



The Professional School of Psychology
Dissertation Manual
Use with 6th Edition APA Publication Manual

**Introduction:
The Dissertation Framework and Process**

The purpose of this manual is to provide a major source of support and guidance through the dissertation process. The APA Manual, your Dissertation Chair, your Dissertation Committee, and probably other students also will help you steer through the long series of decisions and considerations required to complete such a project. This Dissertation Manual reflects current School policy regarding doctoral dissertations and supersedes the APA Publication Manual, which primarily is intended to guide submissions for publication. In addition, this manual includes PSP's regulations, procedures, and forms. Changes in procedure and policy are possible during the period in which you are working on your dissertation. Major changes will be distributed to you in the form of revised editions of the Dissertation Manual. Small changes in dissertation policy or procedure typically will be communicated by memo. If you become aware of issues that could be clarified by the Manual, please convey those to the administration.

The School also accepts the completion of a "project" in lieu of a dissertation. One of the main requirements of the project is that it be of the same scholarly quality as a dissertation. In other words, demonstration of knowledge, creativity, logical thought, and critical analysis are expected at the same level as with the dissertation. A number of factors may affect your choice between dissertation and project. First, your decision might be affected by which you think will be most valuable for your future professional career. The dissertation probably will be especially valuable in honing your ability to evaluate future research. A quantitative dissertation probably will help prepare you for the statistics part of the written licensure exam. In fact many graduates have felt that their understanding of statistics and research methods gelled from the dissertation experience. In addition, if you anticipate ever being involved in research or working in a setting which involves research, the dissertation will enable you to list research

experience on your resume. For others the project may mesh better with interests and also may open doors to a particular career pathway. Before opting to go one direction or the other, you should give some hard thought to which you would prefer to do and which would be best for your future career.

While quantitative dissertations typically follow the organization shown in this manual, non-quantitative dissertations may require a totally different organization. To provide additional guidance to students doing non-quantitative dissertations, examples of such dissertations completed previously at PSP, including a list of particularly helpful examples is available for your reference in the library.

This manual is particularly salient for students doing a traditional quantitative dissertation. The first part of the manual emphasizes completion of the proposal (primarily the Introduction and Methods chapters) and the second part provides guidance for the finalized dissertation. Since information on the Introduction and Methods sections is provided in the proposal part of the manual, less information on these sections are provided in the second part of the manual, which primarily emphasizes the Results and Discussion chapters of the dissertation and formatting issues.

Compared to the coursework and exams already completed, the doctoral dissertation (or project) requires a more global type of involvement with a large body of information relatively unique to your chosen project. As a result, the dissertation involves functioning more independently and with less external structure. However, this relative independence affords the opportunity for greater creativity and expression of individual ideas which can make significant contributions to individual learning. As daunting as this opportunity can appear, the individual parts of the project can be viewed as

extensions of the type of work that already has been accomplished within the doctoral program.

In fact, the actual dissertation process naturally falls into separate efforts. Completing the proposal is the first of these efforts. Typically, this entails justifying your proposed project and summarizing your exact intentions in the introduction, describing how you plan to carry out your project in the Method section, explaining your proposed statistical (or other) method for organizing the information you acquire as Proposed Data Analysis, and compiling references. Once the proposal is finished and approved by your Dissertation Committee, you will be assigned a Pass grade for the Dissertation Design class.

You can begin collecting data after receiving approval of the three required forms (Dissertation Committee Designation Approval, Dissertation Proposal Approval, and the Human Subjects Review Committee Approval). At this point your focus will turn to the day-to-day logistics of gathering data. This is followed by the data analysis, which is summarized in the Results section. This is followed by the Discussion section, where you have the opportunity to make meaning of the new information. This meaning should be both in the context of the dissertation and in the context of building on your findings in future studies. The ultimate and defining task of the dissertation is to integrate all aspects of your dissertation into one major product that is internally consistent (the parts make sense with each other and within the whole) and which reflects the knowledge, skill, creativity, and critical analysis which doctoral education represents.

Ultimately, discovering that you can use your long investment in learning and reasoned judgment to replace amorphous bits of information with a new and organized

whole should add to your own confidence and sense of accomplishment.

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THE DISSERTATION: AN OVERVIEW

The Professional School of Psychology is committed to providing an education and conducting assessments of the student's work that are closely tied to the work the student is now doing and/or will be doing when graduating from the school. This commitment is embedded in the very name of the school—we are about preparing our graduates for the profession of psychology. Like other venues for assessing the performance and competency of our students, the dissertation process is intended to be an “authentic” process that is closely aligned with the work that a graduate is actually likely to do upon receiving a graduate degree from the school.

In keeping with this commitment to authentic assessment, the school offers students two options with regard to completion of the dissertation requirement for the Doctor of Psychology degree. One option is the traditional production of a single document (the dissertation) which provides evidence of the student's mastery of psychological research and scholarship. The second option is production of three published articles.

The doctoral dissertation must address a well-defined question, problem, or issue which merits investigation. The kind of investigation to be conducted depends upon the nature of the question being asked as well as the current state of knowledge and understanding of that question. There is no general rule of right or wrong for type of project or type of design. The criteria for evaluating a proposed research design are: (a) is the question important and of potential significance to psychological knowledge and/or practice; (b) is the design appropriate to the question and to the current state of knowledge; (c) is the project feasible? (See Appendix B, Guidelines for the Evaluation of Dissertation Proposals and Dissertations, for more information on the criteria faculty generally use in assessing dissertation projects.)

In the past, PSP students generally did empirical dissertations. "Empirical," as used here, means "pertaining to or derived from experience." Empirical research includes, but is not limited to, experimental research or "quasi-experimental" research, which is more typical of social science research, where variables are less controlled than in the harder sciences. Nevertheless, this type of research typically involves a quantitative data analysis which can suggest a pattern of relationships between or among variables. This approach is valuable for determining common patterns rather than unusual patterns. The exception to the ordinary is merely reflected in the error term of the statistics. Quantitative analysis usually is not the method of choice for analyzing unusual or individualistic patterns.

Today, many PSP students have chosen to conduct dissertation projects involving methods and perspectives that are not primarily quantitative in nature and might not involve any statistical analyses. In some cases, the dissertations involve qualitative analyses. These analyses can be useful for uncovering unknown or idiosyncratic patterns among variables that may not have been previously studied or even considered for study. In many ways, this is a more exploratory process leading to the construction of hypotheses rather than being driven by already constructed hypotheses. In fact, because the data are in the form of words rather than numbers, generally the emphasis is on depth of understanding rather than breadth of information, the latter being more readily covered by statistical analysis. The goal of qualitative research is to identify categories and to find themes that can lead to further exploration. Study of clinical populations often is more readily done through qualitative analysis because the available subject pool frequently is too small in size to meet standards for quantitative analysis.

Another version of a qualitative analysis is the case study, where there may be only one

individual studied. In this approach, even more depth is expected. One example of a case study is a psychobiography, which seeks to explain the individual's pattern of development through biographical information interpreted from a psychological point of view.

At the extreme end of the quantitative-qualitative spectrum is a "theoretical" dissertation. A theoretical dissertation is not an extended review of the literature in a particular field, nor is it the simple presentation of a new theoretical perspective. Instead it is a closely reasoned and persuasively argued critical synthesis of existing research and theory in a given topic area. The goal is to be able to propose a new way of organizing existing information. Theoretical dissertations, to be acceptable, must meet the same standards of conceptualization and presentation as empirical studies. Those standards typically are more difficult to achieve in theoretical studies than in those that deal with less abstract data. Conceptualization is apt to be more complex and the review of the literature usually requires a much more comprehensive approach than does an empirical study. Good theoretical work requires very strong writing skills and a very good ability to keep the project focused. Finally, theoretical dissertations tend to take students longer to complete than empirical studies.

Most commonly students will identify target populations, clinical or otherwise, and then find representative samples from which data can be collected. Another approach is to draw upon data previously collected or archival data, as long as the project is unique, original, and involves analysis of a problem not previously studied with the data. A project that, in part, tests previously demonstrated findings in order to confirm or disconfirm them can also be an acceptable project as long as it also contains at least one additional element that enables the project to be viewed as an original contribution that furthers understanding of the issue.

PLANNING THE DISSERTATION

Before you receive your doctoral degree you probably will go through many revisions of part or your entire dissertation. These revisions will range from complete rewrites of chapters or sections to final editing. Most of the reworking will be to improve clarity and grammar. But some of your revision is likely to involve adding, deleting, or rearranging material. You should take this fact into consideration when you are planning your timeline and pacing your work.

Consultation

Ideally, your dissertation committee should be constituted so that you have the support and help you will need in terms of the topic area or problem, research methods, and the process of conducting and writing up your research. It is not uncommon to obtain advice on content from outside sources as well, even though your committee should be able to provide most of what you need. Occasionally, however, there may be an expert in the field, who lives outside the local area, but who might have a major interest in your project and would consent to meeting with you and discussing your dissertation. It probably is a good idea to obtain advice from your committee chair in using outside consultation.

There are three areas in which students might seek extra assistance: writing and editing, statistical analysis, and use of computers. The least likely of the three areas to warrant the use of outside consultation is writing and editing. Although there is tremendous variation in the quality of writing among professionals, anyone with a doctorate should be able to express ideas clearly and to use formal language appropriately and accurately. The APA Publication Manual provides extremely useful guidance regarding style and clarity of writing.

Consultation in the use of computers or statistics can be appropriate. It is important to keep in mind that consultants who are unfamiliar with psychology sometimes can have difficulty, despite their expertise in statistics, in grasping the essence of your research, especially if it is at all complicated. More and more there has been a proliferation of complicated statistical processes that would not be understood by most readers. In this light the APA's Board of Scientific Affairs Task Force recommends that researchers use methods of data analysis that are "minimally sufficient." In other words, you should not add complexity where it is not needed. Your Dissertation Chair should be able to guide you toward reasonable statistical techniques that are well within the understandable range of those reading your work.

Costs

Producing a dissertation can be an expensive business, and you should take that fact into consideration in your planning. Following are some of the costs normally involved in the dissertation project:

Typing/ word processing.

Copying/reproduction: Each part of your dissertation, beginning with the proposal, is likely to go through several drafts, and each must be copied for the members of your committee. The final product requires multiple copies for filing—though in most cases the drafts can be sent digitally.

Computerized literature search and copies of journal articles.

Computer costs and data analysis.

Communication and travel: If you are mailing questionnaires to subjects, gathering data in different parts of the country, getting consultation by long-distance telephone, communication and mail expenses can be high.

Instruments and scoring: If you are using a standardized copyrighted instrument, you will have to purchase copies. If your instrument requires standardized or computerized scoring, you will have to pay for that service.

Research assistance: If you are using interviewers or coders, they should be paid and this will add to your expenses.

The average doctoral student in psychology probably spends between \$1,500.00 and \$3,000.00 on the dissertation. Some projects are more expensive than others.

The Dissertation Committee

The doctoral degree is granted by PSP on the recommendation of the faculty. The faculty, in turn, depends upon the dissertation committee to ensure that the student's research meets the standards established and expected by PSP. At PSP the dissertation committee consists of the chair and typically two other members. (Additional readers are allowed but not necessarily recommended, especially if this results in rather fragmented or excessively contradictory guidance for the student.) In addition to monitoring the quality of the student's work, the dissertation committee provides guidance and consultation to the student in all phases of the doctoral research.

In assembling your committee, you should look for at least three persons who (a)

qualify to serve on PSP dissertation committees, (b) possess expertise in areas in which you will require advice and/or assistance (either substantive or methodological), (c) are willing to serve on your committee, and (d) will be available to consult with you throughout the course of the dissertation process.

It is extremely important that your committee members are able to work well together. Therefore, it is a good idea to ensure that each member know who the other members are. In addition, the chair needs to formally approve the other members of your committee.

