PH.D. DISSERTATION HANDBOOK

GLENN R. JONES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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## Contents

Introduction to the Ph.D. Handbook ................................................................. 4
Degree Requirements ....................................................................................... 4
  Dissertation Timeline .................................................................................... 4
  DPS Components ......................................................................................... 4
  Grading .......................................................................................................... 5
Proctoring Dissertation Defense ................................................................. 6
Dissertation Requirements ............................................................................. 7
  Methodology Types for Dissertations ......................................................... 7
  Quantitative Research Methods ................................................................. 7
  Qualitative Research Methods ................................................................... 7
  Mixed Methods Research ........................................................................... 7
Dissertation Chapters ..................................................................................... 8
  Chapter I – Introduction ............................................................................ 8
  Chapter II – Literature Review ................................................................. 8
  Chapter III – Methodology ....................................................................... 9
  Chapter IV – Data Analysis and Results ................................................... 9
  Chapter V – Discussion and Conclusions ................................................ 9
Dissertation Procedures .................................................................................. 9
  Ph.D. Program Milestones ........................................................................ 9
  Dissertation Tasks ...................................................................................... 10
  Task 1: Academic Plan ............................................................................ 11
  Task 2: Identify Area of Research and General Research Questions .......... 11
  Task 3: State Research Questions ............................................................. 11
  Task 4: Draft of Problem Statement and Introduction ............................ 11
  Task 5: Draft of Literature Review ............................................................ 11
  Task 6: Draft of Research Methods .......................................................... 11
  Task 7: Qualifying Exam (Written and Oral) .......................................... 11
  Task 8: Dissertation Prospectus ............................................................... 12
  Task 9: IRB Certificate ............................................................................ 12
Task 10: Committee Formation ................................................................. 12
Task 11: Draft of Dissertation Proposal .................................................. 13
Task 12: Final Proposal ........................................................................... 13
Task 13: Post-Defense Proposal with Corrections ....................................... 13
Task 14: Approved Dissertation Proposal ................................................ 14
Task 15: IRB Application ........................................................................ 15
Task 16: IRB Approval ............................................................................ 15
Task 17: Draft of Dissertation ................................................................... 15
Task 18: Final Dissertation ....................................................................... 16
Task 19: Post-Defense Dissertation with Corrections ................................. 16
Task 20: Approved Dissertation ............................................................... 17
Responsibilities of Dissertation Committee ............................................... 17
  Responsibilities of Committee Chair ...................................................... 18
  Responsibilities of Dissertation Committee Members: .......................... 18
Appendix A: Proposal Guidelines ............................................................... 19
Appendix B: Quantitative Dissertation Guidelines ..................................... 24
Appendix C: Qualitative Dissertation Guidelines ....................................... 32
Appendix D: Dissertation Approval Page .................................................. 36
Appendix E: Dissertation Proposal Defense Rubric ................................... 37
Appendix F: Evaluation Rubric for Ph.D. Dissertation Defense ................... 39
Appendix G: Proctor Approval Form ......................................................... 41
Introduction to the Ph.D. Handbook

The Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.) Dissertation Handbook is a guide to promote efficiency during the rigorous process of writing proposals and Dissertations. It is not a contract between students and Trident University International nor is it to be used to determine published program admission or graduation requirements. Trident University reserves the right to update or amend this guide at any time according to Trident University Ph.D. program needs, accreditation requirements, and/or ProQuest publication changes.

Earning a Ph.D. is the highest academic degree obtainable, and requires novel, independent research supported by advanced-level, program-specific theoretical knowledge geared toward scholarship and systematic inquiry. Completion and publication of the Dissertation is required to earn a Ph.D. Publication provides a permanent record of original research directly attributable to the student. Trident University is committed to the preservation and dissemination of such research.

The first section of this guide provides a general overview of degree requirements and policies. The subsequent sections address Dissertation requirements, procedures, and responsibilities of the Committee Chair and Members. Appendices provide guidelines, procedural information and evaluation rubrics for a research proposal and dissertation. The guidelines for writing, formatting, and publishing the Dissertation are contained in the separate Dissertation Template.

Degree Requirements

The degree requires a total of 56 semester hours of coursework. Following the completion of the 600-level required core coursework, students work on their Dissertation in the 700-level courses.

Dissertation Timeline

Students are strongly encouraged to complete the Ph.D. based on their Academic Plan (AP). All Ph.D. degree requirements must be fulfilled within nine consecutive years. Dissertation (700) courses not completed within three years require permission from the Doctorial Studies Director and/or College Dean to continue. Please review the University Catalog for more information on program requirements and the policy related to maximum time for degree completion.

DPS Components
1. 600-level core, concentration, and elective courses are valued at four credit hours each.
2. Dissertation courses begin after all 600-level course requirements are completed. There are two levels of dissertation courses. **Dissertation series** (700-701-702). These four-module courses are valued at four credit hours each. Each course requires substantive progress in the Dissertation tasks in all modules. **Students must defend the dissertation proposal by the end of 702.** 702 can only be repeated twice. If a student fails to pass 702 after the third attempt, they will be dismissed from the program. **Dissertation continuation courses** (703 through 711) are valued at zero credit hours. The Dissertation Continuation courses must be taken every session for students to maintain their active status in the doctoral program. During Dissertation Continuation courses all students are required to demonstrate academic progress in their Dissertation research. At the end of every session enrolled, students complete a Progress Report detailing their achievements, which is graded by the Committee Chair, a rubric is completed with feedback, and a final grade of P/NP is assigned. Credits earned toward 700 series and continuation courses will NOT be included in overall GPA calculation. The 700 Dissertation course are equivalent to a full-time enrollment status for reporting purposes only. Dissertation continuation courses are not eligible for federal financial aid and VA/GI Bill benefits.

3. 800-level courses. These courses are valued at zero credit hours. They are the Dissertation task courses created for each individual student following program registration requirements to facilitate submission, tracking, and approval for completed Dissertation tasks.

4. The ePortfolio provides a single place to save documents related to the development of a student’s Dissertation. Students can utilize it to develop a portfolio for Dissemination before and after graduation. All eForms are available in ePortfolio.

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**Grading**

To meet graduation requirements, students must receive a minimum grade of “B-” in all 600-level courses. Dissertation level courses are graded as P/NP (pass/ no-pass). Students who fail to meet course expectations will have to repeat the course.

A passing grade in Dissertation Continuation courses (703 and above) requires continuous interaction with the Dissertation Chair, submissions of updated Dissertation drafts, and submission of a Progress Report at the end of each course. It is the responsibility of all students to remain in contact with their Dissertation Chairs during the 700-level courses regarding their Dissertation progress. Lack of Dissertation progress will be recorded as “NP”. Students who receive two consecutive NPs will be on Academic Probation and must submit a plan of action to the Doctoral Studies Director before registering for the succeeding session. Students who receive three consecutive NPs will be Academically Disqualified.
**Note on Resources:** Most of the course materials are available to students through Trident's Online Library or open access on the Internet. Students are responsible for additional tools and materials needed to complete their dissertation. For example, students need to purchase statistical software needed for their data analysis. All students are required to complete the on-line training for Protecting Human Research Participants (PHRP) to meet the requirements of the Trident Institutional Review Board. Students are also responsible for professional editing of their final Dissertation if needed before publication. Fees for software, publishing at ProQuest, and PHRP Training are paid directly to the vendors.

