

Manuscript Option for the PhD Dissertation

Background

The manuscript option is considered an equivalent to the traditional dissertation document format. The manuscript option benefit the student by contributing to their publication record. Numerous universities, including other schools and colleges at the University of Minnesota offer this option. Nursing and non-nursing schools and colleges have this option. It is possible that content of the DNP project may serve as the basis of one of the manuscripts in the Manuscript Option for the PhD Dissertation.

Requirements and Approval

- The research must have been carried out under the direction of University of Minnesota graduate faculty.
- The student must be registered for the appropriate graduate credits at the University of Minnesota during completion of the dissertation.
- The student's advisor and PhD Committee must approve the manuscript option in writing, and they are to guide the content of the full dissertation including the content of the manuscripts. The student's advisor makes the final approval of the content.
- The manuscript option should be approved soon after their study topic is approved, optimally before the research commences.
- The dissertation must read as one cohesive document. The student's full examining committee reviews the manuscripts and other chapters and content as part of the final examination similar to a traditional dissertation.
- Manuscripts -- A minimum of two and a maximum of three manuscripts suitable for publication. At least one manuscript needs to be data-based and report new/original knowledge of the main findings of the study. The student should be the first author on all of the manuscripts
- Inclusion of the DNP project content must be discussed with and approved by the PhD committee.

Content

The manuscript option for the PhD dissertation should be comprised of the following components:

- Dedication
- Copyright if it is a published manuscript
- Abstract – summarizing the entire study (250 words or less)
- Table of Contents (with continuous numbering that accommodates any published manuscripts included)
- Acknowledgements
- An Introductory Chapter – at minimum presents an overall unifying theme to the entire contents, addresses the construction of the dissertation, i.e., the distribution of content across manuscripts or chapters, discusses how the manuscripts and/or chapters address the theme, and explains the

relationship of the manuscripts to each other. In addition, the Introduction should discuss the overall need and significance of the research topic and study and the originality of the findings.

- **Specific Content** -- The following content should be present either as one of the manuscripts or as additional chapter(s): a review of the literature relevant to the study; theoretical framework/model/theory; a description of the methods including design, hypothesis if applicable, procedures and analysis plan; specific primary and secondary findings including appropriate type of supporting data and analysis/statistical results, and conclusions related to specific findings including an interpretation of the meaning of the specific findings and relation to existing literature.
- **Synthesis chapter** – at minimum, a synthesis and interpretation of overall findings of study that shows integration of content of all manuscripts and chapters and an understanding of the unifying theme, discussion of the new/original contribution of the full set of findings to the body of science, and an explanation of the importance of the manuscripts in relation to the main topic. In addition, direction for future research and implications of results for nursing practice, as appropriate, should be identified.
- **References** – each manuscript may have its own set of references and the style of references in the manuscripts may differ from one another depending on the journal for which the manuscript is intended.
 - In addition, a comprehensive reference list in APA style must be included as the last section of the submitted dissertation.
- **Appendices** – content similar to a traditional dissertation
- **Manuscripts published during the PhD program and reprints** may be included as part of the dissertation if they are approved by the PhD committee, so long as they result in a cohesive dissertation and have the necessary provisions to be legally reproduced. It is expected to be a rare instance that reprints of existing publications will be included.
 - The student is responsible to guard against self-plagiarism and minimize overlap of content in the manuscripts; the advisor should discuss this concern with the student prior to the writing of the manuscripts

Definitions

- **Suitable for publication** is defined as being written in the style, substance, and format of a specific peer-reviewed, professional journal relevant to the content of the manuscript. Suitable for publication does not require that the manuscripts be submitted for publication or published.
 - The student's advisor makes final determination when a manuscript is considered suitable for submission; the advisor may invite input from the PhD committee for deciding.

Authorship – additional information is in progress

- The dissertation must be the student's original work
- The student must be listed as the sole author of the overall dissertation.
- Others, including the faculty advisor and PhD committee members, may be listed as coauthors on manuscripts that are included. Students whose manuscripts include more than the student's research must make others' contribution clear in the dissertation.

- Appropriate contributions with general significance made by other authors should be acknowledged in the introductory materials.
- Specific contributions by others should be acknowledged in situ by citations using appropriate formatting where appropriate.