Once the dissertation committee has been established and its members have agreed to your proposal, its composition is considered relatively fixed and permanent, barring unforeseen circumstances. However, if you find during the dissertation process that you and some member of your committee differ seriously about the nature of the project, member roles, or expectations of you, you may both seek a change in committee membership. Such a change is initiated by discussion of the problem with the administration. Students should be aware that changing the membership of the dissertation committee once the project is underway can cause major delays in the progress. Therefore, a change should be sought only in the case of a truly intractable problem.

Dissertation Chairperson

The chairperson of your dissertation committee is your primary source of guidance, and the School's primary guarantor of quality. Specifically, the chair is responsible for (a) supervising you in all phases of the dissertation process, (b) carrying out any administrative or liaison functions as necessary, and (c) chairing meetings of the

dissertation committee. Your chair should be someone whose judgment you respect and whose criticisms you can accept.

Your chair is there to advise, guide, and support you in producing a piece of research that will reflect credit on both of you. Your chair is a source of information on what is academically appropriate or required. He or she also is there to aid you in finding creative and pragmatic solutions to any problems you encounter.

In identifying a potential chair, you should also consider how you work best and discuss with faculty members how they like to work. For instance, some students prefer to work very autonomously, and to present their committee members with written work in fairly final form for critique and suggestions for revision. Others prefer a closer working relationship, with regular meetings to discuss the progress of the project. Faculty members also have their preferred ways of working. Some like to be involved throughout the data collection and analysis, while others want to work only with written drafts in close-to-finished form. It is essential that your chair's preferences in these matters be compatible with yours. Similar discussions should be held with all committee members and a group understanding of the way that you will work together should be established early.

Requirements for Selecting a Chair

Since the School has access to numerous individuals, who are not faculty members or are not Professors or Associate Professors, and who are very qualified to chair dissertations and are interested in doing so, the School allows other qualified individuals to become chairs if approved by the Academic Committee. General guidelines in determining who is eligible to be a chair are that the individual must have

had research experience at least equivalent to having been a reader on two previous dissertation committees and sufficient knowledge to serve in this leadership role.

Although the School will not consider that you officially have a chair for your dissertation until you have advanced to candidacy, there is nothing to prevent you from consulting with potential chairs while you are developing your proposal. Often ideas for research will come to you in the course of your earlier studies. So that your time is not wasted thinking about a project that is not feasible or that has already been done, you should feel free to consult with faculty members at any time about the merit of a potential research project.

Dissertation Readers [Committee Members]

Committee members, or readers as they also are called, may be PSP faculty, or they may be other professionals or researchers. Committee members ordinarily hold doctoral degrees in fields requiring the writing of a dissertation (most often in psychology, frequently in one of the other social sciences), though it is permissible to include as members, professionals with other academic preparation if they have special expertise. For example, health psychology studies might include physicians as committee members. A study using epidemiological methods might include an M.P.H. Often readers are selected based on their area of expertise. In general, it is a good idea to have most of the knowledge base needed for guidance represented by the committee.

Working with your Dissertation Committee

Before the collection of data is begun, you should discuss all aspects of your proposed project with each of your committee members and come to an agreement as a group on any revisions that must be made before you can proceed to collect data, and on any

revisions that will need to be made in writing the dissertation itself. Your committee members should sign your Synopsis and Agreement Form, indicating their commitment to work with you on the research as it is proposed.

Generally, your contract with your dissertation chair and committee is for one year, unless in your proposed timeline you project a longer period of time and your committee agrees to commit to the longer time. If you become stalled and your process extends beyond the timeline identified in your proposal, your committee members have the right to withdraw from your committee, in which case you will need to renegotiate a committee agreement.

It is also important to realize that the dissertation is primarily your responsibility. As a result, you need to be prepared to be the coordinator of this project. When submitting material to your committee, it is perfectly acceptable to ask your committee members when to expect comments from them. Since they probably have fairly packed professional lives, they may not always be able to meet your desired deadline. At the same time, it is your responsibility to keep the process moving and perfectly acceptable to give polite reminders.

On the practical level, most professionals receive a considerable amount of mail and many papers requiring their attention. You can help your committee members keep track of your submissions amidst an accumulation of paper clutter by dating and labeling your submissions. Often a student turns in a number of revisions. In time it is very easy for the committee member to lose track of which is the latest revision if it is not identified.

Another potential problem is that at times you may get conflicting advice from

different committee members who do not realize they are creating such a problem for you. If you find yourself in this situation, it is up to you to approach your committee and let them know of the dilemma. If it seems important to meet to resolve any differences or if having the members contact each other would be helpful, it certainly is acceptable for you to facilitate this or ask your chair to do so.

Be proactive in resolving dilemmas. If you have strong feelings about a given topic or approach it is best for that to be known early so that committee members can consider your input and its reasoning or, in the worst case, if there is a true impasse, to step off your committee. At the same time, it is important for you to realize that all your committee members will need to put their name on the finished product. Therefore, it is reasonable for them to disagree with you, if they feel strongly, and to insist on an alternative. It is reasonable for committee members to ask for modifications.

THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

The dissertation process at PSP generally begins after the student has been advanced to candidacy. They then identify their dissertation chair and members of their dissertation committee. Together with the chair and committee, the student prepares the dissertation proposal, and upon completion of the proposal and approval of the proposal by the chair and committee members, the student is awarded credit for the dissertation research design course.

The proposal itself should consist of a clear statement of the research problem and question(s), placed in the context of previous research in order to establish its significance, and a precise description of the research design through which the research question(s) will be addressed. This should include methods of data collection and data analysis.

The dissertation proposal provides the reader with a clear, detailed, and explicit description of the objectives of your research, the rationale for conducting it, and the methods you will use to collect and analyze data. The proposal should be written in narrative (that is, not outline) form. In addition, at the proposal stage, only previous research and ideas have already happened.

Therefore, only those parts of the proposal which refer to past research or theory should be written in past tense. Findings or ideas which appear to have enduring truth should be written in the present tense. What you propose to do (particularly the Methods section) should be written in the future tense. While much of the content in the proposal will be part of the completed dissertation, you will need to submit much of the proposal itself in the future tense. The past tense should be used in the final draft, since the events (meaning all the procedures you implemented in the process of doing the research) by then have happened. But, for the proposal itself, a method section written in the past

tense implies that you collected data before your proposal had all the necessary approvals, a major ethical violation. Typically, a proposal will contain the following sections.

Introduction

This section includes (a) background and literature review, (b) a clear statement of the problem or issue, including its relevance to the discipline and practice of psychology, (c) goals of the study, (d) definitions of key terms, and (e) a clear statement of the thesis under study or the hypotheses to be tested. The reiterated use of "clear" here is intentional. Your descriptions of your problem and thesis must be readily comprehensible to a professional audience with no particular expertise in your topic area.

Statement of the Issue to be addressed (Justification)

In a sense this section is the introduction to the Literature Review. It is here that the need for study of the problem is brought to the attention of the reader. Ideally this is written in a way that automatically leads the reader to the Literature Review; In particular this section will talk about why the proposed study is worth doing, typically including a statement to the effect that this part of the topic has not been studied previously. In addition, this section should explain the potential value of doing the proposed study.

Literature Review

The bulk of your literature review should provide a context for your research questions and hypotheses. The literature review section is devoted to a review and critical analysis of the relevant theoretical and research literature. Its purpose is to integrate your dissertation topic with a broader framework of research or theory. The task here is to show how and where your study fits into the accumulated knowledge about the problem

area.

The literature review for dissertations also is somewhat different than for published articles. Because the dissertation is part of an initial learning process, its purpose is more than to merely document prior research in a given area. For the dissertation, a more complete review is indicated because the purposes of the review are both a) to demonstrate knowledge of previous research and b) to demonstrate the ability to clearly describe how previous research intertwines with the proposed research.

Research Question and Hypotheses

Every research project, no matter how "exploratory" in design, has a thesis. The primary tasks in the proposal development phase (in consultation with your chair) are to identify your thesis and hypothesis (as). Even the most basic qualitative studies, which undertake to describe the nature of an experience, are predicated on the assumption that the experience can be characterized and that its nature is likely to fall within a given range of possible meanings. Failure to specify a thesis or hypotheses precisely enough in the proposal stage is likely to lead to confusion later, with difficulty in establishing organization and meaning as well as discriminating chance effects from "real" differences.

If you are planning an experimental study, you will know that you have hypotheses and that your task is to state them in the most testable form. In previous classes, discussions of classic experimental designs are likely to have focused on those that tested large psychological questions.

Few dissertation students have the resources to undertake such studies, but you should attempt to frame hypotheses that genuinely raise a question that can be disconfirmed

as well as confirmed. While finding statistically significant results in your data is not a requirement for completing the dissertation, it is required that the project at least has the potential for finding significant results if quantitative and at least meaningful results otherwise.

Method

One of the reasons traditionally given for providing this information is so your study could be replicated exactly if anyone chose to do so. On a more pragmatic level, this information is important because it can alert the reader to possible reasons for results beyond the proposed effects of your primary variables.

Participants or Sample

Please note that "participants" is the APA-sanctioned term which is preferred over the more traditional term "subjects." The term "participants" implies that those involved in providing data are willingly giving their time and effort to the cause, as our current ethics guidelines appropriately demand, whereas the term "subjects" implies that those involved in the research are "subject" to the control of the researcher, which is not the case. Ethics guidelines require that participants be allowed to drop out of a study any time they wish.

Another issue that requires sensitive writing is how people with disabilities and minorities are described. When discussing disabilities it is important to remember that the individual is a person more than a disability. Therefore, examples of the preferred terminology are people who are blind (rather than blind people) and people who are handicapped (rather than handicapped people).

Here it is vital to describe how the participants came to be part of your sample. For example, if your sample consists of individuals who needed to go out of their way to

participate in your study or who might have had an ulterior motive to participate in your study, then it is possible that these other factors, which you probably did not measure or include in your data analysis, might be contributing to the results. The systematic effects from these potentially spurious variables can be analyzed post hoc to determine if these variables might have interfered with your results.

Measures

In this section, you will be providing operational definitions of your variables, or, in other words, specifying how each variable in your study is being measured. Describing the basis for your measurements also is critical to evaluating the results of the study. Many instruments for measuring a given variable or set of variables are similar but not the same.

Often students have questions about how much detail should be divulged about instruments in this section. The rule of thumb is to assume that the reader has professional knowledge and provide information accordingly. If you use a very well-known instrument you do not need to go into the established reliability or validity which will be known as adequate already. If it is a lesser-known instrument, a recapitulation of the scales or meaning of the instrument is appropriate at the very least. If it is a relatively unknown instrument or one that you have devised, then it is important to describe it in fine detail and probably include it in the appendix. Please be aware of copyright laws. Unless you can get written permission to reproduce the instrument, then you must leave the specific items out of your dissertation. In any case, a good description, with references to reliability and validity, should be included.

If you decide to develop your own instrument, which is not particularly encouraged unless that is the theme of your project, it is important to understand the traditional

standards for doing this as well as the ways in which these standards have become more relaxed in recent years.

Traditionally, it has been expected that any scale development be based on a series of increasingly fine-tuned analyses, each with a different sample. It is now generally acceptable to refine a scale by weeding out irrelevant items based on a single sample. An easier alternative, if you have good reason to believe that your initial measurements were valid, is to do a statistical test comparable to a Cronbach's Alpha (on SPSS) which at least gives you some indication of whether or not the items on any given scale do indeed measure the same variable. This will tell you and the reader the extent to which the items in each scale represent a unitary concept or variable. Whatever approach you adopt, at the very least, it is important to express very clearly the standards you have used in developing your instrument.

Procedure

In this section, you will explain the order in which your procedures take place and how each procedure is carried out. If the administration of your procedures is counter balanced, that should be mentioned; In addition, specific instructions to participants should be stated. You also should state the conditions under which the measurement was done, including who else was present, whether information was gathered over the phone or via mail, and a general description of where your measurements were done.

