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Introduction

The final phase of study for Walden University doctoral students is completion of a dissertation, which begins with preparation of a dissertation premise and ends with approval of the final dissertation. Walden does not favor any particular research approach or methodology but does require that a dissertation reflect a high level of scholarly effort and be an original contribution to the knowledge that supports professional practice. Students should demonstrate knowledge of research design and execution as well as the ability to interpret research findings, both verbally and in writing. The final product should have the level of detail and sophistication expected of a doctoral-level scholar-practitioner in the discipline.

The Walden University Dissertation Statement

This statement is designed to provide a broad vision of the Walden University dissertation and an understanding of the university’s dissertation requirements:

The Walden University dissertation embraces and reflects the core values and mission of the university. Walden strives to produce graduates who combine academic credentials with professional skills and whose actions are motivated by informed intellect and educated attitudes. As accomplished practitioners, Walden students bring a wealth of expertise to their studies. Walden’s curricula then provide the foundation upon which students build their competence and mold their interests, culminating in the dissertation learning experience. Through this process, Walden graduates are provided the learning necessary to set forth new ideas through enlightened insights and to effect change in individuals, organizations, and society.

Because Walden students and their courses of study vary, the nature and purposes of Walden dissertations also vary. The university’s approach to scholarship is flexible. The dissertation can be built upon a foundation of basic or applied research, multidisciplinary perspectives on scholarship, improved teaching, or an appropriate and acceptable combination of different forms of rigorous scholarship. Each of these meets the Walden dissertation requirements insofar as it relates to the nature and purpose of the inquiry and demonstrates a literate grounding in the relevant fields in which it is written, while maintaining the fundamental elements of quality and integrity required of stewards of the discipline.

The Walden dissertation demonstrates a commitment to improving the caliber of professional practice. It is an inquiry that addresses unanswered questions or issues lacking thorough study and envisions what could happen as a result of the research outcomes. It contributes to professional practice by offering new knowledge or new understanding of existing knowledge arrived at through rigorous application of appropriate research methodology and provides a basis for further research. Therefore, the results of a research study conducted for
a Walden dissertation are worthy of publication as a significant contribution to professional practice.

The Walden dissertation demonstrates a commitment to addressing the phenomena of social change and, within that context, exhibits sensitivity to societal conditions and a consideration of social issues.

The Walden dissertation confirms a student’s understanding of and commitment to academic honesty and scholarly integrity.

Every dissertation is shaped by the university’s core values of integrity and quality as well as its mission: to provide a diverse community of career professionals with the opportunity to transform themselves as scholar-practitioners so that they can effect positive social change. The dissertation is the unifying culmination of a doctoral student’s academic experience at Walden. The most important outcome of all teaching and learning at Walden is to produce graduates with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to

- understand and continuously develop and change themselves, the organizations in which they work, and society at large;
- create new knowledge dedicated to the improvement of social conditions and to impact society positively by putting that knowledge into practice by both modeling their learning through action and by being civically engaged;
- continue learning across their lifetimes as practitioners, researchers, and scholars and continue to impact social change;
- achieve professional excellence as active and influential professionals by applying their learning to specific problems and challenges in their work settings and professional practice;
- be information literate, including knowing the literature of their professional fields and reading it critically;
- understand the design and methods of inquiry in their professional fields;
- practice in their professional fields legally and ethically;
- communicate effectively, particularly in communicating their learning and research to others;
- appreciate, respect, and advocate for diversity and multiculturalism within their professional fields; and
- function flexibly and effectively in a variety of educational environments, including online and distributed environments.
How This Guidebook Is Organized

The *Dissertation Guidebook* complements other important resources during this phase of the students’ graduate career, including their dissertation supervisory committee, their academic program leaders, the academic advisors and other university staff members, the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA style manual), and the Walden Writing Center.

**The Dissertation Process.** Part 1 of this guidebook describes the steps of the dissertation process, including the use of evaluative rubrics. Part 1 also explains the policies and procedures related to ethical standards and use of human subjects in research.

**The Committee Evaluation Process.** The duties of the chair, second member, and university research reviewer at each stage of the document review process are described in Part 2 of this guidebook.

**Style: APA and Walden University.** Form and style guidelines are provided in Part 3, as an introduction and a supplement to the APA style manual. The APA style manual is students’ main source of form and style information when writing their dissertation. References to APA style in this edition of the *Dissertation Guidebook* reflect the sixth edition of the APA style manual. When the university has style preferences for dissertations that supersede APA guidelines, those preferences are indicated in green boxes in this guidebook.

**Frequently Asked Questions.** Part 4 of this guidebook includes a series of frequently asked questions regarding the dissertation process as well as form and style issues.
Part 1. The Dissertation Process

The processes for dissertations are continually evaluated and updated to make the experience easy for both faculty members and students. The steps are detailed in this guidebook. A shorter description of the dissertation process and relevant forms can be found on the Office of Student Research Administration (OSRA) section of the Walden University website.

Process Overview

If students wish to graduate in a specific term, they must plan their program carefully. Once students enter the final stages of the capstone process, they should begin planning for program completion at least 13 months in advance of their anticipated graduation date. The table below provides a quick summary of the steps involved in completing the dissertation. The following sections describe these steps in more detail.

Note: Time to completion will vary based on individual factors applicable to the student.

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<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Premise</td>
<td>The dissertation <strong>premise</strong> is a short document that <strong>identifies a preliminary topic</strong> for the dissertation and supports formation of the dissertation supervisory committee. The students’ primary goal for the premise is to narrow their dissertation topic to provide a general sense of the direction of their research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Assignment</td>
<td>At this time, students are assigned their dissertation <strong>supervisory committee</strong>. The committee will consist of a committee chair and a second committee member who provide guidance related to the content and research methods appropriate to the study. After approval of the prospectus, students are assigned a third member serving in the role of the university research reviewer, URR (if not assigned at committee formation). Students can find more information about the committee formation process on the Capstone Committee Process page of the Center for Research Quality website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospectus</td>
<td>The dissertation <strong>prospectus</strong> builds on the premise by helping students organize, delineate, and make decisions regarding their dissertation and appropriate research style. The prospectus serves as an agreed-upon <strong>plan for developing the proposal</strong> and helps guide the assignment of the final member of the capstone committee, the University Research Reviewer (URR). The supervisory committee uses the Dissertation Prospectus Rubric to give feedback on the prospectus. If the committee approves, the prospectus will then move to the program director for review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal Development</td>
<td>The first three chapters of a dissertation are known as the dissertation proposal. The proposal establishes the rationale for conducting the study, including a review and analysis of the relevant literature, and describes the design and methodology that will be used for the study. Students work with their supervisory committee to develop the proposal, consulting the specific university-approved dissertation checklist for specific guidance on the content and organization of the dissertation and the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric indicators that will be used to evaluate the dissertation. When ready, students complete a self-evaluation using the dissertation checklist and a Turnitin report and submit these documents with their proposal for committee review, via Taskstream, under Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis. <em>(Note: The dissertation chair may complete a separate Turnitin report, which is submitted to the URR for review along with the dissertation checklist and proposal).</em> Students’ committee members, including the URR, evaluate the proposal against the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric, referring to the annotated checklist that students provide for detailed guidance, when needed. The committee members also review the Turnitin report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal University Research Review</td>
<td>When the supervisory committee is satisfied that the proposal meets all the requirements specified in the minimum standards rubric, the chair reconciles the Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis as approved and uploads the clean proposal, checklist, and Turnitin report to the reconciliation. The URR reviews the proposal, again using the minimum standards rubric, including items relevant to content, methodology, form and style, and ethical procedures. The URR either approves the proposal, which enables the student to set up an oral conference, or returns the proposal with a set of suggested revisions. The URR enters his or her review under Proposal URR Rubric Analysis. Students work with their committee to make any requested revisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Oral Presentation</td>
<td>Following URR approval, students orally present the proposal to their committee via teleconference scheduled with OSRA. Requests must be made at least 1 week in advance of the meeting. This presentation is used to confirm students’ plans for their research, clarify any remaining questions that committee members may have regarding the study, and help ensure that students initiate their research from a sound foundation. After the proposal has been successfully defended, the chair enters the approval under Proposal Oral Presentation and uploads the clean approved proposal. <em>(Note: Walden provides a conference call service that is toll-free for most countries outside the United States. Students living in areas outside this coverage are responsible for toll charges associated with this call.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB Approval</td>
<td>Walden’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews each study conducted by Walden students to determine if the anticipated benefits of the study outweigh the risks associated with participation in it. While developing their proposal, students review the Research Ethics Planning Worksheet and take part in IRB Office Hours if any questions arise from the worksheet. After the proposal has received final approval following the presentation, students receive a notice from OSRA to submit their formal application directly to the IRB. <em>(Note: No data may be collected until IRB approval is granted.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dissertation Completion</strong></td>
<td>Following IRB approval, students can collect and analyze their data and report their findings, complete the remaining chapters of their dissertation, and prepare the abstract. They complete a self-evaluation of the remaining chapters in the dissertation checklist as well as make any needed updates to the proposal chapters so that dissertation reflects the most recent understanding of the information. Students also complete another Turnitin report. Students submit their clean dissertation, checklist, and Turnitin report under <strong>Final Study Committee Rubric Analysis</strong> for the committee review. <strong>Note:</strong> The dissertation chair may again complete a separate Turnitin report, which is submitted to the URR for review along with the dissertation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dissertation University Research Review</strong></td>
<td>When the supervisory committee is satisfied that the full dissertation draft, including the abstract, meet all the requirements specified in the minimum standards rubric, the chair reconciles the <strong>Final Study Committee Rubric Analysis</strong> as approved and uploads the clean dissertation, checklist, and Turnitin report. The URR then reviews the dissertation and abstract, again using the minimum standards rubric, including items relevant to content, analyses, reporting and interpreting results, form and style, and ethical issues related to reporting results. The URR either approves the dissertation and abstract, which enables the student to continue to the Form and Style review, or returns the documents with a set of suggested revisions. The URR enters his or her review under <strong>Final Review – URR Rubric Analysis.</strong> Students work with their committee to make any requested revisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form and Style Review</strong></td>
<td>After URR approval of the dissertation and abstract, an editor conducts a Form and Style review. Students must address the editor’s revisions and suggestions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oral Defense Teleconference</strong></td>
<td>After receipt of the Form and Style review, students present their dissertation via teleconference scheduled with OSRA. Requests must be made at least 1 week in advance of the meeting. This final oral defense is a formal discussion of the scholarly content of the dissertation, followed by an evaluation of the dissertation. At this point, students may need to revise the dissertation based on feedback during the teleconference as well as from the Form and Style review. When the call is completed, the chair enters his or her review of the call under <strong>Final Oral Presentation.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Quality Committee Review</strong></td>
<td>After successful completion of the oral defense, students must submit their dissertation (with all changes made and no track changes showing) under <strong>Final Overall Quality Committee Rubric Analysis</strong> for the formal committee review. The committee members ensure that the Form and Style edits were completed and review the final abstract for compliance with university standards and quality. Committee members complete their reviews and, if the dissertation is ready to go to the URR, the chair must reconcile <strong>Final Overall Quality Committee Rubric Analysis</strong> as approved and upload the clean approved dissertation to the approved reconciliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Quality University Research Review</strong></td>
<td>The URR ensures that the Form and Style edits were completed and reviews the final abstract for compliance with university standards and quality. The URR enters the review under <strong>Final Overall Quality URR Rubric Analysis.</strong> If approved, the URR uploads the clean approved dissertation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chief Academic Officer Review</strong></td>
<td>After final URR approval, the abstract is sent to the university’s chief academic officer (CAO) or designee as a final endorsement of the study. Revisions may be required at this point, and these changes are facilitated through consultation with the chair and others. Upon CAO approval, the dissertation is officially completed.</td>
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To graduate from Walden University, students must submit their dissertation to ProQuest for indexing. After this submission has been approved, students have completed all the graduation requirements for the dissertation and their degree can be validated.

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<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ProQuest Submission</td>
<td>To graduate from Walden University, students must submit their dissertation to ProQuest for indexing. After this submission has been approved, students have completed all the graduation requirements for the dissertation and their degree can be validated.</td>
</tr>
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**Beginning the Process**

Students begin the dissertation phase of their program by completing their premise and then prospectus; they receive the first two members of the dissertation committee: a chair and a second committee member. Students can find more guidance in the *Dissertation Premise Guide* and *Dissertation Prospectus Guide*. More detailed information on the committee can be found on the *Capstone Committee Process*. These documents, forms, and additional supporting resources can be found on the OSRA section of Walden’s Center for Research Quality website.

**Developing the Premise**

Students’ first step to completing the dissertation is developing the dissertation premise. This document is used to identify a preliminary topic for the research and to help identify the faculty members who will guide development of the dissertation prospectus. Students can find more information in the *Dissertation Premise Guide*.

