and have been identified in the research literature as possible approaches, strategies, or interventions for solving the problem or answering the research question or questions. How you will use these approaches, strategies, or interventions in your study will be explicated in chapter 3.

Occasionally you may feel that there just is not any research or literature available for the topic you are researching. Should you find yourself in such circumstances, you probably are not using the correct descriptors in your literature searches. You should obtain assistance from your committee chair or the reference librarian (see <http://www.nova.edu/library/help/askalib.html>) in

such cases.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides a “road map” so that another researcher could conduct and replicate your applied dissertation. Chapter 3 will typically contain the following subsections:

Participants, Instruments, Procedures, and Limitations. In general, the Methodology section will

1. indicate if the study has qualitative or quantitative designs.
2. clearly describe the methodology or combination of methodologies.
3. explain the rationale for selecting the methodology.
4. justify its appropriateness to address the problem and answer the research questions.

Participants

If your applied dissertation project includes working with a group of people, it is very important to provide as much detail as possible about this group. Participant information should include

1. how the sample or target group will be obtained or recruited.
2. numbers in the target group or sample.
3. demographic information, including age, gender, race, and ethnicity.

Instruments

In this subsection you will describe the instrumentation that you utilize to collect data for your study. Detailed information pertaining to the tools used should be presented. Examples of data-gathering instruments include standardized tests, questionnaires, interview guides, field study logs, or search probes of major databases (e.g., census reports, labor statistical reports, or U.S. Department of Education databases). Evidence must be provided about the reliability and validity of instruments selected. If an instrument is standardized, report its reliability and validity. If it is not standardized, report how the instrument was designed and field tested (or

pilot tested), and report the resultant findings. Often the research studies reported in the literature have utilized instruments that can be adapted to the proposed project. If adaptation is necessary, report how the revision was done, its probable impact on the original validity and reliability, and the results of field testing. If a survey is used, for example, will it be oral or written? Will the questions be open ended? How much time will be allowed for administration of the survey?

If you intend to design or use any data gathering or measuring instruments as part of the procedures, the committee must approve these prior to implementation. Permission must be obtained if you intend to use instruments designed and copyrighted by others. Students also need to remember that permission to *use* a previously developed instrument does not constitute permission to *publish* the instrument in the dissertation. Students who include instruments in the appendixes of their dissertation should secure specific and written permission from the author to do so. Refer to the APA manual for guidelines concerning permission notes. Instruments designed by you, whether questionnaires, observation schedules, or tests, must be approved by your committee along with the applied dissertation proposal. Include blank copies of all instruments in the appendixes of the proposal and the applied dissertation.

Procedures

Procedures should be outlined in clear, precise, and sequential statements about how the dissertation will be conducted. Procedural steps should be very specific, and each research question should be addressed by one or more procedures. In this subsection the approaches, strategies, or interventions that are utilized during the time frame of your applied dissertation will be described. Furthermore, each approach, strategy, or intervention should be clearly connected to the research question or questions.

It is important that the methodology be replicable if the applied dissertation is to add to

the educational knowledge base. Put differently, the reader should be convinced that “where you are going” makes sense. You will need to describe what those involved in your applied dissertation will be doing. In addition, you will need to delineate data collection and analysis procedures that will be used and the rationale for using them. You should also describe in detail how you plan to monitor your project activities and to document that they did indeed occur. Essentially, you are moving from the conceptual level to the operational level.

In your applied dissertation you should describe any deviations from the planned methodology outlined in your proposal along with the reasons for deviating. When you have completed your applied dissertation, your methodology should be strong enough so that you will have confidence in your findings and be able to resist criticism. Additionally, if your design can be replicated and get the same results, then that will add credence to your findings. Again, draw upon the knowledge, tools, skills, and abilities developed in the applied research courses toward this end.

Finally, the Procedures subsection should include your plans for analyzing and presenting the results. This subsection should address the following questions:

1. What methods will you use to gather the evidence?
2. How will the types of data collected relate to discussing the impact your solution strategies have on the problem?
3. How will you analyze the collected data?
4. What statistics will you use?
5. What methods will you use for analyzing qualitative data?
6. How will you make judgments about whether or not the expected findings were achieved?

