

Part I of Proposal Writing Package

Syllabus

RES: 985: DISSERTATION PROPOSAL (4 credits)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to write an approved doctoral dissertation proposal in the standard format containing the specifications required for doctoral research. The research proposal will be at least 20 pages in length with one half devoted to the background and literature review and the second half devoted to the Design of the Research Study. The standard, doctoral dissertation format as set out in the accompanying Part II mimeo material "Parts of a Dissertation Proposal" will be required. Students will begin with selecting a topic of interest and proceed to clearly define the problem statement and the research hypotheses/questions for their research. Students will write a comprehensive review of the literature, including a review of other dissertation research related to their study. Students are expected to develop a design of their study with a discussion of the methodology to be used including selection of a sample, instrumentation and its testing, sources of data and the data collection process. Students will describe how their data will be treated and analyzed, and the significance and limitations of their study.

PREREQUISITES

Completion of a minimum of 36 required credits of coursework including the major, minor, and research preparation modules.

COURSE TOPICS

- Standard Requirements of a Dissertation Proposal
- The Topic and Researchable areas for study
- Defining The Problem Statement, its importance as the foundation of the dissertation.
- Hypotheses or Questions
- Writing a Review of the Literature as a Case for the Study
- Utilizing a Theoretical Model
- Terms and Definition
- Design of Study
- Sources of Data
- Sampling and Population
- Instrumentation and Testing
- Analysis of Data and Treatment of Data
- Significance of the Study
- Limitations of the Study
- Drawing Conclusions from Findings
- Importance of making Recommendations for Further Research

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course students will have demonstrated competencies in writing an approved doctoral dissertation proposal, which will comprise:

1. A clearly defined problem statement, hypotheses/questions for their doctoral research project.
2. A review of the literature, in the area of their study, which builds a case for their research.
3. An appropriate research design for their doctoral research project.
4. Identification of the sources from which to collect the data.
5. A discussion of procedures for collecting their data for the study.
6. A selection of a sample from a population/ justification of a case for case study research.
7. A tested and appropriate instrument for his/her research (if applicable).
8. A statement of appropriate techniques to be used for analyzing data of their study.
9. A statement of the limitations of their study.
10. A statement of the significance of their study

REQUIRED STUDY MATERIALS

Sample of Doctoral Research Proposal included in Course Package

Slade, Carol , *Form and Style*, Research Papers, Reports, Theses, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. Eleventh (2000) or Twelfth Edition, 2003. This manual is required for writing your dissertation. You may find used copies of the text at Amazon.com and other online booksellers.

Madsen, David, *Successful Dissertations and Theses, A Guide to Graduate Student Research from Proposal to Completion*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1992 or most recent edition. (Note: The sample proposal on pages 56-61 is not an approved sample for Akamai University).

For Referencing: Select one of the following:

- Turabian, Kate, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (any recent edition)
- American Psychological Association, *APA Manual of Style*, Washington, DC.

RECOMMENDED STUDY MATERIALS

The recommended study materials will change depending on discipline.

Babbie, Earl R., *Survey Research Methods*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, (any edition)

Burgess, Robert G. (Ed.) *Strategies of Educational Research*, Philadelphia: The Falmer Press, 1985.

Cresswell, John, *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*, Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, 2002.

Davis, Gordon B., and Clyde A. Parker, *Writing the Doctoral Dissertation: A Systematic Approach, Barrons Educational Series*, New York: Woodbury, Second Edition, 1997.

Fox, David J., *The Research Process In Education*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, (any edition).

Kerlinger, Fred N. *Foundations of Behavioral Research*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., (any edition).

Merriam, Sharan B., *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1998.

Sax, Gilbert, *Foundations of Educational Research*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, (any edition).

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1

Make contact with your Committee Chair and discuss your ideas for your doctoral dissertation. Review the sample proposal provided in your materials, and Chapter 3 “Selecting and Shaping the Research Topic” in Madsen, focusing on the criteria for the selection of a problem in your research. Also Madsen Discuss with your instructor your ideas for your doctoral dissertation project. Write out your topic /area of investigation and any of the Study Design that you have thought about for your instructor to comment on. Begin your review of the literature on your topic. Subscribe to Akamai Questia Media Library and also use any local libraries to do a search of books and the Reader’s Guide and Education Indexes for appropriate articles on your topic. Do a search of dissertation abstracts for dissertations in the area of your study at

<http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/search>

Send your ideas about your doctoral project to your committee members for feedback.