The premise consists of four parts: title, problem statement, approach for the study, and references. An annotated outline and sample premise are included in the guide and can be used to help create the premise document. The primary goal of students for the premise is to narrow the dissertation topic to provide a general sense of the direction of the research.

The foundation for quality in every dissertation is a research question that reflects a high level of conceptual manipulation and a significant and original contribution to knowledge or professional practice. A brief litmus test of a doctoral-level research problem can be found in the *Dissertation Premise Guide* as well as on the Research Resources page of Walden’s Center for Research Quality website. These basic indicators appear throughout the dissertation process.

Every doctoral student’s journey is a little different, so it is difficult to say exactly when to start the premise. All students should check their program of study and consult with the Academic Advising Team. In general, however, because the premise is used to form their supervisory committee, students should plan to start the premise toward completion of their core research sequence and at least two quarters before beginning the dissertation prospectus. In the quarter prior to starting their prospectus, students submit their premise to their faculty mentor or course instructor (some education students submit the premise to their specialization coordinator, so please check your program’s processes for specific instructions).
Supervisory Committee

The dissertation supervisory committee is a unique feature of doctoral education. The primary goal of the committee is to provide students with the guidance and support that they need to conduct an independent research project of the highest quality and relevancy. Walden dissertation supervisory committees are generally composed of three members: a committee chair, a committee member, and a university research reviewer (URR). In some rare cases, a fourth, external (non-Walden) member may be added to the committee to provide special expertise with approval of the program director or designee. The full policy on external committee members can be found in the Walden University Student Handbook.

A few guidelines are used to shape committee formation. Between the chair and second member, someone must be designated as the context expert and someone as the methodologist; one person cannot be designated for both roles. The dissertation chair must be from the student’s program. Students should also be mindful of any department-mandated core courses, pertinent residencies, and prerequisites that must be completed prior to committee formation.

Committee Formation: Students can find more information about the committee formation process on the Capstone Committee Process page of the Center for Research Quality website.

Note: An approved chair is effective at the start of the following quarter, whereas a committee member may become effective immediately, depending on when final approval is given to the committee.
Doctoral Committee Structure

All Walden University capstone study committees are comprised of three members who serve in specific roles: a committee chair, a committee member, and a committee university research reviewer (URR). Each is a key contributor to the process of a student’s completion of an acceptable doctoral capstone project by serving essential functions within the committee.

Duties of the Committee Chair, Committee Member, and Committee URR

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<tr>
<th>Committee Chair</th>
<th>Committee Member</th>
<th>Committee URR</th>
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<tr>
<td>The committee chair is the nucleus of the committee, serves as its primary representative in communication with both the student and representatives of the university, and provides early and direct support to the student.</td>
<td>The committee member provides direct support to the student by complementing the essential content and/or methodology support provided by the committee chair.</td>
<td>The committee URR works through the chair to provide direct support to the committee and indirect support to the student to ensure a high level of integrity and quality in the research, as well as consistency in application of university research standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The committee chair - Supports students early on in project conceptualization, early drafts, and forming the committee. - Assumes a primary responsibility for assuring that the committee’s work fulfills expectations of service to the student and service to the academic discipline(s) and professional field(s) of practice involved. - Leads, monitors, coordinates, and assesses the progress of the capstone research from start to finish as either a content expert, methodology expert, or a combination of these two functions. - Monitors and provides thorough, timely, and regular feedback on drafts and discussion postings through the Blackboard classroom assigned to the specific research capstone.</td>
<td>The committee member - Assumes a shared responsibility for assuring that the committee’s work fulfills expectations of service to the student and service to the academic discipline(s) and professional field(s) of practice involved. - Engages, monitors, refines, and assesses the progress of the capstone research from start to finish as either a content expert, methodology expert, or a combination of these two functions.</td>
<td>The URR provides timely and substantive feedback that is within the defined scope of the URR role at discrete points in the capstone process. This includes - Reviewing final drafts of proposals and completed capstones. - Answering specific questions directed to them by committee chairs on behalf of students regarding the acceptability of key components of the capstone, such as issues related to the appropriateness of research questions, designs, and data analyses or interpretation. URRs do not review drafts of entire chapters or sections until the proposal or completed capstone is ready for review. - Determining if the proposal or research study is ready for advancement to the next milestone in the process. URR approval, expressed through scores and comments entered in the appropriate capstone rubric, is a prerequisite for progressing to the oral conference of the proposal and completed capstone, as well as for submitting the abstract to the CAO for final approval.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. It should be noted that students do not work directly with the URR. Instead, committee chairs facilitate communication between students and the URRs. However, URRs do have the option to attend oral conferences if they choose to do so.
Writing the Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus builds on the premise and provides more information about the dissertation research. Writing the prospectus helps students organize, delineate, and make decisions regarding their topic and appropriate research style. An approved prospectus serves as an agreed-upon plan for developing the proposal and helps guide the assignment of the final member of the capstone committee, the University Research Reviewer (URR). The Dissertation Prospectus Guide provides more details on the document and process.

The prospectus consists of several small sections, which are detailed in the annotated outline in the Dissertation Prospectus Guide. The goal for the prospectus is to create a plan for developing the dissertation proposal. Therefore, a student needs to have more information for the prospectus than for the premise but does not need to know all the specific details of the study that will ultimately be conducted. That remaining work will occur when the proposal is written. The final draft of the prospectus is assessed against the quality indicators in the Dissertation Prospectus Rubric.

Depending on the academic program, some students work with their chair in a companion course that supports prospectus development. Students in Knowledge Area Module (KAM)-based programs work on their prospectus in a Research Forum (e.g., EDUC 8800, SBSF 7100) with their faculty mentor, who is now their committee chair. Other students may start their prospectus in a course led by a senior member of the faculty in their area before moving into a dissertation completion course with their chair. Yet other students may directly work with their chair in a dissertation course, during which they complete the prospectus. Students should check their program of study to know which path they will follow.

Like the proposal and dissertation, for which students will receive feedback on working drafts, prospectus development is an iterative process. When the prospectus is completed, students should follow the submission guidelines for their program. Generally, students submit a final prospectus to their dissertation supervisory committee for review after completion of the core research sequence but before taking any advanced research courses, and

- as required in the students’ dissertation course, if students are currently enrolled in this course;
- toward the end of their time in a companion course, following the guidance of the chair; or
- prior to beginning the dissertation proposal in a Research Forum (e.g., EDUC 8800, SBSF 7100), following the guidance of the chair.

Registering for Credits

Students enrolled in a KAM-based program (PhD in Education or Management) are automatically placed in a Research Forum (e.g., EDUC 8800, SBSF 7100) with the chair of their dissertation supervisory committee. Students cannot register for this course themselves; they are
registered by their academic advisors after the appointment of their dissertation chair is confirmed. Students remain registered in the Research Forum until successful completion of the dissertation. The Office of the Registrar assigns all 20 dissertation credits when the final academic audit is complete.

Students enrolled in a *course-based program* (PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision, Criminal Justice, Education, Health Education and Promotion, Health Services, Human and Social Services, Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Management, Nursing, Psychology, Public Health, Public Policy and Administration, or Social Work) must register for a total of 20 dissertation credits (exception: 12 credits for Counselor Education and Supervision). Registration for the dissertation course (specific course numbers are dependent on the program) takes place during the regular course registration period. Once registered for the first term, students are then registered automatically for the dissertation course until the dissertation is formally approved by the chief academic officer (CAO).

Students enrolled in a *mixed-model program* (PhD in Education, Management, or Public Policy and Administration) must register for a total of 20 dissertation credits. Registration for the dissertation course (specific course numbers are dependent on the program) takes place during the regular course registration period. Once registered for the first term, students are then registered automatically for the dissertation course until the dissertation is formally approved by the CAO.

*Note:* Students who have an approved dissertation supervisory committee may register for the dissertation course during any term in which they are working on the proposal and dissertation. Students who have only a committee chair may register for the dissertation course, but they will not be able to submit their proposal for review until they have an approved committee.

All students should check the *Walden University Catalog* regarding their program’s prerequisites for enrolling in the dissertation course.

**Review Tools**

**Checklists and Minimum Standards Rubric**

Walden’s dissertation checklists and rubrics are used to operationalize Walden’s *Dissertation Statement*. Each checklist is designed to assist students, dissertation supervisory committees, and the university’s academic leadership by providing specific guidance regarding the content and organization of the dissertation, while the *Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric* is used to determine whether a dissertation meets Walden’s standards. *Students should download the appropriate dissertation checklist when their committee and prospectus are approved.*

Walden’s evaluations for dissertations follow a university-approved process, as described below:
The purpose of the dissertation checklist is to guide students and dissertation supervisory committees as they work together to develop high-quality doctoral proposals and dissertations. The checklist should be shared with students early in their doctoral programs and frequently used in advisement and courses to reflect Walden’s expectations for high-quality dissertations. The checklist is designed to help ensure a rigorous reporting across the common components that are used to build the dissertation.

Specific dissertation checklists have been developed for use with studies employing qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-research designs. As students begin the process of developing a proposal for the dissertation, the specific checklist that best reflects the design of the proposed dissertation study should be used.

As the proposal is developed and submitted for review to the dissertation supervisory committee, each committee member should consult the most current version of the dissertation checklist for detailed guidance, and then use the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric to communicate his or her evaluations to the student, the chair, and any other members of the committee. This process of ongoing evaluation and communication continues throughout the development of the dissertation.

Detailed content elements are specified in the checklist for each chapter of the dissertation. The subsections for each chapter include descriptions of substantive characteristics of the dissertation, specifically related to the scholarly quality and integrity of the document. Students annotate the page numbers where these substantive characteristics are found within the dissertation. This documentation serves three important functions: (1) It presents the general consensus of the Walden faculty regarding the specific content areas that should be addressed within each chapter of an acceptable Walden dissertation, (2) it assists students in reflecting on areas for improvement within the document, and (3) it helps guide the committee members’ review of the documents.

A space for comments is provided for each chapter’s subgroup of substantive characteristics. Comments provided by the evaluator (committee member) should refer to praiseworthy aspects of the document and offer specific guidance for revision when needed. Comments should provide formative evaluation for that particular chapter and be useful to the student and other members of the dissertation supervisory committee. The spaces provided for comment are not to be used for communicating line-by-line editing of the manuscript. If the document is in need of editing, the committee member needs to comment to that effect but provide any extensive comments in a separate communication, such as comments in the document.

The use of a dissertation checklist is intended to support ongoing reflection and formative feedback related to the specific subcomponents of the proposal and dissertation drafts as they are developed into a comprehensive document that is internally consistent and aligned to serve the purpose of the doctoral-level investigation. The Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric is applied by the members of the committee to verify that the substantive characteristics of the dissertation guided by the checklist have been adequately demonstrated to meet core quality standards. For the final copy of each document (either the proposal or the dissertation), there must be unanimous approval by the dissertation supervisory
committee, including the URR, before the student proceeds to the oral defense (although revisions may be required following the oral defense).

The checklist and minimum standards rubric aid students, along with their committee, in writing the proposal for the dissertation. All forms and rubrics can be downloaded from the Center for Research Quality website. Rubrics should be downloaded from the site for each study being evaluated to ensure the most recent version is employed in the review.

**Caution:** It is advisable to clear temporary files from the Internet browser before downloading any official documents from the website. This will prevent reopening older versions of a document that still reside in temporary files on the computer.

**MyDR**

My Doctoral Research (MyDR), which includes the Taskstream application, is a tool that allows students to submit all research documents into a central online location for faculty review and feedback. MyDR gives students a visual roadmap of their progress throughout the review process.

It is important to note the difference between the preliminary sections (Proposal Preliminary Development and Final Study Preliminary Development) and the formal committee review sections (Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis and Final Study Committee Rubric Analysis) in Taskstream. The preliminary sections are designed for the committee to provide feedback to students to help develop the final version of their proposal or dissertation for the formal committee review (i.e., the rubric analysis). Completing the preliminary sections does not count as the formal committee review and will not move students forward to the URR review. The preliminary sections are meant only to help students and committees communicate with each other to draft the proposal or dissertation. Students are not required to complete the preliminary sections; these sections are provided as a helpful tool only. The committee rubric analysis sections are where the formal committee reviews take place. Completing the rubric analysis sections will move students forward to the proposal or dissertation URR review.

Throughout the dissertation process, the URR, Form and Style editors, and CAO or CAO’s designee generally have a 2-week time frame to complete their review. The return of dissertation drafts takes longer than other graded classroom assignments. If reviewers need a longer time to review the dissertation, they should inform the student and the committee chair should suggest activities the student can undertake during this time. **Please note:** Faculty members are not expected to review research drafts between terms, outside of what is required for end-of-term grading. Any research draft submitted within 5 days of the final day of the term may not receive detailed feedback until approximately 10 days into the subsequent term. If the review takes place during any of the official Walden holidays (New Year’s Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day; day after Thanksgiving; or Christmas Day), the holiday will not count in the review cycle. It is important to note that MyDR,
which includes a general 14-day review timeline, does not adjust for holidays and end-of-terms, so any late notices received from the workflow as a result of a holiday are not an accurate reflection of the review time frame.

