



**GUIDE TO THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROCESS**

**A Manual for Planning and Writing a  
Doctoral Dissertation Research at Argosy University**

**College of Education  
College of Business  
College of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences**

**Fall 2011**

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## **OVERVIEW: GUIDE TO DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH**

### **Purpose and Organization of the Doctoral Dissertation Research Guide**

The Doctoral Dissertation Research Guide provides candidates and their committees a foundation for their work together. This Guide is for reference and guidance to assist the candidate and their committee member(s) with decisions regarding the various steps for completing the dissertation. Authority for decisions regarding the dissertation resides with the doctoral dissertation research Chair and Committee and, ultimately, the Program Chair of the Department.

This guide is organized into five main sections. The first section provides a general overview of the dissertation. The second, third, and fourth sections address the dissertation committee structure, process, and components, and are much more specific, including descriptions of the various sections of the dissertation. The final section focuses on writing and formatting issues. The Guide ends with links to forms and samples pertaining to the various sections of the dissertation.

The extent to which candidates use this guide; other resources available; the input of the committee; and their own abilities, skills and motivation will determine the success of the dissertation process. Argosy University has prepared this guide to assist candidates in this very important journey.

### **The Doctoral Dissertation Research**

The doctoral dissertation research is a scholarly written record of an original, research investigation submitted in support of candidacy for a degree. It is the culmination of the student's academic study at Argosy University (AU) and reflects the highest levels of intellectual rigor and quality in higher education. The doctoral dissertation research may result in a theory being created or tested, or the research may focus on a contextual topic or phenomenon with the goal of action and resolution.

The doctoral dissertation research is a major undertaking. Candidates should expect research-related expenses, such as (a) postage, (b) printing and binding, (c) costs associated with use of test instruments or surveys, (d) purchase of specific software packages (e.g., SPSS, NVivo), (e) service of research assistants, and (f) professional copy editing services.

Depending on the area of study and purpose, doctoral dissertation research may vary in structure and components, depending on the topic and phenomenon being investigated. Doctoral research products typically include the following components: (a) introduction of the research topic, with an explanation of why the subject was chosen for study; (b) review of relevant literature and discussion of how the review has informed the research issue, or focused on similar contexts to establish the importance of the research for particular audiences, address their shortcomings and advantages, and provided justification for the research; (c) description of how the research has been

designed and the rationale for the research methods; (d) presentation of the findings, (e) analysis of the findings in the context of the literature review; and (f) conclusions and future recommendations.

The dissertation is developed in phases.

- Candidates begin with a prospectus. The prospectus is a short document (usually less than fifteen pages) describing the research interest of the candidate and the proposed approach to conducting the research.
- After the prospectus is approved by the program chair or designee, the committee is formed and the candidate works with the committee to develop and defend a proposal.
- Candidates must attain written approval from the organization/institution where the study is to be conducted. Approval from the organization may include an application and/or review process. Candidates should become familiar with the approval process and timeline prior to submitting the IRB application to AU.
- The Institutional Review Board (IRB) application is submitted for approval (see the IRB guide for details of the process).
- Once approved by the IRB, the candidate conducts the research, documents the findings, and defends the study. After the final defense, the candidate should expect the dissertation to undergo revisions, per the committee's suggestions.
- The final copy of the revised dissertation is then edited and submitted to the Program Chair or the Chair's designee as record of successful completion.
- A digital copy of the final dissertation will be submitted for inclusion in the University's dissertation archive database. Please click [here](#) for more information.

The doctoral dissertation research committee, with the Program Chair or the Chair's designee, is the final arbiter of whether candidates have successfully completed the dissertation requirements at Argosy University. The selection of, and working relationship with, the committee is crucial to the successful outcome of the dissertation process.

### **The Doctoral Dissertation Research Calendar**

The timeline to complete the doctoral dissertation research process, from the time of the committee assignment to the final signatures for the document, is designed to take four semesters. In rare circumstances, the process may be accomplished in a shorter amount of time, and in some cases, the process may take longer. The doctoral dissertation research must be completed within the 7-year time limit from which the candidate started course work at Argosy<sup>1</sup>.

The student must register for and complete 12- semester credit hours of doctoral dissertation research to complete the program. Upon successful completion of required coursework and comprehensive examinations, students enrolled prior to Fall 1 2009 will register for the 7935 series dissertation courses and will continue taking the 7935 courses

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<sup>1</sup> The start date may be adjusted if the candidate was on an approved leave of absence during the program of study.

(B7935, E7935, C7935, TH7935, or L7935) until the completion of their doctoral dissertation research. Students needing time beyond four semesters will register for additional credits continuously until the doctoral dissertation research is completed (check entering catalog for additional doctoral dissertation research hour requirements).

Students entering after Fall 2009 will enroll in one of two tracks, the 9000 or the 9500 series. All courses in the 9000 series commence at the beginning of the semester, and are offered only in 15-week semesters. The 9500 series commences in session II of each semester, and comprises five courses with the first and last courses in 7.5 weeks and the remaining three in 15-week semesters.

Doctoral dissertation research topics naturally vary in the pace to completion. Candidates negotiate with the doctoral dissertation research Chair<sup>2</sup> both specific deliverables and timelines associated with the individual modules, or default to Table 1.

Table 1

*Doctoral Dissertation Research Courses and Durations*

Track one		Track two	
Course #	Session length	Course #	Session length
9001	15 weeks	9501	7.5 weeks
9002	15 weeks	9502	15 weeks
9003	15 weeks	9503	15 weeks
9004	15 weeks	9504	15 weeks
		9505	7.5 weeks

Students earn dissertation credit on successful completion of the negotiated/-established objectives distributed throughout four or five dissertation courses. These courses divide the total number of credits required to complete the doctoral dissertation research process. Unless otherwise negotiated, the 9001 track objectives are as outlined here.

**D9001**

As a result of their satisfactory completion of 9001, candidates

1. Define a topic for doctoral dissertation research that addresses an issue, concept, problem, course of action, or question relevant to their program outcomes and/or their profession.
2. Develop a prospectus.
3. Submit a prospectus for approval.
4. Form a doctoral dissertation research committee.

<sup>2</sup>In some cases, the Program Chair or designee may provide permissions or approvals during the dissertation process.

5. Develop the initial sections of a proposal that include: a concise statement of the issue, concept, problem, course of action, or question to be addressed; key terms and operational definitions; research questions, hypotheses, goals and objectives; and the rationale or purpose of the proposed research.
6. Research the background of the selected topic area so that findings can be evaluated in the context of the wider body of knowledge and practice.
7. Critically evaluate prior research that serves as a foundation for the proposed research.
8. Conduct a review of literature and information sources related to the proposed research.
9. Compile a reference list related to the proposed research.
10. Complete a working draft of an introduction to the dissertation or research project.

### **D9002**

As a result of their satisfactory completion of 9002, candidates

1. Continue working on the proposal and complete a working draft of a literature or information source review.
2. Describe the design of the doctoral dissertation research.
3. Complete a working draft of a methodology or approach to organizational improvement and problem resolution.
4. Revise and refine the proposal.
5. Prepare for the proposal defense.
6. Successfully defend the proposal.
7. Complete and submit an IRB application.
8. Prepare to conduct research.

### **D9003**

As a result of their satisfactory completion of 9003, candidates

1. Conduct the research after receiving IRB approval.
2. Analyze data.
3. Interpret data and draw conclusions based on results.
4. Write results.