Proposed Data Analysis

This part should include your plans for data analysis, and the rationale for specific statistical tests you propose to use. This may be the hardest part of the proposal to do well, since it requires assumptions about what you plan to do but have not yet done. This is the section that most often needs revising at the proposal stage. If you are not concrete and specific, you may face a situation after data collection where you realize

your data is not usable or you may not have collected enough data. Making this error is one of the main reason students end up needing expensive statistical consultation.

Without careful planning of how your research questions, hypotheses, measurements, and data analysis all mesh and are consistent with each other, it is possible that you may need to recoiled new data in order to test the proposed hypotheses.

Conducting a power analysis in order to determine the sample size necessary to achieve the level of significance set for the study can be helpful. At the very least, comparing your proposed sample size with that of previous studies which have found significant results can be a good informal guide to the sample size needed to have a reasonable likelihood of finding a significant relationship. Conducting a power analysis can be frustrating, particularly if you have a variety of measures with different properties, and previous research has not been helpful in the matter of reporting effect sizes. Clinical students are often interested in studying clinical populations for which it will not be feasible to obtain the sample size needed for respectable power. It may be appropriate to use a power analysis to identify the power you can expect from the probable sample size. If the power is very low (if you have only a 50% probability of finding an effect if it is present), you may want to reconsider your sampling methods, your measures, whether you should be attempting a qualitative analysis, or even if you should revise your research question.

It is desirable and acceptable to do a more exploratory study using qualitative methods, especially if you are working in an area with little previous research. In addition, researchers continue to increase their recognition of the importance of research being theory-driven as well as experientially-driven. Many times, theories do not provide a sufficient base for a solid quantitative study. In this case, a qualitative approach may be much more useful for providing basic and in-depth

information and should be considered.

References

References need to be in APA format. In interfacing with the 6th Edition of the APA Manual, there may be some confusion about details of format. Because the APA Manual primarily is designed for use by researchers submitting journal articles, it stipulates an editing format that will be transformed into final format by the publisher of the journal. In contrast, your dissertation will be produced as a final copy by you. Therefore, for references you do not use the paragraph format indicated in the Manual but rather the "hanging indent" format you see in journal articles where the first line is not indented and the second and any subsequent lines are indented three spaces.

In addition, for the dissertation you do not double space references. While 1 1/2 spacing makes sense in the text of your dissertation since it is easier to read, references are not read for content in the same way. Typically, they are scanned for specific details such as the author, date of the article, or the name of the journal in which it appeared.

Formatting requirements also dictate different considerations. Just as the APA Manual stipulates that you cannot have one line of a paragraph by itself on a page (because what it is connected to can be confusing for the reader), you also must keep all lines of a given reference on the same page. Therefore, to keep the components of a given reference on one page and to avoid the many very short pages (from moving the entire reference to the next page in order to avoid splitting it between two pages), you should use 1 1/2 spacing for references.

Being a "reference" section rather than a "bibliography," it is vital that all references be cited in the text and vice versa. (See the Reference section under Formatting for further

details.)

Sources of Information

APA offers on-line database providing journal abstracts for articles from over 1,300 scientific journals and doctoral dissertations relevant to psychology from 1887 to the present. Additional information about access is available through the APA home page (www.apa.org).

All data bases are limited resources for very recent works. An appropriate thorough search of the literature begins with a combination of computer work and manual labor. An excellent approach to finding the right "vein" of information is to look at review articles, recent dissertations, or standard textbooks and their bibliographies.

Another very fruitful approach is to locate a well-known article in the field and look up the references for that article in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). This index will identify articles which, subsequent to the publication of the well-known article, have cited the key article which you start with. This is available at CSUS. An online source is under development and, eventually, will go back to 1980. At present, only the last few years are available.

SSCI online can be reached at <http://publishorperish.mh.gov>. Follow the Web of Science link and select Full Search. Email updates and document delivery are available.

Guidelines for Using Secondary Sources of Information

In a doctoral dissertation or proposal, it is inappropriate to rely on secondary sources for the content of literature reviewed. Review articles and recent dissertations can be very good resources. But you must go to the primary source itself in order to critically

evaluate pertinent articles. In general, you should only cite references through secondary sources if the primary source is unavailable to you (as may be the case with very dated, obscure, or foreign-language periodicals). But you must exhaust the resources of the interlibrary loan system to be sure that the source is unavailable. (See the APA Manual for details.)

Obtaining Journal Articles

The PSP library contains a number of up-to-date journals but not nearly enough for a comprehensive literature search. One of the easiest ways to get copies of the articles you need is to enlist the help of a journal service which, usually for a nominal fee, will locate the article through the vast network of Bay Area libraries and send or fax it to you within days. A list of these services is provided in the library.

Approval Forms Required Prior to Data Collection

Dissertation Committee Designation Approval

Your dissertation committee selection must be approved by the Chief Academic Officer. Any non-faculty members on your committee must have a vita on file at the School. Therefore, if any of your committee members have not been on a dissertation committee at PSP or do not have a vita on file; it is the student's responsibility to see to it that it is submitted.

Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC Protocol)

Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC Protocol)

The purpose of the review is to ensure that the research conforms to the principles of ethical research as established by the profession and articulated by the American Psychological Association and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Human Subjects Review Committee is concerned with protection of individuals' rights to privacy, the researcher's obligation to obtain informed consent of subjects, protecting the confidentiality of data, and protecting subjects from physical, psychological, social, and legal harm.

Because many of the dissertations and other research projects being done by students and faculty at The Professional School of Psychology concern highly sensitive issues related to clinical services (such as psychotherapy) and organizational consulting services, the issue of confidentiality is particularly important. In some instances, the person or people conducting the proposed study must protect the confidentiality of those whom they are serving from even members of their thesis or dissertation committee, as well as others who would be reviewing their work under ordinary circumstances. In many instances, the ethical guidelines enacted by professional psychology associations (such as those overseeing clinical psychology practices) require complete confidentiality of persons being served except from someone providing formal and approved supervision. Thesis and Dissertation committee members are not included among those exempt from this policy of confidentiality.

It is standard procedure, when research is undertaken within an institution, to submit a Human Subjects protocol to the Human Subjects Review Committee, regardless of the type of study and regardless of your assessment of risk. "Human subjects" is a broad concept including, in addition to living persons of all ages and dead persons, body parts, fluids, and recorded information about persons. For this reason, all proposed research, including theoretical or anthropologically oriented research, whether involving human individuals or not, and regardless of method and sample, must be submitted for review and approval by the HSRC. However, protocols for research

projects not involving human subjects are abbreviated in form and length.

You should not begin collecting your data until your project has been approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee. This would be a serious ethical violation which, just as with other ethical violations such as plagiarism and breach of confidentiality of research data. As already noted, breach of confidentiality within a therapeutic or consulting relationship, could have serious consequences.

Along this line, just as with the proposal, your HSRC summary must be written in future tense. Perhaps stating the obvious: honesty and accuracy are important and you probably will have more than a few changes before the final draft.

It is **not** the function of the HSRC to assess the merit of the proposed project or the appropriateness of the methods *per se*. Therefore, the HSRC protocol should be fairly brief and, as a rule, only address ethical aspects of your research. (In any case you definitely should not submit your entire proposal.) Additional information about your research design and purpose are needed only if your proposed research design requires some degree of risk which you want to defend as necessary in addressing your research question. In such a situation it would be important to describe how the benefits of the proposed research outweigh any risks of the procedure. Most commonly this involves a situation where some degree of deception is required so that participants' responses are not biased by knowing the true purpose of the research. In such a case, it also would be important to briefly discuss the potential importance of your study, why collection of the data requires some deception, and to illustrate how you plan to minimize the risk of deception, such as by describing appropriate debriefing procedures.

Your HSRC protocol should be submitted to the Registrar who will pass it to the Chair

of the Human Subjects Review Committee. The Human Subjects Review Committee may require some revision of your proposal, such as a more detailed informed consent form, a different method of screening your subjects, or a more rigorous security procedure for your data or for protecting the anonymity of those in your study. The Committee may decide that, as presently designed, your project's risks to human individuals outweigh its potential benefits and that substantial redesign is necessary. Complying with PSP's rules and procedures regarding human subjects does not, in and of itself, exhaust your ethical responsibilities as a research psychologist. Therefore, you should be thoroughly familiar with the American Psychological Association's standards of conduct for researchers and users of assessment instruments.

After the members of your dissertation committee have signed your proposal, and before you have begun to recruit participants or collect data, you must submit your research protocol (**two copies** if it is sensitive), signed by yourself and your chair, to the HSRC. If you plan to conduct a pilot study or do any pre-testing prior to completing your proposal and conducting your dissertation data collection, you must submit a protocol covering such activity to the HSRC for review. The format to be followed in preparing your protocol and questions you must address is given in Appendix D, Human Subjects Review Protocol, in this Manual. The Human Subjects Review Committee will not review your protocol until your HSRC proposal (addressing only HSRC issues) and the Request for HSRC Review form have been filed.

The structure and length of the protocol you submit will vary according to the nature of your project and the category of review to which it is subject. Some research is exempt from full review, and needs only to be registered with the Committee before the project begins. (Please see Appendix C for guidelines on determining whether your project is

exempt from full review and on how to prepare your protocol.) Theoretical dissertations, most studies evaluating educational methods or a curriculum, and some archival, interview, and questionnaire studies are exempt from full HSRC review. Please note, as you are deciding which category applies to your project, that archival, interview, and questionnaire studies are exempt only if there is **minimal** psychological or other risk to subjects, and if there is **no record at all** of information linking your subjects' identities with their data. This means, for instance, that if you keep a key to your subject code numbers (John Smith = A38; Mary Smith = B38), your project is not exempt and a full protocol for regular review must be prepared.

FULL APPROVAL - the project is approved as proposed. The project either 1) does not involve collecting data from subjects, and adequate safeguards for preserving the confidentiality of any information are present; or 2) the project involves no physical risk and little or no other risk to subjects, and adequate measures to obtain informed consent and to safeguard the confidentiality of information are built into the project; or 3) subjects in the proposed project are at no, some, or little physical or other risk, adequate safeguards are built into the project to minimize the occurrence or effect of risk and to ensure that subjects participate voluntarily, and confidentiality of information is safeguarded.

CONDITIONAL APPROVAL - the project requires some revision in order to be fully. The revisions may involve changes in your plans for recruiting participants, your plans for protecting the privacy of subjects or the confidentiality of their information, revisions in your informed consent form, or some revision in your plans for preventing or minimizing risk to your subjects. Or the revision may involve a clearer statement about any of these issues. Students will then submit a revised protocol to the HSRC, incorporating the

revision requested. If the indicated changes are made, the project is considered approved. Documentation of the necessary changes needs to be submitted as well.

UNAPPROVED - the project is not approved. Adequate safeguards are not built into the project, or confidentiality of data is not and cannot be assured, or subjects are at too great a psychological, physical, or other risk. Students whose projects are not approved must redesign their studies and rewrite their proposals. This process can involve a good deal of rethinking and backtracking, negotiating with the dissertation committee members, and so on. So, even though you do not submit your HSRC protocol until after your proposal is complete and approved, do not leave consideration of human subjects concerns out of your project development.

Sometimes, revisions are made in your project after the proposal has been approved and it has received HSRC approval. You may find that you and your chair underestimated the difficulty of finding appropriate subjects and you have to redefine your sample. Perhaps you discovered a new and better instrument to measure one of your variables. All such changes require a 'resubmission of the project for HSRC review.

Breaking Confidentiality in Cases of Suspected Abuse of Children, Elders, or Dependent Adults.

Ordinarily, the confidentiality you promise to your research subjects is absolute and constitutes one of the essential elements of informed consent. Breaching that confidentiality can be considered a serious ethical offense. However, under certain

circumstances, California law may allow, or even require, reporting instances of abuse or neglect of children, the elderly, or dependent adults, even in situations covered by agreements of confidentiality. California laws (Penal Code Section 11166 in the case of Children and Welfare and Institutions Code Section 15630 in the case of elders or dependent adults) require reporting instances of abuse if you are a health care practitioner working in your professional capacity or within the scope of your employment. You may not fall into that category if you are merely conducting research as part of your academic requirements.