More detailed information on MyDR can be found on the research center’s website.

**Developing the Proposal**

The proposal consists of the first three chapters of the dissertation document and an APA-style reference list. The proposal presents a detailed plan of the proposed research for the dissertation and describes a specific idea, the related literature, and the intended research methodology.

Students should consult with their committee chair early and frequently when developing the proposal. With guidance from their supervisory committee, students conceptualize a topic, organize and synthesize the literature, and determine a research methodology appropriate to the subject matter.

Additional details and information on developing and writing the proposal and dissertation are found within this guidebook, on the OSRA website, and on the Walden Writing Center’s Doctoral Capstone Form and Style site, which includes helpful templates.

**Gaining Committee Approval of the Proposal**

To help clarify the research framework for the project, a student’s committee chair reviews drafts of the proposal, along with a completed Research Ethics Planning Worksheet. When satisfied that the proposal meets the university criteria outlined in the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric, the chair authorizes the student to submit the proposal and Research Ethics Planning Worksheet to the other committee member for review.

After the chair has deemed that the proposal is ready, he or she will submit it for Turnitin review. At the same time, the student completes and submits a Turnitin self-evaluation to the chair, with a plan for revisions if warranted. After the chair has determined Turnitin compliance and believes the proposal is ready, the chair authorizes the student to submit the document for the formal committee review. Students must submit their proposal (after making all required changes), dissertation checklist, and Turnitin report under Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis in Taskstream.

The committee members generally have 2 weeks (14 calendar days, not including holidays) to review the proposal draft and Research Ethics Planning Worksheet. Guided by the student’s annotated checklist, the second committee member uses the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric to evaluate the proposal and shares evaluations with the chair. The committee member may assist the chair in providing feedback to the student on revisions requested; committee
members generally have an additional 2-week time frame within which to review each subsequent round of revisions.

After both members of a student’s committee complete a minimum standards rubric reflecting that no further changes are necessary, the proposal is ready for review by the committee URR. The chair must reconcile the Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis as having “Met” the requirements and upload the approved review documents (clean proposal, checklist, and Turnitin report) to the approved reconciliation. Then the MyDR system moves the student forward to the URR review.

**Gaining URR Approval of the Proposal**

The URR must enter his or her review under Proposal URR Rubric Analysis. Informed by the student’s annotated dissertation checklist, the URR completes an initial review of the proposal using the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric, including items relevant to content, methodology, form and style, and ethical procedures. At this stage, if needed, the URR can refer the student for mandatory consultation with the IRB office or the Writing Center to address ethical or writing concerns, respectively. The URR is obligated to make these referrals should he or she note significant ethical or writing concerns.

If the URR returns the proposal for revisions, the MyDR system will move the student back to Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis. The committee works with the student to make the requested revisions. When the chair believes that the URR revisions have been made, the student must submit the revised work under Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis. That stage must be completed again before a new URR review can take place. The URR then reviews the revised materials. This process continues until the URR approves the proposal as meeting university criteria outlined in the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric. After URR approval under Proposal URR Rubric Analysis, the student can commence with the oral defense.

**Proposal Oral Presentation**

After the URR enters his or her approval under Proposal URR Rubric Analysis, the MyDR system notifies the student, committee, and OSRA about that approval to move forward in the process. After everyone is notified, the proposal oral presentation may commence. The student presents the proposal via teleconference with the committee members. The URR does not participate in the proposal oral presentation unless there are compelling reasons that necessitate the URR’s attendance. The oral presentation is a formal discussion of the proposal to identify any concerns to be addressed in the final version of the proposal or issues that may arise as the student moves forward with the dissertation. The teleconference is led by the committee chair. 

*Note:* Walden provides a conference call service for the oral defense that is toll-free for most countries outside the United States. Students living in areas outside this coverage are responsible for toll charges associated with this call.
The proposal oral presentation must be recorded. Instructions are provided to the committee chair for starting and terminating the recording. Teleconferences are made public within the Walden University community; the e-mailed reservation includes instructions regarding a privacy option. Upon request, the research service specialist can e-mail a link to the recording of the conference within 72 hours of holding the call. Recordings of teleconference calls are archived for 30 days.

**Scheduling the Teleconference**

To schedule the teleconference, students should identify several commonly available dates and times among those participating in the teleconference (i.e., student and committee members). That information should be forwarded to the committee chair who will then use the *Conference Call Reservation* form (located on the Walden website) to submit the request to OSRA to reserve the date and time that is convenient for the participants. *Note:* Reservation forms must be submitted at least 1 week prior to the teleconference date requested.

A confirmation of the request is sent to all participants with instructions for calling in at the appointed date and time. Before the call, students should ask the chair to clarify any expectations of the content of the conference call, if necessary. The call information is found on the student *MyDR* web landing page.

**Oral Presentation Outcome**

If the committee believes that the student did not pass the proposal oral presentation, the chair must enter “Not Met” under *Proposal Oral Presentation*. The *MyDR* system will then notify OSRA about the outcome, prompting OSRA to clear the *Proposal Oral Presentation* section and advise the student and committee to schedule a second proposal oral presentation. The student does not have to submit the updated proposal in *MyDR* if the committee determines that the student did not successfully complete the oral defense.

If the committee believes that the student did pass the proposal oral presentation, the chair must enter “Met” under *Proposal Oral Presentation* and upload the clean approved proposal. Once the approval has been entered, the *MyDR* system will process the approval overnight.
Getting Approval for Research

Approval from Walden’s IRB prior to beginning any research is required of all students, faculty members, and staff members who undertake research studies, including a dissertation, that grow out of their affiliation with the university or that involve interviewing, surveying, testing, treating, and/or experimentally manipulating human participants or archival data on human subjects. All researchers, including students, can download the current version of the IRB application and instructions from the Research Ethics and Compliance section of Walden’s Center for Research Quality website.

The IRB reviews all students’ applications and determines if their proposed research complies with accepted ethical standards. Walden does not accept responsibility or liability for research conducted without the IRB’s approval, and the university will not accept or grant credit for student work where the student has failed to comply with its policies and procedures related to ethical standards in research. Note: A repeat of the proposal URR process can be required by the committee, the IRB, or the CAO at any time if ethical or pragmatic concerns necessitate substantial revisions to a URR-approved proposal.

The Purpose of the IRB

The IRB is primarily concerned with ensuring ethical practice and protection of participants in all studies, particularly those involving

- protected classes (e.g., children, elderly, prisoners, or cognitively and/or mentally impaired individuals);
- potential challenges identifying subjects or obtaining informed consent;
- deception of subjects;
- potential coercion; or
- sensitive data collection topics or methods that require extra privacy protections.

The IRB’s purpose is to evaluate proposed data collection procedures to ensure that the risk to subjects is minimized or eliminated and that the study complies with commonly accepted ethical principles for human subject research.

The IRB’s authority is consultative to the CAO, or designee, with regard to the approval of proposed research studies.

IRB Application Process

Students may not initiate data collection until they receive written (e-mail) notification from the IRB of approval to conduct research. This prohibition includes all aspects of data collection, including recruitment of subjects; advertising; mailing or distributing consent forms; interviewing; surveying; data gathering; and so on.
After their proposal has received final approval, students receive a notice from OSRA to submit the formal IRB application that is posted on the IRB website. The IRB works with students to ascertain that all necessary materials and partner site approvals have been submitted. The IRB has the authority to require revision of students’ requests, to ensure compliance with the university’s policy on ethical standards in research.

Note: Data collected without IRB review and approval cannot be included in the dissertation. Prohibited activities conducted prior to IRB approval do not fall under the legal protection of the university.

Completing the Dissertation

After the IRB application has been approved, students can conduct their research, collect and analyze the data, report their findings, and draw their conclusions. With the guidance of their committee, students write Chapters 4 and 5 of the dissertation as well as the dissertation abstract. At this time, students should also make any needed updates to the proposal chapters so that dissertation reflects the most recent understanding of the information.

Required Data Storage

Students are required to maintain all raw data—interview tapes, spreadsheets, questionnaire results, and so forth—for no less than 5 years upon completion of their dissertation. For safekeeping, students should store copies of data in two different locations.

Reporting the Findings

Committee guidance and requirements can vary as to the best way to report findings. For example, some committees ask students to place lengthy portions of interviews—raw data—in Chapter 4 of the dissertation. Other committees request that interview transcripts appear in an appendix; still others do not require raw data to be included in the dissertation at all but ask that interview notes and tapes be kept in a secure location for later review, if necessary. Students should follow their committee members’ suggestions and requirements in presenting and analyzing the data.

As is often the case in scholarship—and most forms of writing, students must first weigh the needs of the audience and publisher with their own, because no two situations are alike. Thus, when reporting their research, students should be concerned less with prescribed rules and more with (a) accuracy and integrity, (b) protection of confidential sources, and (c) ease of reading; however, students will need to adhere to rules related to APA formatting. Several common issues related to confidentiality, interviews, and participant and/or observer notes bear mentioning.
Confidentiality of Sources

Research participants are never identified in a dissertation and site identities are typically masked to protect the privacy of individuals who provided data (though completely masking the site’s identity is not always possible). Students are obligated to inform participants and managers of research sites that all Walden dissertations enter the public arena.

How students refer to anonymized locales and participants can vary. The reader should know the part of the world (i.e., region) where the research took place but naming the city is not typical. Students should introduce the pseudonym for an organization with a sentence such as the following: To ensure confidentiality, the facility will be referred to as XYZ Medical Clinic throughout this dissertation.

Students may refer to participants as Participant 1 or P1, by any other logical abbreviation, or by a pseudonym. Students should inform their readers in the narrative if pseudonyms will be used throughout.

For more information about maintaining confidentiality, students should contact the IRB office at irb@mail.waldenu.edu.

Integrity and Accuracy

A predetermined bias by some writers leads almost invariably to selective use of quotations to support their position. However, as a scholarly researcher, students are obligated to report findings as completely, accurately, and objectively as possible, lest the integrity of the narrative be compromised. The reader expects that the speaker’s actual words are reported and portrayed in an honest context, including judicious use of blatant grammatical errors and vulgar language. Students should be prepared to negotiate with the committee and the study participants and stakeholders what the word judicious implies.

Use an ellipsis to show that some words have been deleted or brackets to indicate that words have been changed or added. If a substantial portion of an interview is deleted or changed, paraphrase that section of the interview. Students should refer to the APA style manual for more details about maintaining the accuracy of quotations.

Formatting Interview Transcripts

In many qualitative dissertations, portions of interview transcripts appear in the narrative, particularly in Chapter 4. Although students should follow their committee members’ guidance regarding reporting and analysis of data, students should remember that an important goal is to help the reader navigate the text. As such, writers must be consistent and try to format the text with the reader in mind. APA’s 40-word rule for quotations may be helpful here: If an interview excerpt is 40 words or longer, the transcript should be set off in block form. (The Crediting Sources section provides more detail on formatting quotations.) Establishing a consistent pattern whereby all transcript segments are set off in block form may be helpful.
The committee may require a listing of all interview dates. Here too, students have choices, depending on how the integrity of the transcriptions is established, while also aiding the reader during what can become a tedious journey. Citing specific dates for each interview may seem obtrusive. Some writers offer in the narrative a summary statement of this sort: *Unless otherwise noted, all interviews took place between May 1, 2015, and May 21, 2015.* If complete transcripts are in an appendix, students could list the actual dates of the interviews.

The following narrative represents one way to handle these tasks:

Ms. T., a 30-year-old woman who said she needed “welfare” because of an “emergency,” described the atmosphere in the food stamp office as “cold, dreary, and uninviting.” When pressed, Ms. T.’s face became red, revealing the anger that underscored her words:

I do not see why I should be treated like a criminal when I seek assistance in a time of need. Them workers act like they are doing you a big . . . favor by pulling up your case file. Lord knows that food stamp office is the last place I want to be, waiting 4 hours to talk to my caseworker and then just hearing all that [nonsense].

The segment included information about the source of the quotation, placed unobtrusively in the writer’s introductory paragraph, which led into a smooth transition to the interview excerpt.