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**Proctoring Dissertation Defense**

**NOTE:** Proctoring requirements apply to all California residents.
Proctoring requirements will apply to all students beginning the Ph.D. program in SUMMER 2018, and forward.

If a student is able and prefers, they can schedule their Proposal and Dissertation defenses at Trident University, in Cypress, California. The Doctoral Studies Director will reserve an on-site conference room for the defense. A proctor form is not necessary for students who come on-site to defend.

In accordance with the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), a Proposal and Dissertation defense in which a student is not physically present on-site must be proctored. This will confirm the identity of the student and that the student does not receive prompting and/or have access to materials not allowed during the evaluation period.

Students can use a remote (off-site) Ph.D. Committee member as a proctor for Proposal and Dissertation defenses. If a Committee member cannot be physically present for a defense, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain a proctor and assume all associated costs. Students must complete the External Proctor form (Appendix H) two-weeks in advance and receive the Doctoral Studies Director’s approval prior to the date of the defense evaluation. Proctors cannot be a relative or friend of the student.

Approved proctors include the following:
- A testing center or academic administrator of a regionally accredited University or college
- A testing center on a military installation
- A librarian
- Online proctoring service (e.g., proctoru.com)
Dissertation Requirements

Trident University Ph.D. programs require a five-chapter Dissertation format. Within the Dissertation, students must defend a comprehensive synthesis of their Ph.D. study by demonstrating knowledge and scholarship with a significant and novel research project which contributes to the body of knowledge in the field(s) potentially affected by the research.

Methodology Types for Dissertations

Two types of Dissertations are widely accepted in the Ph.D. programs at Trident University: 1) Quantitative and 2) Mixed Methods. The Qualitative methods are accepted in the College of Education Ph.D. program. Each student should consult with their Doctoral Studies Director and Dissertation Chair for approval on use of Qualitative Methods in a Dissertation. An overview of these methods is discussed below.

Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative research methods use multi-variate statistical analyses of numeric data to generate results which are responsive to defined research question(s). The research design can consist of, but is not limited to, the following: 1) Experimental, 2) Quasi-experimental, and 3) Non-experimental research designs. The research design is meant to address the research questions and test hypotheses/null hypotheses grounded in theory. **Students can use primary or secondary data.** The measurement tools must be valid and reliable. Findings that address each research question and hypothesis are presented in tables, graphs and figures, as well as subsequently discussed in the context of the literature. Appendix B provides details on quantitative research methods.

Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research methods generate data via some of the following: interviews, focus groups, and participant observations. The research approaches can consist of grounded theory, phenomenological research, narrative research, ethnographies, and case study research. Findings for qualitative research studies are presented through case studies and narratives with themes identified to help address the research questions. Appendix C provides further details on Qualitative research methods.

Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods refer to a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. At times, qualitative methods are utilized as a means of exploring project feasibility
which is then validated with quantitative research methods. The data analysis of each method, quantitative and qualitative is completely separate.

**Dissertation Chapters**

Trident Ph.D. programs require the following five Dissertation chapters:

I. Introduction  
II. Literature Review  
III. Methodology  
IV. Data Analysis and Results  
V. Discussion and Conclusions

The first three Dissertation chapters are reliant on the approved Dissertation Proposal. Major modifications of the general content need to be approved by the Chair and the Committee.

**Chapter I – Introduction**

This chapter introduces the topic and rationale for the independent research. This includes defining the problem or issue and discussing a clear study purpose. The student should explain the process resulting in the identification of the research question(s) and support their project justification with literary references from peer-reviewed journals. Students must discuss the nature of the study and study significance explaining how their research contributes to the current body of knowledge in the field(s) of research. Students must also provide definitions of key terms.

**Chapter II – Literature Review**

This chapter is a comprehensive review and synthesis of all literature pertaining to the research question(s), variables, and the field of research. The review is arranged by the synthesis of findings from the literature into emerging themes. The review emergent themes establish the appropriate theoretical background and conceptual framework to support the hypotheses. Statistically testable hypotheses are presented that directly correspond to the research questions. Students must summarize the review by explaining how the research fits within other research in the field.
Chapter III – Methodology

The student will identify, describe, and defend the study design and methods selected for their study. A methodological analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of available or alternative methods should be included, in addition to literary supported rationale to defend the method(s) of choice. The study population, sample, materials and instrumentation, variables and operational definitions of the variables, data collection and statistical analysis, assumptions, delimitations, and ethical assurances are articulated and justified here.

Chapter IV – Data Analysis and Results

This chapter details the descriptive statistics, bivariate analysis and multivariate analysis results, and the statistical applications used to analyze the data. Results are presented in Tables and Figures, and interpretation of the results must be provided in the light of existing research and the theoretical/conceptual framework. The study results are discussed and articulated here.

Chapter V – Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter explains how the study results address the research question(s) by drawing logical conclusions. The implications and contributions of the research to the current body of knowledge are discussed. Recommendations for further research should be included, and recommendations for practice modification(s) are highly desirable where appropriate. A concluding statement presents the key message of the complete study.

Dissertation Procedures

Trident University International has an electronic infrastructure called the Doctoral Positioning System (DPS). The DPS is a web-based technology used for the administration, documentation, tracking, and evaluation of progress toward completing all the tasks and milestones required to attain the Ph.D. degree at Trident. The DPS is composed of 600-, 700-, and 800- level courses, and an ePortfolio.

Ph.D. Program Milestones

Program milestones include 20 Dissertation tasks, which may vary depending on the respective Ph.D. program. These Dissertation tasks represent a general approach that students must follow to complete their Dissertation study and attain their degree. During the 600-level coursework, students should begin to make progress toward their Dissertation proposal. Using proposal topics as foundation for
course assignments can facilitate this process. During the 700-level courses, students are responsible for recording Dissertation progress. Students are responsible for communicating and working closely with their Dissertation Chair to ensure efficient and timely advancement. All substantial Dissertation task documents are uploaded into the 800-course. The rate of advancement is dependent upon the type of study, the tasks required for completion, and the student’s effectiveness. At a minimum, students are expected to maintain bi-weekly communication with their Chair.

Dissertation Tasks

1. AP (Academic Plan)
2. Identify Area of Research and General Research Questions
3. State Research Questions
4. Draft of Problem Statement and Introduction
5. Draft of literature review
6. Draft of Research Methods
7. Qualifying Exams (Written and Oral)
8. Dissertation Prospectus
9. IRB Certificate (on-line)
10. Committee formation
11. Draft Dissertation proposal
12. Final Proposal - **Defense**
13. Post-defense Proposal with corrections
14. Approved Dissertation Proposal
15. IRB Application
16. IRB Approval (or exemption)
17. Draft Dissertation
18. Final Dissertation - **Defense**
19. Post-defense Dissertation with corrections
20. Approved Dissertation - **Degree**
Task 1: Academic Plan

The Academic Plan (AP) is required and provides a timeline for completion of the Ph.D. program in 3, 4, or 5 years. The AP e-Form, located in the e-Portfolio, is to be completed by the student at the beginning of the program and uploaded into the 800-course. The student may update their AP form if changes are needed.

Task 2: Identify Area of Research and General Research Questions

Upon matriculating to the first program course (600-level), the student will begin to review literature and identify a general research topic of interest within their area of concentration. Students follow the instructions outlined in the individual courses. Substantive drafts are uploaded to the 800-course.