### **D9004**

As a result of their satisfactory completion of 9004, candidates

1. Write the discussion, conclusions, and implications and recommendations sections.
2. Complete the final doctoral dissertation research document, including appendices, reference list, acknowledgements, dedication, and table of contents.
3. Submit document to *Turnitin*®.
4. Prepare for the oral defense.
5. Successfully defend the doctoral dissertation research.
6. Revise the document, per the committee's recommendations.
7. Submit the document for the final editing process.
8. Submit the final version for approval.
9. Secure all necessary signatures and approvals.

Unless otherwise negotiated, the 9501 track objectives are as outlined below:

### **D9501**

As a result of their satisfactory completion of 9501, candidates

1. Define a topic for doctoral dissertation research that addresses an issue, concept, problem, course of action, or question relevant to their program outcomes and their profession.
2. Develop a prospectus
3. Submit a prospectus for approval.
4. Form a doctoral dissertation research committee.
5. Develop a proposal that includes: a concise statement of the issue, concept, problem, course of action, or question to be addressed; key terms and operational definitions; research questions, hypotheses, goals and objectives; and the rationale or purpose of the proposed research.

### **D9502**

As a result of their satisfactory completion of 9502, candidates

1. Research the background of the selected topic area so that findings can be evaluated in the context of the wider body of knowledge and practice.
2. Critically evaluate prior research that serves as a foundation for the proposed research.
3. Conduct a review of literature and information sources related to the proposed research.
4. Compile a reference list related to the proposed research.
5. Complete a working draft of an introduction to the doctoral dissertation research.
6. Complete a working draft of a literature or information source review.
7. Describe the design of the doctoral dissertation research.
8. Complete a working draft of a methodology or approach to organizational improvement and problem resolution.
9. Revise and refine the proposal.

### **D9503**

As a result of their satisfactory completion of 9503, candidates

1. Prepare for the proposal defense.
2. Successfully defend the proposal.
3. Complete and submit an IRB application.
4. Prepare to conduct research.
5. Conduct the research after receiving IRB approval.

### **D9504**

As a result of their satisfactory completion of 9504, candidates

1. Analyze data.
2. Interpret data and draw conclusions based on results.
3. Write results.
4. Write discussion, conclusions, and implications and recommendations sections.
5. Complete the final doctoral dissertation research document, including appendices, reference list, acknowledgements, dedication, and table of contents.
6. Submit document to *Turnitin* ®.

7. Prepare for the oral defense.
8. Successfully defend the doctoral dissertation research.

### **D9505**

As a result of their satisfactory completion of 9505, candidates

1. Revise the document, per the committee's recommendations.
2. Submit the document for the final editing process.
3. Submit the final version for approval.
4. Secure all necessary signatures and approvals.

### **Doctoral Dissertation Research Grading Protocol**

Students enrolled in their program prior to Fall 2009 will follow the grading scale as outlined in the academic catalog under which they entered. Students entering after Fall 2009 will receive at the end of each doctoral dissertation research course (either 7.5 or 15 week), a grade of "PR" (Progressing), a grade of "NC" (No Credit), or a grade of "LP" (Limited Progress). A grade of PR indicates that the student is progressing toward completion of the dissertation; a grade of NC indicates that the student should receive no credit toward the doctoral dissertation research that session; and a grade of LP indicates that a student has progressed at a slower rate, but has not met all course objectives. Each grade is described in further detail below:

#### **Grade Definition**

- PR = The Doctoral Dissertation Research Chair will assign a grade of PR when the student completes all requirements, or if the Chair and student feel confident that the student can finish the incomplete work in the first two weeks of the next dissertation course. Upon receiving the grade of PR, the student will continue to the next course. All PR grades will convert to a grade of CR upon completion of all dissertation requirements.
- NC = The Doctoral Dissertation Research Chair will assign a grade of NC when more than seven weeks of work remains in the current dissertation course. Upon receiving the grade of NC in the extension course, the LP grade previously assigned to the core dissertation course will change to NC, as well as that of the extension and the student will repeat the core course. A student may only receive two NC grades during the dissertation and remain in the program. Upon receiving the third NC, the student will be dismissed from the program.
- LP = The Doctoral Dissertation Research Chair will assign a grade of LP when the Chair and the student feel confident that no more than seven weeks of work remains in the current course. If an LP grade is assigned, the student enrolls in the corresponding dissertation extension course to complete the work over the next semester. The student must complete 100% of the course objectives during the extension to continue to the next course. If the student does not complete all objectives during the subsequent semester, the LP grade assigned to the original course will be changed to NC, and an NC will also be assigned to the extension course. If the student has not exceeded the two-NC limit, he/she must retake the course for which the LP was

originally assigned. If the student completes the extension successfully, the LP changes to PR, and the corresponding extension course will be assigned a PR. Regardless of how early or late in the extension period candidates complete the requirements of the course, they should continue working on their dissertation for the entire period of the extension (that is, beginning the work of the next course).

### **Grade Flowchart**

Please see [File ID C-1: Application of PR, NC, and LP Dissertation Grades Flowchart](#).

#### **D9000 Series**

- All courses in the 9000 series are offered in 15-week semesters only.
- All extensions are offered in 15-week semesters only.

#### **D9500 Series**

- The first and last courses are 7.5-week sessions only.
- Extensions for D9501-D9504 are offered in 15-week semesters.
- Extensions for D9505 are offered as a 7.5-week session.
- If a student receives an initial LP in D9501, and receives a grade of NC in the extension, the previous LP changes to a grade of NC, and the student continues the dissertation process in the 9000 series sequence.

### **Attendance in Dissertation Courses**

Dissertation students are required to post a weekly message confirming their attendance in the Questions for the Professor section of Course Home of their eCollege dissertation course. In addition, to confirm their enrollment each session, students must post their initial confirmation message during the first seven days of a session. Students who fail to post within the first seven days, or who miss two consecutive weeks of attendance confirmation, will be dropped from their program and the university.

## THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH COMMITTEE

### Committee Selection Process

Upon successful completion of all coursework and the comprehensive examination, and after meeting all current financial obligations to the University, students begin the doctoral dissertation research process. Students are now advanced to doctoral candidacy status and are considered ABD (All But Dissertation). The first step after the acceptance of the prospectus is to establish a committee. [Please see File ID F-3: Petition for Establishing a Doctoral Dissertation Research Committee](#). Students should discuss the committee formation process with their Program Chair or designee well before starting the dissertation process. Students should discuss the topic with faculty member(s) to facilitate their decisions regarding who they wish to serve on their committee, while faculty member(s) determine whether they may wish to serve. Students submit names for the doctoral dissertation research Chair and committee member(s) to the Program Chair or designee for consideration. If students desire to include a non-Argosy committee member, they must have the approval of their Program Chair. Please see [File ID F-4: Request for Non-Argosy Doctoral Dissertation Research Committee Member\(s\) Form](#). Students may not always have the Chair or committee member(s) they prefer, due to faculty schedules and other circumstances. Selection of the Chair should ideally be determined prior to the formal doctoral dissertation research coursework.

The doctoral dissertation research committee consists of the dissertation Chair and one committee member(s), who may be external to Argosy University. The committee member(s) and Chair are selected for their content, methodological, and analytical expertise. The committee provides guidance throughout the doctoral dissertation research process and offers content and methodology support. The doctoral dissertation research Chair leads the support of the candidate in conducting the doctoral dissertation research, relying on close collaboration with the candidate and the committee member(s). If conflicts exist between the committee member(s) and the candidate, the dissertation Chair serves as the mediator in moving the process to a satisfactory solution. If a conflict exists between the Chair and committee member(s), or between the committee Chair and the candidate, then the program chair or campus chief academic officer or their designees serve as the arbitrator.