In some instances, it may be effective to include several excerpts from an interview transcript. This should be done with purpose, when it is necessary to present elements of a discussion; for example, a back-and-forth exchange between participants in a focus group or the researcher and a participant (as opposed to a quotation from a single participant). When including an excerpt from a transcript, again only when necessary, format the excerpt by indenting the first line of text 0.5 in., but use a hanging indent for the second line of text from each speaker. This will help the reader track the different speakers. For example:
Focus group participants were divided in their responses to RQ4 and openly disagreed with one another. This transcript excerpt is one example of several instances where participants presented contradictory information, even regarding experiences with the same managers:

Interviewer: So, what you’re saying is that your managers do not enforce the policy?

Participant 1: No, my manager does not. She has instructed us to go with our gut on some of these issues and doesn’t want to follow any formal rules. Each situation may be different.

Participant 2: I would actually say the opposite. My manager does not want us to take any actions that are not supported by the written rules of the policy. We need to be able to defend our actions, and we need the policy to back that up.

Participant 3: That’s funny [Participant 2], because I have the same manager, and I actually had him tell me the opposite once. He asked me to do something that was against policy but to keep it quiet.

**Participant and/or Observer Field Notes**

First-person point of view may be used as appropriate, as guided by APA and as discussed on the [Writing Center](#) website.
Committee Review

The committee chair reviews preliminary drafts of the complete dissertation manuscript. When satisfied that the manuscript sufficiently meets university criteria, the chair authorizes the student to submit the document through MyDR for review.

After the chair has deemed that the dissertation is ready, he or she may submit it for Turnitin review. At the same time, the student must complete and submit a Turnitin self-evaluation to the chair, with a plan for revisions if warranted. After the chair has determined Turnitin compliance and believes the dissertation is ready, the chair authorizes the student to continue the process through MyDR. Students must submit their clean dissertation, dissertation checklist, and Turnitin report under Final Review Committee Rubric Analysis for the formal committee review.

Committee members generally have 2 weeks (not including holidays) to evaluate the dissertation. If committee members need a longer time to review the dissertation, they should inform the student and suggest activities the student can undertake during this time. Guided by the student’s annotated dissertation checklist, the second committee member uses the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric to share evaluations with the committee chair. The second member may assist the chair in providing feedback to the student on further revisions requested; an additional 14 calendar days are allotted to committee members for each subsequent round of revisions. After the chair and committee member have entered their individual reviews, the chair must reconcile the Final Review Committee Rubric Analysis as “Met” and upload the approved review documents (clean dissertation, checklist, and Turnitin report) to the approved reconciliation. Then the system moves the dissertation forward to the URR review.

Gaining URR Approval of the Dissertation

The URR must enter his or her review under Final Review URR Rubric Analysis. Informed by the student’s annotated checklist, the URR reviews the full dissertation (primarily focusing on Chapters 4 and 5) and the abstract, using the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric, including items relevant to content, analyses, reporting and interpreting results, form and style, and ethical issues related to reporting results. (Again, the URR can refer students for mandatory consultation with the IRB office or the Writing Center to address ethical or writing concerns, respectively.)

If the URR returns the dissertation for revisions, the MyDR system moves the student back to Final Study Committee Rubric Analysis. When the chair believes that the URR revisions have been made, the student must submit the revised work under Final Study Committee Rubric Analysis. That review stage must be completed again before a new URR review can take place. This process continues until the URR approves the dissertation to move forward.

After the URR provides approval, the dissertation moves forward to the Form and Style review.
Optional Pre-Oral Teleconference

At the request of the URR or committee chair, an optional pre-oral conference can be scheduled to discuss recommendations of the URR and reach agreement about changes that are necessary before the oral defense of the dissertation. It is recommended that the pre-oral conference be held if the URR has raised serious concerns and/or if the committee requests the opportunity for discussion and clarification. The purpose of the pre-oral conference is to prevent multiple submissions and reviews of the dissertation and thus facilitate the process of completion. Note: A pre-oral conference will not be recorded.

Scheduling the Optional Pre-Oral Teleconference

Once the URR enters his or her approval under Final Study URR Rubric Analysis, the MyDR system notifies the student, committee, and OSRA about that approval. Once everyone is notified, the pre-oral conference may commence. To schedule the teleconference, students should identify several commonly available dates and times among those participating in the teleconference. That information should be forwarded to the committee chair who will then use the Conference Call Reservation form (which is located on the Walden site) to submit the request to OSRA to reserve the date and time that is convenient for the participants. Note: Reservation forms must be submitted at least 1 week prior to the teleconference date requested.

A confirmation of the request will be sent to all participants with instructions for calling in at the appointed date and time. Before the call, students should ask the chair to clarify any expectations of the content of the conference call, if necessary.

Form and Style Review

A dissertation goes to Form and Style review before the final oral presentation. The editor generally has up to 2 weeks to review the document: The review cycle begins the day after submission. Manuscripts are reviewed in the order in which they are received, and turnaround varies by the volume of submitted dissertations, which increases at commencement deadlines.

Submissions that are missing any basic required component (e.g., abstract, reference list) or that still contain editing marks from previous reviewers may be returned by the editor as incomplete and not ready for review until the appropriate items are included and comments or edits from previous reviewers have been addressed and no tracked changes are present. In these cases, the manuscript is returned for additional work, and the student and committee are notified as to next steps. The 14 calendar days afforded the editor for the review does not begin until the editor receives a complete and clean document.

Note: Dissertation documents must be submitted for the Form and Style review as a single Microsoft Word document. Form and style guidelines are found in Part 3 of this guidebook.
**Outcome of the Form and Style Review**

After the dissertation has been submitted for the Form and Style review, students may work with their chair to schedule their oral defense. Students may collect convenient dates and times for their dissertation teleconference while their paper is being reviewed; however, the teleconference may not be scheduled or held until after the paper has been received back from the Form and Style review. Therefore, students should not attempt to schedule an oral defense within the 2-week time frame afforded the editor to complete the review. The oral conference should be scheduled to take place no sooner than the day following the due date of the Form and Style review.

Upon receipt of the completed Form and Style review and in consultation with the committee chair, students must address the Form and Style editor’s revisions and suggestions.

If questions concerning academic integrity arise as a result of the review, the Form and Style editor contacts the committee chair, URR, and program director with his or her concerns. Refer to the guidelines in the *Walden University Student Handbook* concerning academic integrity.

**Oral Defense**

The oral defense is a formal discussion of the scholarly content of the dissertation and an evaluation of the paper. Students present their full dissertation via a required teleconference with their committee members. The teleconference is led by the committee chair. All committee members except the URR are required to participate in the oral defense. Walden provides a conference call service for the oral defense that is toll-free for most countries outside the United States. Students living in areas outside this coverage are responsible for toll charges associated with this call.

The oral defense may commence only after the committee members have reviewed the current draft of the student’s dissertation and have reached consensus as to its level of development by using the guidelines of the *Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric*. The teleconference may not be held until after the student’s paper has been received back from the Form and Style review; however, edits suggested during the Form and Style review do not have to be made before the teleconference.

*Note:* Walden asks that both committee members receive a copy of the most recent version of the dissertation at least 3 days before the teleconference takes place.

The oral defense of the dissertation must be recorded. Instructions are provided to the committee chair for starting and terminating the recording. Teleconferences are made public within the Walden community; the e-mailed reservation includes instructions regarding a privacy option. Upon request, the research service specialist can e-mail a link to the recording of the conference within 72 hours of holding the call.
Scheduling the Teleconference

Students should identify several commonly available dates and times among those participating in the teleconference (i.e., the committee members). That information should be forwarded to the committee chair, who will then use the Conference Call Reservation form (which is located on the Walden site) to submit the request to OSRA to reserve the date and time that is convenient for the participants. Note: Reservation forms must be submitted at least 1 week prior to the teleconference date requested.

A confirmation of the request will be sent to all participants from the MyDR system with instructions for calling in at the appointed date and time. Prior to the call, students should ask the chair to clarify any expectations of the content of the conference call, if necessary.

Oral Defense Outcome

If the committee thinks that the student did not pass the final oral presentation, the chair must enter “Not Met” under Final Oral Presentation. The MyDR system then notifies OSRA about the outcome, prompting OSRA to clear the Final Oral Presentation section and advise the student and committee to schedule a second final oral presentation. The student does not have to submit the updated dissertation in MyDR if the committee determines that the student did not successfully complete the oral defense.

If the committee thinks that the student did pass the final oral presentation, the chair must enter “Met” under Final Oral Presentation and upload the clean approved dissertation. Once the approval has been entered, the MyDR system will process the approval overnight, and OSRA will send an e-mail confirming the approval and saying that the student can move forward to the final committee review under Final Overall Quality Committee Rubric Analysis.

Final Approval and Submission

After students receive approval of their final oral presentation, they must submit the clean dissertation under Final Overall Quality Committee Rubric Analysis. The chair and committee member must enter their individual reviews. The committee members ensure that the Form and Style edits were completed and review the final abstract for compliance with university standards and quality. If the committee believes that the dissertation is ready to go to the URR, the chair must reconcile the Final Overall Quality Committee Rubric Analysis as “Met” and upload the clean dissertation to the approved reconciliation.

At this time, the URR conducts a final review to make sure all methodological, content, and writing issues have been addressed. In addition, the URR reviews the abstract to make sure it meets university guidelines. The URR conducts any additional reviews that are necessary until the final copy, including abstract, meets full approval. The URR must enter his or her review under Final Overall Quality URR Rubric Analysis. If the URR approves the documents to
move forward to the CAO review, the URR must upload the clean, approved dissertation and abstract. The CAO review generally takes place within a 2-week time frame. If changes are necessary and a resubmission to the CAO is required for approval, an additional 2-week time frame is generally allotted to the CAO for each subsequent review.

When the CAO grants approval, the MyDR system generates an e-mail confirming the approval and providing instructions on how to submit the dissertation to ProQuest (see next section). OSRA sends the approval page in a separate e-mail when notified about the CAO approval.

**ProQuest**

After approval from the CAO has been communicated, students receive instructions for online submission of their dissertation to ProQuest. ProQuest produces microfilms or indexed database of dissertations and publishes the abstracts online and in its monthly publication, *Dissertation Abstracts International*. **To be validated for graduation from Walden University, students must submit and have their dissertation approved to be included in ProQuest.**

The research service specialist completes one last Form and Style check on the submitted document to ensure that it conforms to APA formatting. The dissertation may be sent back to students for requested revisions if errors are found.

Here are some aspects of the ProQuest process that students should keep in mind:

- Students may opt to have ProQuest file an application for copyright on their behalf. If students choose this option, they must note it when completing the electronic submission form.
- There is no fee for inclusion of the dissertation in ProQuest if the “Traditional Publishing” option is chosen. Students are responsible for any fees related to copyright or any other services provided by ProQuest.

For questions related to publishing the dissertation, students should contact ProQuest at 1-877-408-5027 or visit its [website](#).

Students are notified when OSRA formally accepts their submission to ProQuest.

**Degree Validation**

After the ProQuest submission is accepted, an automated request is sent to the Office of the Registrar ([graduation@mail.waldenu.edu](mailto:graduation@mail.waldenu.edu)) to complete the students’ final audits and validate their degrees. Students will know the audit is complete when they receive their final bill from the bursar’s office.
Students’ tuition charges stop as of the date they receive CAO approval of their dissertation. If students receive CAO approval within the first 7 days of a term, they are not charged tuition for that term. If students receive approval later in the term, they will be charged prorated tuition.

Students who want to participate in the summer commencement ceremony must have their dissertation approved no later than the last business day of the spring term. Students who want to participate in the winter commencement ceremony must have their dissertation approved no later than the last business day of the fall term. Note: Students are not automatically registered for commencement. If students want to attend a commencement ceremony, they must register.

**Survey of Earned Doctorates**

Upon acceptance of the ProQuest submission, the OSRA sends students the *Survey of Earned Doctorates*. They should complete this survey from the link provided in the e-mail.

The National Science Foundation and four other agencies sponsor the *Survey of Earned Doctorates*. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate graduate education programs at the federal, state, and university levels. By submitting the completed survey to Walden, students add to the university’s visibility among national graduate institutions. Completion of the survey is not required, but it is strongly encouraged.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Walden University regards academic honesty to be essential to the entire academic enterprise and treats academic integrity violations very seriously. No student shall claim credit for another’s work or accomplishments or use another’s ideas in a written paper or presentation without appropriate attribution through proper documentation. The consequences of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to providing false information or altering documents submitted to the university, are discussed in the *Walden University Student Handbook*. (Select the handbook from the drop-down menu, then select “Section 3. Student Expectations and Responsibilities,” followed by “Student Conduct and Responsibilities” and “Code of Conduct.”)

The [Crediting Sources](#) section of this guidebook provides more information regarding plagiarism. For a detailed discussion of the ethics of scholarly writing, Chapter 1 of the APA style manual is another resource.

