



# Amridge University Dissertation Manual

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Doctor of Ministry

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Doctor of Ministry in Family Therapy (I & II)

August, 2015

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## PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

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Published words become a permanent part of the public domain. Long after a student has graduated, his or her written work continues to represent his scholarship. Therefore, what one writes becomes an original contribution to the literature in one's field of study. A student must not plagiarize or otherwise misuse what others have written. Amridge University puts great value on research and well-written dissertations. Like any other major university, Amridge insists that all written materials emanating from the University follow a uniform style.

This manual provides the researcher and the dissertation committee a common basis from which to proceed in researching and writing the dissertation. One's dissertation should demonstrate his or her knowledge of the field, ability to conduct advanced research, organizational skills, and competence in both oral and written presentation. The dissertation should be used as a tool to ascertain and dispense truth independent of one's desired results.

The contents of this manual are selected primarily from policies and procedures in the academic catalog and other sources. Efforts will be made to keep this manual up-to-date with University policies and requirements. However, the user of this manual should be aware that the current Amridge University Academic Catalog is the most accurate source of University policy and, should policies in the academic catalog differ from this manual, the policies in the catalog will take priority.

In the process of writing a dissertation, the researcher may use many resources such as people with knowledge of the subject and aids such as computer software, but the student ultimately bears the responsibility to defend his or her work and own it as intellectual property. A good dissertation enables the student to obtain a terminal degree -- an accomplishment which relatively few people can claim.

## INTRODUCTION

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The information in this manual applies specifically to students pursuing the *Doctor of Ministry* and *Doctor of Ministry in Family Therapy* (I & II) degree programs. Candidates and faculty members should be familiar with the contents of this manual, as it contains key information regarding the expectations and components of the DMin dissertation. It is important to note that the DMin dissertation differs from that of a PhD dissertation. While the PhD dissertation focuses on making a new contribution to the body of knowledge in one's field, the DMin dissertation focuses on making a practical contribution within the field of ministry. The PhD dissertation may focus on generating a new theory or testing an existing theory; however, the DMin dissertation would typically focus on the practical application of an existing theory in response to a problem the student has identified within the context of his or her ministry.

The doctoral dissertation at Amridge University is a formal, written document that is accepted for partial fulfillment of a doctoral degree program. The doctoral dissertation demonstrates the student's ability to:

1. Analyze and synthesize the pertinent literature on a subject
2. Identify, select and verbalize a valid, researchable problem
3. Design and implement a scientific investigation
4. Analyze the results of the investigation and draw supported conclusions
5. Develop a written report of the study that meets standards of the profession and present practical information to professionals in the field

## BEGINNING THE DISSERTATION

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The student must pass his or her Qualifying Exam and achieve “Candidacy Status” prior to enrolling in the first Dissertation Module. Candidacy Status marks a major milestone in one’s doctoral journey and represents the transition from student to independent researcher. Before beginning the dissertation the student should have a general understanding of the dissertation purpose, standards and required procedures. The student must be eligible to begin the dissertation and must have a dissertation committee appointed. The student must develop the dissertation through a series of dissertation module courses and must receive approval from the Institutional Review Board prior to beginning data collection.

## DISSERTATION MODULES

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The DMin dissertation is to be completed through a sequence of three dissertation module courses. The sequence may also include module continuation courses. A *Research Dissertation Module - First Continuation* course and a *Research Dissertation Module - Second Continuation* course are available for each module course level if the student does not complete all requirements for a given module in one semester.

The student must successfully complete the dissertation modules in sequence. The student must receive a grade of P (Pass) for a module course (either the original module course or the first continuation module course or the second continuation module course) to be eligible to enroll in the next level module course in the sequence. After beginning the dissertation the student must enroll in a dissertation module course or dissertation module continuation course each semester until completion of the dissertation.

## DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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The dissertation is developed by the student with the advice, guidance and approval of the dissertation committee. The dissertation committee is composed of the student, a chairperson, one or more readers, and the dissertation secretary. The dissertation committee is appointed by the Dean of the school and approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The student is responsible for requesting that the Dean appoint the dissertation committee. The student, in consultation with the Dean, may request that specific individuals be appointed as chairperson or as dissertation reader.