If you do not fall into this mandated reporter" category but reasonably suspect a situation where abuse of children, elders, or dependent adults has taken place, you may report such occurrences to the appropriate protective or law enforcement agency. Such reports are confidential and those making such reports in good faith are immune from liability. It probably is wise to discuss your suspicion within 24 hours with your dissertation chairperson or a person in authority at the agency where the research is being conducted.

A note on human subjects review. While putting up with the apparent extra bureaucracy involved in Human Subjects Review may seem unreasonable at times, it is important to remember that you are not a known entity to accrediting agencies, governmental bodies, or institutions or agencies in which your subjects may live or be treated. Human Subjects Review is one extra safeguard to your subjects' welfare. Preparing the Human Subject Review Committee protocol requires you to stand back from your research, look at the human side of the individuals in your sample, and appreciate the participants' vulnerabilities that can produce risk.

Finally, clinical students in particular are used to dealing with people as clients. As a therapist working with clients, you have a more or less explicitly stated contract with them. They have knowingly and willingly entered into a relationship with you in which they will permit you to do all kinds of things people don't ordinarily permit, such as ask them uncomfortable questions, interpret their behavior, etc. In return, you pledge your good faith, professional competence, and ethical responsibility to support them in a vulnerable state. Remember that research subjects are not therapy clients and neither you nor they have the protection or permission granted by the therapeutic contract. Therefore, as a researcher, you must refer any participant in need to another clinician. As part of the HSRC protocol you need to identify a potential therapist (including license number) if there is any risk of this need.

THE DISSERTATION

The Text constitutes the body of the dissertation. It is usually divided into four chapters, entitled Introduction (or Background), Methods, Results (or Findings), and Discussion (or Conclusion). The virtue of the traditional APA organization or format is that people know what to expect and are not distracted from what you are saying by any confusion due to how you are structuring what you are saying. In conventional quantitative experimental or co-relational design, this traditional four-chapter presentation usually is the most understandable.

However, you need not feel constrained by this structure, especially if your dissertation is qualitative or is not conventional. If you and your committee agree that another way of organizing your dissertation is more appropriate or more meaningful for your study, you may and should use another structure. Aside from the typical quantitative study, the design should drive the format rather than having the format drive the design. Your dissertation organization in terms of chapters may vary, but heading conventions, referencing, and other formatting rules must be followed unless you have obtained an exception from the Chief Academic Officer.

Whatever organizing framework you use for presenting your research, it should tell the reader (a) what problem you are addressing, and why this problem is of interest and importance, (b) how you addressed the problem, (c) what, exactly, you learned or discovered, and (d) what your discovery means or how it changes understanding of the problem area, what can be done with it in practice, and where research and practice in this area should go from where you left off. At this juncture in the history of psychology, traditional notions about the research process are somewhat in flux.

Introduction

The Introduction section you wrote for the proposal should be fairly sufficient for the finalized dissertation. Again, the main purpose of this chapter is to state the central problem or question addressed by the research. This section may need to be expanded or somewhat altered after data collection. Sufficient time may have passed for additional highly relevant studies to be published. The data from these studies may bring up additional issues which should be addressed in your Discussion section. In fact your interpretation of your results might be altered in major ways by the discovery of new information since your study was initially conceived. Potentially, new information may enable interpretation of data that perhaps made little sense before the newer information became available.

Methods

In this chapter, you present the way in which you addressed your research question. You describe your sample, how subjects were recruited or selected and how data were collected, what instruments and procedures were employed, and how you handled the data, including construction of variables and scaling, and the statistical or other analyses you employed.

Conventionally, this chapter is divided formally into four subsections: Participants, Measures, Procedure, and initial Treatment of the Data to finalize it for the primary statistical analysis. This would include how and why certain participants were excluded from the primary analysis or any transformation of data.

The APA Task Force has emphasized the importance of not leading the reader astray. Specifically, the Task Force encourages extensive description of the data, including means, standard deviations, sample sizes, summaries and graphs of data, and

descriptions of missing data. The latter should include information to counter (or potentially confirm) that artifacts of the sample did not contribute to the results. Examples of these artifacts would be "outliers, points of high influence, non-random missing data, selection procedures, and attrition problems."

In a qualitative study the methods and results may be recursive, moving from one to the other a number of times until genuine information or trends become apparent. Here too, however, some of the issues that pertain to a quantitative study may also pertain to a qualitative study. Idiosyncrasies of the sample also can influence qualitative results. These issues should be incorporated into the Methods section(s), or equivalent, of a qualitative study.

Results

In this chapter, you present your research findings. In studies employing quantitative data, you will present the statistical analyses. If your data analysis is fairly lengthy, you will not want to provide every little piece of statistical analysis. The presentation of data should reflect your ability to discriminate between what is critical information and what are minutiae. Remember, your goal here is to present only the necessary information as clearly as possible. It is usually easier on the reader to present statistical results in tabular form. However, as the APA Manual dictates, every bit of information presented in a table or figure, also must be presented in the text.

It also is important to not be redundant. With statistical programs on home computers, able to readily provide reams of tables and graphs and the same information in many different formats, it is important that intelligent choices are made about what to include. The researcher needs to determine which is the one best format for a given set of information and to not overwhelm the reader with various versions of the same

information. If data can be well presented in a few lines of text, you need not, and should not, also present them in a table.

In maintaining the goal of keeping perspective on the results, the APA Task Force emphasizes the importance of reporting the effect size as well as the direction of the relationship between variables. By chance alone, very large samples are more likely to yield significant relationships which should be considered in representing and interpreting the data.

Another recommendation from the APA Task Force, which is somewhat intertwined with your choice of research questions and hypotheses, is the use of "minimally sufficient designs and analytic strategies." Perhaps this is an offshoot of the concept of "parsimony" in theory development. In other words simple is better than complex when it is sufficient to elucidate answers to the questions you wish to ask. The Task Force notes that many forces propel researchers to "state of the art" and "cutting edge" approaches to data analysis. The difficulty is that the more idiosyncratic the analysis, the fewer the number of people who will really understand it. This is not to say that if your questions and hypotheses warrant a more complex data analysis that you should not use it. But the key concept is that your choice of data analysis should be in line with your basic purposes.

Studies using non-quantitative data, and studies combining quantitative and qualitative data (for instance, interview studies employing content analysis of data, with quotations and other material from the interviews to provide examples and illumination of the analysis), do not have a set of readily available rules for presentation of findings. If your study falls into one of these categories, your task is both simpler and more difficult. It is simpler because you do not have to find a way to make your data fit a standard

presentation. It is more difficult because you have to figure out a good way to present your data without much authoritative guidance. The guiding criteria for presentation of qualitative data are those governing scholarly work in general: coherence, logical order, and clarity of organization. You will observe that these are not particularly dear-cut criteria. Your own reading in social science research (particularly clinical case studies, and anthropological field research) can probably provide you with useful models.

Another point of emphasis from the APA Task Force is to not report results at a greater level of precision than is warranted. The Task Force states that, "computer programs have placed a much greater demand on researchers to understand and control their analysis and design choices."

Whatever your design and data, upon finishing your Results chapter, the reader should have no doubt about what you discovered in your investigation. In the interest of objectivity, it is important to include any information that could negate your hypotheses. This chapter is not the place to talk about why you may have obtained these surprising results, or about the meaning and significance of your findings. This information belongs in the Discussion.

Discussion

Given that this section is one of the last to be written, it is not uncommon for students to let down at this point. The Methods and Results sections require more of a focus on details that sometimes can be difficult to change in writing the Discussion. In contrast, the Discussion section, like the Introduction, requires maintaining the larger picture, including the meaning and purpose of what you are doing. One way to help preserve this overall focus is to construct an outline of if-then scenarios after your Introduction is written, when you are more fully involved mentally with the issues. These if-then

possibilities can then serve as prompts for covering the possible conclusions and ramifications raised by the real data. As a result you may be more readily able to write a more comprehensive, useful, and creative Discussion section.

One of the difficulties in writing this chapter is that it is often difficult to know how and where to start, even if you do have a good focus on the overall picture. A very useful prompt is to review your introduction and the details of prior research. This can trigger ideas on how to work your own data into a meaningful whole, incorporating previous findings and ideas with your own.

If there has been some time between the completion of your literature review and the final write-up, it is possible that additional information will have been published on your topic referring to key issues you might want to incorporate into your Discussion section. Therefore, either monitoring the main sources of information on your topic or doing a brief literature review during your write-up will help you catch any new references which could affect your interpretation of your own work. These references would need to be added to your original reference section.

The Discussion also can be the most creative section. While this chapter can be the most challenging in terms of its demand for critical thought, it also can be the most fun to write. Not only can you explain how your particular results may contribute to the understanding of your area, but you also can delve into the nuances of how what you have discovered may have its effect. You can (and should) pull in demographic information and try to determine how such variables are intertwined with your results. In essence, this is where you make meaning of your dissertation. The final paragraphs of this section should clearly summarize the meaning you have found.

It is rare for all hypotheses to be significant in the predicted direction. In many respects this enables additional creativity. You may be able to pull ideas from your literature review or your own basic knowledge and logic and create a picture.

In many cases, where your hypotheses were not confirmed, you may be contributing an example of an approach that is not particularly helpful. You should ascertain and explain why your sample and/or your measures may have contributed to the unexpected findings. Based on your own experience with your dissertation, you should strive to suggest what modifications future researchers in your area should include as well as what parts of your own approach are worth replicating.

This also is the chapter where you critically examine your statistical results for misleading influences. For example, an additional point along the lines of the APA Task Force's concerns is the inflated probability for obtaining significant test results when multiple tests are made, (i.e., remember that if you do 100 correlations, by chance alone, five of the hundred will be significant at the .05 level.) Results should be interpreted and discussed in light of such possibilities.

In the process of critically examining the data, you also should be considering possibilities which would disconfirm your hypotheses. Given that you probably have considerable emotional investment in seeing your hypotheses substantiated, this may be very difficult. But it is important to keep your ultimate purpose of genuine discovery in mind.

However, it sometimes is difficult to deal with the disappointment of not having your pet ideas confirmed. Nancy Barber, previously Dean at PSP, wrote the following:

When you selected your topic and developed your research question, you very naturally chose to focus on something you care about. Knowing that you were about to spend a significant amount of time with this question, you sensibly selected a topic of personal and/or professional importance to you. At some point during the dissertation process, perhaps from the very beginning, you may have developed a deep commitment to your predicted findings or hypothesized relationships. In fact, the structure of normal scientific investigation, which requires you to predict your findings, leads you naturally to develop a certain attachment to them and an expectation that they will become real.

If your findings turn out to be different from your predictions (and it is *extremely rare* for all findings to be significant and in the predicted direction) it is apt to be, at the least, disappointing. You may suffer self-reproach for not having anticipated that your sample was too small or your measures not sensitive enough. The traditional response to this very normal state of affairs is for your chair to point out in measured terms that not getting confirmation of your hypotheses is also useful, scientifically. Knowledge is advanced, and barren avenues of approach have been identified for the next generation of researchers to avoid.

Should this task not completely address the state of your feelings, we suggest that you plunge fully into the newly discovered flaws of your research design. If you were beginning the project now, knowing what you now do, what would you do differently? Should your hypotheses be abandoned or modified? What research design now seems to you more promising for producing data to support your hypotheses? Such a line of thinking can add a good deal to your discussion of implications for future research. And, most importantly, you may discover in yourself an enthusiasm for undertaking future research that you never expected.

If you feel yourself, during the development of your dissertation project, becoming excessively attached to your predicted findings, we recommend another general strategy: Try to fall in love with your data rather than your hypotheses. A truly helpful attitude is that described by one dissertation student who had just completed data collection: "I feel like a kid on Christmas morning, and I can't wait to find out what I got." An excitement about what your data can tell you, and do tell you, can carry you through the most depressing disconfirmations.

