

## **Three-Article Dissertation Option**

1. The three-articles dissertation option must comprise a minimum of three articles. The articles should form a cohesive body of work that supports a theme or themes that are expressed clearly in the introduction of the dissertation (Chapter 1). The need for three articles (as opposed to just two) should be clear and approved by the dissertation committee. None of the articles can merely represent minor tweaks or elements of a work that would be more appropriately reported in just one or two articles.
2. All proposed studies must be new at the time of the proposal.
3. It is expected that the three articles submitted for the defense will be of publishable quality, meaning they all must be conceptually rigorous, methodologically sound and representing publishable quality writing. (Note: Although it may be more difficult to publish articles addressing null findings, articles will be considered of publishable quality so long as they meet other criteria, regardless of whether hypotheses are supported.) The articles should be crafted with a list of and justification for specific journals in mind, subject to review of student's chair and committee.
4. Student work must be independent, allowing for appropriate chair and committee input. The work cannot have been done in conjunction with any other student or faculty member or in a class.
5. Articles must be based on data that were analyzed by the student.
6. If appropriate, one study can be based on analysis of secondary data, as approved by the student's chair and committee.
7. If appropriate, the first study could be a theoretical paper incorporating a systematic literature review or meta-analysis, as approved by the student's chair and committee.
8. A certain amount of overlap is acceptable. For example, portions of the literature review for each article may need to be cited across articles because it delineates the entire historical background of the study's focal topic. Redundancy can be carefully reduced by citing one's own work. However, self-plagiarism - reusing one's own previously written work or data in a 'new' written product without letting the reader know that this material has appeared elsewhere - is prohibited.
9. As in the traditional/current format, students are responsible for development and articulation of a concept or idea for research, development of a proposal to pursue this idea, development of a research design, conducting research and analysis, writing the manuscripts, designing an intervention or assessment (if relevant), and interpreting results.
10. The introduction should function as the cord that weaves the various manuscripts together and describes, for the reader, their 'collective meaning' and 'combined contribution' to the field. It should include:
  - a. A definition or statement of the problem
  - b. The importance of the problem, i.e., why it is worth researching, why it matters to the field.
  - c. The theoretical foundation (s) supporting the problem/issue.
  - d. An overview of the important literature (overview, because each article will have its own unique literature review). This section can be compared to the

introduction section of a journal special issue, which ties together all articles in a systematic manner.

- e. The research questions for each study.
  - f. A summary of the methodology to be used to answer those questions for each study.
11. Each study will have independent and unique literature reviews, methods, findings and discussion and limitations sections.
  12. An additional conclusions chapter will be added. The conclusion includes: the dissertation's major overall findings, discussion, future research and recommendations. The student will use this chapter to present and discuss linkages (i.e., similarities and differences) among the separate manuscripts that are included in the dissertation, striving as much as possible to present the document as representative of a coherent body of work. The conclusion chapter ties everything together and helps the reader see how the various manuscripts, taken together, make a contribution to the knowledge base regarding the problem. The conclusion chapter should present/discuss research imperatives, or knowledge gaps, not visible when each manuscript is considered individually and should articulate an agenda for future research on the issues addressed in the dissertation.
  13. The proposal process is the same as the traditional, current procedure. The overview chapter serves as the introduction for the three papers. After that, separate literature reviews and methods (including data collection and analysis) for each study will be proposed.
  14. The defense of the dissertation proposal must parallel the proposal defense for a traditional dissertation. The three-article dissertation alters the format, but not the content, expected in the dissertation research.
  15. Failure to follow the policies detailed in this document constitute academic dishonesty and most likely will result in your degree being revoked.

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