*Student* - The student is responsible for his or her dissertation. This includes registering for the correct dissertation course, selecting the dissertation topic, conducting the literature review, designing the research plan, obtaining necessary approvals, executing the research plan, writing the dissertation, obtaining approval for each module, defending the dissertation, and fulfilling all dissertation completion processes.

*Chairperson* - The dissertation chairperson is the leader and coordinator of the dissertation committee. The dissertation chairperson provides advice and reactions to the student’s ideas and materials. The dissertation chairperson communicates to the students the directions and decisions of the committee. The dissertation chairperson considers both the technical content and the written form of the student’s presentations. The dissertation chairperson decides when to bring in the dissertation reader for suggestions and reactions during the planning and development stages.

*Reader* - The dissertation reader reads, evaluates, and provides written reactions to each dissertation module as it is presented. The dissertation reader provides assessment and advice regarding subject matter content.

*Secretary* - The dissertation secretary is responsible for assessing the quality of the written product based on standards of grammar, sentence structure, and the appropriate writing style manual. The dissertation secretary checks each dissertation module against University standards. The dissertation secretary provides ideas and reactions when requested by the dissertation chairperson.

## STYLE MANUALS

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The *Turner School of Theology* and the *School of Human Services* at Amridge University require students to follow different style manuals.

- Students enrolled in the *Doctor of Ministry* degree program are required to use the writing guidelines provided in the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMS Manual).
- Students enrolled in the *Doctor of Ministry in Family Therapy* (I & II) are required to use the writing guidelines provided in the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA Manual).

It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the appropriate manual and ensure that anyone assisting in the typing of the document follows the rules of the manual. The manuals also include directions for the reporting of numbers, construction of tables and figures, structure of headings, use of sexist terms, preferred language, and the expression of ideas or writing style suggestions. Writing for research or publication demands a new level of dedication and compliance to rules, and, in order to be acceptable by publishers of professional literature, the student must demonstrate this ability. The committee must be able to focus on the substantive content of the dissertation without spending valuable time looking for infractions of these rules.

Allowable alternatives/exceptions to the University approved Style Manuals:

- If a student is writing a paper for publication, the student is allowed to follow the editorial guidelines of the publication rather than the school approved style manual.
- A student may choose whether to use one or two spaces after a period, as long as consistency is maintained.
- The possessive of Jesus may be done as Jesus' or Jesus's, according to the student's preference.
- Pronouns for religious figures, including God and Jesus as deity (e.g. he, him, and his), may be either upper case or lower case, as long as consistency is maintained. In quotations of works by other authors, the integrity of sources must be maintained by preserving either upper or lower case pronouns for deity as found in the original sources.

# DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

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Doctor of Ministry students are strongly encouraged to follow the traditional dissertation format, which consists of five chapters. This format is most common; however, variations exist. The candidates should consult with his or her dissertation committee to determine the most appropriate format with consideration given to the chosen approach.

A suggested template is given below for students to consider along with advice from their committee chairpersons. General, suggested guidelines for page numbers are included as well. Chapters may vary slightly by name and/or page length as a result of the chosen research method and design. For example, if a student puts most of the research results and findings in an appendix, Chapter 4 might be quite short. If the data is quite extensive and if it is all reported in Chapter 4 rather than an appendix, Chapter 4 could exceed 30 pages.

The quality of the work is what is most important, not the actual length of the dissertation or each individual chapter. Listen to the advice of your chairperson and the other committee members as they judge your unique topic and the research needed to address your research problem and questions in the proper manner.

## **5 Chapter Dissertation Guidelines**

### **Chapter 1 - Introduction** (12 -15 pages)

The introductory chapter generally includes the following key sections: Need for the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Delimitations, and Definitions of Key Terms.

### **Chapter 2 - Review of Literature** (25 - 40 pages)

In the Review of Literature, the candidate should summarize and synthesize the peer-reviewed literature relevant to the topic area of the dissertation. Findings from existing studies should not be merely reported; they should be compared and contrasted when appropriate.