Walden uses a service provided by [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) to check manuscripts for plagiarism. Any content that may not have been cited or appropriately paraphrased and synthesized will be further examined, which may slow completion of the dissertation process. A [Turnitin and Academic Integrity Online Tutorial](https://www.waldenu.edu/academics/academic-skills-center) on the [Academic Skills Center website](https://www.waldenu.edu/academics/academic-skills-center) provides instructions on how to identify and avoid plagiarism.
Walden understands that progression through the dissertation process can be a demanding endeavor and that students can find themselves feeling stressed or frustrated. Nonetheless, the university expects that students will continue to maintain a high level of professionalism when communicating with their committee, academic leadership, and staff. Behavior that is not consistent with the university’s expectations may result in a Code of Conduct referral. Students are encouraged to respond appropriately to constructive feedback and follow up unresolved concerns by seeking assistance from their academic leadership.
Part 2. Evaluation in MyDR

The following three tables present all the dissertation supervisory committee members’ duties at each evaluation stage of the document, using the MyDR process.

Proposal

Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis and Proposal URR Rubric Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair Evaluation</th>
<th>Second Member Evaluation</th>
<th>Chair Reconciliation</th>
<th>URR Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upon student submission, the chair evaluates the proposal under Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis.</td>
<td>Upon the chair’s evaluation of “Met,” the second member completes an evaluation under Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis.</td>
<td>Following the second member’s evaluation, the chair reconciles the committee evaluations appropriately based on the second member evaluation and their own (“Met” or “Not Met”). Upon a reconciliation of Not Met, the chair combines committee feedback and attaches all documents uploaded in the individual evaluations. There should be at least one score of 0 (zero) recorded in the reconciliation rubric. Upon a reconciliation of Met, the chair uploads the proposal, checklist, and antiplagiarism report to the reconciliation for the URR to access and review. There should be no scores of 0 (zero) recorded in the reconciliation rubric.</td>
<td>Upon system notification, the URR completes an evaluation under Proposal URR Rubric Analysis, with the outcome of the evaluation either approved to move forward or revisions required to the document or the antiplagiarism report. The URR provides feedback on the manuscript through the use of tracked changes and comments. At this stage, the URR should refer the student for mandatory consultation with the IRB office or the Writing Center to address any major ethical or writing concerns, respectively. (Note: URRs are obligated to make IRB and/or Writing Center referrals should they note significant ethical or writing concerns.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Final Study

### Final Study Committee Rubric Analysis and Final Study URR Rubric Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair Evaluation</th>
<th>Second Member Evaluation</th>
<th>Chair Reconciliation</th>
<th>URR Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upon student submission, the chair evaluates the dissertation under Final Study Committee Rubric Analysis.</td>
<td>Upon the chair’s evaluation of “Met,” the second member completes an evaluation under Final Study Committee Rubric Analysis.</td>
<td>Following the second member’s evaluation, the chair reconciles the committee evaluations appropriately based on the second member evaluation and their own (“Met” or “Not Met”).</td>
<td>Upon system notification, the URR completes an evaluation under Final Study URR Rubric Analysis, with the outcome of the evaluation either approved to move forward or revisions required to the document or the antiplagiarism report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If scored as requirements “Not Met,” the chair returns the final study to the student without input from the second committee member.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Upon a reconciliation of <strong>Not Met</strong>, the chair combines committee feedback and attaches all documents uploaded in the individual evaluations. There should be at least one score of 0 (zero) recorded in the reconciliation rubric.</td>
<td>The URR provides feedback on the manuscript through the use of tracked changes and comments. At this time, the URR should recommend that the student seek assistance from the Writing Center to address writing concerns, if applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If scored as requirements “Met,” the final study is evaluated by the second committee member.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Upon a reconciliation of <strong>Met</strong>, the chair uploads the final study, checklist, and antiplagiarism report to the reconciliation for the URR to access and review. There should be no scores of 0 (zero) recorded in the reconciliation rubric.</td>
<td>Upon final study approval, the URR uploads a <strong>clean</strong> copy of the final study for the Form and Style reviewers to access and review.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If the Form and Style review decision is “Not Met,” the process begins again with student submission under Final Study Committee Rubric Analysis, committee evaluation and chair reconciliation, and eventual URR reevaluation under Final Study URR Rubric Analysis.**
### Final Overall Quality

*Final Overall Quality Committee Rubric Analysis* and *Final Overall Quality URR Rubric Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair Evaluation</th>
<th>Second Member Evaluation</th>
<th>Chair Reconciliation</th>
<th>URR Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Upon student submission, the chair evaluates the final study submission under Final Overall Quality Committee Rubric Analysis. If scored as requirements “Not Met,” the chair returns the final study to the student without input from the second committee member. If scored as requirements “Met,” the final study is evaluated by the second committee member. | Upon the chair’s evaluation of “Met,” the second member completes an evaluation under Final Overall Quality Committee Rubric Analysis. | Following the second member’s evaluation, the chair reconciles the committee evaluations appropriately based on the second member evaluation and their own. Note there is no option in this stage to reconcile as Not Met. Minimum standards of the final study were already evaluated as requirements Met in the previous final study stage. Only the first reviewer or URR has the option to return for revisions during the final quality review. The chair should upload the final study to the reconciliation for the URR to access and review. There should be no scores of 0 (zero) recorded in the reconciliation rubric. | Upon system notification, the URR completes an evaluation under Final Overall Quality URR Rubric Analysis, with the outcome of the evaluation either approved to move forward or revisions required to the document. Upon final study approval, the URR uploads a clean copy of the final study for the CAO reviewer to access and review.**  
**If CAO revisions are requested, the process begins again with student submission under Final Overall Quality Committee Rubric Analysis, followed by committee evaluation and chair reconciliation, and eventual URR reevaluation under Final Overall Quality URR Rubric Analysis. |
Begin Proposal Stage

Optional draft development in Proposal Preliminary Development section of Taskstream.

Chair and 2nd member can provide feedback in the Proposal Preliminary Development section.

Chair determines readiness of document for committee review under Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis.

If assigned, URR is available to provide consultation and advice on specific questions as the study develops.

Chair deems proposal ready for formal review.

Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis

Committee chair scores as Met under Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis. System notifies committee that new evaluation has occurred. 2nd member completes rubric analysis following both committee member rubrics being completed, chair reviews evaluations, combining all feedback so it is visible to the student.

Committee chair scores as Not Met, return to author.

Chair uploads proposal, checklist, and Turnitin report to Meets Requirements reconciliation in Taskstream.

RR completes rubric analysis under Proposal URR Rubric Analysis.

A score of Not Met will require the system basic to student submission under Proposal Committee Rubric Analysis.*

A score of Met will move the student forward to the Proposal Oral Presentation.

Student schedules oral with chair and committee, URR does not attend.

Chair submits Conference Call Request form to OSRA.

Upon completion of the Proposal Oral Presentation, the committee chair evaluates under Proposal Oral Presentation in Taskstream as having Met or Not Met the requirements of the presentation.

If significant changes are required after the oral, the chair notifies and consults with the URR.

Wordlive e-mails approval of proposal with notice to submit URR.

RR reviews application outside of MyIR and communicates any needs to student, assigned to chair.

RR notifies student of approval or requires for revision.

RR notifies student of approval to collect data based on proposal and URR approval, expired to chair and OSRA.

Proposal Oral Presentation

Not Approved

Refer Review

Approved

Move to Oral Defense

Schedule Oral Defense

Complete Proposal Stage
Begin Final CAO and UMI Review

Abstract Review by CAO or designate

- CAO/Designate returns feedback in Taskstream, notification generated to OSRA to clear Taskstream sections
- OSRA clears sections and sends notification to committee and URR
- Chair supervises revisions with student
- Student submits revised study under Final Overall Quality Committee Rubric Analysis
- Committee members complete rubric analysis; chair reconciles evaluations and uploads study for URR to reconciliation
- URR completes rubric analysis upon system prompt and uploads clean copy for CAO review
- Cycle continues to achieve satisfaction of CAO/Designate comments, Chair and student may be referred to Center for Research Quality for additional guidance

CAO enters approval in Taskstream
- Workflow notifies student, committee, and URR of approval
- OSRA follows up with approval page for publication

Clean copy of final draft of study submitted for URR publication review

- Approved
  - Move to Final URR review
- Not Approved
  - Review

Complete Final CAO and UMI Review

- Approved
  - Research Capstone is Complete

Graduation Audit
Part 3. Style: APA and Walden University

Students writing dissertations must use the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA style manual). Additional specific requirements for Walden University dissertations, above and beyond APA style, are included in this guidebook. In rare instances where Walden’s requirements conflict with the APA style manual, the university style standards prevail. These items are indicated in this guidebook by green boxes.

Students are encouraged to download the dissertation template from the Walden Writing Center website.

The following sections are intended to supplement guidelines and instructions that appear in the dissertation template, Form and Style checklist, dissertation checklist, *Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric*, and other information sources.

**Overall Structure**

The Walden dissertation consists of the following sections, in this order:

1. Abstract title page.
2. Abstract.
3. Title page.
4. Dedication page (*optional*).
5. Acknowledgments page (*optional*).
6. Table of Contents (including List of Tables and List of Figures pages, if necessary; begin the pagination of the preliminary pages with *i* centered in the footer of the first page of the Table of Contents).
7. Body of the paper (begin the pagination with *j* in the upper right corner of the first page of Chapter 1; paginate consecutively on every page to the last page of the document).
8. Reference list.
9. Appendices (*optional*).
Abstract

Concise and well-written abstracts highlight the richness of the students’ research. A complete abstract primer can be found on Walden’s Center for Research Quality’s website Research Planning and Writing page or on the Doctoral Capstone Resources website.

The following summary outlines important points to keep in mind.

Abstract Content

- In the first few sentences of the abstract, describe the overall research problem being addressed and indicate why it is important (i.e., who would care if the problem is solved). **Note:** Students can include a general introduction of the issue in the first sentence, but they need to quickly move to a clear statement of the research problem being addressed.
- Identify the purpose and theoretical foundations, if appropriate.
- Summarize the key research question(s).
- Concisely describe the overall research design and methods.
- Identify the key results from the data analysis.
- Conclude with a statement on the implications for positive social change.

Form and Style Tips

- Limit the abstract to a single paragraph, with no indentation, contained on one page.
- Maintain the scholarly language used throughout the dissertation.
- Keep the abstract concise, accurate, and readable. Use correct English.
- Make sure each sentence adds value to the reader’s understanding of the research.
- Use the full name or phrase of any abbreviation, and include the abbreviation in parentheses only if it is used again in the abstract; the abbreviation must be reintroduced the first time it appears in the narrative chapters.
- Do not include references or citations in the abstract.
- With the exception of numbers that begin sentences, write all numbers as numerals in the abstract.
- Do not use first-person singular in the abstract.
Common Abstract Problems

The following issues could delay the approval of the abstract:

- There are grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- Identified abbreviations have not been used more than once in the abstract.
- The research problem, research question, or purpose of the study is unclear.
- There is misalignment between the research problem, research question, methods, results, or implications.
- The question “So what?” has not been answered. Students need to indicate why the research is important. Who would care if the problem is solved?
- The research methods, data analyses, and results are not adequately described.
- Social change implications are inadequate or missing.
- The abstract exceeds one page.

Appendices

The APA style manual addresses appendices and supplemental materials in Section 2.13 (pp. 38–39) and on pages 229–230. The appendices follow the reference list. They are lettered A, B, C, and so forth. Figures and tables in the appendices are labeled A1, A2, B1, and so forth, according to the appendix in which they appear. Note: If there is only one appendix, no letter is given.

A blank divider page is unnecessary between appendices unless it lends to readability or if a heading cannot be placed on the first page of an appendix. (Typically, this could happen when a scanned document takes up an entire page.) The materials in the appendix must not extend beyond the margins of the rest of the dissertation: Reduce the appendix materials as needed.
Definitions of Terms and Glossaries

Many dissertations include a brief listing of key terms that are interpreted and clarified for the reader’s benefit. In general, students should not define a common term such as teenager (“a person between 13 and 19 years, inclusive”). They should list only ambiguous, controversial, or operational terms used throughout the dissertation. Technical terms are usually defined in the text, if necessary, rather than in a Definitions of Terms section. Definitions must be explicit, specific, and scholarly, and the source must be cited. More information on defining terms and further instruction on words used as words is provided below.

When defining a term, students need to determine whether the definition belongs in a list or in the text. Walden suggests the following three options for defining key terms:

• List key words or phrases in a section called Definition of Terms, in the first chapter.
• List all key terms in a glossary, in an appendix.
• Define more common terms, particularly abbreviations and technical terms with only immediate application for the reader, upon first usage. (Per APA 4.21, remember to italicize key terms on first usage.)

Students should consult their committee chair about what is most appropriate for the reader’s comprehension.

Definition Examples

Note that it is important to give proper credit to the originator of the definition.

The following examples illustrate different approaches to defining terms. The first two examples might well appear in a section called Definition of Terms.