Formatting

While the APA Publication Manual is primarily designed to be a guide for preparing material that will be published in a journal, the PSP Manual is meant to be a guide for adapting APA format to dissertations at PSP. One of the main distinctions between the two types of productions is that material that is submitted for publication in a journal will undergo further editing and reformatting. In contrast, the submitted copy of the dissertation is a final copy. Therefore, some APA style requirements make sense for manuscript submissions but not for dissertations.

Rules for Headings

Headings are used to help orient the reader to the organization of the work so that the content can be understood more readily. The APA Manual organizes headings as follows:

CENTERED UPPER CASE (Level 5)

Large Space

Centered Upper and Lower Case (Level 1)

Large Space

Centered Italicized Uppercase and Lowercase

(Level 2)

Large Space

Flush Left Italicized Uppercase and Lowercase Side Heading (Level 3)

Small Space Indented italicized lowercase paragraph

-

heading ending with a period

(Level 4) This is how the first sentence under a Level 4 heading should connect. It should not start on the line following the heading.

The number of headings you have in your dissertation is based on the chapter which has the most headings. For example, if your Methods chapter has 4 levels of organization and your other chapters have only 3 levels of organization, you must format the whole dissertation with 4 levels of headings.

Usually, but not always, headings should be used in order according to their number. However, **in a paper that has only two or three levels of organization, Level 2 is skipped** (possibly because it has the greatest potential for creating confusion, especially when the centered Level 2 heading is wide enough to appear left justified). Also, **a Level 5 heading is used only when there are five levels of organization.**

Any level of heading must be used more than once within a section to justify use of that heading level at all. In other words, if you are not organizing your discussion into two separate areas there is no need to use two headings within that section. This is the same principle used in constructing outlines. In addition, a Level 5 heading (which, to keep you confused, is the most super ordinate) should be used at least twice within a chapter. (See the Sixth Edition of the APA Manual)

While the APA Manual is written primarily for journal submissions, the dissertation is closer to a book than a journal article. Just as a book has chapters, a dissertation has chapters. In formatting a dissertation, it is traditional to use a Level 5 heading (centered, all capitals) to designate the chapter number (CHAPTER 1, CHAPTER 2, etc.) and then start with a Level 1 heading to designate the title of the chapter (Introduction, Methods, etc.). Since the entire document has more than one chapter, these extra headings are justified. For reasons of tradition more than logic, the chapter number is not counted in your tally of headings and the chapter title is counted in determining the levels you will use (i.e., If you only have two or three levels total, then Level 2 is skipped.) A heading assistant page is included in the Appendix to assist in headings formatting.

The purpose of APA format is to increase the clarity and understanding of a work for many social science disciplines. Experienced readers of the social science literature use

the standard APA format to orient themselves within a work. It is for this reason that it is important to use APA format. For example, a Level I Heading tells the reader that he or she is looking at central information or is on the main highway. A Level 4 Heading tells the reader that he or she is looking at a subset of information or is on a back road. While many readers of APA style may not be able to recite all APA specifications, nevertheless, experienced readers of APA format will at least more readily recognize material when it is in correct APA format.

Fonts and Printing

The need for extra visual clarity in dissertations also affects limitations on choice of font, print size, and spacing. The most commonly-used (and perhaps at least in part for this reason the most readable) fonts are those designated as "serif". This term refers to the extra fine lines which finish the main strokes of each letter. Examples of serif fonts include Bookman, Palatino, New York, Courier, and Times. Serif fonts are contrasted by "sans serif" fonts which do not include any embellishments in the lettering.

Examples of sans serif fonts include Helvetica, Geneva, and Anal. (Each of these examples is printed in the font indicated by the name.) For the purpose of readability, serif fonts may be advisable for your dissertation, although non-serif fonts also are acceptable. The dissertation should be printed on a laser quality printer (which includes current inkjet printers but not dot-matrix printers).

Print size should be 10-point or 12-point. If you choose a smaller sized print, such as Times, you should use 12 point Also, if your printer does bitmapping, which can shrink the size of the font, you also should use a 12-point print size. Bolded or size changes for headings may be used judiciously to increase clarity.

Margins

Margins should be 1 1/2 inches on the left side (for binding) and 1 1/4 inch on the top, bottom, and right side. The right side should be ragged and not justified.

Pagination

Each page in the dissertation is assigned a number, and the number appears on each page except the title page and the first page of the text. Do not number the blank sheets at the beginning and the end of the dissertation. Use lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.) for the preliminary pages, beginning with ii for the page following the title page. Preliminary page numbers are centered at the bottom of the page (see sample pages in Appendix M). Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) for the balance of the dissertation. Pagination should begin with a "2" on the second page of the Introduction, and continuing consecutively through the references and appendices (if any). Place the number in the upper right corner, one inch from the top, roughly aligned with the right margin. Type the number only. Do not add any ornamentation such as periods or dashes. Page numbers should be 1 inch from the top and approximately flush with the right margin, at 1 1/4 inch from the right edge of the paper.

Indentation

Each paragraph should be indented five spaces. The first line of a reference should be flush with the left margin and subsequent lines should be indented three spaces to create a "hanging" indentation.

Spacing

The body or text line spacing may be double spaced or 1 1/2 spaced, depending on the font. Choose one and be consistent throughout the dissertation.

Long quotations of more than 40 words should be single spaced and indented one tab

or five spaces. If this involves more than one paragraph, then there should be a space between the paragraphs. (The APA Manual says to double space in this instance, but, again, that is because articles submitted for publication are not in final copy form and room may be needed for editing.) While this single spacing may be more difficult to read than double spacing in the published dissertation, it has the advantage of indicating clearly that you have a lengthy quote. And, given that such quotes should be a very small portion of the entire dissertation, the single spacing in this instance is a reasonable tradeoff.)

Contiguity

Both the text and the references should follow the same rules for contiguity, namely there should be no "widows" or "orphans." (Many computers can be preset to eliminate "widows" and "orphans.") This can be particularly problematic in reporting statistics in the Results section, where the computer does not know that the p value is linked to the statistic or that each element is part of the statistical equivalent of one word. Therefore, if a reported statistic is split by the computer this needs to be manually overridden and the entire summary statistic moved to the next line.

In addition, each paragraph of the text should have at least two lines on a page. Therefore, if only one line of the preceding paragraph appears at the top of the page, the previous line should be manually pushed to the next page so that there are two lines minimum. In the same way, if there is a single line of a paragraph at the bottom of a page, that line should be manually moved to the next page to join the rest of the paragraph. At times this may mean moving the heading preceding it since the heading of a section should not exist by itself either.

Tables

Information regarding when to use tables and how to set them up is provided in the APA Publication Manual. Tables should always appear as close as possible to when they are first mentioned in text, after the paragraph in which they are first mentioned if there is room on the page, or at the top of the next page if necessary. If you must print a table sideways to get all the necessary columns in, print it so that the top of the table is on the left at the binding edge.

Layout and Description of the Elements of the Dissertation

The completed dissertation typically includes the parts described below. All dissertations, regardless of method, topic, or manner of presentation, include a title page, signature page, abstract, table of contents, and references. Some of the material that comes in between the abstract and the references are optional, such as the dedication and copyright page, the latter being needed only if you want a copyright. If you have tables or figures, you must provide a List of Tables and/or List of Figures. You need not organize the body of your dissertation in the manner described below, as long as your method of organizing and presenting your research is clear, logical, appropriate to the study, and has the approval of your committee.

Title Page

There is a standard format for the title page of your dissertation, which you will find in the Dissertation Format Guidelines (Appendix E). One thing you should be aware of in writing your title is that the individual words of a title are often used as indexing terms in computer-generated indexes. The basic assumption of this kind of indexing is that the words used in your title are keywords, meaning that they reflect basic or central themes of the dissertation. Thus, if your dissertation ultimately is included in an index organized by keywords, it will be accurately indexed only to

the extent that you have chosen the correct words for your title.

This means that your language should lean toward specific and concrete nouns and verbs, rather than global elusive modifiers. Do not assume familiarity on the part of readers (or indexers) with the code language associated with either your topic or your method. In other words, avoid jargon. The title of your dissertation should be as short as it possibly can be while still conveying the major content.

Copyright Page

You are not required to copyright your dissertation. But, if you do, you must include this page stating your rights to this protected material. While a copyright costs a little extra money, the advantages are that you are more likely to get credit for your own ideas.

Approval Page

When signed by all the members of your committee, this page attests to their approval of the dissertation.

Abstract

The abstract is a summary of the content of your dissertation. If it is well prepared, it allows readers to identify the nature and scope of a study quickly and accurately, and to determine its relevance to their interests. In addition to the title, the abstract also can serve as the basis for indexing and information retrieval. In a sense the abstract is your advertisement of what you did. Therefore, it is especially important that this small segment be as well-crafted as possible. The traditional length of a dissertation abstract is 300 words, which is just a little over a double-spaced page. Economy of expression is important but incorporating all of the relevant information also is essential.

The dissertation abstract, just as the dissertation itself, generally has four segments or elements: the introduction or statement of the problem or issue, the methods, the results or findings (typically without statistics), and the conclusion or implications. These elements are not specifically labeled, but the finished abstract should include: what problem you were investigating, how you investigated it, what you discovered, and what the implications and important findings of your study are. Usually statistics are not included in the abstract, but they can be included.

Dedication Page

This page is optional and, within reason, the contents can be determined exclusively by the writer.

Acknowledgments

This may or may not be an essential part of your dissertation. If the only issue is whether to acknowledge special help and support from friends, faculty, or family, this is an optional part of the dissertation. However, if you used measures or anything else that another person has copyrighted, you should have obtained written permission to reproduce or use the material, and that permission should be acknowledged here. Similarly, if your research was supported by funds obtained from public or private sources, the support should be acknowledged here. You also should acknowledge access to someone else's data, computer account, support staff, etc.

Table of Contents

This can be very simple, involving only initial headings or more complicated with additional levels of headings indicated.

List of Tables

This is required if you have tables. It should be formatted the same as the Table of Contents except that the numbered tables and the title of the table, instead of a section of

the dissertation, should be listed with the page number where it appears.

List of Figures

This is required if you have figures. The format is the same as the List of Tables.

Text

Each of the four sections (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion), or other main sections if you have a non-quantitative dissertation or a nontraditional organization, should start on a separate page.

References

In order to support the credibility of the author, it is crucial to make sure there is an exact correspondence between the citations within the text and the references. (Note that "references" mean that they are also citations. In contrast, a "bibliography" is a list of works consulted for a write-up but not necessarily cited. APA Format requires that you have "references.")

With computers, it is very easy to ensure that there is a match. For each reference, do a search in the text and make sure you have at least one citation for that reference and that it is cited accurately. And for each citation, do a search in the references and make sure it is listed in the same way. It can be easy to alter a spelling or a date as you type in a citation. A methodical check for matching is a worthwhile procedure.

Appendices

Your appendices will include such material as detailed tables of data summarized in the text, copies of instruments designed for your research, copies of letters granting permission to use copyrighted material. You should not include copies of well-known, published, standardized instruments. You may assume that your reader is already

familiar with common instruments or can easily obtain information about them. And, if measures are copyrighted and not in the public domain, you are not permitted to reproduce them without written permission of the copyright holder. A useful rule of thumb for appendices is that they should provide sufficient and appropriate additional information for the reader to determine whether you have arrived at the appropriate conclusions, given your data. A glossary of terms may also be a useful appendix depending on your dissertation type.

COMPLETING THE DISSERTATION PROCESS AND THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

After you and your committee members agree that your dissertation is substantially complete, you should schedule the oral defense. You must provide your committee members with a complete draft, including references and abstract, and incorporating all their suggestions from prior drafts, at least two weeks before the scheduled oral defense.