### **Chapter 3 - Research Method** (15 - 20 pages)

Discuss the appropriateness of the research method as it relates to the problem statement, and present the research design chosen for the study. Provide enough details so that the study could be replicated.

### **Chapter 4 - Reporting of Data** (15 - 30 pages)

Present and evaluate the findings in light of the research questions.

### **Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations** (15 - 30 pages)

Draw conclusions based on the findings presented in Chapter 4. Discuss practical implications resulting from the conclusions.

## TOPIC SELECTION

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Selecting a topic for researching and writing a dissertation is one of the most important decisions one can make in a doctoral program. Do not rush and make a quick, hasty decision on a dissertation topic. Rather, make a cautious, careful, deliberate decision in the choosing of a topic, and the rest of your work in research, gathering data, analysis, writing, and defense will go much smoother and be more pleasant.

A DMin dissertation topic should match the personal and vocational goals of the candidate. In other words, a good topic will typically have some relationship to the candidate's career goals and related to his or her current vocational setting. For a candidate in the *Doctor of Ministry* degree program, the dissertation may involve a ministry project related to the student's present work in ministry (e.g. missions, preaching, chaplaincy, etc.). For a candidate in the *Doctor of Ministry in Family Therapy* degree program, the dissertation may involve a counseling or family therapy technique or an intervention for dealing with addictions. Further, the DMin dissertation must match the candidate's academic needs and goals for whichever field in which he or she is studying.

There are many ways you can go about selecting a topic (Neuman, 2006). Begin by exploring ideas from your personal experience in ministry, counseling, or family therapy and examining current cultural trends that affect your field. The current state of knowledge in your field of study will yield many topics that are valid for research. In reviewing your vocational specialty, consider the problems people often struggle with. Also consider the values to which you are committed – religiously, socially, ethically, and politically – and explore how a topic might be embedded in these aspects. You should also seek advice from professors and scholars for areas of study that need to be explored further (Lei, 2009) and explore recommendations for further research in recently published peer-reviewed journals. As you continue to narrow your topic, consider the following questions:

1. Is it **WORTHY?** Choose a topic that merits the time and effort of dissertation research. It could take two or three years to complete your project, so you need to choose a topic worthy of that commitment. By the way, it is a myth that you must pick a topic that you are passionate about or one to which you have a prior commitment (Ségol, 2014).
2. Is it **FEASIBLE?** Pick a topic that is manageable. Be realistic. Consider the resources that will be needed, the participants that will potentially be involved, and the time that will be required.
3. Is it **RELEVANT?** Select a topic that is timely; it should matter to and make a difference in your field now and in the future. Strive to make your dissertation of publishable quality, and think of it as a way to make a positive impact on others and advance your career. Those things are more likely to occur when your topic is relevant.

Once you have found a topic that you think is perfect for you, your academic goals, and your vocational goals in ministry, counseling, or family therapy, further groundwork is still needed. Search the dissertation index for other dissertations on this topic to see what others have written. Remember, your dissertation needs to be original work. If other dissertations exist on a similar topic, read their abstracts to see if they are cast in a different ministry setting or if they tackle a somewhat different problem. You want to make sure that your dissertation proposal will be unique. You should also do a bibliographical survey of books and journal articles to ensure there is sufficient literature available for your literature review. Finally, confer with the instructor who has the most expertise within your topic area, since that instructor would be the most likely person to be the chairperson for your dissertation committee. Get advice from him or her on the suitability of your topic. Find an advisor who is knowledgeable about your dissertation topic and is able to help you analyze it for potential issues, problems or dangers. Try to choose an advisor with whom you think you will have a good working relationship (McKinley, Grant, Middleton, Irwin, & Williams, 2009).

## RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

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As noted in the Introduction, the DMin dissertation is an applied research project. In an applied research project, the researcher typically seeks to understand a human or societal problem and develop an intervention that allows him or her to manage his environment more effectively (Patton, 2002). Further, an emphasis is placed on the application of existing theory and disciplinary knowledge as the researcher strives to understand the complexities of the problem being addressed.