Task 3: State Research Questions

Course assignments are tailored towards refining and specifying research question(s) throughout curriculum progression. Students follow the instructions outlined in the individual courses. Substantive drafts are uploaded to the 800-course.

Task 4: Draft of Problem Statement and Introduction

Students will conduct literature reviews about their area of interest, identify a knowledge gap that is relevant and novel to the field of science. The student will develop a draft of the Problem Statement and Introduction to explore their topic of interest. Students follow the instructions outlined in the individual courses. Substantive drafts are uploaded to the 800-course.

Task 5: Draft of Literature Review

Students will continue to review theoretical and empirical literature to set up a conceptual framework for their study and formulate a hypothesis(ies). Students follow the instructions outlined in the individual courses. Substantive drafts are uploaded to the 800-course.

Task 6: Draft of Research Methods

Students will explore and describe the Methods section of their dissertation research throughout enrollment in methodology courses. Students follow the instructions outlined in the individual courses. Substantive drafts are uploaded to the 800-course.

Task 7: Qualifying Exam (Written and Oral)
The Qualifying Exam assesses the student’s ability to conduct independent research. It includes both a Written and an Oral Qualifying Exam to determine the student's qualifications, including knowledge and skills for undertaking rigorous scientific investigation in a research field. Students will be examined on their understanding of research methods and statistical concepts related to the research process. The qualifying exam is conducted via phone conference or e-conference and uploaded to the 800-course and ePortfolio. The Qualifying Exam Committee will evaluate the prospectus and presentation and will then schedule an oral exam if ready. The results of the Written and Oral Qualifying Exams are uploaded to the 800-course and ePortfolio by the student. Students are allowed up to two opportunities to take the qualifying exams.

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**Task 8: Dissertation Prospectus**

The Dissertation Prospectus must be developed by the end of the 600 level courses. The final version is uploaded by the student to the 800-course and ePortfolio. The faculty instructor or Dissertation Chair will evaluate the Prospectus using the rubric (Appendix A) to record progress and provide feedback.

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**Task 9: IRB Certificate**

Students must complete the on-line IRB Training session to receive proof of completion in the form of an “IRB Certificate”, which is uploaded by the student to the 800-course. The IRB Certificate is required to allow Trident IRB to review the student’s forthcoming Trident IRB application. Go to the Protecting Human Research Participants website (PHRPtraining.com) to complete the Online Training in Human Subjects training and obtain the required certificate. The fee to complete this training is paid directly to the vendor.

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**Task 10: Committee Formation**

The student is aligned with a Dissertation Chair and a minimum of two Committee Members based on expertise and availability. The Chair and Members must be Trident faculty. All Committee members must have at least three years of postdoctoral field or research experience, as well as at least five years of active scholarship or professional activity related to his or her degree prior to serving. All Committee members must be approved by the Doctoral Studies Director.

The Chair is responsible for guiding the student during the Dissertation process. The completed Dissertation proposal must follow all the Dissertation requirements and will be circulated to Committee members by the Chair for constructive feedback. Exceptions to the Committee composition must be approved by the Doctoral Studies Director.
Task 11: Draft of Dissertation Proposal

Once the Dissertation Committee is assembled, the student works with the Committee to develop a proposal that must be defended by the end of course 702. The first objective of the Proposal Development is to add depth to the approved Prospectus, which should be a substantial draft of the proposal following proposal rubric (Appendix A). The student is responsible for contacting their Chair bi-weekly at minimum to discuss proposal issues. Revisions or modifications based on Chair feedback should be completed in a timely manner. The final version submitted in the session will be evaluated by the Chair using the proposal rubric (Appendix A). Substantive drafts of the working proposal are uploaded to the 800-course.

Task 12: Final Proposal

The Dissertation Proposal should be complete and in "final" form, with correct and polished content and style, appropriate notes, bibliography, tables, etc., at the time it is distributed by the Chair to the Committee members. The Committee will review the Dissertation Proposal to ascertain whether student’s knowledge, skills, and conceptual framework are sufficient for undertaking a rigorous research process. All Committee members determine if a proposal is ready for defense, which is scheduled by the Dissertation Chair with a minimum two-week notice.

The oral defense of the Dissertation Proposal must be accompanied by a professionally formatted PowerPoint presentation which describes the details and significance of the proposed research project. One-week prior to the defense the student must distribute the PowerPoint presentation to the Committee and the Doctoral Studies Director for review. The final version of the Dissertation Proposal and PowerPoint presentation are uploaded by the student to the 800-course and ePortfolio.

The evaluation rubric (Appendix F) is used to assess Dissertation Proposal Defenses in Trident Ph.D. Programs.

Task 13: Post-Defense Proposal with Corrections

After a student defends their Dissertation Proposal the Committee meets to reach one of four conclusions:

- **Pass.** The proposal is approved by the Committee, as presented, with recommendation of only minor adjustments. The completed adjustments must be reviewed and approved by the Committee Chair.
- **Pass.** The proposal is approved but requires major adjustments. The completed revisions must be reviewed and approved by all Committee members.
• Fail. The proposal will be approved only after significant restructuring. The proposal must be defended again after the restructuring. The second defense must be scheduled no earlier than two months after the first defense.
• Fail. The proposal is not accepted, and the Committee will assist the student in preparing another proposal. A second defense will be scheduled to occur no earlier than three months following the first defense.

Post-defense corrections of the proposal must be completed and uploaded by the student within 30 days of the defense to the 800-course and ePortfolio. If revisions are not submitted within 30 days, the student must defend the proposal again. The Committee Chair will review and provide feedback until all issues have been addressed. The Committee Chair will submit the approved, latest version of the proposal along with a list of completed post-defense revisions to the Doctoral Studies Director with a recommendation of whether to approve the student’s advancement to candidacy. The Doctoral Studies Director may request additional revisions if any problems/issues are identified. The final approved Dissertation Proposal will be uploaded by the student to the 800-course.

If the defense is unsuccessful and approval is not achieved, a second defense can be scheduled no earlier than 30 days after the first defense. A Dissertation Proposal may be defended up to three times. If a student fails the third defense, they are dismissed from the program.

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Task 14: Approved Dissertation Proposal
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Once the Doctoral Studies Director approves the Dissertation Proposal, the completed document is uploaded by the student to the 800-course and ePortfolio. Only the Doctoral Studies Director will assign “Approved” in the 800-course. Final approval and declaration of Advancement to Candidacy will be sent via email by the Doctoral Studies Director to the student. Advancement to Candidacy implies all requirements for the degree have been completed, except for the research Dissertation itself. No data collection can occur until Trident IRB approval is received.

All students must be aware of the following standard academic protocols. These protocols are rigorously respected and observed at Trident University. Prior to formal admission to candidacy, students should not refer to themselves as “doctoral candidates” or “Ph.D. candidates.” In a Ph.D. program, the term “candidate” has a very specific meaning, and students should be careful in using the term to refer to themselves. No Ph.D. student or candidate should ever use the initials Ph.D. after their name until all degree requirements have been met and the student is notified by the University that the degree has been conferred. The same is true for using the title “Dr.” or “Doctor.”

Students who have been admitted to candidacy should refer to themselves as “Ph.D. Candidate in Health and Human Services (or Education or Business
Administration), Trident University, expected date of completion 20xx.” Students should not refer to themselves as “ABD” (“all but Dissertation”) until they have been formally admitted to candidacy.