In cases where the program chair and dissertation chair find that it is beneficial to obtain additional expertise or perspectives, a third committee member may be added for consultation purposes. If the capstone is a dissertation, the third member should be chosen to provide additional methodological expertise or content knowledge. In cases where the capstone is an applied research project, the additional member should be a practicing professional in the field of the research who does not work otherwise for Argosy University. Third committee members must be approved by the campus VPAA according to criteria in the Doctoral Dissertation Research Guide.

The chair and committee member must have academic expertise in the field (business, education, leadership, or counseling), and must hold an earned, doctoral

degree. An official transcript reflecting the terminal degree earned by each must be on file with the University. The third committee member may be an external doctorally prepared faculty member, administrator, or researcher or an appropriately credentialed practitioner. Committee members must submit documentary proof of relevant expertise to the University (e.g., CVs, transcripts) prior to serving on the committee. All external committee members must agree to a background check.

Candidates should complete the Doctoral Dissertation Research Approval form after finalizing their committee. Please see [File ID F-2: Doctoral Dissertation Research Approval Form](#). After signatures are obtained related to committee formation, the form should be maintained at the program office on campus and brought for signatures to both the Proposal and the Final Defense of the doctoral dissertation research.

The doctoral dissertation research committee, together with the Program Chair, is the final arbiter of whether candidates have successfully completed the dissertation requirements at Argosy University. Relationships among the committee member(s) are important. The candidate and the committee must work well together creating a professional, collegiate atmosphere. Therefore, the selection of, and working relationship with, the committee is crucial to the successful outcome of the doctoral dissertation research process.

### **Changing the Committee Membership**

Should a problem occur and the candidate finds the situation to be irresolvable, that candidate may submit a request to change the doctoral dissertation research Chair or member(s) of the committee to the Program Chair. Changing the committee composition is a serious event, and any changes should be considered very carefully, as they may result in additional time and cost for the candidate.

If the Program Chair agrees that a change is indicated, the candidate then completes the Doctoral Dissertation Research Approval Form (please see [File ID F-2: Doctoral Dissertation Research Approval Form](#)) to submit a list of the new member(s) to the Program Chair for approval.

If the new committee membership is approved, the candidate must submit the prospectus to the new committee individual(s).

### **Candidate and Committee Responsibilities**

The dissertation is the product of the candidate, but the process should be a collaborative effort involving the candidate and the doctoral dissertation research committee. The candidate's fundamental responsibilities and the doctoral dissertation research Chair and committee's supporting responsibilities are outlined below:

## **Responsibilities of the Candidate**

The candidate's responsibility in the dissertation process includes the following:

1. Proposing a viable project.
2. Managing the doctoral dissertation research process, including initiation of and continuation of communications with the committee.
3. Meeting the deadlines included in the proposed timeline.
4. Conducting a well-thought out, ethical, and well-researched project.
5. Incorporating appropriately the advice and suggestions from the committee.
6. Delivering a well written, error-free, professionally composed and edited final draft of the prospectus, proposal, and doctoral dissertation research that meet the content and quality standards of the University.

The candidate is responsible for keeping the doctoral dissertation research Chair informed of all the developments as the research study is conceptualized, designed, and conducted, and the dissertation is written. Although securing additional assistance from resources outside of those found at Argosy University is permissible, the candidate must keep the Chair fully informed when this is a consideration and when it occurs. A candidate may consult with a statistician, a university-approved editor, or methodologist, but in no case should any person other than the candidate conduct the work of the dissertation.

In the event that the candidate is experiencing or anticipating factors that affect the progress of the doctoral dissertation research, the candidate must communicate with the Chair to report on progress and obtain advice, service, or assistance. If significant modifications need to be made to the timeline, the candidate must seek approval from the committee.

## **Responsibilities of the Doctoral Dissertation Research Committee and Chair**

The doctoral dissertation research committee serves as the expert support structure in content and methodology and provides guidance throughout the process. Candidates must consider, and may adopt, suggestions from the committee. The committee members are responsible for working with the candidate and each other in a collegial and professional manner.

The doctoral dissertation research Chair leads the support of the candidate in conducting the doctoral dissertation research, relying on close collaboration with the candidate and the committee member(s). If conflicts exist among committee member(s) and the candidate, the Chair serves as the mediator in moving the process to a beneficial solution for the candidate. If a conflict exists between the Chair and committee member(s), or if the Chair cannot mediate a conflict within the committee, then the Program Chair or campus chief academic officer or their designees serve as the arbitrator.

## THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROCESS

### Selection of a Doctoral Dissertation Research Topic

Candidates often select doctoral dissertation research topics based on professional activities or academic interests. Candidates are encouraged to consider their topics early in their academic programs at Argosy University and may consult with their Program Chair, any Argosy University faculty member(s), or other outside scholars at any time regarding potential dissertation topics. The topic must be selected with the goal of adding to the body of knowledge in the discipline or contributing to the mission and goals of particular organizations and/or individual careers.

In selecting a topic, candidates may also wish to keep in mind the relevance of their question to their profession, as well as the potential for publication of their dissertations as books, articles, or chapters within academic journals or other scholarly publications or as presentations to professional audiences. Doctoral dissertation research topics are selected and approved in close cooperation with each individual candidate's doctoral dissertation research Chair, Program Chair, or the Program Chair's designee (see Formation of the Doctoral Dissertation Research Committee).

Candidates should keep three primary things in mind in the topic selection process. First, the topic needs to be of sufficient interest to them in order to sustain their efforts to produce the best possible product. Second, the topic should be narrow enough to allow candidates to become experts in the topic or field that is selected and the research to be accomplished according to the doctoral dissertation research calendar. Finally, the topic and research study should be related to the student's program of study and contribute to the content base of the profession or goals of the organization selected for the research.

### The Prospectus

The prospectus begins with a cover sheet (see [File ID F-1: Cover Sheet for Prospectus and Proposal](#)). The prospectus outlines the proposed investigation in a paper no longer than 15 pages. It should clearly describe the candidate's proposed research to other students, potential committee member(s), and the Program Chair. A copy of the prospectus must be attached to the Doctoral Dissertation Research Committee Petition. This enables the Program Chair or the Chair's designee to make recommendations about finalizing committee member(s). Prospectus meetings involving the candidate and committee may be scheduled to discuss the details of the prospectus development. Students should check with their program or doctoral dissertation research Chair for such meeting requirements.

The prospectus should provide enough information to help prospective committee member(s) determine if their interests and backgrounds would be appropriate for serving on the committee. The components of this narrative should include (a) the problem to be addressed, the significance of the problem, the purpose of the proposed study; (b) an

initial review of the literature related to the selected research topic, sufficient to inform the candidate of what is, and is not, known about the topic; (c) an initial set of research question(s) and hypotheses as appropriate; (d) anticipated research methodology which includes population and sample, procedures and measures, hypotheses, level of significance, and statistical tests; (e) a short reference list of key articles, books, etc., related to the research area; (f) identification of possible databases and keywords to be used in the literature search; and (g) the candidate's timeline goals for completing the four doctoral dissertation research courses. Extensions, where necessary, must be negotiated between the Chair and candidate, and tied to completion of specific and agreed upon objectives. Questions regarding this prospectus should be addressed to the Program Chair or the Chair's designee.