Considering the nature and scope of the DMin dissertation, Amridge University often encourages DMin students to choose a qualitative design because this method of inquiry provides a flexible structure for exploring problems as they exist in the everyday world (Creswell, 2007). In a qualitative study, the researcher examines characteristics, nuances and complexities in order to understand a situation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). After developing a thorough understanding of a problem within the context of his or her ministry or counseling/therapy setting, the DMin researcher can then determine ways to more effectively facilitate that environment.

Below is a list of recommended research designs for the DMin dissertation.

1. **Program Development and Evaluation**: Develop and implement a ministry initiative or counseling/therapy program and evaluate its effectiveness.
  - Develop a curriculum for adults to promote the practice of spiritual disciplines; the student would select a few classes or groups to study and act on the curriculum.
  - Create a leadership development course to train future church leaders to assume a place in church leadership.
  - Produce a program (curriculum) for training teenagers to lead in various areas of worship.
  - Teach a particular leadership theory to see how it raises the level of effectiveness of leaders in a church setting.
  - Create a marriage enhancement curriculum or program to increase marital satisfaction within a specific group.
2. **Program or Process Evaluation**: Examine and evaluate the effectiveness of an existing program or process in an effort to make improvements and enhancements based on the research findings.
  - Evaluate the assimilation program used by a church to involve and retain new members.
  - Evaluate an addiction recovery program to ascertain sustained recovery among participants over a given period.
  - Evaluate a church pre-school program to ascertain whether new families joined the church through their participation in the program.
3. **Case Study**: Select a case (e.g. church, organization, church leader, community, event, etc.) and study it in-depth over a period of time. The researcher may describe a relationship or system, attempt to verify an assumption, or evaluate a policy, practice, or innovation. Case studies have become quite common in the social sciences, and this approach can be especially useful in understanding unique ministry and counseling/therapy settings. While a single case study is typically chosen to generate an in-depth understanding of a specific setting or situation, the researcher may choose to conduct a multiple case study in order to generate broader generalizations to inform practice.



- Evaluate the use of temporary facilities by churches in a location transition for meeting ministry objectives (perhaps studying four churches that have used temporary facilities to move from one permanent location to another).
- Examine and evaluate churches within a religious group in a particular region of the country who have reached and maintained a membership of over 400 for 10 years or more.
- Evaluate the leadership structure of five churches that have been listed as healthy churches in a nationwide church or denominational newspaper to determine shared characteristics.
- Evaluate the growth patterns of church plants that meet in rented, temporary facilities versus those who meet in owned, permanent facilities.

Selecting an appropriate and acceptable research method and design is critical to the success of the DMin dissertation. Students are encouraged to explore the resources in the Suggested Bibliography below and consult with faculty regarding these decisions.

## SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Auerbach, C. F. & Silverstein, L. B. (2003). *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis*. New York: New York University Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2016). *Practical research: Planning and design* (11th ed.). Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sensing, T. (2011). *Qualitative research: A multi-methods approach to projects for doctor of ministry theses*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Shank, G.D. (2006). *Qualitative research: A personal skills approach* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

*The Chicago Manual of Style Sixteenth Edition*. (2010). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Vyhmeister, N. J., & Robertson, T. (2014). *Your guide to writing quality research papers for students of religion and theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

## THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

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The dissertation proposal provides the foundation for the research plan and serves as the candidate's roadmap to completion of the dissertation. The dissertation proposal contains many of the key components of Chapter 1 of the dissertation. It also organizes the project, and the effort and clarity put forth in the proposal will likely prevent problems down the road and help the candidate avoid pitfalls that commonly occur in subsequent stages of the dissertation process.