Task 15: IRB Application

Once the Dissertation Committee has approved the research plan, and before any data collection, the research plan must be approved by the Trident University International Institutional Review Board (IRB). Federal law and regulations require an IRB review of all research involving human subjects. The purpose of such reviews is to ensure that research complies with established ethical standards and principles.

All proposed studies with human subjects require Trident IRB review. No data collection can occur until Trident IRB approval is received. If data is collected before that approval, the data may not be used in the Dissertation (a certain degree of exploratory reconnaissance is allowed).

SUBMISSION OF THE IRB APPLICATION AND DOCUMENTS

To complete Trident IRB review, the student must prepare the Trident IRB application under the guidance of the committee Chair. After the Chair approves, the student submits the application which summarizes the project and the human subject’s protection issues that it poses. Copies of the research methods and any relevant forms and/or data gathering instruments are generally attached to the application. Appendix D provides instructions for generating and submitting a Trident IRB application.

The Trident IRB Committee reviews applications and makes the determination as to the nature and extent of the review. An IRB decision letter is sent to the student and Chair stating if the application is Approved, Exempt, or needs further information to proceed.

Task 16: IRB Approval

Once the Dissertation research plan has been approved by the Trident IRB Committee, the student can then begin data collection under the supervision of their Dissertation Chair. Any changes in the research plan will require notification and approval by the Trident IRB. The student must keep their Dissertation Committee, especially the Chair, informed on the progress of the research and any changes that may be considered. Students upload the Trident IRB approval/ exemption letter to the 800-course and e-portfolio. Only the Doctoral Studies Director will assign “Approved” in the 800-course.

Task 17: Draft of Dissertation
The student completes the Dissertation research study as approved in the proposal. During this period, the student will set up regular meetings with the Chair to discuss the issues in the research process. Every draft of the Dissertation will be uploaded to the 800-course, and the Chair will provide feedback regularly. The student will address the issues and/or make revisions accordingly. At the end of each course session, the Chair will use the grading rubric to evaluate a Progress Report and assign a P/NP grade.

The Committee Chair will provide supervision and guidance for the student. The other Committee members will provide feedback to the Dissertation Chair. Each course session, the Chair will report to the Doctoral Studies Director on the progress of the Dissertation.

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**Task 18: Final Dissertation**

The Committee will review the Dissertation to ascertain if the data analyses and discussion are sufficient for rigorous inquiry into the student’s designated field of research. All three Committee members will review the Dissertation in detail. A defense will be scheduled once the Committee assesses that the Dissertation is ready. A Ph.D. Dissertation defense must be scheduled at least two-weeks before the end of the session to provide the time needed for the Committee, Doctoral Studies Director and Dean to review. Otherwise, the defense will be scheduled for the following session.

One-week prior to a Dissertation Defense, the student will distribute to all Committee members and the Doctoral Studies Director, a PowerPoint presentation describing and defending the Dissertation. The student uploads the final version of the Dissertation and PowerPoint presentation to the 800-course and ePortfolio. The evaluation rubric (Appendix G) is used to assess Dissertation Defenses in Trident Ph.D. Programs.

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**Task 19: Post-Defense Dissertation with Corrections**

After the defense of the Dissertation, the Committee will meet and reach one of three conclusions:

- **Pass.** The Dissertation is approved by the Committee, as presented, with only minor adjustments.
- **Pass.** The Dissertation is approved but with major adjustments. These completed adjustments must be reviewed and approved by all Committee members.
- **Fail.** The Dissertation will be approved only after significant restructuring. The Dissertation must be defended again after the restructuring. The
second defense will be no earlier than two months following the first defense.

After the post-defense Dissertation corrections have been completed, the Committee Chair will recommend approval to the Doctoral Studies Director. Any necessary revisions must be made within 30 days from the Doctoral Studies Director’s review of the Dissertation. The Committee Chair is responsible for the continued guidance of the student with the post-defense revisions. The student will upload their updated Dissertation to the 800-course and ePortfolio.

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**Task 20: Approved Dissertation**

**Dissertations must be approved by the Committee, Doctoral Studies Director, and Dean.** All corrections must be made within 30 days of the date of defense. A Dissertation Approval page (Appendix E) must be signed by all Committee members, the Doctoral Studies Director and the Dean who are recommending the student for an award of a degree. The student uploads the final approved Dissertation and fully executed Appendix E to the 800-course and ePortfolio. Only the Doctoral Studies Director will assign “Approved” in the 800-course. The Registrar will start the degree audit (check) to make sure all academic and other requirements have been satisfied for this degree. The Registrar will send a degree completion letter to the student for submission of the dissertation to UMI.

Once the student receives the letter from the Registrar, the Dissertation can be prepared for publication at ProQuest following the publication guidelines available at [http://www.proquest.com/products-services/Dissertations/submitting-Dissertation-proquest.html](http://www.proquest.com/products-services/Dissertations/submitting-Dissertation-proquest.html). ProQuest will provide more information to the student upon request. Trident’s librarian can assist further with the process if there are questions.

Upon receipt, the student will send the Trident librarian a digital copy of the dissertation after it is published at ProQuest. In addition, the student should consult with each Committee member and the Doctoral Studies Director to determine if they would like to receive a hard-copy or a digital copy of the Dissertation. **Upon receipt of these copies and confirmation of degree clearance, the degree and diploma will be awarded.**

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**Responsibilities of Dissertation Committee**

All Ph.D. Committee Chairs report to the Doctoral Studies Director and are subject to a quarterly assessment of student progress and committee activities. The relationship between the student and committee members is one that can take many forms. There is no single pattern that characterizes successful relationships, and due to the dynamics of such relationships, random evaluation is neither possible nor helpful. Rather, a formative self-evaluation with completed Progress
Reports are used to encourage all parties to remain engaged and effectively communicating to promote continual improvement.

Responsibilities of Committee Chair

While the responsibility for progress and completion of the Dissertation is that of the student, the Chair will have the following specific responsibilities:

- Coordinate regular meetings with the student.
- Provide guidance and supervision during the entire Dissertation process.
- Provide timely first reviews of all elements of the research process.
- Provide feedback to student’s Proposal/Dissertation.

Topics of communication include:

- When the Dissertation proposal or Dissertation is ready for review.
- When an element is unacceptable and should be returned to the student without forwarding to the members.
- Specific constructive critique by the Chair, including inquiry into lack of acceptable progress.
- Forward Committee member comments to the student. Only the Chair communicates directly with the student. Committee members may not communicate directly with the student unless the Chair is aware.
- Make logistical arrangements for the defenses of the proposal and completed Dissertation, and forward copies of each document to the relevant parties.
- Serve as Chair and moderator for the Proposal and Dissertation defenses.
- Report results of the proposal and completed Dissertation defenses to the Doctoral Studies Director.
- Schedule and moderate all meetings of the full Dissertation Committee.
- Assign final grades, provide feedback and complete the grading rubric for all 700-level courses.

Responsibilities of Dissertation Committee Members:

- Provide the Chair feedback regarding the dissertation as needed.
- Review all dissertation elements forwarded by the Chair and respond with constructive critique in a timely manner.
- Attend and participate remotely in the Proposal and Dissertation defenses.
Appendix A: Proposal Guidelines

Title Page

- Clearly identifies main constructs
- Lists Committee members

Abstract

- A concise, brief, rational statement of what will be done in the study (150-250 words; maximum 350 words).

