

## Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal is foundational to the dissertation manuscript. Its purpose is to describe the research idea, critically explore the multiple perspectives in the literature, and present a discussion on the appropriate methodology to conduct the inquiry. In proposing a dissertation study, the proposal demonstrates that the student has a command of both the topic area and the methodologies needed to conduct the research. The proposal should follow the most recent version of the CSUCI Format and Evaluation Guidelines for Dissertation Preparation.

In EDD 720, the student will be guided to build on the qualifying examination to bring together the knowledge, skills, and insights to develop a full dissertation proposal. Coursework is designed to ensure the research design includes scholarly references, demonstrates a thorough understanding of research design and analysis, and clearly identifies the “gap” in literature that is being addressed with the research.

The proposal includes a title page, an abstract, an introduction, review of the literature, proposed methodology, a reference page, and any relevant appendices, including research instruments, surveys, protocols, etc. The dissertation proposal should use the current edition of the APA Manual style

### Key Elements of the Dissertation Proposal:

1. **Title:** The title of the proposal, and later of the dissertation, gives a clear, concise description of the study topic and scope. The title page includes the title; author's name; the degree to be conferred; the university, school, and department; and month and year of approval. Title should be in all capitals.
2. **Abstract:** The abstract is a summary (250–350 words) of the dissertation project's area of investigation. It should reflect the current issue in the field and raise research questions suggested by findings in the current literature. In addition, the student should briefly describe the proposed methods and expected conclusions.
3. **Table of Contents:** The table of contents for the proposal list all of the elements of the proposal with accompanying page numbers. These elements generally include: Abstract, Table of Contents, Statement of the Problem, Review of the Literature, Methodology, Appendices, and References.

4. **Section One, Introduction and Problem Statement:** This section provides a general introduction to the area of study, presents the problem of practice to be investigated by the study, and explains the study purpose. This section should include the following:
  - A. Study background, including an overview of the topic and context of the study
  - B. Problem statement
  - C. Study purpose
  - D. Research questions
  - E. Overview of methodology
  - F. Study significance and rationale
5. **Section Two, Review of the Literature:** This section provides a comprehensive synthesis of relevant literature and outlines the theoretical/conceptual framework to be used in the study. This section should include the following:
  - A. An introduction that outlines the scope of the literature review and gives an overview of this section.
  - B. Comprehensive review and synthesis of the existing relevant literature
  - C. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature
  - D. Connections between the literature and the proposed study
  - E. A comprehensive description of the theoretical/conceptual framework (if applicable) and how it will be applied
6. **Section Three, Methodology:** The methodology section describes in detail how the study will be conducted. The information presented will employ future tense because the work has not yet been done. This section usually begins with an overview of the study purpose, a restatement of the research questions, and the context in which the study will be conducted. This section will vary depending on the methodology chosen for the research, but generally includes the following:
  - A. Introduction: Contains an overview of the study purpose, a restatement of the research questions, and the context in which the study will be conducted, as well as an overview of the section.
  - B. Research Design/Methodology: Contains a comprehensive description of the design that will be used in this study, including methodology/methods to be employed.
  - C. Rationale: A discussion and justification of the selected research design to explain the rationale for the design choice in terms of the research problem(s) identified.
  - D. Research Sample and Data Sources, including Selection Criteria of Participants: A discussion of the sample and population, the participants, the criteria for the selection of participants, and a description of the method that will be used to identify participants.

- E. Description of the Setting: Describes the Context and/or Setting in which the study will take place.
- F. Measures/Instruments: A detail description of the instrument(s) for data collection.
- G. Variables: Detailed description of any variables that will be measured/included.
- H. Data Collection: Detailed description of how the data will be collected and how the data to be collected will answer the research question(s).
- I. Data Analysis: Describes the data analysis process as it relates to the research question(s) and the methodology.
- J. Issues of Validity/Trustworthiness: Discusses issues of validity, reliability, and/or trustworthiness, as appropriate.
- K. **Researcher Positionality:** Discuss the role, the position, and the factors influencing the researcher in relation to the population and the topic.
- L. Limitations and Delimitations: In-depth analysis of the anticipated limitations of this study. Limitations should include any limitations in the research design, the proposed instrumentation, any bias that may be present in the selection of participants, the participant(s), and the researcher. Once the limitations are thoroughly discussed, strategies that will be used to minimize their impact should be explored. Delimitations are conditions or parameters that are intentionally imposed by the researcher in order to limit the scope of the study and should be explained here.