**Components of the Proposal:** While some of the components may vary slightly in the order and length of presentation, each proposal will contain, but is not limited to, the following:

- Introduction
  - Describe the congregational or counseling/family therapy setting and structure
  - Provide the main ideas and establish the central focus of the study
  - Present the key concepts that will be discussed throughout the study
- Statement of the Problem
  - Clearly articulate the problem that the study will address
  - Be succinct, but justify the need for the study
- Purpose of the Study
  - Describe the overall goal of the study
  - Provide an overview of how the goal will be achieved
- Research Question
  - Provide context for the reader by briefly reintroducing the problem and main ideas
  - Propose answerable research questions that are aligned with the problem and purpose
- Delimitations
  - Define the boundaries of your proposed study
  - Describe the scope as it relates to the research design you have chosen
- Definition of Key Terms
  - Define the key terms and concepts that will be discussed in the study
  - Support definitions with citations
  - It is typically not necessary to define terms that are commonly known
- Brief Review of Literature
  - Synthesize and evaluate the most relevant existing scholarly literature
  - Discuss conflicting findings/points of view (if any) in the existing literature
- Research Methodology
  - Present the rationale for the research method and design
  - Explain why the selected method and design are most appropriate for the problem, purpose, and research questions
  - Provide and justify the approximate sample size
- Conclusion
  - Summarize the key points presented in the document
  - Present an outline for the remainder of the project

NOTE: It is important to align the problem, purpose, research questions, and proposed design perfectly.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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The literature review is the chapter of the dissertation in which the researcher critically analyzes and synthesizes existing literature related to the dissertation topic. Some literature reviews flow chronologically; they begin with germinal works and move forward with more recent seminal works. Most DMin literature reviews, however, survey relevant literature by theme or topic.

The literature review can accomplish numerous objectives. For example, it may:

- Further establish the significance of the research project;
- Detail the history of research published in the topic area;
- Compare and contrast opposing points of view in the topic area;
- Discuss theoretical/conceptual frameworks commonly utilized in similar contexts;
- Present empirical data and evaluate conclusions from existing studies; and/or
- Highlight variables to be measured, noteworthy themes in the literature, or gaps of information that need to be filled (Sumerson, 2014).

So what are the characteristics of an acceptable literature review?

First and foremost, the literature review must flow logically and be well organized. It is important to begin the chapter with an introduction that explains both the purpose and the organization of the chapter. In the introduction, the researcher should also reveal where sources were retrieved from (e.g. the library or online library search engines) and describe the strategy used in the search for sources. The chapter should be organized by themes and sub-themes, and a succinct summary of the key points (two to three paragraphs) should be provided in conclusion.

Second, the literature review must exhibit adequate coverage (Holbrook, Bourke, Fairbairn, & Lovat, 2007). One's research must be thorough and extensive in its review of relevant academic, scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles. Depending on the nature of the research problem, other types of sources may have to be sought out and investigated. If opposing or alternative perspectives exist in the topic area, those viewpoints should be included and analyzed carefully in order to demonstrate unbiased research.

Third, the researcher must make coherent use of sources (Holbrook et al., 2007). Sources should be chosen, analyzed, and arranged in a manner so that they are used appropriately and advance the argument. Scholars should not be quoted simply because they are scholars. Instead, appeals should be made to logical arguments or other evidence to be offered for or against a proposition.

Finally, the review of literature should be substantive (Holbrook et al., 2007). The researcher should be familiar enough with the relevant literature so that he or she has a practical understanding of it. The researcher should be able to review the relevant literature in depth, analyze it critically, and give it a systematic treatment. The goal is that the researcher will be able to make appropriate connections between findings in the literature review and what is discovered in his or her own research project (Holbrook et al., 2007). Topic selection is critical. For example, a topic that is too broad will make an in-depth review of literature impossible.

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

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The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is responsible for reviewing all research associated with the University to ensure that the use and treatment of human subjects is ethical and in compliance with established standards. Faculty members, students or others, other than the Amridge University Center for Institutional Research, conducting research on human subjects in association with the University, including research for dissertations, master's theses or other studies, must have IRB approval prior to data collection. IRB approval is sought in cooperation with the dissertation chairperson and must be received prior to the completion of Dissertation Module I. Procedures for requesting IRB approval can be found in the *IRB Policy and Procedures Manual*.

Candidates must document having received training in protecting human subjects through a course approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. One such course is provided by the National Institutes of Health and can be found online at <http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>. Candidates are responsible for submitting documentation of the completion of this training along with the IRB application.

NOTE: If the research investigator (candidate in this case) and his or her Chairperson determine that the research plan does not involve human subjects, the research investigator may complete the *IRB FORM 2-Request for IRB Approval of a Research Plan that does not include Human Subjects* (see page 16 of the *IRB Policy and Procedures Manual*) and submit to the IRB as instructed on the form.