Chapter I: Introduction

Background

- The background presents a clear and specific overview of why the research topic is currently of interest.
- Describes the specific facts and relevant context leading up to the study problem and purpose.
- Concisely presents the knowledge gap and guides the reader to the problem statement that will follow in a clear manner.
- Describes what research has been conducted in this area and why the topic is practically, empirically, and theoretically important and relevant,
- The background transitions seamlessly into the problem statement.

Problem Statement

- Represents a general issue/observation in the research literature and leads to the need for the study.
- Follows with a focused, documented problem that directly reflects and leads to the need for a research response.
- Clearly describes and document the problem that prompted the study and provide evidence of its existence using recent scholarly peer-reviewed literature within the last five years.
- Articulates the negative consequences of not conducting the study.
- Study purpose and aims stem clearly from the problem statement and knowledge gap.
- Must be clearly presented, focused, specific, and theory based.

Purpose of the Study

- The study purpose identifies the study design and describes the study goal that directly reflects the research questions in single statement.
- The purpose statement is followed by a concise synopsis of how the study will be conducted.
- Variables/constructs and/or phenomenon/concept/idea(s) are identified.
- The variables/constructs and/or phenomenon/concept/idea(s) are identified.
- The participants and/or data sources are identified.
- The purpose should be a logical and explicit research response to the stated problem.
Research Questions

- Should be clear, articulated, and specific, corresponding exactly to the study purpose.
- Provide original insights to the issues.
- Be thought-provoking.
- Provide clear and compelling promise of contribution to discipline and/or communities.
- Clearly address the knowledge gap.
- Include main and/or sub-questions that are comprehensive in scope.
- Refer to the main constructs and relationships to be investigated in the study.

Nature of the Study

- Briefly discusses the methodology and design including a concise description of the data collection procedure and analysis.
- Seminal studies related to the selected methodology and design are cited.
- Indicates why the selected methodology and design are the best choices for the study by an explanation of how they align with the purpose, problem statement, and research questions.

Significance of the Study

- The significance section should explain why the study is important and how it can contribute to the field of study.

Definition of Key Terms

- Identifies the key terms used in the study and provides clear definitions as used in the literature and as used for the purposes of the study.
- Operational definitions will be provided in Chapter III.

Chapter II: Literature Review

- Presents historical research as well as recent research on the topic of study within the last five years
- There is a relevant synthesis of empirical and theoretical literature.
- Critical understanding of literature is evident in style, organization, and content.
- Mastery of appropriate canon is evident. Sources cited are rich and diverse.
- Recent publications are utilized.
- The knowledge gap is clearly identified and discussed.
- The review is comprehensive in scope.
- Key issues are included. All the components of the research question(s) (main constructs and his or her associations) are addressed.
- Multiple citations from diverse literature are cogently woven together.
- The existing controversies or issues in the literature are reframed in novel terms.
Theoretical Orientation and Conceptual framework

• The theory, theories, theoretical models, or mechanisms have been identified and are relevant to the research questions and associations under study.
• The concepts and the relationships among the constructs/variables are presented clearly and logically.
• The dependent variables and independent variables are clearly assigned in the conceptual framework, and there is clarity of directionality.
• A clear graphical presentation is provided.

Hypotheses

• Correspond to the research questions.
• Are relevant and flow logically from the theory used.
• Are accurately stated and bi-directional (two-tailed).
• Are testable based on operationalized variables.
• Hypotheses are only included for quantitative and mixed methods proposals.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Design

• The study design is accurately identified and described.
• The study design is appropriate and discussed by how it answers the study hypotheses.
• Feasibility is discussed and outlined.

Population and Sample

• The population and sample are identified and described.
• The study population is clearly differentiated from the sample drawn from the population.
• Recruiting and sampling procedures are identified and justified.
• Power analysis to determine the minimum sample size is conducted using previously reported effect sizes.
• The calculated sample size is sufficient and correctly presented.
• The process of obtaining the data (secondary data, primary data) is detailed sufficiently to allow replication by other researchers.

Materials and Instruments

• Describes the data as primary or secondary data.
• Secondary data is described by the original collection and purpose detailing validity and reliability.
• Published measurement instruments are described including information on origin, validity, and reliability.
• All the materials used are identified including pilot/field testing results and subsequent modifications.
• Clear measures for all study variables exist.
• For qualitative studies, describe interview protocols including the process to develop the interview questions using an appropriate qualitative research method support.

Variables and Operational Definitions
• Each of the primary variables/constructs/covariates associated with the proposed topic, problem, research question(s), and hypotheses are clearly identified.
• Each variable is listed with and operationally defined based on operational definitions in published research and valid/reliable instruments.
• The specific instrument used to measure each variable is identified.
• Describes the independent/dependent variables and covariates.
• Describes the level of measurement for each study variable including clearly identified independent/dependent variables and covariates, variable values or scores, and data sources.
• The descriptions are consistent with and appropriate to the study purpose, design, and proposed statistical analyses.
• A Table of Variables is used to present the operationalized variables in APA format listing each variable, its role in the analysis/variable type (IV/DV/CoV), level of measurement, values, and data source.
• Each variable is described by the four levels of measurement: Ratio, interval, ordinal, and nominal.

Data Collection and Statistical Analysis
• The hypotheses are restated verbatim to introduce data collection and statistical analysis.
• The data types and strategies used to code and analyze the data are described.
• The collected data and specified analyses can be used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.
• The collected data and specified analyses are described using proper terminology related to the study design and analysis.
• Multivariate statistical analysis is required for a Ph.D. dissertation.
• Three levels of statistical analysis of the Ph.D. dissertation are presented in sequential order: Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate.
• All the analyses are graphically displayed in APA formatted tables.

Assumptions
• The assumptions and rationale for the assumptions regarding the study population and study design are thoroughly discussed.
• Evidence is provided to justify and support the assumptions and rationale.

Limitations
• Limitations are described in the context of validity and study design.
• Measures taken to mitigate the study limitations are sufficiently discussed.
• The methods/strategy used to address missing data, nonresponse rates, participant honesty, etc. are sufficiently detailed.
• Potential threats to validity are reviewed including how they will be addressed.

**Delimitations**

• The scope of the data used in the study is discussed including a description of the study delimitations.
• The rationale for the study delimitations is described and supported.
• An explanation is provided to show how the delimitations relate to the literature, theoretical/conceptual framework, problem statement, purpose, and research questions.

**Ethical Assurances**

• Compliance with ethical standards for conducting research are discussed and detailed in a manner appropriate for the research design including sufficient information on protection for human subjects.
• Informed consent procedures and the process of maintaining and achieving confidentiality and privacy are detailed.
• The role of the researcher in the study is described in a discussion of biases relating to professional or personal experiences with the topic, problem, or context.
• Strategies to prevent biases and experiences from influencing the analysis or findings are presented.
• The process of obtaining ethical assurances for IRB approval of the study is described.

**Additional Information**

• A timetable of research activities is presented.
• A properly APA formatted reference list is included.
• The proposal is approximately 50 pages (not counting appendices and references).
Appendix B: Quantitative Dissertation Guidelines

The following list contains most of dissertation components of a quantitative dissertation. These components must be adapted to each dissertation and follow the Ph.D. Dissertation Template.

Abstract

- Concise, brief, rational statement of what was done in the study (300-350 words).
- Describes the purpose, methods, results and conclusions of the study.
- Primary results (effects, significance from statistical analyses) are included.