### **The Doctoral Dissertation Research Proposal**

A project with the scope of a doctoral dissertation research requires detailed planning. The proposal serves as a test of the feasibility of the proposed dissertation project. The proposal must clearly convey the goals and the relevance of the research. The proposal contains the introduction to the research problem, the literature review, and the proposed methodology. In most cases, hypotheses and expected outcomes are included. While these components are not considered complete at this point, they must contain enough information for the committee to fully support and commit to the candidate's project.

The proposal begins with a cover signature sheet (see [File ID F-1: Cover Sheet for Prospectus and Proposal](#)). The signature sheet is followed by the proposal's Table of Contents and the major components. The proposal concludes with a reference list that identifies all of the sources cited in the proposal. Also included are any necessary appendices of essential material for the committee to consider in the proposal defense. These materials may include copies of testing instruments, workshop manuals, interview protocols, consent forms, approval letters, permission documents, or other materials created specifically for this doctoral dissertation research.

### **The Proposal Defense**

Prior to the proposal defense, the proposal must be –submitted to *Turnitin*®, and the Dissertation Chair should review the originality report. The candidate provides the committee member(s) and Program Chair with a final copy of the proposal at least 10 days prior to the proposal defense. Examples of the cover sheet (File ID F-1: See link above) and of the Table of Contents for the Proposal (see [File ID S-11: Table of Contents for the Proposal](#)) are included.

When they believe the research project is ready for execution, candidates submit the proposal to the committee Chair. The committee then reviews the proposal and provides preliminary evaluation of the proposal. Based on this evaluation, the committee recommends either additional preparation or scheduling of the proposal defense.

The proposal defense is moderated by the doctoral dissertation research Chair and attended by the candidate and the committee member(s). The proposal defense will be open to the public, unless the candidate provides a compelling reason for an exception.

At the proposal defense, candidates present a brief overview of their study and respond to a variety of questions from the committee to demonstrate mastery of the proposed study and the related literature that supports it. Candidates will also be asked to explain the dissertation methodology and plans for the implementation and completion of the study. Candidates are expected to answer questions posed by the committee, such as:

1. How does the design clearly relate to the Purpose of the Study?
2. How does the design adequately address the research questions?
3. What are the data sources? Are they useful, reliable, and sufficient?
4. How is the design feasible within the stated limitations and delimitations and the established timeframe?
5. Is a realistic timeline established?
6. Though the IRB has the final say on this aspect of a dissertation, how does the design attend to the protection of human subjects?
7. Is the sample clearly defined?
8. How is the methodology appropriate for the research questions, research hypotheses, or other key aspects of the study?
9. What steps have been taken to ensure that this is the most appropriate design for the study and the subject area?
10. How does the study contribute to informed practice/literature in the field/candidate's career?
11. What alternative plans have been developed, should problems arise in various areas of the research?

The committee may also:

1. Relay any concerns, including project scope, demonstrated writing competency, data collection, proposed methodology and analysis, and other issues.
2. Suggest additions that may be required or omissions that need to be reviewed.
3. Set a date for revision to be completed and the proposal returned to the doctoral dissertation research Chair.
4. Verify that permissions have been requested when appropriate and work with the doctoral dissertation research Chair to ensure all permissions have been obtained.

The proposal defense is the critical stage in the doctoral dissertation research process, as it establishes and communicates the commitment between the candidate and the committee. The defense provides an opportunity to discuss issues that require clarification or decisions that need to be supported. Candidates are expected to demonstrate a mastery of their proposed study and the related literature that supports it. Following the proposal defense, candidates will receive narrative feedback from their Chair explaining the committee's decision.

The proposal evaluation is one of the objectives in the doctoral dissertation research courses (described in the Overview section). Acceptance by the committee is a prerequisite to continuing in the doctoral dissertation research process. Minor editorial revisions may be approved by the doctoral dissertation research Chair. Substantive additional work requires rescheduling of a proposal defense.

Subsequent to a successful proposal defense, the candidate will submit a copy of the approved proposal to the doctoral dissertation research Chair for signatures by the committee. The Chair submits all proposal documentation to the program office.

### **Approval from Internal Agencies**

After the acceptance of the proposal, and prior to completing the IRB application, the candidate must obtain the necessary approvals from the agencies where the research is to be conducted.

### **Cross-campus Cooperative Research**

In cases where cross-campus research is requested (more than two campuses), the application must be filed with the chair of Argosy's National IRB. The National Chair will then convene a subcommittee of the full National IRB for review of the application. For most national requests, the convened subcommittee will include the chairs of the campus sites where the proposed research will take place. For national requests at the Full level, a quorum of the members of the National IRB will review the application at their next regularly scheduled meeting. When there are only two campuses involved the following procedure should be employed:

- The IRB application and certification is conducted by the originating campus
- The VPAA and, if required, the director of HR of the host campus provides a permission letter for the research.
- The VPAA and, if required, the director of HR from the second campus provides a permission letter allowing the research to take place on their campus. The VPAA sends this letter to the applicant's home campus IRB chair plus the principal investigator and their advisor.
- The principal investigator includes VPAA's permission as an appendix in the original application or as an amendment if the principal investigator is seeking to expand the participant pool from the original campus.

### **Argosy Research at the National Level**

In cases where research is requested at the National level, the principal investigator files an application with the Chair of Argosy's National IRB and the national IRB will review the materials, certifying where possible.

**Permissions required.** At the National level, if a principal investigator seeks to use Argosy students, class practices or related educational materials, permission must be obtained from the University's Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). If a principal investigator seeks to use Argosy employees or business practices at the national level as part of a study, permission must be obtained from the University's Vice President for Human Resources (VPHR) in consultation with the University's VPAA. In the principal investigator's request for permission, the principal investigator must explain in detail the purpose and procedures of the study and what is being requested from the school. The VPAA or VPHR will then either approve or deny the request in writing. National applications that do not contain the needed written permissions will be denied. Please note that OHRP cautions against research using "participant pools of convenience," and requests to use Argosy's students, staff, educational or business practices, or faculty as research participants are only approved when the research provides a specific benefit to those being studied. Internal research conducted by Argosy at the national or local levels for purposes of program review, departmental assessment and university accreditation do not require IRB review, as these practices do not fall under the definition of research as per this handbook.

**Argosy research at the campus level.** The same criteria, as mentioned in the previous section, apply to research conducted at the campus level. However, the principal investigator must secure written permission from the VPAA of the campus and, when required, the director of HR to conduct the study. Again, requests to use Argosy's students, staff, educational or business practices, or faculty as research participants are only approved when the research provides a specific benefit to those being studied.

### **Approval from Outside Agencies**

Before applying for IRB certification from Argosy, candidates must first attain written approval from the organization/institution where the study is to be conducted. Candidates should seek to become thoroughly familiar with the identified organization's approval process, keeping in mind the following.

- Prior to submitting an IRB application to Argosy University, the candidate must secure written approval to conduct research within the organization. (A copy of the approval must be attached to the IRB application.)
- Approval from the organization must come from the person with authority to grant permission to conduct research. In some instances, approval must be attained from multiple levels (e.g. school district approval and school approval).
- If the study is to be conducted at an institution of higher learning, the candidate may be required to secure IRB certification from the college or university where the study will be conducted, as well as from Argosy.

- Many organizations have their own application and review processes in place for those who wish to conduct research. Some have infrequent review periods. Consequently, candidates should learn the organization's deadlines and plan accordingly.

### **Submission to the Institutional Review Board**

After the acceptance of the proposal, the candidate prepares the IRB application with guidance from the doctoral dissertation research Chair. Prior to submitting the IRB application, all candidates must have completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), and have a certificate of completion on record with Argosy University. Candidates should complete the CITI training and submit the IRB application in a timely manner to keep the dissertation process on schedule.