7. Will the data be presented in figures and tables?

Limitations

Limitations are any conditions, restrictions, or constraints that may affect the validity of the dissertation's outcomes. A limitation is a weakness or shortcoming in the implementation or intervention plan that could not be avoided or corrected and that is acknowledged in the applied dissertation. Common limitations include poor reliability of measuring instruments, the restriction of the project to a particular organization or setting, the skill of the interviewer, and other confounding variables. If there are too many limitations, the student should consult with the committee chair about how to proceed. This subsection should be included in chapter 3 for the proposal and then updated and moved to chapter 5 for the applied dissertation.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of your study, but *not* any discussion or interpretation of the findings; that will come in the following chapter. You will report the results that occurred in the implementation phase of the applied dissertation. In this section, you should report a summary of the actual data collected and the findings from the analysis conducted for each of your research questions. Quantitative data may be presented in a variety of ways (e.g., tables and figures) and should be discussed in the narrative text (i.e., do not just present a table and assume it speaks for itself). Qualitative data may be presented as patterns or trends.

The research questions of chapter 1 will guide the presentation of the results; organize results so they address the research questions in the order in which they appeared in chapter 1. Findings from statistical analyses should be listed in this section. Results can be presented in paragraphs, figures, or tables. Include an explanation for all figures and tables. If qualitative data are collected, use quotes or excerpts from the data that support your pattern or trend. The clear presentation of your data for the reader is the goal. Refer to the APA manual and SGAD for details related to the presentation of tables and figures.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, it is necessary to provide some context to the findings presented in chapter 4. This chapter will typically contain four subsections: *Introduction of Dissertation*, *Implications of Findings*, *Limitations*, and *Recommendations*.

The various subsections of this chapter should relate directly to all objectives, purposes, procedures, and the evaluation design. Additional citations from the literature (not cited in the applied dissertation proposal) may be used throughout this chapter, where appropriate.

Overview of Applied Dissertation

In this opening subsection, you should briefly summarize the research problem, research purpose, and research questions as well as state the overall findings of your study in a succinct, cogent manner. You should discuss the results in terms of both the implementation of your applied dissertation study and the actual findings.

Implications of Findings

After presenting the results (the facts) in chapter 4, discuss their meaning and interpret them very specifically in this subsection. Include references from the literature when comparing and contrasting your results with the work of others. Provide an analysis of the ways in which the findings were consistent or inconsistent with those found in the literature.

Discuss the unanticipated events as well, particularly as they may have impacted your implementation. Did they have meaning? Why do you think so? This discussion section should conclude with a summary flowing logically from your results. Avoid impressionistic, judgmental, or unwarranted assertions that cannot be directly related to the expressed methods and procedures employed in the applied dissertation and supported by data.

Limitations

There is no such thing as a perfect research study. Every study in the published literature has its share of limitations. It is very important for researchers to lay out what the limitations of the study were and why they were not addressed in their particular study. For example, what are the limitations on the generalizability of the applied dissertation? Where there threats to the internal validity of this study? Discussing the limitations of your applied dissertation strengthens, rather than weakens, your conclusions; the discussion indicates what you might have learned and sets the stage for further investigation. Finally, two cautions: (a) Do not claim more than your study supports, and (b) when making statements or claims, err on the conservative side. Stating these limitations lays the groundwork for future studies and contributes to the organic properties of the research process. The *Limitations* subsection from chapter 3 in the proposal should be moved to chapter 5 for the applied dissertation and updated.

Recommendations

In this subsection, include recommendations for future research. These recommendations can be numbered with an introducing section. A rationale for your recommendations should also be included.

References

- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Gall, J. P., Gall, M. D., & Borg, W. R. (2005). *Applying educational research: A practical guide* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.
- HHSS Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects, 45 C.F.R. 46.102 (2004).

Appendix
Applied Dissertation Rubrics

Concept Paper Rubric

Student's Name: _____

Committee Chair: _____

Submission #: _____

Committee Member: _____

Date: _____

Item	Comments
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>1) Title Page</u></p> <p>a) Is descriptive of AD study</p> <p>b) Useful for keyword searches</p> <p>c) Is within 10-12 words</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
<p><u>2) Introduction - Nature of the Problem</u></p> <p>a) Actual problem indicated</p> <p>b) Impact of problem is clearly stated as a declarative sentence</p> <p>c) Problem statement is concise and focused</p> <p>d) Purpose of the study clearly indicated and stated as a declarative sentence</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p>
<p><u>3) Background and Significance of the Problem</u></p> <p>a) Documented evidence of problem provided</p> <p>b) Definition of major issues related to the problem provided</p> <p>c) Explains the setting of the study</p> <p>d) Contains organizational profile, if applicable</p> <p>e) Describes the student's role in relation to the organization</p> <p>f) Problem is in range of student's influence</p> <p>g) Includes other salient information</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p> <p>e)</p> <p>f)</p> <p>g)</p>
<p><u>4) Preliminary Literature Review</u></p> <p>a) Provides contextual background</p> <p>b) Reveals related issues</p> <p>c) Reviews similar problems</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>