Chapter I: Introduction

Background

- The background presents a clear and specific overview of why the research topic is currently of interest.
- Describes the specific facts and relevant context leading up to the study problem and purpose.
- Concisely presents the knowledge gap and guides the reader to the problem statement that will follow in a clear manner.
- Describes what research has been conducted in this area and why the topic is practically, empirically, and theoretically important and relevant.
- The background transitions seamlessly into the problem statement.

Problem Statement

- Presents a general issue/observation in the research literature and leads to the need for the study.
- Follows with a focused, documented problem that directly reflects and leads to the need for a research response.
- Clearly describes and document the problem that prompted the study and provide evidence of its existence using recent scholarly peer-reviewed literature within the last five years.
- Articulates the negative consequences of not conducting the study.
- Study purpose and aims stem clearly from the problem statement and knowledge gap.
- Must be clearly presented, focused, specific, and theory based.

Purpose of the Study

- The study purpose identifies the study design and describes the study goal that directly reflects the research questions in single statement.
- Variables/constructs and/or phenomenon/concept/idea(s) are identified.
- The purpose statement section includes a short but clear step-by-step synopsis of how the study was conducted.
- The variables/constructs and/or phenomenon/concept/idea(s) are identified.
• The participants and/or data sources are identified.
• The purpose should be a logical and explicit research response to the stated problem.

Research Questions
• Research questions are directly specific and answerable within the given framework specified in the problem and purpose statement.
• Research questions for quantitative and mixed methods ask about a relationship (correlation, association, or difference) between an independent variable and an outcome/dependent variable in a defined population.
• Refers to the main constructs and relationships (relationships to be investigated in the study).
• Clear, articulated, and specific questions corresponding exactly to the study purpose and addressing the knowledge gap.
• Comprehensive in scope including main questions and/or sub-questions.
• Thought provoking; provide original insights to the issues; a promise of contribution to discipline, and or communities is clear and compelling.
• Include main and/or sub-questions that are comprehensive in scope.
• Refer to the main constructs and relationships to be investigated in the study.

Nature of the Study
• Briefly discusses the methodology and design including a concise description of the data collection procedure and analysis.
• Seminal studies related to the selected methodology and design are cited.
• Indicates why the selected methodology and design were the best choices for the study by an explanation of how they align with the purpose, problem statement, and research questions.

Significance of the Study
• Describes why the study is important and how it can contribute to the field of study.
• Explains how the results advance the topic area and contribute to the literature.
• Describes the benefits of addressing the study problem/knowledge gap, achieving the study purpose, and answering the research questions in novel terms.

Chapter II: Literature Review
• Presents historical research as well as recent research on the topic of study within the last five years.
• Multiple citations from diverse literature are used to weave concepts coherently together.
• There is a relevant synthesis of empirical and theoretical literature.
• Critical understanding of literature is evident in style, organization and content.
• Mastery of appropriate principles is evident. Citations are rich and diverse from scholarly peer-reviewed sources.
• The knowledge gap is clearly identified and discussed.
• The review is comprehensive in scope.
• Key issues are included. Addresses all the components of the research question/s (main constructs and associations).
• Reframes existing controversies or issues in the literature in novel terms.
• Includes a summary of the literature review.

Theoretical Orientation and Conceptual Framework
• Identifies, articulates, and described the theoretical and/or conceptual framework used to guide the study based on the critical review of relevant literature.
• The theory, theories, theoretical models, or mechanisms have been identified and are relevant to the research questions and associations under study.
• The concepts and the relationships among the constructs/variables are presented clearly and logically.
• The dependent variables and independent variables are clearly assigned in the conceptual framework, and there is clarity of directionality.
• The origin and/or development of the framework is presented demonstrating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the historical and current literature.
• There is a clear graphical presentation of the conceptual framework showing all the relationships between the constructs/concepts and/or variables.

Hypotheses
• The hypotheses directly correspond to the research questions.
• The hypotheses are relevant and flow logically from the theory used.
• The hypotheses are accurately stated and bi-directional (two-tailed).
• The hypotheses are testable based on operationalized variables.
• Hypotheses are only included for quantitative and mixed methods proposals.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Design
• The design is accurately identified and described.
• The appropriateness of the method and design in relation to the study problem, purpose, and research questions is substantiated.
• Ensure the design will answer the study hypotheses.
• Describes how the chosen design is appropriate as a logical response to the study purpose and provide literature support for its use.
• Why and how the design is the optimal approach and will accomplish the study goals is demonstrated.
Population and Sample

- The study population is identified and described as fitting the given design, estimated size, and relevant details with adequate support.
- The sampling method/procedure, selection of participants, or relevant sample, including population features, recruitment, or selection strategy are identified and explained.
- Participant recruitment procedures are detailed.
- The sampling method and minimum required sample size are described and justified with a supporting power analysis.
- Power analysis and effect size have been calculated and are sufficient and correctly presented.
- The process of obtaining the data (secondary data, primary data) is detailed sufficiently to allow replication by other researchers.

Materials and Instrumentation

- Describes the data as primary or secondary data.
- Secondary data is described by the original collection and purpose detailing validity and reliability.
- Published measurement instruments are described including information on origin, validity, and reliability (including Cronbach Alpha scores).
- All the materials used are identified including pilot/field testing results and subsequent modifications.
- Clear measures for all study variables exist.
- For qualitative studies, describe interview protocols including the process to develop the interview questions using an appropriate qualitative research method support.

Variables and Operational Definitions

- Each of the primary variables/constructs/covariates associated with the proposed topic, problem, research question(s), and hypotheses are clearly identified.
- Each variable is listed with and operationally defined based on operational definitions in published research and valid/reliable instruments.
- The specific instrument used to measure each variable is identified.
- Describes the independent/dependent variables and covariates.
- Describes the level of measurement for each study variable including clearly identified independent/dependent variables and covariates, variable values or scores, and data sources.
- The descriptions are consistent with and appropriate to the study purpose, design, and proposed statistical analyses.
- A Table of Variables is used to present the operationalized variables in APA format listing each variable, its role in the analysis/variable type (IV/DV/CoV), level of measurement, values, and data source.
Each variable is described by the four levels of measurement: Ratio, interval, ordinal, and nominal.

**Data Collection and Statistical Analysis**

- The process of study implementation is described by indicating the exact steps followed to collect the data.
  - A detailed description is used to indicate what, when, where, and from whom data was collected in sufficient order to allow replication by other researchers.
- The data types and strategies used to code and analyze the data are described.
- The collected data and specified analyses can be used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.
- The collected data and specified analyses are described using proper terminology related to the study design and analysis.
  - A correspondence between the collected data, research questions, measures, variables, and analysis, is evident.
  - The analysis strategy used to test each hypothesis is described.
  - Evidence is presented to support the appropriateness of each statistical test to test the hypotheses.
  - Evidence is presented to support the data assumptions for each statistical test.
- **Multivariate statistical analysis** is required for a **Ph.D. dissertation**.
- Three levels of statistical analysis of the Ph.D. dissertation are presented in sequential order: Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate.
- All the analyses and the results are displayed in APA formatted tables.

**Assumptions**

- The assumptions and rationale for the assumptions regarding the study population and study design are thoroughly discussed.
- Evidence is provided to justify and support the assumptions and rationale.