Oral Defense of the Dissertation

The oral defense is a special meeting of your committee to review the entire project. In the past, this meeting was always in person. With our new digital communication tools and the outreach of PSP to students and faculty located throughout the world, the Oral Defense meeting is often conducted with participants situated many miles away from one another. Regardless of the setting—be it in-person or virtual--the committee meeting usually consists of four parts: (1) reviewing the final dissertation draft to see if there are any additional changes to be made, (2) a brief presentation by you, the student, regarding the major outcomes of the dissertation and the learning that came for the students from completing this project (with committee members gradually entering the conversation with their own reflections on the content and their own learning from the student’s work), (3) the committee’s review of your work (with you “leaving the room” -- in a virtual setting this means stepping away from your computer and going for several minutes to another room) and (4) the committee members’ report to you about their decision (successful completion of dissertation and awarding of doctorate or alternatively, a conditional acceptance is awarded with a recommendation regarding further work to be done by you on the dissertation and setting up of another meeting for final review)

During the first two parts of this meeting, committee members can raise questions or concerns they may have about the dissertation and you can respond to these questions as well as discuss the implications and significance of your findings. If your committee

members have reviewed your chapters as you wrote them, and you have incorporated or responded to their suggestions for revision, this meeting should hold few surprises, and you are unlikely to have to “defend” either yourself or the choices you have made in your work

Each oral defense is unique, responding to both the individual project and the styles and concerns of the individual committee members. It is common for the Chair to frame this meeting using the four parts noted above. The second part usually receives the most attention. The Chair will ask you to give a brief overview or description of your project: the problem addressed, the method employed, the findings and their implications. From there, committee members may ask you to discuss in greater depth various aspects of the project. You should be prepared to discuss your data analysis and to relate your conclusions specifically to your findings. You may be asked to speculate upon the implications for practice or further research of your findings. In this context, committee members may think of additional implications. You are likely to be asked to discuss the weaknesses and limitations of your study. It is often helpful, in preparing for the oral defense, to work from your abstract. A good abstract contains all the important statements about your study. Work from these statements, and think about the rationale and justification for each one.

If the meeting is held in person, then you will want to bring two copies of the signature page for the dissertation on the kind of paper (acid-free or 100% cotton archival paper) and using the type face that you expect to use for the final copy. If you want an original signature page for your own copy, bring three blank signature pages. It also is a good idea to bring an extra copy or two of both your signature page and your final draft of the dissertation. Committee members have been known to sign on the wrong line or smear the ink. And committee members may forget to bring their copies to the defense.

If the meeting is held virtually, then you should plan to send the signature pages to one of the committee members, with addresses included for the other committee members – stamped envelopes with addresses of the second and third committee members are always appreciated. The last person receiving (and signing the signature page) should be the Chair (this person sending copies of the signed pages to PSP). As in the case of the in-person meeting, the signature pages should be printed on 100% cotton archival paper—and you might want to prepare four or five copies to be signed (coffee spills and wrongly places signatures can occur in locations throughout the world!!)

The third and fourth part of the oral committee process are obviously the most important (and most stressful for most students). At the end of the oral defense, your committee formally decides whether or not to approve the dissertation. Students are asked to leave the room so that the discussion and decision are made by the committee in private. It is fairly rare for a committee to decide not to approve the dissertation at the oral defense and, if you have maintained regular contact with your committee members during the process, it is not likely to happen to you. But, particularly if you were rushing the last stages of your dissertation and scheduling of the oral defense in order to meet a graduation or other deadline, committee members may have some criticisms or concerns that you are not prepared for. In these cases, it sometimes happens that the committee will approve the dissertation conditionally, contingent upon your making specified changes. Many committees will delegate to the chair responsibility for seeing that the changes are made in the dissertation. Others will want to have each member review the revised final copy before the dissertation is completely approved. Some committees may wish to reconvene in another oral defense. In order to avoid these tedious and avoidable delays, plan your timeline carefully and update it as necessary, stay in touch with your committee members and respond to their critiques and suggestions, and be sure to give your committee members at least two weeks to read the

final draft of your dissertation before the oral defense. After passing the orals, your committee chairperson should sign the appropriate form, confirming that you have passed your oral exam and giving the date, and submit it to the administration.

Format Clearance

Formatting of the dissertation is meant to be completed by the student. To help with this process, you should follow the guidelines in the format section and check off the items on the Self-Check Format form. Your dissertation will be looked at briefly for obvious errors and for correct heading structure. It is up to you to make sure you have correct page numbers in your Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures and that your citations and references match.

In terms of the sample forms, other than margins, measurement between elements is approximate and meant to convey the idea of the importance of separating elements of information. For the sake of clarity, each element should be sufficiently separated from others.

Dissertation Filing

After your manuscript has been checked and cleared for format, you are responsible for having at least two copies of your dissertation hard bound for the school. These must be on acid-free archival paper. (Cotton paper that is 100% cotton rag is acid-free since it is produced without wood products. This is sometimes known as sulfite paper. This is available at the larger office supply stores - Office Depot, Office Max, Staples). The two hard-bound copies for the school should be bound in royal blue and silver. These will become part of PSP's permanent library

collection with one copy for reference and the other for checkout. Many students also arrange to have additional copies of their dissertation bound for themselves, committee members, family, or friends. The completed copies of the dissertation is to be sent to:

Herring & Robinson Bookbinders

100 North Hill Drive, #5

Brisbane, CA 94005

(415) 468-0440

This bookbinder will bind all copies of the dissertation you send them and will return all copies to you. We ask you, in turn, to send two copies of your dissertation to the school. There is an alternative process you can engage with Herring and Robinson. This bindery is well aware of our specifications for PSP dissertations. Furthermore, they bind dissertations for many other graduate schools and universities (including Stanford and UC Berkeley) – so they know what they are doing. Since they have our specifications on file, you can just let them know that the dissertation is from PSP. The PSP administration will send the dissertation over in a PDF format and Herring and Robinson will print it on the appropriate paper. The cost is about \$0.12 for all pages that contain only black printed text, and \$0.25 for each paper that contains colors other than black. If you live in a country other than the United States, we recommend that you select this option and let the PSP administration handle the submission of your dissertation for binding. The bound dissertations will, in turn, be sent back to PSP and we will send to you any additional copies (other than the two copies required by the school). PSP will bill you for the production costs and any shipping expenses.

In addition to the bound copies, you have the option of requesting that your dissertation be placed for public consumption in the Library of Professional Psychology (which is

owned by PSP). There is a form located near the end of this manual that asks you to offer your permission for the dissertation to be published in the library. With your granting permission, one of the library curators will be contacting you regarding submission of a digital copy of your dissertation. Typically, a dissertation is published one chapter (or one section of a chapter) at a time, with the entire dissertation being available as a download (with each chapter or chapter section). You might wish to visit the library (<https://psychology.edu/library/>) before submitting your dissertation for publication in the library. By the way, any document published in the Library of Professional Psychology is considered an official publication and can be cited on a resume.

Conclusion

Completing a dissertation is a major accomplishment that can change your status in life in that it moves you into the category of having completed a doctoral level education. While doing a dissertation is unquestionably an intense time consuming and educational experience, it also can be a source of success which will always be yours. Hopefully it is a major source of satisfaction and sense of accomplishment that you carry with you forever.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

SUMMARY OUTLINE OF STEPS IN THE DISSERTATION PROCESS

1. Find a committee chair who is willing to guide you throughout the proposal as well as the later stages of the dissertation.
2. Secure the agreement of a qualified person to chair your dissertation committee (or another individual approved by the Chief Academic Officer).
3. Secure the agreement of two other qualified professionals to serve as members of your dissertation committee.
4. Submit a Dissertation Committee Designation form for approval, and the Vitae of any non-faculty committee members.
5. Review and alter your proposal as necessary for your committee's approval.
6. Submit a copy of the final draft of your proposal, your signed Dissertation Committee Proposal Agreement form (including any stipulations or conditional plans for covering problems (such as low subject turnout).
7. Submit two copies of your Human Subjects protocol, with the appropriate form signed by you and your chair, and all required attachments.
8. When all approvals have been received and any conditions met, then collect data.
9. Analyze data.
10. Write Results and Discussion chapters. Revise Introduction and Methods chapters as necessary. Prepare additional components of the dissertation. Submit drafts to chair and committee members, get feedback, and incorporate suggestions.
11. When you and your chair agree you are ready, schedule your oral defense.
12. Hold your oral defense. Prepare at least two copies of the signature page for dissertation on the kind of paper (acidfree) and using the typeface you expect to use for the final copy. Distribute this page to committee members if the meeting is held in person or send signature pages to each committee member (send to one member who in turn sends signed form to second member and then on to third member). The form when signed by all committee members is sent to PSP administrative office.

13. Submit a complete final draft of your dissertation, incorporating all necessary revisions identified at your orals, for format clearance with form, checklist, and headings.
14. Make format revisions as required. Submit two hardbound copies of your dissertation (on acidfree paper), one loose copy, and a diskette version.
15. Submit Diploma Clearance Form to PSP when all obligations have been met.

APPENDIX B

Guidelines for Evaluating Dissertations and Dissertation Proposals

Dissertation Proposals

1. The proposed project is supported by a review of the literature that establishes its originality, its importance to the field, and/or its place in an established area of inquiry.

The design, measures, and analysis planned for the project are appropriate to the question.

Specifically,

- a. Multiple sources, or types of measurement are ordinarily included. It will usually not be appropriate for a dissertation study to include only a single type of measurement (e.g., only paper-and-pencil self-report measures; only projective measures).
 - b. If the question being investigated addresses differences between groups, appropriate provisions should be made for inclusion of control or contrast groups.
2. For projects whose primary question is psychometric, special care may be required to ensure that the project has sufficient scope. For example, the measure being investigated should promise an original approach to investigating a construct or problem of dear importance to the discipline or to practice. In general, dissertations whose purpose is to validate a measure of limited utility will not be appropriate, nor will those whose scope is confined to statistical treatment of existing data.
 3. Applied research in psychology includes an honorable place in its tradition for the single case study design, but special care is required to ensure that the known limitations of such designs are taken into account. For projects whose focus is a single case, both multiple data sources, measurement types and a sufficiently broad theoretical base are employed to provide adequate internal validity and promise of reasonable generalizability beyond the index case; use of time-series methods is especially encouraged for such studies.
 4. Any project involving human subjects or informants provides for the protection of subjects' or informants' privacy and physical, psychological, social, and economic well-being.

5. Proposals for non-empirical studies address questions appropriate for such treatment. That is, they do not investigate matters susceptible to empirical investigation. A proposal for a non-empirical study meets the highest standards of rigorous and scholarly investigation. It is not simply an extended review of the literature in an area, but provides critical synthesis of existing theory and research as a basis for asking new questions or positing new relationships. In addition, students intending to conduct non-empirical studies must secure the agreement, in writing, of a member of the faculty to chair the dissertation committee before the proposal is complete. Students presenting proposals for non-empirical projects will not receive a Pass in Dissertation research Design, unless the proposal includes a Proposal Approval Page signed by the chair.

Dissertations

1. The dissertation represents a contribution to psychology.
2. Conclusions and interpretations are appropriately derived from and based upon the study findings.
3. Implications for further research and for practice are identified and discussed.
4. The written presentation of the study reflects the competence in organization and clarity of expression expected of doctoral-level practitioners.

(Note that these are not guidelines for the oral defense, but are for the committee's use in evaluating the final draft.)