_Dialects:_ Language varieties that initially and basically represent various geographic origins (Fishman, 1972, p. 5).

This writer might have chosen an entirely different definition, depending on how the term was used in the dissertation.

_Dialects:_ Differences between kinds of language that are differences of vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation (Trudgill, 1974, p. 17).
The writer might have decided, for purposes of this dissertation, that the reader is best served by defining the term in the text, as below, rather than in a list of terms in a Definition of Terms section.

Fishman (1972) used the term *dialects* to mean “varieties of language that initially and basically represent divergent geographic origins” (p. 5).

**Words Defined and Words Used as Words**

To introduce a new, technical, or key term or label or to indicate a word used as a word, students should set the term in italic type on first reference. After the first reference, Roman type should be used. This use of italics most often occurs in the context of defining a word, term, or phrase:

The term *networking* refers to creating relationships and saving contact information for a specific situation, usually a job search.

**Copyrights and Permission to Use**

**Copyrighting the Dissertation**

A statement of copyright ownership to a dissertation is not necessary because, by federal law, a copyright exists once a work is “fixed in tangible form” (APA 1.15). If students wish to add a copyright notice, they should place this wording at the bottom of the acknowledgments page, or if there is no acknowledgments page, on a blank page after the main title page:

© [year] by [author’s name]. All rights reserved.

See Walden’s [authorship guidelines](#) for more information.

**Permission to Use Copyrighted Material**

As discussed in APA 6.10, if copyrighted material is used in the dissertation beyond “fair use,” students must obtain written permission from the copyright owner to reproduce the material. To determine if something is within or beyond fair use, consider these four issues:

1. The purpose and character of the use.
2. The nature of the copyrighted work.
3. The amount and substantiality of the portion used.
4. The effect of the use upon the potential market for, or value of, the copyrighted work.

ProQuest offers guidance to authors to help them avoid copyright infringement. Such mistakes may include, among other potential problems, the following:

- Long quotations; there is no legal requirement, but authors should avoid long quotes in nearly all instances.
- Reproduced publications; this includes standard survey instruments or questionnaires and articles, such as newspaper or magazine articles, included in an appendix.
- Music or lyrics.
- Graphic or pictorial works.

In general, permission to reproduce tables and figures reproduced or modified from published works not in the public domain must be demonstrated, most often by a copy of a letter of permission in an appendix (see APA 5.06). Permission to reprint is usually indicated on the first page of a copyrighted document, following the wording requested by the copyright holder. For more information, visit the Writing Center website page on tables and figures.

ProQuest also reminds authors that web-based sources are copyrighted just as print materials are. Beyond plagiarism, students must be careful not to violate copyright laws by reproducing web-based materials without permission.

**Note on Copying Test Instruments, Surveys, and Questionnaires**

Gaining permission to reproduce a survey instrument for participants in a study is necessary when such a document is not in the public domain. However, that is not the same as permission to reproduce it in the dissertation. If the committee asks the student to include a published copyrighted document in the dissertation itself, specific authorization must be obtained from the copyright holder. The authorization granting permission to reproduce must be included in an appendix. For more information on copyright law and graduate research, visit the ProQuest website.

**Crediting Sources**

**In-Text Citations**

APA style uses the author–date citation system. Authors’ names and year of publication are given within the text or at the end of block quotations. The author name may appear as part of the narrative text with the year of publication in parentheses, or both the name and year may appear in parentheses, separated by a comma. These citations are reflections of items in a reference list placed at the end of the paper and arranged alphabetically by the authors’ last names and chronologically within lists of works by a single author.
Students should consult APA Chapter 6 for detailed instructions on how to properly credit sources. The Walden Writing Center also provides information on APA citation style.

**Block Quotations**

Quotations of 40 or more words must appear in a free-standing block, indented 0.5 in. from the left margin (in the same position as a new paragraph). The right margin remains the same as the rest of the text, with a ragged border. The final punctuation is at the end of the final sentence; no punctuation follows the citation at the end of the block quotation (APA 6.03). The Walden Writing Center encourages minimal use of block quotations, as they can break up the narrative and be distracting. Discussion and analysis should be in the writer’s own words, demonstrating scholarship.

Note in this example of a block quote that the left margin is indented about five spaces. There are no quotation marks, although they would be used to quote words within a block quote, such as the “hyperbolic tendencies” of a speaker.

The right margin is flush with the rest of the manuscript. The first word can be capitalized even if the original is not. It is double spaced per APA sixth edition.

(Taylor & Fife, 2009, p. 46)

**When to Cite Page Numbers**

When directly quoting an original source, students should use quotation marks to set off the quoted text or format it as a block quotation, as described above. Per APA 6.04, Walden strongly encourages students to provide page numbers when paraphrasing closely. The reader will appreciate knowing the exact location of all references, and it will clarify the origination of the ideas, whether they are the author’s or from another source.

**Plagiarism**

As discussed in the section on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism, Walden University does not tolerate plagiarism and uses a service to detect plagiarism in student work.

In The Craft of Research (University of Chicago Press, 1995), Booth, Colomb, and Williams offered a useful definition of plagiarism:
You plagiarize even when you do credit the author but use his exact words without so indicating with quotation marks or block indentation. You also plagiarize when you use words so close to those in your source, that if your work were placed next to the source, it would be obvious that you could not have written what you did without the source at your elbow. (p. 167)

The following excerpts, based on *The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing* by Axelrod and Cooper (St. Martin’s Press, 2010), show the difference between plagiarism and paraphrasing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bruner (1968) and the discovery theorists have also illuminated conditions that apparently pave the way for learning. It is significant that these conditions are unique to each learner, so unique, in fact, that in many cases classrooms cannot provide them.</td>
<td>Apparently, some conditions, which have been illuminated by Bruner (1968) and other discovery theorists, pave the way for people to learn.</td>
<td>Guterson (2008) wrote that the “discovery theorists” have found that certain conditions may help learning to take place. Because each individual requires different conditions, not all children can learn in the classroom (p. 172).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism Example 2</td>
<td>According to Guterson (2008), Bruner (1968) and other researchers have also identified circumstances that seem to ease the path to learning (p. 172).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Plagiarism Example 1, the student changed Guterson’s (2008) original material slightly, but there is no mention of Guterson—only Bruner (1968), whom the student did not read firsthand.

In Example 2, Guterson is credited, and so is Bruner; however, the student did not read Bruner. And again, the wording is almost identical to the original. Because of the conventions of documenting sources, the reader cannot distinguish who originated the ideas and words.

In the acceptable paraphrase, the student attributes the point to Guterson (2008) and changes the language more substantially. The student did not read Bruner firsthand and does not mention Bruner, so the source is clear.

*Note:* In the event that the Form and Style editor identifies a significant academic integrity violation, the review will be stopped and the manuscript returned to the student and committee so that together they may revise as necessary. The editor and managing editor will explain the nature of the academic integrity violation, highlight the text from the narrative, include the original source, and explain how to revise. The manuscript will then need to be resubmitted so
that the Form and Style review may be completed. The final oral defense and CAO review cannot be scheduled until the Form and Style review is complete.

Students should review the Turnitin Plagiarism Spectrum to ensure they know what plagiarism is and have the writing and citation skills to avoid it:

Reference Lists

Note that each source in a reference list provides information on work that specifically supports the dissertation; a bibliography cites works for further reading. As such, dissertations require
reference lists but not bibliographies. The following information regarding references is taken from Chapters 6 and 7 of the APA style manual. Students should review both of these chapters thoroughly before developing a reference list. Pages 198–215 provide examples by the specific type of source and can be a helpful resource after reading the chapters.

Some general guidance for creating a reference list follows:

- Paginate the reference list continuously, following the narrative chapters.
- Use the first and middle (if any) initials of all authors; do not write out the first name. Place a character space between the initials. With two or more authors, use & rather than and before the last author. Separate the names with a comma:
  - Foyt, A. J., & Andretti, M. P. (APA 6.27)
- When a reference has up to seven authors, spell out all authors’ names. When a reference has eight or more authors, spell out the first six, then put ellipses and the last author’s name:
- If two or more of the works by a single author or set of authors have the same publication date, assign the dates the letters a, b, c, and so on.
- For the titles of books and journal articles, capitalize only the first word of the title, the first word of the subtitle (if any), and any proper nouns. Capitalize the titles of journals in title case (APA 4.15). Italicize titles of books and journals. Do not use quotation marks around titles of journal articles.
- Do not use the abbreviations Vol. and No. in reference to journals. Italicize the volume number. Indicate the issue number in parentheses immediately after the volume number only if the journal is paginated separately by issue. Follow the volume (and issue, when applicable) with a comma and the page numbers:
  - American Political Science Review, 37(2), 17–32.
- Do not precede page numbers of journal articles by p. or pp.
- In reference lists, use U.S. postal code abbreviations for all state names.
- Type one character space after all punctuation in the reference list (except after the colon preceding a DOI number, where there is no space).

**Electronic Sources**

The APA style manual (6.31–6.32) provides extensive guidance on citing sources from databases and other electronic publishers, including a discussion of the DOI system used for journal articles on the Internet. (If there is a DOI provided, it will be somewhere on the first page of the journal article, perhaps hidden behind a database button.) References to various electronic materials are included in the Examples by Type section (pp. 198–215). See also the APA website or Walden’s [Writing Center website](http://www.waldenu.edu/writingcenter) for additional rules.
Footnotes

APA style does not use endnotes or source footnotes. Content footnotes, used sparingly, may assist the reader. In general, however, something important enough to appear in a content footnote is important enough to appear in the narrative text.

Point of View

Use of first-person point of view is acceptable in some cases (APA p. 69), as discussed on the Writing Center website.

Verb Tense

A significant portion of the dissertation proposal should be written in future tense, as shown here:

The study will address four questions.

One hundred nurses will be surveyed.

Once the study has been completed, the dissertation should appear in present and past tense as appropriate.

As a general rule for social science writing, ongoing issues and current realities should be reported in present tense. What has occurred, what has been reported, and what the writer and sources have accomplished should be reported in past tense. For example, writing the statement “There were 50 states in the country” is ungrammatical and illogical since there are now 50 states in the United States. Similarly, it is not appropriate to write in the problem statement that “managing healthcare costs was a big problem in the United States” unless the problem no longer exists. If healthcare costs no longer are a problem, past tense works; otherwise, as an ongoing reality, this example should be described in present tense.

In the review of literature, use the past tense when reporting past research. “Jenkins (2013) observed three reasons why victims of abuse do poorly in school.” Note here that what Jenkins observed is a present tense clause. Of course, if Jenkins reported a historical fact, the entire sentence would appear in past tense: “Jenkins (2013) found four reasons that AIDS spread through the gay population in the 1980s.”

Some writers refer to past research in present tense. “Jenkins (2013) reports that there are three main reasons that victims of abuse do poorly in school.” But if this same writer decides to refer to Merton (1950) or Watson (1920), he or she will have difficulty staying consistent: “Watson (1920) argues that…” Watson is long dead and, therefore, it is awkward to report his 90-year-old
research in the present tense. In fact, APA specifically requires that the literature be presented in the past tense: “Watson argued that ... .”

**Inclusive Language**

Language used in scholarly writing should be inclusive. Most writers know the gender-restrictive nature of words like *policeman, mailman, or fireman*. Accordingly, writers should employ words that are not sexist and more accurately describe American society.

One of the most troublesome issues for writers regarding sexist language revolves around the pronouns *he* and *she*. The combination *he or she* is common, if cumbersome; some readers resent *he* always preceding *she*. Some writers choose as a matter of course to use only the word *he* and then add a note of apology at the beginning of a manuscript. This is dated and seen as a poor solution by many readers. Some writers go back and forth between *he* and *she*—also cumbersome, but effective in certain instances.

One frequent solution is changing the singular third-person pronoun to the plural *they*—thus, replacing “A junior high school teacher spends much of her day just maintaining order” with “Junior high teachers spend much of their day just maintaining order.” In this example, another solution is to use the passive voice: “A junior high school teacher’s day is spent, to a large extent, maintaining order.”

Some ethnicity and nationality titles require sensitivity due to historically racist usage: Oriental, American Indian, and Eskimo, for example. The APA style manual, in Chapter 3, offers an informative discussion of this issue (pp. 70–77). Check any of several dictionaries devoted to this subject to learn more. The Walden Writing Center also suggests consulting its information about bias-free writing as well as the APA’s supplemental materials on reducing bias.

Walden University’s preferred usage for groups of people whose ancestors can be traced to Africa is *African American*. The usage should be consistent:

African Americans make up the largest minority in America, while European Americans compose the majority.