**Limitations**

- Limitations are described in the context of validity and study design.
- Measures taken to mitigate the study limitations are sufficiently discussed.
- The methods/strategy used to address missing data, nonresponse rates, participant honesty, etc. are sufficiently detailed.
- Potential threats to validity are reviewed including how they will be addressed.
Delimitations

- The scope of the data used in the study is discussed including a description of the study delimitations.
- The rationale for the study delimitations is described and supported.
- An explanation is provided to show how the delimitations relate to the literature, theoretical/conceptual framework, problem statement, purpose, and research questions.

Ethical Assurances

- Compliance with ethical standards for conducting research are discussed and detailed in a manner appropriate for the research design including sufficient information on protection for human subjects.
- Informed consent procedures and the process of maintaining and achieving confidentiality and privacy are detailed.
  - Identify the secure storage of data in accordance with IRB requirements.
- The role of the researcher in the study is described in a discussion of biases relating to professional or personal experiences with the topic, problem, or context.
- Strategies to prevent biases and experiences from influencing the analysis or findings are presented.
- The process of obtaining ethical assurances for IRB approval of the study is described.
- A statement is composed that the study received IRB approval from Trident University International prior to data collection as a written confirmation.
- An IRB approval letter is attached in an appendix.

Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Results

Data Screening

- A Data Screening section is included as appropriate to detail the assessment of missing data, outliers, data utilities, and rectification of unforeseen data issues.

Descriptive Statistics

- Presented results should flow logically
- An overview of the demographic information and demographic analysis (including sample characteristics and frequencies) in properly APA-formatted tables is presented. No potential identifying information is reported.
- Describe data coding.
- Report validity and reliability of the measurement instruments. Describe results of the measurement models.
- Include final version of instruments used in the study.
• For the instrumentation and measurement model, evidence of soundness of the initial and final instruments is provided.
• Describe any changes made to the instruments during data collection.

Bivariate Analysis
• Data assumptions and violations are addressed in narrative and figures.
• Statistical results of the bivariate analyses are objectively reported with interpretation.
• Appropriate statistical results are presented in tables for each analysis (i.e. coefficients, mean, mean difference, R², odds ratios, risk ratios, p-values, confidence intervals).
• Tables/figures have appropriate APA formatted headings and footnotes including only relevant information.

Multivariate Analysis
• Data assumptions, specific to each statistical test, are checked (normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity, multicollinearity, etc.) and violations are addressed in narrative and figures.
• Statistical results of the multivariate analyses are objectively reported with interpretation in text.
• Appropriate statistical results are presented in tables for each analysis (i.e. coefficients, mean, mean difference, R², odds ratios, risk ratios, p-values, confidence intervals).
• Tables/figures have appropriate APA formatted headings and footnotes including only relevant information.
• Significant results beyond those answering main research questions are reported.
• Sufficient information is presented to allow the reader to make an independent judgment regarding interpretation.
• Data analysis is consistent to the analyses planned in the Methodology chapter of the Dissertation.

Summary of the Findings
• Summarize the results and the interpretation of findings.
• Provides explanations for inconsistent, unexpected, or conflicting results.

Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion of Findings
• Results are discussed in the scope of the literature and theoretical and/or conceptual framework for each of the research questions.
• Describes whether the obtained results were expected based on the existing research.
• Discusses critically drawn conclusions of each research question and hypothesis individually.
• All conclusions are supported with one or more of the study findings avoiding drawn conclusions beyond the scope of the study results.
• Any factors or potential limitations (biases, confounding factors, missing data, etc.) that have potential to influence the interpretation of the results are adequately discussed.
• The results are presented in context by relating the degree to which the results responded and addressed the study problem, accomplished the study purpose, demonstrated significance, contributed to the literature, and advanced the field.
• Describes the level to which the results were consistent with existing research and provides explanations for inconsistent, conflicting, or unexpected results by comparing and contrasting the study findings with findings reported in the literature.
• Potential mechanisms/theories for unexpected findings are proposed using recent peer-reviewed literature.
• Study strengths, limitations, and delimitations are detailed.

Recommendations and Implications
• The recommendations regarding how the study findings can be applied to practice and/or theory are presented and discussed.
• Recommendations for practice are supported with one or more of the study findings and developed/framed with study findings from the literature.
• Recommendations for future research are presented and explained using the framework, findings, and implications while justifying how/what future researchers might do to build upon and learn from the study.
• Recommendations for future research include how investigators may improve upon the study given the study limitations.
• The discussion ends with a strong conclusion/definitive statement to the dissertation followed by a summary of the study, the problem that was addressed, and the importance of the study.
• The meaning of the study with respect to previous research and theory/methodology/practice is emphasized.

References
• A complete reference list formatted to APA and Trident University International Template is error-free and included.

Appendices
• All documents relevant to the construction and execution of the dissertation study are included as separate appendices.
• Examples may include data collection instruments, consent forms, IRB training certificates, and IRB permission for data collection.
Appendix C: Qualitative Dissertation Guidelines

Previously, our Ph.D. program has accepted only quantitative or mixed-study-approach Dissertations. However, a review of other WASC-accredited Ph.D. education programs shows that other programs in Education allow both quantitative and qualitative Dissertation formats. Therefore, based on the results of benchmarking and an external reviewer’s recommendation, Trident University has added qualitative methodology to the current allowable Dissertation formats in the **Ph.D. Educational Leadership Program**. This change has been prompted by the highly specialized work of some of the students in the Ph.D. E.L. Program, including special education. Students in the special education field and other areas may have difficulty obtaining the large sample sizes necessary for quantitative research but have access to a unique population that may lend itself to high-quality qualitative research. The modification to our Dissertation requirement will enrich our students’ learning experience and increase student success without sacrificing quality.

**Methodology in Qualitative Study**

Designing qualitative studies is quite different from designing quantitative studies. Qualitative research is defined as research devoted to developing an understanding of human systems, be they small (such as one or a small group of students/classrooms), or large (such as a cultural system). Qualitative research studies typically include ethnographies, case studies, and generally descriptive studies. Of the qualitative methodologies, currently grounded theory, phenomenological research, and case study research are accepted in the Ph.D. E.L. program.

The qualitative studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and his or her relationships. The qualitative study will be an individual or group studied for a specific period of time. Usually the study includes interviews (individual/group), data, and observations to triangulate conclusions and answer research questions.

**Primary Goal of the Dissertation**

The primary goal of the Dissertation is to make an original and significant contribution to the body of knowledge with practical applications.

**Characteristics of Qualitative Research**

- The research provides views that reality is constructed and supported by individuals interacting with their social worlds.
- The researcher decides the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.
- The research usually involves fieldwork.
- The study primarily employs an inductive research strategy.
- The product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive.
- In most cases, the design is emergent, flexible, and responsive to changing conditions of the study.
Development of Methodology

I. Process used to bring about the product, and the design of the product
II. How was the process validated? By experts? During field testing? Or by employing evaluation methodology of the results?

Evaluation of Methodology

I. Process of identifying if a product is doing what it is supposed to be doing—reaching its goals and/or objectives
II. Sources are experts, and data analysis procedures are appropriate

Analysis of Qualitative Methods

New technologies to analyze qualitative data and to report findings of qualitative studies include Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis programs:

2. Transana: [http://www.transana.org/about/Tour/index.htm](http://www.transana.org/about/Tour/index.htm)

Validity, Reliability, and Ethics

- Validity
  - Internal validity vs. credibility
  - External validity vs. transferability
- Reliability vs. dependability
  - Explanation, triangulation, and audit trails
  - Trustworthiness of the data
- Ethics
  - Autonomy, beneficence, and justice

Six Steps of Conducting a Qualitative Study

1. Determine and define the research questions.
2. Select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques.
3. Prepare to collect the data.
4. Collect data in the field.
5. Evaluate and analyze the data.
6. Prepare the report.