Item	Comments
<p>elsewhere</p> <p>d) Provides significance to your approach to the study</p> <p>e) Includes major/seminar research articles pertaining to study</p> <p>f) Written in an integrated manner</p> <p>g) Use of peer-reviewed research</p>	<p>d)</p> <p>e)</p> <p>f)</p> <p>g)</p>
<p><u>5) Initial Research Questions</u></p> <p>a) Formulation based on theory, previous research, and professional experience</p> <p>b) Stated in the form of a question</p> <p>c) Focused and clear</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
<p><u>6) Brief Description of Methodology and Research Design</u></p> <p>a) Presents an overview of the methods to be utilized to address research questions</p> <p>b) Explains appropriateness of methods and provides rationale for selection</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>
<p><u>7) Anticipated Outcomes</u></p> <p>a) Description of expected study results</p> <p>b) Detail the importance of conducting the study as well as the possible impact on practice and theory</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>
<p><u>8) References</u></p> <p>a) List consistent with citations in the text (APA style)</p> <p>b) Use of peer-reviewed research</p> <p>c) Include retrieval dates if obtained from Internet</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>9) Overall</u></p> <p>a) Approximate length is 10-12 pages, excluding title page and reference pages</p> <p>b) Consistent with APA and Style Guide</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>
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Proposal Rubric

Student's Name: _____
 Submission #: _____
 Date: _____

Committee Chair: _____
 Committee Member: _____

Item	Comments
<u>1) Title Page</u> a) Is descriptive of AD study b) Useful for keyword searches c) Is within 10-12 words	a) b) c)
<u>2) Table of Contents</u> a) Contains key headings b) All tables, figures, and appendixes (if any) are listed	a) b)
Chapter 1: Introduction	
<u>3) Introduction - Nature of the Problem</u> a) Actual problem indicated b) Impact of problem is clearly stated as a declarative sentence c) Problem statement is concise and focused d) Purpose of the study clearly indicated and stated as a declarative sentence	a) b) c) d)
<u>4) Introduction - Background and Significance of the Problem</u> a) Detailed, documented evidence of problem provided b) Brief review of literature supporting the existence of the problem c) Definition of major issues related to the problem d) Setting of the problem described in detail e) Contains organizational profile, if applicable f) Students' role in relation to the	a) b) c) d) e) f)

Item	Comments
<p>organization is discussed in detail</p> <p>g) Problem is in range of student's influence</p> <p>h) Includes other salient information</p>	<p>g)</p> <p>h)</p>
<p><u>5) Introduction - Research Questions</u></p> <p>a) Formulation based on theory, previous research, and professional experience</p> <p>b) Stated in the form of a question</p> <p>c) Focused and clear</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
<p><u>6) Introduction – Definition of Terms</u></p> <p>a) Definitions provided for technical and professional jargon</p> <p>b) Variables in study are defined operationally</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>
Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature	
<p><u>7) Review of Related Literature</u></p> <p>a) Comprehensive review conducted</p> <p>b) Includes subsection of proposed methods including program evaluation model, if appropriate</p> <p>c) Reveals related issues</p> <p>d) Reviews similar problems elsewhere</p> <p>e) Provides significance to your approach to the study</p> <p>f) Includes major/seminar research articles pertaining to study</p> <p>g) Use of peer-reviewed research</p> <p>h) Written in an integrated manner</p> <p>i) Organized, cohesive, well-sequenced, integrated, and transitioned appropriately</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p> <p>e)</p> <p>f)</p> <p>g)</p> <p>h)</p> <p>i)</p>

Chapter 3: Methodology	
<p><u>8) Methodology- Participants</u></p> <p>a) Description of who and how many b) Demographics included c) Participant selection method indicated</p>	<p>a) b) c)</p>
<p><u>9) Methodology- Instruments</u></p> <p>a) All data-gathering instruments are cited b) Review of psychometric characteristics provided c) Source of instrument and proper citation used d) Copy of instruments developed by student included in the appendix</p>	<p>a) b) c) d)</p>
<p><u>10) Methodology- Procedures</u></p> <p>a) Clear, precise, and sequential description of how the study will be conducted b) Indicates research design c) Explains rationale for methods d) Justifies appropriateness of methods to address the problem and answer research questions</p>	<p>a) b) c) d)</p>
<p><u>11) Methodology- Limitations</u></p> <p>a) All shortcomings of study are presented b) Possible threats to the internal validity of the study are included c) Limitations to the generalizability of the study are included</p>	<p>a) b) c)</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>12) References</u></p> <p>a) List consistent with citations in text (APA style)</p> <p>b) Peer-reviewed research is utilized</p> <p>c) Include retrieval dates if obtained from Internet</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>13) Appendixes</u></p> <p>a) Include instrumentation created by student only</p> <p>b) All necessary information included</p> <p>c) Conforms with Applied Dissertation Guide and Style Guide.</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>14) Overall</u></p> <p>a) Consistent with APA and Style guide</p> <p>b) Provides a concrete plan of action that permits it to serve as a “contract” between student and ARC</p> <p>c) Consistent with concept paper</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>

