

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This section describes the conceptual basis for what the researcher will investigate, including the research questions, hypotheses, and basic research design. The introduction develops the significance of the study by describing how the study is new or different from other studies, how it addresses something that is not already known or has not been studied before, or how it extends prior research on the topic in some way. This section should also briefly describe the basic nature of the study and provide an overview of the contents of Chapter 1.

Keep in mind that you will write Chapters 1 through 3 as your dissertation proposal. However, there are changes that typically need to be made in these chapters to enrich the content or to improve the readability as you write the final dissertation manuscript. Often, after data analysis is complete, the first three chapters will need revisions to reflect a more in-depth understanding of the topic and to ensure consistency.

To ensure the quality of both your proposal and your final dissertation and reduce the time your writing needs to reflect doctoral level, scholarly writing standards **from your very first draft**. Each section within the proposal or dissertation should be well organized and easy for the reader to follow. Each paragraph should be short, clear, and focused. A paragraph should (1) be three to eight sentences in length, (2) focus on one point, topic, or argument, (3) include a topic sentence that defines the focus for the paragraph, and (4) include a transition sentence to the next paragraph. Include one space after each period. There should be no grammatical, punctuation, sentence structure, or

APA formatting errors. Verb tense is an important consideration for Chapters 1 through 3. For the proposal, the researcher uses **future tense** (e.g. “The purpose of this study is to...”), whereas in the dissertation, the chapters are revised to reflect past tense (e.g. “The purpose of this study was to...”). Taking the time to ensure high quality, scholarly writing for each draft will save you time in all the steps of the development and review phases of the dissertation process so make sure to do it right the first time!

As a doctoral researcher, it is your responsibility to ensure the clarity, quality, and correctness of your writing and APA formatting. Your chair and your committee members are not obligated to edit your documents. If you do not have outstanding writing skills, you may need to identify a writing coach, editor and/or other resource to help you with writing and editing. Poorly written proposals and dissertations will be immediately suspended in the various levels of review if submitted with grammatical, structural, and/or form and formatting errors.

The quality of a dissertation is not only evaluated on the quality of writing. It is also evaluated based on the criteria that have been established for each section of the dissertation. The criteria describe what must be addressed in each section within each chapter. As you develop a section, first read the section description. Then review each criterion contained in the table below the description. Use both the overall description and criteria as you write each section. It is important that each listed criterion is addressed in a way that it is clear to your chair and committee members. You should be able to point out where each criterion is met in each section.

Prior to submitting a draft of your proposal or dissertation or a single chapter to your chair or committee members, please assess yourself on the degree to which each criterion has been met.

You need to continuously and objectively self-evaluate the quality of your writing and content for each section within the proposal or dissertation. When you have completed a comprehensive self-evaluation of your work, then you may submit your document to your chair for review. Your chair will also review each section of the proposal and dissertation and will determine when it is ready for full committee review. Keep in mind the committee review process will likely require several editorial/revisions rounds, so plan for multiple revision cycles as you develop your dissertation completion plan and project timeline. You will notice in the tables that certain columns have an X in the scoring box. As mentioned above, your chair will score all five chapters, the abstract and the reference list. Your chair and committee members will assess each criterion in their required chapters when they return the document with feedback.

Once the document has been fully approved by your chair and committee, and is approved for, your chair will approve each chapter in the courseroom.