Above all, students are asked to be sensitive to the terminology of racial, ethnic, and religious groups.
Type

A serif font is required. Times New Roman is the preferred font. Do not use Courier or New Courier. All text copy must be in the same point size: Use 12 point. A sans serif font, such as Arial, may be used for tables and figures if its use improves readability and format. The font size used in tables and figures may be smaller than that used in the text; however, for legibility, choose a point size no smaller than 8 points and no larger than 12 points.

Line Spacing

• Double-space between all text lines throughout the manuscript, including the Table of Contents, block quotations, and the reference list. To do this, go to the line spacing options, select the entire document, and then, under Spacing, set Before and After to 0 (zero), and make sure the line spacing is set to Double.
• Double-space the text on the Acknowledgments and Dedication pages, and use regular paragraph indents.
• Never use single-spacing or one-and-a-half spacing except in tables or figures.
• Begin each chapter on a new page.
• Do not begin each section or subsection on a new page. Sections should follow one another immediately in order to avoid large blank spaces.
• One-line widows and orphans are acceptable at the top and bottom of a page; however, for increased readability, two lines are preferred. Do not leave a heading floating at the bottom of a page without accompanying text.

Margins and Page Numbers

The Walden dissertation template is preformatted with correct margins.

The margins of the dissertation must conform to the following guidelines. This includes the appendices and any tables and figures. Set the document’s margins at these measurements:
• Left margin: 1.5 in.—to allow for binding.
• Right margin: 1 in.
  Note: Text at the right margin must be ragged—not justified—throughout the dissertation.
• Top margin in the preliminary pages: 1 in.
• Top margin in the narrative chapters: 1.3 in.—to allow space between page number and first line of text (see below).
• Bottom margin in the preliminary pages: 1.3 in.—to allow space between page number and last line of text (see below).
• Bottom margin in narrative chapters: 1 in.
• Header and footer throughout the document: 1 in.

On the preliminary pages, which include the Table of Contents pages, List of Tables, and List of Figures pages, page numbers are indicated in lowercase Roman numerals placed 1 in. from the bottom of the page, centered, beginning with i on the first page of the Table of Contents. The last line of text appears 0.3 in. above the page number, or 1.3 in. from the bottom edge of the paper. To accomplish this, set the bottom margin to 1.3 in. and the footer to 1 in.

Starting with the first page of Chapter 1, an Arabic page number must appear 1 in. from the top edge of the page and 1 in. from the right edge. The first line of text appears 0.3 in. under the page number, or 1.3 in. from the top edge of the paper. To accomplish this, set the top margin to 1.3 in. and the header to 1 in.

Note: Some versions of Microsoft Word are defaulted to set the page number at 0.5 in. from the top edge of the paper. The margin must be changed for Walden dissertations.

Although manuscripts submitted to the American Psychological Association for publication must contain a brief manuscript running head, Walden dissertations do not have a running head.

Pages containing tables and figures may be formatted in landscape page setup. The bound margin must still be 1.5 in. Page numbers should be placed consistently with the rest of the manuscript.

Nothing can appear in the margins of the page. All page numbers, text, tables, figures, and so forth must be contained completely inside the area bounded by the margins.

**Headings**

Headings must be worded identically in the table of contents and the text. Do not strand a heading at the bottom of a page. Headings should not be labeled with letters or numbers.

Per APA, double-space between a subheading and the preceding text.
APA’s heading levels, positions, and formats for a dissertation with five heading levels are listed below, with the addition of Walden’s chapter heading (Level 0).

Centered Uppercase and Lowercase Chapter Heading (Level 0)

Centered Uppercase and Lowercase Heading, Bold (Level 1)

Flush Left, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading, Bold (Level 2)

Indented, bold, lowercase. (Level 3)

Indented, bold, lowercase, italics. (Level 4)

Indented, plain, lowercase, italics. (Level 5)

Lists: Seriation

Seriation refers to lists of items (APA 3.04). Two of the most important aspects of formatting lists are readability and consistency. The reader needs to keep track of the listing.

Formatting Lists in Text

For listed items within a paragraph like this, (a) use letters, not numbers, in parentheses; (b) separate each item with a comma; or (c) separate each item with a semicolon, as shown in this example, if there is already a comma in one or more of the items.

When listing items vertically, use the numbered format below:
1. When listing items vertically, or breaking them out of the paragraph format, use 1., 2., 3., and so forth, and continue to double-space.

2. Indent the number the same as for a paragraph, usually 0.5 in.

Bulleted lists are formatted the same as numbered lists. Use a bulleted list when there is no need to indicate a certain order or chronology.

**Formatting Lists in Block Quotations**

If copying from text that already appears in list form in the original source, determine if the entire quotation needs to be included. The text may be better served with a paraphrase. If the quotation of a list is required, indent the entire set of items in the list. By properly punctuating at the end of the text, the reader will identify this as a block quotation. Further instructions on block quotations are provided in the [Crediting Sources](#) section of this guidebook. See the example below:

Hosmer (1982) offered three statements typical of psychological egoism:

1. People always look out for No. 1 first.

2. People act so as to benefit themselves, whether or not they also benefit others.

3. People always do what they want to do, or if that is impossible, what they dislike doing the least. (p. 70)

**Punctuating Lists**

Properly punctuating lists is a bit of an art and a bit of a science. APA allows the use of periods at the end of items in lists, even if the item is not a complete sentence. To determine the proper punctuation, writers must consider the syntax of the introductory phrase.

Sometimes writers introduce lists with a phrase just like this:

1. End each item in a list like this with a period, even if it is not a complete sentence.
2. Item 2 in a list per APA.

3. Item 3 in a list per APA.

In the above example, the clause that introduces the list could end as a sentence. That is, the items in the list do not complete the introductory clause. In this case, end the clause with a colon and, per APA, capitalize the first word in each numbered item and use periods at the end of the items.

On the other hand, see this example:

Sometimes, however, writers introduce lists with a clause that concludes with

1. item 1 in a list per APA that completes the introductory clause,

2. item 2 in a list per APA that completes the introductory clause, and

3. item 3 in a list per APA that completes the introductory clause.

In this case, the three items in the list complete the introductory clause. Per APA, separate the items with commas if there are no other commas in the items or with semicolons if there are. Start each item with a lowercase letter.

**Tables and Figures**

In the body of the dissertation, information that does not appear in textual form must be formatted and labeled as either a table or figure. APA does not allow for the words *graph*, *illustration*, or *chart*. Refer to them as either a *table* or *figure*. To learn how to correctly display data in tables and figures, students should carefully review the text and examples in APA Chapter 5 as well as the information on the Writing Center website. For information on APA formatting, see the Academic Skills Center resources on tables and figures.

Below are a few helpful tips:

- Ensure that all tables and figures fit within the margin specifications.
- Do not separate a title or caption from the table or figure it identifies.
- Number all tables and figures without a suffix or indicator of the chapter in which they appear: Table 1, Table 2, Table 3; Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and so on. In the appendices, tables are labeled Table A1, Table B1; figures are labeled Figure A1, Figure B1, and so forth.
• In the text, capitalize the word *table* or *figure* when referring to the data (e.g., *see Table 12*). Refer to the specific table number, not to the page number on which the table appears or to “the table below.”

**Tables**

Place the word *Table* and the table number **above** the table, flush left. The title of the table appears double spaced below the table number, flush left in italics, in title case. If the title runs over one line, single-space the two lines of the title, leaving the double space between the table number and the first line of the title. Double-space before and after the table. Use the same font and point size for table numbers and titles as the narrative text.

Information regarding abbreviations or symbols used in a table, copyright information, and probability must be located in a note below the table. See APA 5.16 for information about formatting table notes.

**Figures**

Place the word *Figure* and the figure number **under** the figure, flush left in italics. The title of the figure (which APA includes in the figure’s caption) goes next to the number in sentence case. Use the same font and point size for figure numbers and captions as the narrative text. If the figure caption exceeds one line of type, single-space the continuing line(s). In dissertations, do not type captions on a separate page. See APA 5.23 for more information about figure captions.

- In dissertations, tables and figures are inserted into the narrative as close to the text that introduces them as is practical.
- Do not split a table unless it is too large to fit on one entire page. Placing a table on its own landscape-oriented page is permissible. Do not place any other text on a page if a table or figure takes up three-fourths or more of the page.
- The point size used in tables and figures may be smaller than that used in the text; however, for a professional appearance and legibility, type should be no smaller than 8 points and no larger than 12 points.
- Grayscale (shading) and color used in figures is acceptable; however, they often will not reproduce well in black and white. Avoid color except where its use improves the presentation of data (APA 5.25). Instead, consider using crosshatching, broken lines, and so forth.
Numbers and Percentages

The APA style manual (4.31–4.38) has an extensive explanation of the nuances of presenting numbers. Always check the manual if unsure of the proper style. Examples of APA style for numbers can be found on Walden’s Writing Center website.

Abbreviations

Here are some tips regarding commonly used abbreviations:

- Lowercase should be used for Latin abbreviations, such as a.m., p.m., i.e., and e.g.
- Latin abbreviations such as e.g., etc., i.e., and cf. should be used only in parenthetical materials. Use the English translation of these abbreviations in nonparenthetical material (APA 4.26). Roman, not italic, type should be used for these abbreviations. An exception is made for the term [sic], which is always italicized and set in square brackets, as shown here.
- The plural of the abbreviation p. is pp. Such abbreviations are rarely used when not within parenthetical elements.
- In text copy, spell out the names of states and countries. (See APA pp. 88 and 187 to learn when and how to abbreviate locations.)
- United States should be written out when referred to in noun form. It is abbreviated with periods when used as an adjective: the U.S. economy (p. 88).

APA has many additional rules regarding abbreviations. See APA 4.22–4.30 and consult the index of the style manual for more information.

Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation

The latest edition of Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary is the authority for matters of spelling in Walden dissertations. APA has some additional conventions regarding spelling and hyphenation (4.12–4.13) and provides guidance regarding grammar (3.18–3.23) and punctuation (4.01–4.11). Carefully reviewing these sections of the APA style manual and applying them to the dissertation manuscript will help dissertation reviews go more smoothly.

Following are items to supplement the APA style manual and highlight some common errors:

1. Only standard American English is acceptable in Walden dissertations. Naturally, cited material from previously published sources should be left in the original form, including British or archaic spelling and excessive punctuation or lack of punctuation.

2. Do not use contractions. For example, write cannot rather than can’t and I will rather than I’ll.
3. In most cases, make the possessive form of proper names ending in s by adding an apostrophe and s: Jones’s, Grimes’s, Wilks’s, Sanchez’s. *The Chicago Manual of Style* notes several exceptions: Moses’, Jesus’, Xerxes’.

4. Do not add an apostrophe when forming the plural form of a number:

   Most of you scored 1s and 2s.
   The 1950s was a decade of great social homogenization.

5. If a compound adjective cannot be misread or if its meaning is established, a hyphen is not necessary:

   covert learning conditions
day treatment program
sex role differences
grade point average

6. In general, compound adjectives that end in *-ed* are hyphenated when they precede the noun they are modifying:

   client-centered service
group-oriented process
self-described phenomena

   but

   Billie is quick tempered.

7. Check the style manual for the appropriate hyphenation of combinations of words like *high school, follow up,* and *well being* (4.13) and the spelling of such words as *appendices* (4.12).

8. Many prefixes do not require hyphens, including *anti, non, inter, intra, semi, mini, pseudo,* and *under.* (See APA 4.13 for detailed guidance regarding hyphenation.)

9. Academic degrees are spelled as follows in lowercase, unless following a person’s name:

   doctorate
doctoral degree
bachelor’s degree
master of science
master’s degree
Dayna Herrington, MA
Eric Riedel, PhD
10. As discussed in APA 3.19, the subject and verb must agree in number (i.e., singular or plural). *Data* and *media* are plural nouns. (“The data were misleading, but the media were reporting the erroneous information anyway.”) *Datum* and *medium* are singular nouns.

11. Pronouns must agree in number and gender with the nouns they replace.

12. A comma must be used between items (including before *and* and *or*) in a series of three or more items (e.g., trains, planes, and automobiles).

13. No comma appears between the month and year when used alone (without an exact date): for example, December 1957.

14. Use *double* quotation marks for quotations. Use *single* quotation marks within double quotation marks only. For a quotation within a block quotation, the internal quotation gets double quotation marks. (APA 4.08)

15. Quotation marks nearly always go outside the final punctuation.

   The title of the article was “A Day in High School.” One respondent noted, “My boss is a source of great joy at my job.”

   *but*

   As Hernandez (2008) observed, “Nothing is more important than financial integrity in higher education” (p. 26).

16. One or two character spaces after a period is acceptable; one space is preferred at final publication. In the References section, use a single space after end punctuation (e.g., periods, colons other than with DOI numbers).

17. The proper format for a dash (4.06) is an “em dash” or two hyphens with no space between them or on either side: like this—or—like that. This is automatic in some software programs. Other programs leave spaces around a hyphen, requiring adjustment or an override of that function: In Microsoft Word, use *File/Options/Proofing/AutoCorrect Options/AutoFormat*. Consult the APA style manual (p. 97) for more on dashes and hyphens.