Assignment #2

Working on the comments and suggestions from your instructor work with your topic to more clearly define problem statement and hypothesis and questions. Read Chapter 4 of Madsen, “Preparing the Research Proposal.” Also read Chapter 6 “Using the Library.” Search the Dissertation Abstracts to identify other dissertation projects in your topical area. Continue to review the literature for research articles, books, reports that have been completed on the topic and their findings, conclusions and recommendations for further research. Read the readings on writing a research proposal. Write out your ideas for a problem statement and the need for the research in the area with any ideas about your study design and send to your committee members for comments.

Assignment #3

Continue working on clearly defining your problem statement and reviewing the literature to present the case for research on the problem you wish to investigate. Develop your background or orientation to the problem. Working with your Committee, discuss your problem statement and hypothesis or questions. Read Chapter 5 of Madsen, "Employing Basic Sources and Techniques." Include other references on appropriate types of research methods. Prepare a draft, which includes the sections, Introduction, Problem Statement, Hypothesis/Questions and Review of the Literature. Sketch out your ideas for the design of your study. Send a draft to your committee members. Your committee will comment and provide further suggestions.

Assignment #4

Working on the comments from your committee members, develop a research design for your dissertation. Refer to the readings to read about designing a research study. Write out a draft of your research design, include the sample from a population, or a case, include a copy of your draft questionnaire, and how you will collect the data. Review sample proposals. Discuss your design with your Committee. Present a draft of your proposal following the outline presented in the handout materials.

Assignment #5

Working from the suggestions made by your Committee to your draft outline refine your research design and if you are using an instrument test it. Write your data collection section. Discuss how you will collect your data giving the data sources. Write any cover letters to respondents and to any persons that must give you permission to access any materials for your study. Send your research design to your committee members for review and feedback.

Assignment #6

Complete your draft proposal and send to your Committee members for comment. Working from those comments prepare your final proposal. Send to committee for approval and/or further comments. Finalize your doctoral dissertation proposal by signing and following instructions from your Committee Chair.

FACULTY –STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS**Telephone Contacts**

Students will contact their Committee within one week of the enrollment of the course. This initial contact will help familiarize the student and Committee members with each other, and permit the transmission of clear expectations for completion of course requirements. Periodic telephone interaction, required course materials, mailings, and postage at student's expense throughout the duration of the course.

Email Communication

Frequent email communications between student and instructor should be initiated and sustained for the duration of the course.

Alternative Communications

Students may initiate and send communications or materials via postal service as appropriate.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE

Students should schedule completion of Assignment #1 during the first two weeks. Each assignment should be completed on a timely basis with completion of Assignment # 6 during or before the final or 17 week. Normally the first four weeks are for students to orient themselves to the expectations, obtain study materials and make contact with their committee members. The entire four credit hour course should be completed by the end of 17 weeks.

GRADING SYSTEM

For this course, grading will be based on the following assessments (Total 140 points):

- Assignment #1: (20 points)
Clarity of ideas toward developing a doctoral research project.
- Assignment #2: (20 points)
Progress on implementation of instructor suggestions on clarity of definition of problem and hypothesis and questions. Progress on review of the literature.
- Assignment #3: (20 points)
Progress in development of the review of literature in building a case for the research.
- Assignment #4: (20 points)
Progress on review of literature and development of methodology .
- Assignment #5: (30 points)
Progress in Study Design.
- Assignment #6: (30 points)
Finalization of Proposal. 30 points.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE

The following timeline is suggested for completion of the Assignments

Assignment 1 Complete by end of second week of course
Assignment 2 Complete by end of fourth week of course
Assignment 3 Complete by end of eighth week of course
Assignment 4 Complete by end of twelfth week of course
Assignment 5 Complete by end of fifteenth week of course
Assignment 6 Complete by end of seventeenth week of course

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Committee Chair or the University administration shall provide the names of the Committee Members and the contact information for each.