A copy of the IRB Approval Forms and Procedures are available in the IRB Manual. Depending on the nature of the dissertation, the candidate requests an exempt, expedited, or a full review by the IRB, and an IRB representative determines the appropriate course of action.

Once IRB approval is obtained, no substantial deviations from the approved research methodology and procedures may occur. If such deviations are determined to be necessary, the proposal must be revised and approved by the dissertation committee before resubmission of the IRB application.

Candidates may *not* collect any data prior to receipt of IRB approval. *Every candidate* must submit the IRB's application packet--even those who are doing theoretical papers or doing research entirely from archival sources (see the IRB Manual or Dissertation Chair for appropriate forms).

### **Conducting and Documenting the Research**

After the successful defense of the proposal and receipt of IRB certification, the candidate proceeds to implement the research as designed. The nature of the research question and chosen methodology determine the timeframe necessary for completion of data collection. Candidates should anticipate unexpected delays associated with research projects and plan carefully, including contingency plans.

Throughout the data collection process, the candidate should be writing and revising the sections of the doctoral dissertation research draft. The frequency of chapter and section drafts reviewed by the committee will vary, depending on the topic and preferences of the candidate and the committee. Students should expect to prepare multiple drafts of each section, based on the research findings and the feedback provided.

Candidates should prepare and submit a complete doctoral dissertation research draft to the committee for review and recommendations prior to requesting a final oral

defense. As part of preparation for the oral defense, the candidate must submit the document to *Turnitin*® and subsequently submit the confirmation report to the dissertation committee.

### **The Doctoral Dissertation Research Oral Defense**

The oral defense of the doctoral dissertation research is a formal proceeding and should be approached with the seriousness and dignity of the culminating event of the candidate's formal scholastic program. The doctoral dissertation research Chair sets protocol at the beginning of the defense and moderates both the presentation of the research and the questions following.

After the candidate responds to all committee concerns in the doctoral dissertation research draft, the candidate requests scheduling of the oral defense. If the committee approves the scheduling, a mutually acceptable date with at least two weeks' notice will be selected. The defense is open to the public, and the campus community will be notified.

At the oral defense, the candidate presents the dissertation in its entirety. During the defense, the candidate presents the key points, which include:

1. The conceptualization, nature, and purpose of the study.
2. A brief literature review.
3. The research methodology.
4. The data collection.
5. The results.
6. The summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

The candidate is responsible for knowing and responding to any aspect of the research and is answerable to the committee for the procedures, accuracy, interpretation, and integrity of the results and conclusions. Questions may relate directly to the research or evaluation conducted, theoretical probing, and the broader application of the research conducted.

Following the defense, the candidate and audience will be excused, and the committee will confer before announcing the results of the defense. Doctoral dissertation research projects will be assessed using evaluation criteria appropriate to the nature and purpose of the doctoral research, and the committee will reach one of the following conclusions:

1. **Pass:** The Committee approves the doctoral dissertation research. Candidates may need to make minor editing changes for final review and approval by the doctoral dissertation research Chair.
2. **Pass with Content Revisions:** The Committee approves the doctoral dissertation research, contingent upon specified revisions. Candidates make the required changes

and resubmit the doctoral dissertation research to the Committee for final review and approval.

3. **Major Revisions Needed:** The Committee does not approve the doctoral dissertation research as written and presented. The committee gives specific feedback on the reasons for this decision. The candidate must meet with the doctoral dissertation research committee to develop a revision plan to be completed before the resubmission of the doctoral dissertation research and the scheduling of a second oral defense.
4. **Fail:** The Committee finds fatal flaws in the execution of the research as approved at the proposal defense. Examples include, but are not restricted to: Modifying the target population, changing the research instrumentation without committee approval, and incorrectly implementing or interpreting data analyses. In addition, a grade of Fail may be assigned for procedural violations, such as collecting data without IRB approval and plagiarism. Failure to defend the dissertation successfully means that the candidate may not be conferred the degree, may not assume the title of “doctor,” and may not disseminate or publish the research study as written.

The doctoral dissertation research Chair will provide the Program Chair with written notification of the results of the candidate’s defense.

The successful doctoral dissertation research defense marks the conclusion of the work of the committee, and committee member(s) will sign the approval sheet (see [File ID F-2: Doctoral Dissertation Research Approval Form](#)) to indicate their work is completed. The candidate will submit a Project Completion Report (Appendix H of the IRB Manual) to the IRB chair. A copy of these forms, along with the signed, electronic copy of the final doctoral dissertation research and a “Statement of Copyright Release” (see [File ID F-6: Statement of Copyright Release](#)) is submitted to the Program office.

### **Final Submission of Doctoral Dissertation Research**

After the successful final defense of the Doctoral Dissertation Research, the candidate makes all required revisions and resubmits the document to the Doctoral Dissertation Research Chair for approval. The Doctoral Dissertation Research is then submitted to the Program Chair or designee.

Candidates must work with their Doctoral Dissertation Research Chair and Program Chair to meet any quality control or editing requirements identified. In some cases, instruments used in the study may be removed before final publication. In other cases, permissions to publish may need to be obtained. All concerns must be addressed prior to submitting the final doctoral dissertation research to the Program office.

## **COMPONENTS OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH**

A common structure of the doctoral dissertation research is presented below. Variations will occur, depending on the nature and purpose of the research. For example, for certain types of qualitative research, there may not be any hypotheses. Applied research may entail additional or different components, depending on the phenomenon being explored. The organization of the doctoral dissertation research is type dependent and may be divided into the following sections:

1. Abstract
2. Introduction - The Topic to be Studied, Definitions, Significance of the Study, Overview of the Sections of the doctoral dissertation research
3. Review of Literature
4. Methodology
5. Data Analysis and Results (may include more than one chapter)
6. Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations
7. Reference List
8. Appendices (e.g., Survey Instruments, Interview Guides, Consent Forms)

The list above is not necessarily exhaustive. While there is no specific length requirement for the doctoral dissertation research, the product must be of appropriate length to address the research question and the proposed study and must reflect the rigor and academic quality of the research study.

### **The Abstract**

The abstract should not exceed 250 words, and it should consist of an accurate and complete summary of the doctoral dissertation research. The abstract should be neither critical nor evaluative; it is a factual description of the study. The text of the abstract should include (a) a statement of the problem and nature and purpose of the research, (b) the research methodology employed and a summary of the procedures, (c) the results and conclusions of the study, and (d) recommendations for further study. The abstract should not include (a) discussion of, or reference to, the literature review; or (b) detailed elaboration on the purpose, methodology, procedures, or implications of the study.

### **The Problem**

The introduction and statement of the problem sections present the problem or topic to be addressed by the doctoral dissertation research. This section should describe the nature and purpose of the study, present the guiding research question(s), provide the definitions of the terms, identify the limitations and delimitations, and explain the significance of and justification for conducting the study. After reading the problem section, the reader should be satisfied that: a case has been made for the existence of a problem or appropriateness of the topic; the problem has been clearly delineated; and the problem or topic has intellectual merit worthy of doctoral dissertation research.

## **The Literature Review**

The foundation of the dissertation begins with a review of theories, methodologies, and measurement considerations central to the research question. The review identifies gaps in the literature and how the proposed research adds to the knowledge base. Whether the research question focuses on theory development, theory extension, or theory application determines the appropriateness of the sources used. For instance, the sources may include government documents, databases, books, professional journals, refereed academic publications, and dissertations that form the rationale for the current undertaking. Based on the nature of the research, the literature could also be focused on similar contexts or practices to establish the importance of the project for particular audiences, address their shortcomings and advantages, and provide justification for the research project. The literature must be evaluated and interpreted, properly referenced, and presented in a manner which develops an argument for the importance of the research and the appropriateness of the methods used in the research.