Criteria for Evaluating Qualitative Studies (AECT, 2001)
Is the problem clearly stated? Does it have theoretical value and currency? Does it have practical value?

Is the problem or topic situated in a theoretical framework? Is the framework clear and accessible? Does the document contain competing epistemologies or other basic assumptions that might invalidate claims?

Is the literature review a critique or simply a repetition? Is it relevant? Does it appear accurate and sufficiently comprehensive?

Are the theses stated in a clear and coherent fashion? Are they sufficiently demonstrated in an accessible manner? Are there credible warrants to claims made about the theses?

Does the method fit the problem, and is it an appropriate one given the theoretical framework?

Do the data collected adequately address the problem? Do they make explicit the researcher's role and perspective? Are the data collection techniques a "good fit" with the method and theory?

Are the data aggregates and analysis clearly reported? Do they make explicit the interpretive and reasoning process of the researcher?

Does the discussion provide meaningful and warranted interpretations and conclusions?

Chapter 1: Introduction

- Background of the Problem
- Statement of the Problem
- Purpose of the Study
- Research Questions
- Nature of the Study
- Significance of the Study
- Definition of Terms

Chapter 2: Literature Review

- Rationale for the study
- Literature review
- Synthesize previous studies and explain knowledge gap
- Present the theoretical/conceptual framework integrated with emerging themes of the literature review

Chapter 3: Methodology

- Research Design: The Qualitative Paradigm
- Qualitative Methods
- The Researcher's Role
- Population and Sample: Data Sources
- Materials and Instrumentation
- Data Collection and Analysis
- Verification
• Plan for Narrative or Pilot Study Results
• Limitations and Delimitations
• Ethical Assurances

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

• Demographics data
• Participants
• Data analysis
• Summary

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

• Implications
• Recommendations
• Conclusions
DOCTORAL DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGE

We, the undersigned, certify we have read this dissertation and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in ________________________________.

Candidate:

Title of Dissertation:

Dissertation Committee:

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(Additional committee members may be included if necessary)
The evaluation rubric below will be used to assess Dissertation Proposal Defense in the Ph.D. Programs at Trident. The committee Chair completes this rubric with the full committee after a student has defended their dissertation. The final document is sent to the student and Doctoral Studies Director.

Student’s Name:

Date:

Committee Chair:

Committee members:

Verification of ID: ☐ Yes, ☐ No; Initials: ___

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A minimum of 45 points are required to pass the proposal defense. Excellent or Proficient is required for ALL categories for approval.
- **Pass.** The proposal is approved by the Committee, as presented, with recommendation of only minor adjustments. The completed adjustments must be reviewed and approved by the Committee Chair.

- **Pass.** The proposal is approved but requires major adjustments. The completed revisions must be reviewed and approved by all Committee members.

- **Fail.** The proposal will be approved only after significant restructuring. The proposal must be defended again after the restructuring. The second defense must be scheduled no earlier than two months after the first defense.

- **Fail.** The proposal is not accepted, and the Committee will assist the student in preparing another proposal. A second defense will be scheduled to occur no earlier than three months following the first defense.
Appendix F: Evaluation Rubric for Ph.D. Dissertation Defense

TRIDENT UNIVERSITY

The evaluation rubric below will be used to assess Dissertation Defenses in the Ph.D. Programs at Trident. The committee Chair completes this rubric with the full committee after a student has defended their Dissertation. The completed document is then sent to the student and Doctoral Studies Director.

Student’s Name:

Date:

Committee Chair:

Committee members:

Verification of ID: ☐ Yes, ☐ No; Initials: ___

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<td>1 Chapter I: Introduction, Problem Statement and Research Questions</td>
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<td>2 Chapter II: Literature Review and Theoretical Background</td>
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<td>3 Chapter III: Methodology</td>
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<td>4 Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Results</td>
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<td>5 Chapter V: Discussion</td>
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<td>6 Formatting APA style</td>
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A minimum of 21 points are required to pass the dissertation defense. Excellent or Proficient is required for ALL categories for approval.

After the dissertation defense, the committee will meet and reach one of four conclusions:
A. Pass with no revisions.
B. Pass with minor revisions. It is responsibility of the dissertation Chair to review and approve minor revisions to the dissertation before the document is submitted to the Program Director.
C. Pass but with major revisions. These revisions must be reviewed and approved by the committee members before the document is submitted to the Program Director.
D. Fail. The dissertation is not ready for approval. Significant changes are required. A second defense should be scheduled when the majority of the members of the Doctoral Committee agree that the
dissertation has been sufficiently revised and is now defendable. The time between the first defense and the second defense should be no less than three months, to allow the candidate time for thorough revision and preparation for the second defense.
Appendix G: Proctor Approval Form

Instructions

Before your dissertation proposal, dissertation defense, or doctoral study:

1. The student will need to select a Proctor and complete an approval form (page 2).
   a. Instructions: Your proctor will need to be approved by the Doctoral Studies Director or designee, the proctor must be in the same room as you during the dissertation proposal, defense, or doctoral study. Your proctor cannot be a family member or spouse. Provide the proctor’s full name, email, phone number, and relationship to you in an email to the Doctoral Studies Director or designee.
2. Doctoral Studies Director or designee approves the proctor
   a. The Doctoral Studies Director or designee notifies the student via email of approval and request student complete Sections A, B, and C of Doctoral Program Proctor Form.
   b. Student returns Doctoral Program Proctor Form to Doctoral Studies Director or designee.
   c. Doctoral Studies Director or designee completes Section D on the Doctoral Program Proctor Form and returns to the student via email (section E is completed by the Proctor at the defense).

At your dissertation proposal, dissertation defense, or doctoral study:

3. The Doctoral Studies Director or designee confirms the identity of the student and proctor.
   a. Student must be on camera and provide evidence of valid photo I.D.
   b. Proctor must be on camera and provide evident of valid photo I.D.
4. The proctor verifies statement in Section E on Doctoral Program Proctor Form and signs form.
   a. The student forwards the completed form to the Doctoral Studies Director or designee.

Local students are encouraged to schedule their dissertation proposal, defense, or doctoral study at Trident University, the Doctoral Studies Director will reserve an onsite conference room for the defense. A proctor form is not necessary for students who come onsite.
A. This form applies to (check one and select date of activity):

☐ Dissertation Proposal  Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

☐ Dissertation Defense Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

☐ Doctoral Study Project Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

B. Student Information

Name

Email

Dissertation/Doctoral Project Chair’s Name

C. Proctor Information

Proctor’s Name (Printed)  Proctor’s Address

Proctor’s Phone  Proctor’s Email

D. Doctoral Studies Director or Designee Signature

This form must be signed by the Doctoral Studies Director to constitute approval of the proctor.

Doctoral Studies Director or Designee Signature  Date

E. Proctor Statement and Signature

As proctor, I sat as an observer with the student and verified, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California, the identity of the student and the fact that the student received no prompting by anyone and did not have access to un-allowed materials during the evaluation process.

Proctor Signature  Date