Final Report Rubric

Student's Name: _____

Committee Chair: _____

Submission #: _____

Committee Member: _____

Date: _____

Item	Comments
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>1) Title Page</u></p> <p>a) Is descriptive of AD study</p> <p>b) Useful for keyword searches</p> <p>c) Is within 10-12 words</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>2) Table of Contents</u></p> <p>a) Contains key headings</p> <p>b) List of tables or figures (if any) at bottom of page</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>
Chapter 1: Introduction	
<p><u>3) Introduction - Nature of the Problem</u></p> <p>a) Actual problem indicated</p> <p>b) Impact of problem is clearly stated</p> <p>c) Stated as declarative sentence</p> <p>d) Problem statement is concise and focused</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p>
<p><u>4) Introduction - Background and Significance of the Problem</u></p> <p>a) Detailed documented evidence of problem provided</p> <p>b) Brief review of literature supporting the existence of the problem</p> <p>c) Definition of major issues related to the problem</p> <p>d) Setting of the problem described in detail</p> <p>e) Contains organizational profile, if applicable</p> <p>f) Students' role in relation to the organization is discussed in detail</p> <p>g) Problem is in range of student's influence</p> <p>h) Includes other salient information</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p> <p>e)</p> <p>f)</p> <p>g)</p> <p>h)</p>

Item	Comments
<p><u>5) Introduction - Research Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Formulation based on theory, previous research, and professional experience b) Stated in the form of a question c) Focused and clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) b) c)
<p><u>6) Introduction – Definition of Terms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Definitions provided for technical and professional jargon b) Variables in study are defined operationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) b)
Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature	
<p><u>7) Review of Related Literature</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> j) Comprehensive review conducted k) Includes subsection of proposed methods including program evaluation model, if appropriate l) Reveals related issues m) Reviews similar problems elsewhere n) Provides significance to your approach to the study o) Includes major/seminar research articles pertaining to study p) Use of peer-reviewed research q) Written in an integrated manner r) Organized, cohesive, well-sequenced, integrated, and transitioned appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) b) c) d) e) f) g) h) i)
Chapter 3: Methodology	
<p><u>8) Methodology- Participants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Description of who and how many b) Demographics included c) Participant selection method indicated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) b) c)
<p><u>9) Methodology- Instruments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All data gathering instruments are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a)

Item	Comments
cited b) Review of psychometric characteristics provided c) Source of instrument and proper citation used d) Copy of instruments developed by student included in the appendix	b) c) d)
<u>10) Methodology- Procedures</u> a) Clear, precise, and sequential description of how the study will be conducted b) Indicates research design	a) b)
Chapter 4: Results	
<u>11) Results</u> a) Results presented relative to each research question b) Just the results are presented c) Includes effective use of tables and figures d) Participant data, if necessary, is presented only in appendix	a) b) c) d)
Chapter 5: Discussion	
<u>12) Discussion</u> a) Overview of the applied dissertation, including the purpose of the study, is included b) Elaboration and interpretation of results as related to research questions are included c) Discussion of conclusions is provided d) Relationship of findings to literature is discussed e) Implications of findings are reviewed f) Limitations of the study are indicated g) Recommendations for further	a) b) c) d) e) f) g)

Item	Comments
research and for practice are included	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>13) References</u></p> <p>a) List consistent with citations in text (APA style)</p> <p>b) Peer-reviewed research is utilized</p> <p>c) Include retrieval dates if obtained from Internet</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>14) Appendixes</u></p> <p>a) Include instrumentation created by student only</p> <p>b) All necessary information included</p> <p>c) Conforms with Applied Dissertation Guide and Style Guide.</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>15) Overall</u></p> <p>a) Consistent with APA and Style guide</p> <p>b) Chapters 1-3 changed from future to past verb tense (where appropriate)</p> <p>c) Expansion and update of the literature review</p> <p>d) Identifies and clarifies any changes from the proposal</p>	<p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p> <p>d)</p>