The literature review must: be a selective and analytical summary of the documents essential to the research, be presented in a logical manner to support the candidate's claim as to the merit of the inquiry, and provide all the substantiation necessary from the literature to proceed with the study. After completing the literature review section, the candidate should be confident that it:

1. Supports the existence of the problem.
2. Includes contrary or controversial opinions fairly and objectively.
3. Is well organized and written to provide a framework for the proposed study.
4. Is analytical, and not just a presentation of what has been done by others.
5. Discusses how the investigation fills a void in the literature.

## **Methodology**

The candidate presents the design, procedures, and analysis employed for carrying out the study. Although there will be different headings for studies of varying approaches, the most common sections are (a) the research design; (b) the population and sampling procedures; (c) instrumentation; and (d) methodological assumptions, limitations, and delimitations

### **Research Design**

In this section, the candidate describes the specific design used in the study. The research design section and subsections should specify how each research question and research hypothesis will be studied. All constructs and variables of the study will be *operationally defined* in this section. In other words, each construct's or variable's meaning, the manner in which it will be measured, and the way the data are obtained will be described.

## **Population and Sampling Procedures**

The nature of the study determines what, if any, population and sampling procedure is appropriate. For example, an education study may be best served by either surveying all teachers in one school or a sample of teachers from multiple schools or school districts, depending on the precise research question. Candidates provide a complete description of the target population, their demographics, selection procedures and criteria, and the representativeness of the sample to broader populations.

## **Instrumentation**

The candidate presents a complete description of the instruments, such as tests, surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and observational protocols used in the study. This includes information on their reliability, validity, origin, and appropriateness or rationale for uses in the study. If candidates create unique instruments, they must demonstrate reliability and validity for the population being tested. In addition, any permission granted for use in the research must be included. All instruments used in the study must be included in an appendix.

## **Procedures**

Because the work conducted for the dissertation must be replicable, the procedures section of Chapter 3 must be very detailed. Therefore, it must include all of the information necessary for others to implement this same research. This includes, but is not limited to: the securing of institutional permission to conduct the investigation, the first contact with the participants, the instructions and materials used in the study, the setting, the development of special instruments, the conducting of pilot studies, and any other information that would allow the study to be replicated from start to finish. If data gathering instruments, such as a lesson plan, protocol, script, a set of interview questions, or training manual are used, copies of them should appear in the appendices for the document.

If the product of the dissertation is a book, test instrument, training manual or other stand-alone document, the document should be formatted as an Appendix. It should not be integrated into the dissertation.

## **Methodological Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

Every methodological approach and research design is bound by its own assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Consequently, the candidate should include a discussion of issues critical to the study, based on methodological criteria, as well as the unique circumstances of the data-gathering event, with appropriate sources cited and referenced.

**Methodological assumptions.** Methodological assumptions refer to the characteristics inherent in the choice of design that guide everything from the choice of

participants to interpretation of the data. Quantitative studies should include both a brief discussion of the philosophical assumptions underlying the choice of method and the implications inherent in that choice, providing a clear rationale for the candidate's methodological choice(s). Qualitative studies should discuss the value of a constructivist approach to understanding a phenomenon and the implications inherent in that choice, providing a clear rationale for the candidate's methodological choice(s). A mixed methods study should include both.

**Limitations.** Limitations refer to the challenges or flaws inherent to the research study, over which the researcher generally has no control. For quantitative studies, these should be discussed with reference to the relevant threats to internal and external validity. For qualitative studies, these should be discussed with reference to credibility, rigor, representativeness, and alignment with the constructivist view. Mixed methods studies should address both.

**Delimitations.** Delimitations refer to challenges or flaws that are induced or produced by the circumstances specific to the candidate's research. The description should address how the study will be narrowed in scope, and should discuss the rationale regarding why some things were done or not done. The focus should be on the conditions and circumstances that the reader would expect to be present that were not present.

### **Data Analysis and Results**

The analysis of the data depends on the research question, the design of the study, and type of data collected (e.g., use of SPSS, NVivo, coding manuals, statistical treatments for quantitative data, content analysis for qualitative data). The structure of the analysis should parallel the structure of the introduction and methodology sections, including hypotheses where employed.

Where multiple hypotheses are tested, the normal presentation is to provide the results concurrently with the data analysis. In most instances, a summary discussion of results should also be included. Analytic interpretation of the results is appropriate; however, discussion of importance and implications of the findings should be addressed in the final section of the dissertation.

### **Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

In the final section, the candidate persuades the reader of the importance of the work. Included is a discussion of the findings and overall analytical conclusions, but the emphasis should be on implications for professional practice, recommendations for implementation, and areas for further research.

## FORMATTING AND WRITING

### Writing Style and the APA Manual

The fundamental guide for doctoral dissertation research writing style is the university-approved edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. This publication will hereafter be referred to as the “APA Manual,” or simply, “the Manual.” Where there are differences between the doctoral dissertation research *Guide* and the APA Manual, the doctoral dissertation research *Guide* will take precedence. Where there are questions, the doctoral dissertation research Committee will resolve the issues. The student is responsible for familiarity with the university-approved edition of the APA Manual, and for ensuring that anyone assisting in the typing or editing of the document is following the rules of the Manual.

The APA Manual includes directions for the reporting of numbers (Sections 4.31-4.40); construction of tables and figures (see sections 5.07-5.30); Manuscript Structure and Content (see sections 2.01-2.13); Checklist for Manuscript Submission (see section 8.07); Levels of Headings (see sections 3.02-3.03); use of non-gender-biased language (see Section 3.12: Reducing Bias by Topic in the APA Manual see Section 3.12-3.17), the continuity in presentation of ideas (see Section 3.05: Writing Style in the APA Manual); and writing style suggestions (see sections 3.06-3.11).

The candidate typically completes multiple drafts of each chapter prior to approval by the doctoral dissertation research Chair and Committee. In some instances, candidates will be encouraged to seek assistance in writing clarity. Any cost of this assistance will be exclusively the candidate’s responsibility. Review of the dissertation chapters is time consuming. Candidates should allow at least two weeks for review, keeping in mind that committee member(s) have multiple responsibilities.

As the document nears completion, typing requirements and APA format must be particularly precise. The tasks at this stage include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Revision of the Problem section to ensure that it mirrors the content of subsequent chapters and that it is written as having been done.
2. Review of Literature Review section and the inclusion of any literature review material added subsequent to the completion of chapters and courses of work. Particular attention should be paid to ensure that the references are all correctly cited and that their corresponding citations are in the reference list.
3. Review and completion of Methodology section, including the addition of any conditions that affected the proposed implementation of the methodology after the defense of the proposal.
4. Review of Data Analysis and Results, including all tables and figures.