7. **Appendices:** Appendices contain supplementary material too lengthy to be included in the text or not immediately essential to the reader's understanding of the text. Any research instruments, including surveys, interview protocols, observation protocols, etc. should be included. If numerous types of artifacts are included as appendices, each type should have a section labeled as Appendix A, Appendix B, etc. Materials that document important components of the dissertation should also be included.

8. **References:** All references cited within the text must be listed in accordance with the most recent edition of the APA Manual and the CSUCI Format and Evaluation Guidelines for Dissertation Preparation. This section includes only works cited in the dissertation proposal.

## Dissertation Proposal Rubric

|                   | <b>Missing</b>   | <b>Developing</b>   | <b>Meets Expectations</b>  | <b>Exceeds Expectations</b>  |
|-------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Introduction      | The introduction is missing one or more components.  | The introduction does not fully introduce the topic, justify the need for the study, and/or explain the study purpose. A problem statement may not be included or does not support the study. Research questions may be unclear.                    | The introduction introduces the topic, somewhat justifies the need for the study, and mostly identifies the study purpose. A problem statement is included that identifies the problem and mostly supports the need for the study. Research questions are identified.            | The introduction clearly introduces the topic, justifies the need for the study, and identifies the study purpose. A problem statement is included that clearly identifies the problem and supports the need for the study. Research questions are clearly identified and explicitly connected to the study purpose, problem, and methodology. |
| Literature Review | The literature review minimally addresses relevant literature. The literature review does not support the study. | Some relevant literature is explained, but may not be synthesized or explicitly connected to the study. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature may or may not be included. The literature somewhat justifies the need for the study. | Relevant literature is mostly explained and synthesized. Its connection to the current study is mostly explicated. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature are outlined and connected to the study. The literature review mostly justifies the need for the study. | Literature review is comprehensive and relevant literature is clearly explained and synthesized. Its connection to the current study is explicated. Limitations of and/or gaps in the existing literature are comprehensively outlined and deeply connected to the study. The literature review clearly justifies the need for the study.      |

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| Theoretical or Conceptual Framework   | There is no theoretical or conceptual framework.  | The theoretical/conceptual framework is somewhat described and may or may not be applied.  | The theoretical/conceptual framework is described and some justification for choice of framework is provided. The theoretical framework is applied to shape the study and/or make sense of the findings.   | The theoretical/conceptual framework is clearly and comprehensively described, and justification is provided for choice of framework. The framework is utilized to shape the study and make sense of the findings.   |
| Research Design/Methodology (including, but not limited to, study purpose, design, methodology, methods, data collection, sample, variables, data analysis, procedures, validity and/or trustworthiness, limitations) | Research design may not be clearly explained and/or does not include most of the relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Rationale is not provided for design choices. Design is not tied to research questions. The project does not use appropriate research methods to answer the research questions. | Research design is somewhat explained and includes some of the relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Rationale may not be provided for design choices. Design is somewhat tied to research questions. The project sometimes uses appropriate research methods to answer the research questions. | Research design is explained and includes most of the relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Some rationale is provided for design choices. Design is tied to research questions. The chosen research methods are appropriate for the research questions and study purpose | Research design is thoroughly explained and includes all relevant information needed to describe how the study was conducted. Rationale is provided for design choices. Design is clearly tied to research questions. The chosen research methods are appropriate for the research questions and study purpose, and there is explicit justification for the chosen research methods. |
| Writing Conventions   | The writing is not clear and organized. The   | The writing is somewhat clear and organized. The project sometimes adheres to  | The writing is mostly clear and organized. The project mostly adheres to standard  | The writing is clear, organized, and adheres to standard conventions of  |

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|            | project may not adhere to standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and/or professional presentation. | standard conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.                      | conventions of grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.                                 | grammar, academic writing, and professional presentation.  |
| Formatting | APA format is not used. Does not use anti-bias language.   | There are many formatting errors. Inconsistently uses APA style conventions to reduce bias in language | There are a few formatting errors. Generally adheres to APA style conventions to reduce bias in language | APA style is used correctly throughout. Consistently adheres to APA style conventions to reduce bias in language |