APPENDIX C
The Professional School of Psychology

Dissertation Proposal Approval

Student's Name: _____

Working Title of Dissertation: _____

The following members of the student's dissertation committee hereby approve this student's dissertation proposal:

Dissertation Chair: _____ Resume: On File Attached
Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Second Member: _____ Resume: On File Attached
Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Third Member: _____ Resume: On File Attached
Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For Administrative Use

Approval: _____ Date: _____

Conditions: _____

Original File

Chair

Student

APPENDIX D

Preparing the Human Subjects Committee (HSRC) Review Protocol

The protocol must be submitted to the Human Subjects Review Committee prior to the undertaking of any research activity, including both recruiting and screening subjects, and collecting data. Under existing regulations, proposed research submitted to the Committee is divided into two categories, depending upon the degree to which subjects are exposed to risk. Some research will be exempt from full review, and will need only to be registered with the HSRC before the research can proceed. Descriptions of exempt research categories are listed below. All other projects receive regular review.

Categories of Exempt Research

X.1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices and minimal psychological or other risk, such as (a) research on regular or special education instructional strategies, or (b) research on the effectiveness of or comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

X.2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), if information taken from these sources is recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, either directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects and if there is minimal psychological or other risk to subjects. This means that no record at all may be kept pairing subjects' names or other identifying information with their data.

X.3. Research involving survey or interview procedures, or observation (including observation by participants) of public behavior except when any of the following conditions exist: (a) responses are recorded in such a manner that the subjects can be identified, either directly or through indirect identifiers, (b) the subject's responses, if they became known outside the research, could reasonably place a subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability, (c) the research deals with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior, such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol or other drugs, or (d) the research exposes subjects to greater than minimal psychological risk. All research involving survey or interview procedures is exempt, without exception, when the respondents are elected or appointed public official or candidates for public office.

X.4. Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the subjects cannot be identified, either directly or through identifiers.

X.5. Theoretical dissertations not involving collection of data. (This does not include collection or use of archival data.)

Required Elements for an Exempt HSRC Review

- The HSRC Review of Research Protocol form, completed and signed
- A one-page summary of the proposed method
- A brief discussion of possible risks to your subjects, and of how you plan to prevent or minimize them. Exempt projects by definition protect subject's privacy, but there may still be risks of self-esteem, sense of wellbeing, etc. You should assess these and describe your plans to deal with them.
- If appropriate, copies of letters of authorization from institutional administrators or other responsible persons giving permission for your research to be conducted at or through an institution or agency.

NOTE: Although exempt projects do not require subjects' signatures, you should provide all subjects with sufficient information about the project to enable them to make an informed decision about their willingness to participate. The subjects should be provided with a written statement that the study involves research and the following information: a) an explanation of the procedures to be followed, b) the expected duration of the subject's participation, c) the facts that participation is voluntary, one can withdraw from the study at any time, and the identity of the subject will be kept confidential, d) written identification of a contact person, for answers to pertinent questions about the research and who they may contact in the event that there are problems or dissatisfaction. If the research involves children, this information must be provided in written form to the subjects' parents, in order to enable them to make an informed decision about their children's participation. Copies of this material must be appended to your protocol.

One copy of the protocol for an exempt research project is submitted to the office for transmission to the Human Subjects Review Committee. Keep in mind that if you have your participants sign a consent form, they are then identified and the study cannot be exempt. In truly exempt studies, where identification is not possible, participation in the study serves as implied consent.

Issues to Be Addressed in the Protocol for Research Subject to Regular Review

1. Descriptions of Research. Do not submit your entire dissertation proposal or method section. These typically contain a great deal of information irrelevant to the Committee's purposes. The concern is with your method only insofar as it affects contacts with your subjects. An overview of your design and procedures is needed, but two pages are ordinarily more than adequate. (Basically, your Synopsis with the method section embellished would be sufficient.) You should fully answer the following questions:

- a) Who are your subjects?
- b) How many of them are there?
- c) Where will you find them?
- d) How will you recruit them?
- e) Exactly what data will you be gathering from your subjects?
- f) In what ways will you be doing this?
- g) How long do these data gathering procedures take?
- h) What are your instructions to subjects? (Give them verbatim, or as close to verbatim as possible at recruitment, during data collections, and upon completion of the study.)
- i) What measures are you planning to use?
- j) How will data be recorded (video or audio recorders, notes)?

In brief, what is the experience of participating in your study going to be like from the subject's point of view?

2. Confidentiality. This is a major human subject's issue. The sole concern is that your subjects be completely protected. Whenever tapes (audio or video) are made, there should be some statement to the subjects about the fate of these data upon completion of the study.

Unless there are compelling reasons (such as with data collected as part of a longitudinal study), all data are best destroyed a year after the study has been completed. For obvious reasons, questions of confidentiality come into sharper focus when your research area is a sensitive one and subjects are asked to reveal themselves in personal matters.

You should address the following:

- a) How do you plan to protect the confidentiality of subjects' information
- b) Any ways in which confidentiality might be breached
- c) How do you plan to prevent this from occurring
- d) What is the nature of your data (tapes, questionnaires, interview notes, etc.)
- e) How do you plan to store them and dispose of them
- f) If you are using assistants to help with the collection and/or coding of data, how will you train or prepare them to maintain your subjects' confidentiality?

3. Minors. Research with minors or rationally compromised adults creates special problems of consent, often involving legal issues as well as ethical ones. When consent is being obtained by proxy (parent or guardian), special attention needs to be given to the entire consent process in your protocol. In compliance with federal regulations, the following procedures must be followed concerning parental consent for research involving children as subjects:

- a) For research involving no more than minimal risk, the consent of one parent or guardian, and of the participating child, are required.
- b) For research involving greater than minimal risk, the consent of both parents or guardians, and of the participating child, are required.
- c) For research in which parental or guardian permission is not a reasonable requirement (for instance, if you are studying abused or abandoned children), the HSRC may waive the parental consent requirement if an appropriate mechanism for protecting participants is substituted. It is the researcher's responsibility to check that this waiver of permission is consistent with the requirements of applicable federal, state, and local laws.

4. Feedback. You should always provide feedback for subjects, if they are interested in having it. Generally, this feedback should be in the form of group data or findings, not individual data. If you plan to make feedback on individual data available to subjects, you must present rationale for doing so. Probably the best way to arrange for feedback to your subjects is to request people's addresses at the time of recruitment or data collection so that you can send them a written summary (about a page is usually fine) after the study is complete. Many researchers have a place on their Consent Form for those who are interested in receiving feedback to check.

5. Risks. A discussion of the risks to which your subjects may be exposed through their participation in your research serves the important function of letting the Committee know that you have given serious and thoughtful consideration to your subjects' welfare by anticipating negative consequences. Existing regulations recognize two degrees of risk: "Minimal risk," and greater than minimal risk. Minimal risk is defined as meaning "that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests." As you can see, this is not a perfectly precise definition. Judgment is required. You must assess the degree of risk inherent in your research procedures and provide a rationale for that assessment.

Most PSP research involves minimal physical risk. However, participating in research into clinical areas (psychotherapy, testing, social perception, and psychopathology) does have the potential for causing anxiety or depression in the subject. For example, asking a subject to respond to questions about his or her marriage, psychotherapy, or childhood could conceivably create negative consequences, such as marital disharmony, lowered self-esteem, etc. Simply filling out a questionnaire might draw attention to areas that subjects have successfully denied or repressed.

Because such negative consequences would never have arisen (if they actually do) were it not for your study, you are responsible to some degree for any unwanted psychological side effects that can reasonably be shown to have resulted from participation in your study.

Although individual cases vary, usually your responsibility in this regard extends to providing immediately available consultation for any subject who requests it during or immediately alters your study. You should identify a licensed professional who is willing to serve as back-up for you in the event that one or more subjects are distressed and requires consultation. That professional's name and license number must be given in this part of your protocol.

Consultation is offered at no cost to the subject. Your responsibility does not extend to providing free psychotherapy for an unlimited time. Usually one or two consultations are sufficient if such a need (which is very rare) arises. It is important that you fully inform your subjects about any and all such risks, for your own protection as well as theirs. In the special case in which subjects will be deceived about some aspect of the study as part of the design, you must convincingly demonstrate that such deception is necessary and describe in detail how you plan to debrief your subjects.

6. Benefits. What are the potential benefits to subjects from participating in your study? What will they gain from the experience?

Required Elements for a Regular HSRC Review

- The HSRC Review of Research Protocol form, completed and signed
- Answers to Questions 1-6 above
- A Consent Form tailored to your subject population and research design.
- Copies of all research instruments that you have developed yourself, including questionnaires, interview schedules, and tests. If you are using well-known, standard measures, there is no need to submit them. If you are not sure whether or not your instruments are "well known," consult your chair or the Dissertation Design instructor.
- If appropriate, copies of letters of authorization from institutional administrators or other responsible persons, giving permission for your research to be conducted at or through an institution or agency. (This can sometimes be a "Catch 22" in that they might want a copy of the approved HSRC review before they give consent. In such a case you will need to work this out either verbally or by having one consent contingent on the other.)

Two copies of your protocol, including all attachments are submitted to the Administration for transmission to the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Consent Forms

A sample consent form is provided in this appendix, but the form must always be tailored to your particular study. Informed consent, as a goal, has two major parts: informing and consenting.

For the informing portion, the following issues arise:

- a) Are all procedures you will use, and the time they will entail, fully explained.
- b) Is this done in language easily understood by your subjects.

For the consenting portion, the following issues arise:

- a) Is the subject population in an institutional setting (a classroom, a prison, a hospital, an outpatient clinic) in which their freedom to refuse participation might be compromised by pressures created by the institution? That is, is consent by your subjects completely voluntary?
- b) Is your subject's capacity to comprehend your informing statements so that you can be assured that he or she fully understands what participation in your study really entails? This issue is of particular importance with any subjects whose ability to consent might conceivably be compromised (children, psychotics, the developmentally disabled, or cognitively impaired).

A copy of your consent form must be included with your HSRC protocol.

Sample Consent Form for Participants in Research

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

Participant's name _____

1. I hereby authorize _____ (researcher's name), of The Professional School of Psychology, and any research assistants authorized by him/her, to gather information from me on the topic of _____ (focus of the study in your own words, not psychological jargon, not the title of your dissertation. Obviously, all elements given here should be adapted to the specific nature of your study. For example, if you are the sole data collector, don't have your subjects authorizing the use of research assistants.)

I have freely and voluntarily consented to participate in this study, with no coercion, psychological or otherwise, used to elicit my cooperation.

I understand that my participation will involve _____ (answering questionnaires, giving biographical information-- whatever your study calls for) and will take approximately _____ (amount of time).

2. I understand that there is (no/minimal/some/-pick one) physical or psychological risk involved in this participation. Depending upon the nature of your study and the nature of the risk as you have defined it in your protocol, you might include something like one of the following statements: I am aware that some people might be offended or embarrassed by some of the questions asked, and I am aware that I may choose not to answer any questions I do not want to. /OR I have been assured that I must feel free to refuse to discuss any matters that cause me discomfort or that I experience as an unwanted invasion of my privacy. (Use judgment here: Don't include statements such as these if you are not collecting personal data from your subject.)

3. I understand that I may terminate participation in this study at any time.

4. (Required if situation demands) I understand that my participation or nonparticipation in this study will in no way affect my treatment at _____ (name of facility).

5. I understand that if, after my participation, I experience any undue distress that may that may have been provoked by my participation, consultation will be available to me.

6. These procedures have been explained to me by _____.

Participant's signature

Date

APPENDIX E

The Professional School of Psychology

Human Subjects Review Committee Review of Research Protocol

Student's/Researcher's Name _____

Purpose of Review (circle one):

Class Project

Dissertation

Other Study

Title of Proposed Research:

Student's/Researcher's Signature _____

Chairperson Signature _____

Administrative Use Only

Type of Review (circle): Exempt Regular Non-Sensitive Sensitive

**Full
Approval**

**Conditional
Approval**

**Returned
for Revision**

Comments:

Reviewer _____ Date _____

Second Reviewer _____ Date _____

(If Sensitive)

Original/File

Chair

Student

APPENDIX F

The Professional School of Psychology

Dissertation Format Review

Please submit this form, along with your Outline of Headings and your Dissertation Format Self-Checklist Form, and your dissertation. Dissertation should be on draft quality paper (not archival).