5. Review of Discussion of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations, making sure that all research hypotheses are addressed.
6. Preparation of the preliminary pages, appendices, and all other material must conform to the document requirements. Include an Abstract Cover Sheet and an Abstract. Any reprints or copies that are included in the appendices section must be accompanied by the appropriate written permission. Carefully proofread and spell check the entire document. Preliminary pages include:

[File ID S-14: Title Page for the Dissertation](#)

[File ID S-3: Copyright Page](#)

[File ID F-5: Signature Sheet for the Dissertation](#)

[File ID S-4: Cover Sheet for the Abstract of the Dissertation](#)

[File ID S-2: Acknowledgements Page](#)

[File ID S-7: Dedication Page](#)

[File ID S-10: Table of Contents for the Dissertation](#)

[File ID S-13: Table of Tables](#) (If more than four Tables)

[File ID S-12: Table of Figures](#) (If more than four Figures)

[File ID S-9: Table of Appendices](#) (If more than four Appendices)

7. Take a last look at the Title. The title should take into consideration: (a) the precise identification of the problem area, often including specification of independent and dependent variables and identification of the target population; (b) sufficient clarity and conciseness for indexing the title; (c) effective arrangement of the words in the title; and (d) no more than 15 words.

### **Formatting Aspects**

1. References in the reference list should begin with the first line flush left and any additional lines in a single reference indented with a hanging indent of .05 from the left margin (in MS® Word 1997-2003: format/paragraph/special/hanging; in MS® Word 2007 Home tab/Paragraph/Special/Hanging).
2. All type for the doctoral dissertation research will be 12 point in size with the following exceptions: contents of tables (titles are in 12 point), notes to tables and figures, and appendix items; all type shall at least 10 point. All text, tables, and figures will be printed in black and white. No color printing in any document of the doctoral dissertation research process is acceptable, including appendices. Where use of color is essential to the doctoral dissertation research, exceptions may be granted by the committee.
3. Any reprints or copies that are included in the Appendices must be accompanied by the appropriate permission in writing. These will not be included in the dissertation, but they must accompany it. Permission footnotes must also appear in the doctoral dissertation research for the use of any test instruments requiring permission for use.

4. Use of seriation must follow APA requirements (see Section 3.04: Seriation in the APA Manual). Lowercase letters in parentheses are used within a paragraph or sentence to identify three or more elements in a series. To identify separate paragraphs in a list, Arabic numbers followed by a period are used. The numbers are lined up on the left margin, indented .2, and text should line up under text.
5. For chapter number and titles, headings, and levels, the candidate should consult the APA Manual (Section 3.02-3.03: Levels of Headings). Each chapter will begin on a new page. Chapter titles will be at the top margin or 1” down from the top of the page. Chapter titles will be in ALL CAPS (see AU Deviations from APA Style).
6. Note that there are two spaces after punctuation marks at the end of a sentence, although there is one space after periods that separate parts of a reference citation and periods of the initials in personal names (Section 4.01: Spacing After Punctuation Marks).
7. Careful attention must be paid to the levels of headings (see APA Manual). Heading placement is similar to outlining a document. Each level subsumes the level below it.
8. All dissertations must be reviewed by a university-approved editor prior to submission of the final electronic copy of the dissertation.

#### **AU Deviations from APA Style**

1. Because of the length of the doctoral dissertation research, AU will add a heading level for chapter titles, preliminary pages, and ending matter, which will be ALL CAPS. The next level under the chapter title will be the level 1 heading.
2. Block quotations, table titles, figure captions, notes to the tables and figures, and references in the reference list should be single-spaced with an extra space dividing these individual items from text or entries above and below them. All other parts of the doctoral dissertation research should be double-spaced.
3. Times Roman, a *serif* typeface, and Arial or Tahoma, *sans serif typefaces*, are the only fonts acceptable for the document.
4. Running heads will not be used in doctoral dissertation research.
5. Short tables and figures should not be divided between two pages. If the space remaining on the page is insufficient to accommodate the entire table, the table should be placed as close to its first reference as possible. Care should be taken not to leave “white space” at the bottom of a page. If a table extends over more than one page, the table should begin at the top margin of the first page (see Table 5.15 for example pages). At the bottom of the page, place a right justified (continued) note. At the top of the following page, repeat the Table title followed by (continued). Table title

should be in 12-point font; however, contents of the table may be in a smaller font as well as notes to tables and figures.

6. Margin requirements are:
  - a. 1.5 inches left margin
  - b. 1 inch right margin
  - c. 1 inch at the top and bottom
7. Headings on the Table of Contents will appear in unbolded, unitalicized type. There will be an extra space after preliminary pages, before each chapter title, and before the ending pages.

If there are **five levels** of headings in addition to the chapter title, they should be placed as illustrated). Chapter titles always begin on a new page.

### **Headings**

#### **CHAPTER TITLES ARE ALL CAPS AND BOLDFACE**

**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase, and Lowercase Heading (Level 1)**

**Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase, and Lowercase (Level 2)**

**Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.** Text follows immediately (Level 3)

***Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase ending with a period.*** Text follows immediately. (Level 4)

***Indented, italicized, all lowercase ending with period.*** Text follows immediately (Level 5)

(Note: if a proper noun is to appear in the level 4 heading, it is capitalized.)

If there are only **four levels** of headings in addition to the chapter title, they should be placed as follows:

#### **CHAPTER TITLES ARE ALL CAPS AND BOLDFACE**

**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase, and Lowercase Heading (Level 1)**

**Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase, and Lowercase (Level 2)**

**Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.** Text follows immediately (Level 3)

*Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase ending with a period.* Text follows immediately. (Level 4)

If there are **three levels** of headings in addition to the chapter title, they should be placed as follows:

**CHAPTER TITLES ARE ALL CAPS AND BOLDFACE**

**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase, and Lowercase Heading** (Level 1)

**Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase, and Lowercase** (Level 2)

**Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.** Text follows immediately (Level 3)

If there are **two levels** of headings in addition to the chapter title, they should be placed as follows:

**CHAPTER TITLES ARE ALL CAPS AND BOLDFACE**

**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase, and Lowercase Heading** (Level 1)

**Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase, and Lowercase** (Level 2)

A careful examination of the APA Manual for level placement needs to be made to ensure that all headings appear in the appropriate places in the document so that the document is easy to read and understand.

**Table of Contents**

All chapter titles and APA level 1, 2, and 3 headings, if used, must be included in the Table of Contents. Although headings are bolded in the body of the dissertation, they will not be bolded in the Table of Contents (see [File ID S-10: Table of Contents for the Dissertation](#)). A brief discussion of headings is included in the previous section of this document. Chapter titles are to be in ALL CAPITAL letters on the Table of Contents. The preliminary page headings and the reference list and appendix headings should be ALL CAPS headings at the same level as the chapter titles on the Table of Contents lining them up on the left margin (also see section on AU Deviations from APA Style). Further information about headings can be found in the APA Manual. A sample table of contents is included in Appendix K of this document. This is only a guide. The organization of sections may vary based on the research topic and study. It is possible to construct a dynamic Table of Contents Using MS® Word (see [File ID I-1: How to Use Microsoft Word to Construct a Table of Contents](#)).

When more than four tables or four figures are used, they should be listed in a Table of Tables (see [File ID S-13: Table of Tables](#)), a Table of Figures (see [File ID S-12: Table of Figures](#)), or the Table of Tables and the Table of Figures can both appear on a single page immediately following the Table of Contents.

Any material that follows the Table of Contents should be listed on the Table of Contents. Front matter preceding the Table of Content and the Table of Contents itself should not appear in the Table of Contents.

## **Tables and Figures**

The candidate is responsible to include APA style tables and figures. This section is not intended to be exhaustive but highlights some useful tips.

### **Tables**

Tables in APA style include three horizontal lines: one above the heading, one below the heading, and one at the bottom of the table. Exceptions to this include a table that exceeds one full page. In that case, see Table 5.15 for example pages. This table illustrates the beginning of a table that extends over more than one page. At the bottom of the page, place a right justified (continued) note. At the top of the following page, repeat the table title followed by (continued). Table titles go above the table (see, for example, Tables 2 and 3).