### IRB Checklist

- Complete IRB Application
- NIH (ethics training) Certificate
- Informed Consent Form
- Recruitment Letter
- Site Permission Letters
- Interview Guide
- Instruments used in Data Collection

## **THE ORAL DEFENSE**

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The candidate must successfully defend his or her dissertation before an examining committee on campus in Montgomery, AL. The examining committee will consist of the Dean of the candidate's school and his or her dissertation committee. Other faculty members may be included as deemed necessary. Procedures for the defense are included in Appendix B.

During the defense, the candidate should be prepared to answer questions concerning the study's method, implications, and relevance to the field of ministry. Below is a list of sample questions that may be asked during the defense:

1. What was the most challenging aspect of your study?
2. Was there anything that you found surprising during your study?
3. If you had to do it over again, what would you do differently?
4. What advice would you give someone who expressed interest in conducting a similar study?
5. How generalizable is your study?
6. How will your findings affect what you do in the future?
7. What is the most important implication from your study?

## **PREPARING AND SUBMITTING THE DISSERTATION**

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The student becomes eligible to complete the degree program and to be graduated from the University only after the dissertation is accepted by the library (Southern Christian University Library of Amridge University). Requirements for submitting completed dissertations to the library are included in Appendix A.

## References

- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Holbrook, A., Bourke, S., Fairbairn, H., & Lovat, T. (2007). Examiner comment on the literature review in Ph.D. theses. *Studies in Higher Education* 32(3), 337-356.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2016). *Practical research: Planning and design* (11th ed.). Saddle River, NJ: Merrill
- Lei, S. A. (2009). Strategies for finding and selecting an ideal thesis or dissertation topic: A review of literature. *College Student Journal*, 43(4), 1324-1332.
- McKinley, E., Grant, B., Middleton, S., Irwin, K., & Williams, L. (2009). He Rautaki mo te Akoranga Kairangi: 3. Choosing a research topic. *MAI Review*, 3, 1-4.
- Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 6th ed. New Delhi: Pearson Education.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ségol, G. (2014). Choosing a dissertation topic: Additional pointers. *College Student Journal*, 48(1). 108-113.
- Sumerson, J. B. (2014). *Finish your dissertation, don't let it finish you!* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

## Appendixes

## Appendix A: Preparing the Dissertation for Submission to the Library

### Style

1. The writing style of the dissertation shall comply with style manual specified by the specific school.
2. Documentation standards shall follow the style manual specified for the specific school.

### Printing

1. Printing guidelines specify better quality print (not dot matrix), 12-point type in a standard or executive style font.
2. Paper quality for all final copies shall meet the following criteria: white (not bleached), 20-pound stock, acid free, bond or writing weight, in a woven or smooth finish, with 25% or more cotton-rag content, and 86 or higher brightness. Erasable bond is unacceptable. It is also recommended that the rag content of the paper be watermarked on the sheets as such. The library reserves the right to reject any dissertation that appears to be copied on an inappropriate type of paper.
3. Remove running head.

### Binding and Microfilming

1. Dissertation requirements are not fulfilled until the required copies of the dissertation have been submitted to and accepted by the Head Librarian of the Southern Christian University Library at Amridge University.
2. The student shall submit three paper copies of the dissertation to be distributed as follows: two bound copies for circulation at Amridge University Library and one for the candidate. A fourth copy of the dissertation must be delivered electronically (contact the library for details). The electronic copy will be used by Proquest/UMI (an organization that microfilms, digitizes, and publishes dissertations) for the purposes of publication, preservation and promoting scholarship.
3. Blank rag sheets must be in place (one in front and one in back) for all paper copies.
4. All paper copies must be signed off completely by all parties involved and the signature pages must be inserted in the copies prior to delivery to the library. This includes the Dissertation Committee Acceptance page and the Copying Agreement Page. These pages must be on the correct type paper specified for the rest of the dissertation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the committee to have all appropriate pages signed. The library will not accept unsigned dissertations. When sending the copies of the dissertation to the library, the student must also include a separate copy of the sign-off sheet from his or her final dissertation module.
5. The deadline for submitting the required copies of the dissertation to be bound is April 20th before graduation.
6. For microfilming and general archiving of the electronic copy, the candidate shall pay all appropriate fees for this service and sign all appropriate documentation. The student must complete both sides of the Microfilm Distribution Agreement and a Copyright Registration Information Section.
7. It is the responsibility of the candidate to secure his or her personal copy/copies of the bound dissertation once they have been returned from the bindery. The candidate may pick up the bound dissertation(s) in person at the Library or he or she may contact the Library to arrange postal delivery.
8. The library will not bind extra copies of a dissertation beyond what is specified in this manual. If the student wants additional bound copies, he or she must make his own arrangements with a bindery.