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title of Dissertation: _____

- Format is fully approved
- Format is approved contingent on changes indicated.
- Format is not approved. Resubmit.

Reviewed by: _____

Comment: _____

APPENDIX G

The Professional School of Psychology

Dissertation Format Self-Checklist

MARGINS:

- Is your left margin 1 1/2 inches wide to accommodate binding?
- Are your top, bottom, and right margins 1 1/4 inches wide?
- Is your right margin ragged rather than justified?

PAGE FORMATS:

- Does your Signature Approval page conform to Dissertation Manual style and proportions?*
- Does your Copyright page (if you are doing a copyright) conform to Dissertation Manual style and proportions?*
- Does your Title page conform to Dissertation Manual style and proportions?*
- Does your Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures pages conform to Dissertation Manual style and are your page numbers placed vertically using a right margin setting on your computer?
- Are tables entirely on one page to the extent possible? (If a table needs to be continued to a following page, is it labeled as "continued" on the subsequent page?)
- If tables or figures need to be rotated 90 degrees on a page for better fit, is the top of the table or figure toward the margin?

*Since different content can require slightly different measurements, actual measurements for spacing are not given. Nevertheless, keeping the general proportioning as the sample pages is required. Specifically, it is important that each section of information is adequately separated from other sections so that the information is readily understandable.

TEXT PAGE FORMATS:

Is your text 1 1/2 or double spaced (except for lengthy quotations)?

Is each paragraph indented by 5 spaces?

Have you avoided "widows" or "orphans" within your text - single lines of a paragraph on a page by themselves? (All paragraphs should have at least two lines on a given page.)

Are your section headings on the same page as the first two lines of the first paragraph of that section?

Within the Results chapter in particular, are all parts of a numerical piece of information on the same line? (i.e., $g < .05$)

Is your text produced with a font that is either 10 or 12 points in size? (Fonts, such as Times, which are smaller than others, should be 12 point. If you use bitmapping, which reduces the printed size of the font, you also should use 12 point.)

PAGE NUMBERS:

Have you used lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v) for your preliminary pages? (Title page, which is page 1 but not labeled, through List of Figures page.)

Are the numbers of your preliminary pages centered at the bottom of the page?

Starting on Page 2, are your numbers in the upper right corner and within a 1-inch margin from the top and aligned with the right margin?

HEADINGS:

Are your headings properly sequenced, according to pp. 90-93 in the Fifth Edition of the APA Publication Manual and PSP Dissertation Guidelines?

Do you have an outline of your headings, up to five levels total, which indicates that your hierarchy of headings are correctly formatted?

How many heading levels does your dissertation have? (Circle)

1 2 3 4 5

Are there two or three spaces separating previous text from Level 1,2,3, and 5 headings?*

Are there two or three spaces after Level 1, 2, and 5 headings?*

* The important issue with spacing between sections is to have the header at least as close or closer to the section it is referring to rather than closer to the previous section.

If a heading takes more than one line, is there a double space between the lines of the heading?

Are your sentences following Level 4 headings on the same line as the heading with the paragraph indented five spaces?

COORDINATION OF INFORMATION:

Do the page numbers listed in your Table of Contents conform to the actual pages of the content item? (If you make last minute changes that may affect your pagination, have you rechecked for page numbers changes?)

Do the page numbers listed in your List of Tables (if you have one) conform to the pages on which the tables appear?

Do the page numbers listed in your List of Figures (if you have one) conform to the pages on which the figures appear?

Do the names and dates in your citations match the names and dates in your references?

Are all your citations listed in the reference section?

Are all your references cited at least once in the text?

HINT: On the above two items you may be able to use the "Find" option of your computer to search the text for each reference and make sure the citation gives consistent information. If you are checking it by hand, the easiest way may be to check off references as you find them throughout the text and then make sure there are no references left over which have not been checked off.

CITATION AND REFERENCE FORMAT

Are your citations in proper form?

a.) First use of a citation includes all authors' last names (as well as the date) if there are five or fewer authors?

b.) Subsequent use of the same citation gives the first author's last name, followed by et al.

c.) In citations with six or more authors, always use the first author's name followed by et al.

Are your references in the proper form?

a.) You have "hanging" indents of 3 spaces.

b.) Your references are single spaced.

c.) You have a double space between different references.

d.) None of your references spill over onto the next page. (Push the entire reference to the next page if it is broken into two parts.)

e.) Underlines extend under periods and commas. (This change was made in the Fourth Edition for the convenience of your computer!)

f.) Book or journal titles are italicized.

- [] g.) Journal titles have all major words capitalized.
- [] h.) Titles of articles in journals and book titles are not in capital letters except for the first word and the first word after a colon.
- [] i.) When there is more than one author or editor, an ampersand (&) is used in lieu of "and."
- [] j.) If you have more than one source by the same author(s) in the same year, the references are given an a, b, c, etc. designation after the date in both the reference and the citation.
- [] k.) Is the spelling of names consistent (and correct) between each citation and corresponding reference. [] 1.) Legal citations follow APA and Bluebook guidelines. (See APA Manual, pp 223-234.)

APPENDIX H

The Professional School of Psychology

Completion of Oral Defense

This is to confirm that _____
Student's Name

passed his/her oral exam on _____.
Date

Chair's Signature

APPENDIX I

The Professional School of Psychology

Diploma Clearance Checklist

When you have completed all program requirements, please fill in your name as you wish it to appear on your diploma and mark which program you have completed. Submit this form to the Registrar who will initiate the clearance process. If there are any problems you will be notified.

Name _____

Doctoral students only:

Title of dissertation _____

Your diploma will be ordered when your clearance is complete. Your orals date will be your graduation date and this date will be indicated on your diploma.

For Administrative Use

Dissertation Clearance Financial Clearance Academic Clearance Date degree awarded

Diploma ordered _____

Diploma received _____

Diploma mailed to graduate _____

APPENDIX J

The Professional School of Psychology

Permission for Publication: Library of Professional Psychology

Name _____

Title of thesis or dissertation:

I authorize the Professional School of Psychology to publish my thesis or dissertation in the school's digital library: The Library of Professional Psychology.

Signature _____ Date _____

For Administrative Use

Referred to _____ on _____ for web posting.
Webmaster or other Date

This work was posted in the Library on _____ by _____.
Date Name/Signature

Copies for: Student's File Web Files

APPENDIX K

HEADINGS ASSISTANT

Dissertations with 4 levels

CHAPTER ONE (Level 5)

Large Space

Interesting Chapter Title (Level 1)

Large Space

First Subheading Within the Chapter (Level 2)

Large Space

Further Subheading within the First (Level 3)

Small Space

Small details about the level 3 material (Level 4). This is how the first sentence under a Level 4 heading should connect. It should not start on the line following the heading.

In a paper that has only two or three levels, Level 2 is skipped. A Level 5 heading is only brought in when there are five levels of organization.

Dissertations with 3 levels

CHAPTER ONE (Level 5)

Large Space

Interesting Chapter Title (Level 1)

Large Space

First Subheading Within the Chapter (Level 3)

Small Space

Second subheading (Level 4). This is how the first sentence under a Level 4 heading should connect. It should not start on the line following the heading.

APPENDIX L

Format Summary

Paper

Paper must be 8 1/2" by 11". The two copies for the Library's permanent collection must be on 20-pound, acid free paper.

Elements of the Dissertation

Items should be included in the following order. Underlined items are required; others are optional.

1. blank page
2. title page
3. copyright page
4. approval page
5. abstract
6. preface
7. acknowledgments
8. table of contents
9. list of tables (if applicable)
10. list of figures (if applicable)
11. text
12. references
13. appendices
14. blank page

Summary of Rules for Heading

CENTERED UPPER CASE (Level 5)

Large Space

Centered Upper and Lower Case (Level 1)

Large Space

Centered Italicized Uppercase and Lowercase (Level 2)

Large Space

Flush Left, Italicized, Uppercase and Lowercase Side Heading (Level 3)

Small Space

Indented italicized lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period (Level 4). This is how the first sentence under a Level 4 heading should connect. It should not start on the line following the heading.

In a paper that has only two or three levels, Level 2 is skipped. A Level 5 heading is only brought in when there are five levels of organization.

APPENDIX M - SAMPLE PAGES

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

LOCUS OF CONTROL AS A
SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE
ON THE BEHAVIOR OF
ADHD CHILDREN

by

ALFRED SKEY

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Psychology
The Professional School of Psychology

Sacramento, 2000

SAMPLE - COPYRIGHT PAGE

© 2000

Alfred Skey

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SAMPLE SIGNATURE PAGE

The dissertation of Alfred Skey
is approved and is acceptable in quality and form:

John Preston, Psy.D.
Committee Chair

William Bergquist, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Marcy Schiller, Ph.D.
Committee Member

The Professional School of Psychology Sacramento, California, 2000

SAMPLE ABSTRACT

Abstract of the Dissertation

LOCUS OF CONTROL AS A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE
ON THE BEHAVIOR OF ADHD CHILDREN

by

Alfred Skey

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

The Professional School of Psychology

Sacramento, CA

2000

This study was prompted by a new national commitment toward finding solutions for the needs of students most likely to fail academically. Such students, labeled "at-risk," include children who have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). As a

contribution, the purpose of this study was to examine Locus of Control (LOC) as a significant influence on the behavior of children with ADHD as it affects their academic performance. Although a multitude of variables contribute to a decreased likelihood of academic success, LOC as a psychosocial dependent variable has not been examined systematically in regard to ADHD students. To investigate this variable, 60 male students (ages 8 - 18) were evaluated by the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale (N-SLCS, 1973) instrument to tentatively determine the direction of their orientation - internal or external. A2 x 2 Analysis of Variance design was employed to gather the statistical data. The independent variables were Conditions (ADHD or non-ADHD) and Age (preadolescent or adolescent). A significant main effect for conditions (ADHD vs. non-ADHD) was observed with ADHD being more externally oriented than non-ADHD students. In addition, a significant main effect was noted, with preadolescent youngsters being more externally oriented than adolescents, the latter apparently becoming more internal as they grow older. No interaction among the independent variables was found. A number of implications pertaining to ADHD in this paper warrant further study. These include a clarification of evolving concepts in its etiology and clinical features; exploration of the role played in demographic factors; a reassessment of reinforcement principles in behavior management; the linkage between teacher expectations and LOC orientation; the impact of psychosocial variables, such as self-esteem, delinquency, feelings of hopelessness, and suicidal potential; the short and long range effect of medications and their interactions; and the impact of maternal drug addiction on the fetus and post birth sequelae.

SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS

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SAMPLE LIST OF TABLES AND/OR FIGURES

[If there is only one table or figure, you may combine them on the same list.]

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SAMPLE TEXT WITH HEADINGS

CHAPTER 3

Results

Treatment of Data

Descriptive statistics were initially employed to summarize and describe the raw data obtained from this study. Measures of central tendency (means) and variability (standard deviations) is illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1

External Locus of Control Means and Standard Deviations

VARIABLE	ADHD		Non-ADHD	
	M	SD	M	SD
Preadolescent	30.7	4.4	26.5	3.8
Adolescent	22.9	2.1	19.5	2.2

Visual inspection of the means indicates that preadolescents appear to possess a higher degree of external control (ADHD, $M = 30.7$; non-ADHD, $M = 26.5$) than adolescents (ADHD, $M = 22.9$; non-ADHD, $M = 19.5$); ADHD preadolescents appear to be more externally oriented ($M = 30.7$) than non-ADHD preadolescents ($M = 26.5$); and ADHD adolescents appear to possess slightly more external control ($M = 22.9$) than non-ADHD adolescents ($M = 19.5$).

SAMPLE REFERENCES

REFERENCES

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Note: This version of the PSP Dissertation Manual was published on September 21, 2019. The manual is occasionally updated taking into account not only changing school policies regarding dissertation production and review, but also changes in the digital technology associated with creation and publication of the dissertation.