Tables 2 and 3 illustrate correctly formatted tables. The Insert Table feature in Word is very helpful in constructing tables.

Table 2  
*Commonly Used Statistical Symbols*

Abbreviation symbol	Definition
<i>ANCOVA</i>	Analysis of covariance
<i>ANOVA</i>	Analysis of variance (univariate)
<i>D</i>	Cohen's measure of effect size
<i>df</i>	Degrees of freedom
<i>f</i>	Frequency
<i>M</i>	Mean (arithmetic average)
<i>MANOVA</i>	Multivariate analysis of variance
<i>n</i>	Number in subsample
<i>N</i>	Total number in sample
<i>p</i>	Probability
<i>r</i>	Pearson product-moment correlation
$r^2$	Pearson product-moment correlation squared; coefficient of determination
<i>R</i>	Multiple correlation; also composite rank, a significance test
$R^2$	Multiple correlation squared; measure of strength of relationship
<i>SD</i>	Standard deviation
<i>t</i>	Computed value of <i>t</i> test
<i>z</i>	Standards score; difference between one value in a distribution and the mean of the distribution divided by the <i>SD</i>
$\alpha$	Alpha; probability of a Type I error; Cronbach's index of internal consistency
$\beta$	Beta; probability of a Type II error; (1- $\beta$ is statistical power); standardized multiple
$\eta^2$	Eta squared; measure of strength of relationship
$\chi^2$	Computed value of a chi-square test

Table 3  
*The Use of Fonts in APA Publication Figures*

	Figures		
	Journal articles	Manuscripts	CRPs
San serif	Yes	No	Yes
Serif	No	Yes	No

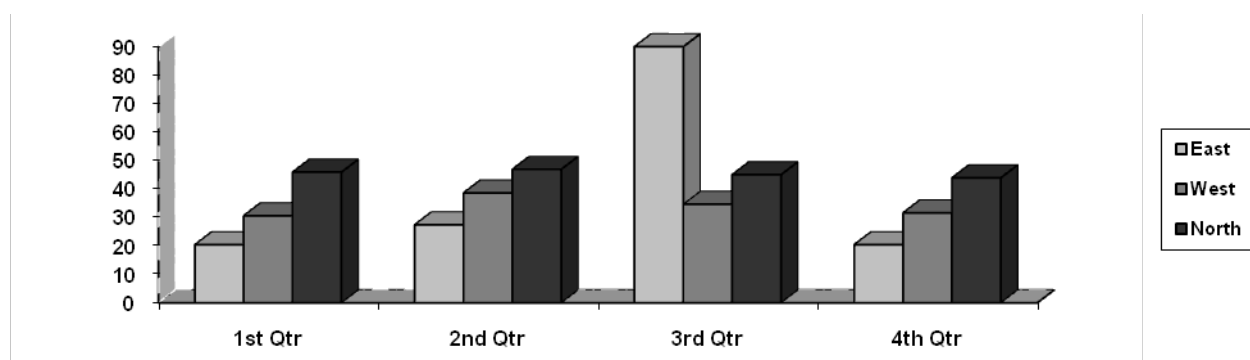
*Note.* See APA Publication Manual for type and size of font to be used in these publication types. Fonts are referenced on pages 228-229.

## Figures

Figures should be included to enhance the text, and they should concentrate information. The APA Manual defines types of figures and has examples illustrating correct APA format for differing figure types.

In doctoral dissertation research, figure requirements for these documents are covered in Chapter 5 in Section 5.20: Principles of Figure Use and Construction. The most critical information covered in this section is the direction to place your figure in the text, not at the end of the document. The figure can appear on the page where it is first mentioned or on the next page. Figures are numbered consecutively throughout your document. Figure captions are placed below the figure.

When looking at the examples listed in the APA Manual, note that many of the figures have footnotes listing the reference for the source of the figure. Many of the examples are figures that were used in published material and are good examples of proper copyright permission footnotes.



*Figure 1.* Breakdown by quarter of East, West, and North divisions of the postsecondary education market.

## Computer Software and Submission Requirements for the Doctoral Dissertation

### Research

Argosy University has adopted *Microsoft® Word* as the standard for its word processing operations. Candidates are also required to submit a copy of the final dissertation in an electronic format, in *Microsoft® Word*, along with the Statement of Copyright Release form granting permission for the university to reprint copies as needed (see [File ID F-6: Statement of Copyright Release](#)). Candidates may also be requested to submit electronic copies of their raw data. The professionally edited final dissertation will be submitted to the University's dissertation archive database. Click [here](#) for more information.

## **Pagination for Front Matter and Dissertation Pages**

1. Front matter should be the same font and type size as the rest of the dissertation. The title page is not paginated but is counted.
2. To change the numbering between the front pages and Chapter 1: In Word 1997-2003 go to insert/break/section break next page/ either at the very end of the dedication page or at the very beginning of Chapter 1. Then insert page numbers in the top of the page/right within the preliminary pages before inserting page numbers in the body of the document. Uncheck the box that says “show numbers on first page” in the preliminary pages. Recheck that box within the body of the document and click on the format button. Select start at page 1 within the body of the document. If you are using Word 2007, go to the Page Layout tab, click on breaks, and select a next page section break. Then go to the Insert Tab, find Page Number, and insert your page numbers in the top right of the page. Do this in the front pages first. Use the format page number option to select lower case roman numerals for the front pages. Then select header, edit header, and click on different first page. This allows your first page to be counted but not numbered. Next, move to the body of the document, under the Insert Tab, insert page numbers and select format page number so that you can choose 1, 2, 3 and start at page 1.

## **Preliminary and Ending Matter**

### **Preliminary or Front Matter Components**

The following dissertation components come before the dissertation text and are considered preliminary or front matter.

The page numbers of these components are formatted as roman numerals. The title page number is counted but not displayed by checking the “Different First Page checkbox in the header and footer properties of Word.

The order of the preliminary or front matter is shown below:

<u>Dissertation Component</u>	<u>Form/Sample File ID</u>
Title Page for the Dissertation	<a href="#">File ID S-14</a>
Copyright Page	<a href="#">File ID S-3</a>
Signature Sheet for the Dissertation	<a href="#">File ID F-5</a>
Cover Sheet for the Abstract of the Dissertation	<a href="#">File ID S-4</a>
Abstract	<a href="#">File ID S-1</a>
Acknowledgements (optional)	<a href="#">File ID S-2</a>
Dedication (optional)	<a href="#">File ID S-7</a>
Table of Contents for the Dissertation	<a href="#">File ID S-10</a>
Table of Tables (If more than four Tables)	<a href="#">File ID S-13</a>

Table of Figures (If more than four Figures)  
Table of Appendices (If more than four Appendices)

[File ID S-12](#)  
[File ID S-9](#)

### **Dissertation Text**

CHAPTER ONE: ETC

### **Ending Matter**

Following the dissertation text, the ending matter components appear as shown below. The page numbers of these components continue the Arabic numbering of the dissertation text.

REFERENCES  
Cover Sheet for Appendices  
Cover Sheet for Individual Appendix

[File ID S-8](#)  
[File ID S-5](#)  
[File ID S-6](#)

## APPENDIX

For a full list of Dissertation Forms, Samples, and Supplementary Documents mentioned in the Doctoral Dissertation Research Guide, please visit:

<http://library.argosy.edu/misc/disspdf/guideline/appendices/>.