## Pagination

The order for assembling pages is:

**First page** - (Blank on both sides, counted but without printed page number)

**Second page** - Title page, counted but no printed page number

**Third page** - Acceptance page, counted page iii

**Fourth page** - IRB approval, counted page iv

**Fifth page** - Copying agreement, counted page v

**Sixth page** - Abstract, counted page vi

**Next page(s)** - Dedication page (optional), counted but no printed page number

**Next page(s)** - Acknowledgement page (optional), with correct page number

**Next page** - (Blank on both sides, counted but without printed page number)

**Next page(s)** - Table of Contents (see style manual), with correct page number(s)

**Next page(s)** - List of Illustrations, if any, with correct page number(s)

**Next page(s)** - List of Tables, if any, with correct page number(s)

**Next page(s)** - Preface, if any, with correct page number(s)

Prior to the Text of the dissertation all page numbers are small Roman numerals (e.g., i, ii, iii, iv, v).

From the first page of the Text itself all page numbers are Arabic (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

## Closing pages

References

Appendix (es)

Additional reference material, etc. (e.g., APA or Chicago Manual of Style)

## Appendix B: Dissertation Defense Procedures

### **The Pre-Defense Procedures**

Students must formally petition to the Chairperson, in writing, for a defense after the following has been accomplished:

1. All Dissertation Modules have been approved and compiled to make up the final draft of the Dissertation.
2. The Dean of the candidate's school has approved the draft of the Dissertation as written.
3. After the dissertation has properly moved through the editing process, the Chairperson will request permission from the Academic Dean to set a date and time for the defense.

### **The Oral Defense Procedures (2 hours)**

1. The Chairperson will call the Dissertation Defense Committee to order.
2. The Chairperson will give a history of how the Dissertation was written and the major revisions that have been made to it (10 minutes).
3. Each Committee member will be given an opportunity to ask the candidate questions about his or her motivation to write on the subject, the procedures of writing, format and content (1 hour).
4. The Chairperson will then ask the candidate to wait in a designated area of the building while the Committee discusses the following: (30 minutes).
  - a. The candidate's depth of knowledge on the subject.
  - b. The style of the dissertation and the poise and accuracy with which the candidate answered the questions.
  - c. Any revisions to be made in the dissertation.
5. The Chairperson will complete the oral examination form as it reflects the conclusions of the full Committee.
6. The Chairperson will call the candidate back to the examination room to discuss any revisions to be made in the dissertation and to set a time for the final edition of the dissertation to be delivered (20 minutes).

### **The Post-Defense Procedures**

1. The Chairperson must reread the revised sections of the paper (if any) and start the final acceptance procedure.
2. The Chairperson will prepare the acceptance form. The form must bear the signatures of the Chairperson, the Reader, and the Secretary.
3. No member of the Committee will be compelled to sign the form if the paper does not meet his or her standard of excellence.
4. The Dissertation will be delivered to the Head Librarian with the Acceptance Form duly signed.

Appendix C: Sample Dissertation Title Page

Title of Dissertation in Size 12 Font:  
Double Spaced and Centered on the Page

by

Jane Doe

BS, Amridge University, 2005

MA, Amridge University, 2010

MDiv, Amridge University, 2012

A Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment for the  
Degree of Doctor of Ministry in Family Therapy

Amridge University  
Montgomery, Alabama

July 2015