**Capitalization**

The following items supplement the APA style manual’s coverage of capitalization (4.14–4.20):

1. Do not capitalize the names of job titles unless they immediately precede a person’s name.

   The vice president of the United States is the second in command.

   Vice President Nelson Rockefeller came from a wealthy family.
2. Do not capitalize words related to schools when they are used generically. Capitalize such words when used with the name of a school.

   the junior high school
   Churchill Area Senior High
   this university
   Walden University

   Terms designating academic years are lowercase: freshman, junior.

3. Proper names associated with topographical features, geographical locations, and names of organizations are not discussed at length in APA. Walden recommends *The Chicago Manual of Style*’s extensive sections on such terms. In general, follow these examples:

   the state of Washington; Washington State; New York State
   the East Coast; the West Coast
   the South; the southeastern United States
   the Columbia River; the Columbia River valley
   the Allegheny, the Monongahela, and the Ohio Rivers; the Mediterranean and the Caspian Seas
   a senator; Senator Barbara Mikulski
   the Congress; congressional; the Senate; the House
   the Supreme Court; the court; juvenile court
   the Democratic Party; a Democrat; communism
Sample Pages

The sample title and manuscript pages that follow are from an actual approved 2016 Public Policy and Administration dissertation, with permission of the author. See the dissertation template on the Writing Center website for additional guidance.

Dissertation Abstract Title Page

Abstract
The Lived Experiences of Immigrant Canadian Women With the Healthcare System

by
Salma Debs-Ivall

MScN, University of Ottawa, 2002
BSN, American University of Beirut, 1984

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Public Policy and Administration

Walden University
September 2016
Dissertation Abstract

The abstract should not exceed one page. The text must be double spaced with no paragraph breaks. Details on writing both the proposal and final dissertation abstract can be found on the Abstract Assistance page of the Center for Research Quality website.

Abstract

Immigrants to Canada report better health status than the Canadian-born population when they first arrive in Canada, a phenomenon called the Healthy Immigrant Effect. However, by the fourth year after immigration, immigrants report a health status that is worse than that of the Canadian-born population. Visible minority immigrant women report the largest deterioration in health. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of visible minority immigrant women with encounters with the Canadian healthcare system to examine the multiplicative impact of gender, ethnicity, and immigration on their health. This phenomenological study, guided by Crenshaw’s feminist intersectionality framework, explored the perspectives of a purposive sample of 8 immigrant women in Ottawa, Canada, about their encounters with the healthcare system. Data were collected through individual interviews. These data were inductively coded and subjected to thematic analysis following the process outlined by Smith et al. for interpretative phenomenological analysis. Key findings of the study revealed that immigrant women define health more holistically and have expectations of the encounters with healthcare that are not met due to barriers that impact them accessing healthcare services, experiencing healthcare services, and following the recommended options. The positive social change implications of this study include recommendations for public health to consider immigration and racism as determinants of health; and for Health Canada to undertake system-level lines of inquiry to shed light on the ways structural discrimination and racism have had an impact on immigrant women’s social and health trajectory.
Dissertation Title Page

Note that the committee chair’s name and signature do not appear on the dissertation title page. They appear on a separate approval page, inserted after final approval and before ProQuest submission.

The Lived Experiences of Immigrant Canadian Women With the Healthcare System

by

Salma Debs-Ivall

MScN, University of Ottawa, 2002
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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
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September 2016
Dissertation Manuscript Pages

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

When immigrants first arrive in Canada they report a better health status than Canadian-born individuals. This is known as the Healthy Immigrant Effect (HIE; Fuller-Thomson, Noack, & George, 2011; Ng, Wilkins, Gendron, & Berhelot, 2005). A good health status is a condition of admissibility to Canada and is usually determined by an independent practitioner in the original country and identified by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2013).

However, the HIE does not persist. Researchers have revealed that by the fourth year after immigration, immigrants report a health status that is worse than that of the Canadian-born population (Fuller-Thomson et al., 2011; Ng et al., 2005). Immigrants from non-European countries and who represent a visible minority appear to be at a greater health disadvantage than immigrants arriving from the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe (Rotermann, 2011). Visible minority refers to individuals who self-identify as non-Aboriginal; belonging to a race other than Caucasian; and having a skin color other than white (Government of Canada, 2012; Statistics Canada, 2012).

Over 260,000 individuals immigrated to Canada in 2014 and over 85% arrived from countries other than the United States and Europe and represented visible minorities (CIC, 2015a). With more than half the visible minority population in Canada settling in Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2013), the province where this study is taking place, it is...

(Manuscript page examples continue.)
Literature Review Related to the Concepts

The initial literature review and my personal interest in the topic led to the development of a preliminary conceptual framework that guided a more comprehensive literature search. The visual representation of the framework is presented in Appendix A. The following sections highlight the findings from the literature related to the concepts and present them in a way that situates the issues within the Canadian immigration and healthcare contexts, which will help define the gap this study was designed to address. They also justify the selection of the theoretical lens selected for the study and present the revised and refined conceptual framework.

Immigration Policies in Canada

In 2002, Canada revised its immigration regulations and replaced the Immigration Act of 1976 with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (CIC, 2015a). The new Act governs immigration policies in Canada and is based on three specific objectives: (a) family reunification, (b) economic development, and (c) the protection of international refugees (Government of Canada, 2016). As a result, the classes of permanent and temporary residents reflect these objectives. Applications for permanent residence fall into three categories: family class, economic class, and refugee class. Family class applicants have to be sponsored by a close relative or family member residing in Canada. Economic class applicants are granted permanent residence visas based on six selection
Part 4. Frequently Asked Questions

This section of the guidebook contains typical questions asked by doctoral students while in the dissertation process.

Questions About the Dissertation Process

How do I form my dissertation supervisory committee?

Your program supports the formation of your committee. Students can find more information about the committee formation process on the Capstone Committee Process page of the Center for Research Quality website.

How do I set up a teleconference? How much does it cost?

After you have received approval to hold an oral conference, you should work with your committee members to identify possible dates and times. (Several alternatives should be requested, in case your first choice is not available.) Your committee chair will submit the scheduling form to the research service specialist, and the chair will be responsible for managing the phone call. The conference line and recording service are provided for you free of charge. International toll-free phone numbers may be available. Note: Walden provides a conference call service for the oral defense that is toll-free for most countries outside the United States. Students living in areas outside this coverage are responsible for toll charges associated with this call.

At what point does tuition stop?

Tuition stops when your dissertation is approved by the chief academic officer (CAO) or the CAO’s designee. If you receive approval within the first 7 days of a term, you are not charged tuition for that term. If you receive approval later in the term, you will be charged prorated tuition.

My dissertation has been approved. When is my official graduation date?

Graduation dates fall at the end of the term. Your official graduation date will be the end of the term in which you finish your degree. You are finished when all prerequisites are met; your dissertation is written, approved, and accepted by ProQuest; and your tuition is paid in full. You must have officially graduated before you can attend a graduation ceremony in either the winter or summer.

When can I refer to myself as a “doctoral candidate?”

You may use the designation “doctoral candidate” after you have completed all the expectations for doctoral candidacy, including completing all required coursework and the core research sequence, successfully completing your first three academic residencies, and having an approved prospectus on file with OSRA.
When can I use the title Dr. or PhD?
You may use the doctoral title only after your degree has been validated.

If I want to participate in the commencement ceremony, when do I need to finish?
Your dissertation must be approved by the CAO (or designee) no later than the last business day of the spring term to participate in the summer commencement ceremony or the last business day of the fall term to participate in the winter commencement ceremony. You are not automatically registered for commencement; to attend a commencement ceremony, register online.

Questions About Form and Style

What is the correct style to use? Is there a manual that explains it?
For academic writing, Walden University endorses and uses APA style, as explained in the sixth edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. The APA style manual is your primary source for style guidance. Throughout this guidebook, the few Walden style preferences that supplant APA recommendations are indicated in green boxes.

What font should I use to type my dissertation? What point size?
A serif font is required, and Times New Roman is the preferred serif font. Do not use Courier or New Courier. Tables and figures can use a sans serif font, such as Arial, to help improve readability and appearance. Particularly for Times New Roman, 12-point font size is preferred. (APA pp. 228–229)

Which is right: italics or underlines? Can I use bold?
Italics are correct, rather than underlines. Use bold only in heading levels (APA 3.03), for certain mathematical copy (APA 4.45), and in tables and figures, sparingly, to improve readability.

How do I format citations of electronic sources?
APA changed its rules for electronic citations in 2009. See APA 6.31–6.32 for overall guidance and review examples of references to electronic sources (pp. 198–215). For up-to-date information about proper formatting of web references and other online documentation, visit the Walden Writing Center or the APA website.

Can I single-space block quotations and reference lists?
No. The sixth edition of the APA style manual specifies double-spacing for block quotations (p. 171) and reference lists (p. 229).
How far down should the page number and first line of text appear?
The Walden dissertation template is preformatted with correct margins. The page number must appear 1 in. from the top edge of the page and 1 in. from the right edge. The first line of text appears about 0.3 in. under the page number, or 1.3 in. from the top edge of the paper. Caution: Students have run into problems with Microsoft Word’s page number placement. Be sure your page layout is adjusted correctly. Set the top margin to 1.3 in. and the header to 1 in.

Do all the tables and figures come at the end of the dissertation? What about table titles and figure captions?
In dissertations, tables and figures (and their titles and captions) are inserted in the text as close to where they are referred to as possible. If you plan to publish your dissertation results in a journal, please see APA’s many requirements for papers submitted for publication (Chapter 8).

What do I do if a table goes longer than one page?
Always try to fit the table on one page. If the table must run over onto the subsequent page, type the phrase table continues in parentheses flush right at the bottom of the table on the first page. Repeat the column headings, but not the table number or title, at the top of the subsequent page.

If including a long table or figure, can I format it in landscape instead of portrait?
Yes. The “top” of the landscape page needs to have a margin of 1.5 in. to allow for binding. The page number on the landscape page is placed in the same spot as it would be when turned in the portrait orientation. This formatting can be accomplished electronically in Microsoft Word.

Do I need a running header on my dissertation?
No. Walden does not use running headers on dissertations.

Does it matter if I write Chapter Two, Chapter II, Chapter 2, or CHAPTER 2?
Yes, it matters. Per APA, only the form Chapter 2 is correct in chapter headings. Note that in the narrative text, chapter is capitalized when followed by a number (e.g., In Chapter 2, ...).

Do I need to get permission from the copyright holder to reprint a table or figure or some text in my proposal?
For the proposal, it is unnecessary, although you may as well go ahead and obtain permission as you will need that permission for your dissertation—unless the item you wish to use is in the public domain or under the rules of fair use (APA 6.10). Contact ProQuest at 1-800-521-0600, ext. 77020, for more specific information than what is provided in the Copyrights and Permission to Use section of this guidebook.
Should the references or the appendices come first? When should page 1 start? Should preliminary pages (such as acknowledgments, abstract, etc.) be numbered with small Roman numerals?

Per APA (pp. 229–230), the references come before the appendices. For the preliminary pages starting with the first page of the Table of Contents, use lowercase Roman numerals, centered, at the bottom of the page. (Any pages before the table of contents are not counted in the pagination.) The first page of Chapter 1 is page 1—using Arabic numerals, not Roman.

May I use British spelling of English in my dissertation?

Walden follows APA style for dissertations, which allows only standard American English. Most word-processing software programs have spell-check features that convert British English to American English. The exceptions to this rule are direct quotes and titles of publications that use British spelling.

Do the key terms go in a glossary or in the first chapter?

You and your committee chair should decide how the reader is best served by placement of a Definition of Terms section.

Am I supposed to use one or two spaces after periods and colons?

For final publication, a single space after periods is preferred. You may use either one or two spaces after a period in the narrative chapters, as long as you are consistent. In the reference list, use a single space after periods and colons, except for the colon preceding a DOI number, where there is no space (APA 4.01).

Can Walden Writing Center staff members review my proposal? Can they look at my dissertation when I’m starting out?

Yes. If your progress toward completion is being impeded specifically because of challenges related to writing, your chair may nominate you for the Chapter Edits service. Encourage your chair to contact chapteredit@mail.waldenu.edu for more information. Your chair will need to submit an application on your behalf before you can be connected with one of Walden’s Form and Style editors.

Is there software that can do the APA formatting for me?

Yes. Check the Walden Writing Center for information about software packages that automatically format reference lists in APA style, as well as set up pages, maintain a running database of references, and offer other useful features.

Are there templates for formatting the premise, the prospectus, and the proposal and dissertation?

Yes. The Walden Writing Center website has a template available for all these documents.