

PROFESSIONAL PAPER GUIDELINES

This is an opportunity to demonstrate in-depth knowledge and mastery of an issue in your field with a rigorous conceptual argument from the literature. The paper's rigor will be judged by the author's level of critical thinking, analysis, and defense of the literature search process. This paper will include three chapters.

STEP 1 Issue Selection

- A. Survey current journals and research abstracts (before you meet with your adviser be able to name at least four different journals you have reviewed which include articles related to your topic.)
- B. Talk with other professionals concerned about your issue.
- C. Listen for issues in class discussions.
- D. Project yourself into the future and identify with issues (problems you hope to help solve.)
- E. Look for gaps in the literature.
- F. Read! Think! Keep notes on your ideas.

STEP 2 Issue Approval

- A. When you have selected your issue and thought through your general approach, arrange a meeting with your adviser (should be at least a semester prior to graduation).
- B. Discuss your idea(s) with your committee when they sign your GS Form 6. Ask committee members for suggestions, ideas, perspectives to help you formulate your approach.

STEP 3 Read on Your Issue

- A. Read extensively on your topic.
- B. Keep topically referenced note cards or photocopy well referenced key articles in a folder for reference.

STEP 4 Submit a Proposal for Your Paper for Approval

- A. Write Chapter I and a detailed outline of Chapter II and III, submit it to your adviser for approval. The proposal must be typed and include:

Chapter I - Statement of the problem (what philosophical issue are you investigating). Be open to alternative answers and different viewpoints about the issue.

- a. What is the issue?
- b. Why is it a relevant issue? Who cares, why are you committed to this issue?

Chapter II - Review of the literature

- a. List of topics being addressed in the literature
- b. Organize the topics logically and/or sequentially

Chapter III - Discussion - Your synthesis and evaluation relative to the literature

- a. A brief description of your philosophy
- b. Summary, conclusions, recommendations at the micro and macro level.

STEP 5 Write Chapter I - Statement of the Problem

- A. This chapter should be a clear statement of the problem. The reader should know what it is that you are asking and writing about within the first few paragraphs. Elaborate on why this is an important issue for consideration.

STEP 6 Write Chapter II - Review of the Literature

- A. Provide an explanation of your literature search strategy (your task is to convince the reader that you conducted a logical literature search).
- B. This chapter should cite specific literature concerning each specific topic identified in your outline.
- C. Briefly describe the studies, articles, etc. Then state the cited author's perspective on the topic.
- D. You are to include all relative literature whether it agrees with your philosophical position or not.
- E. Keep your opinions and ideas out of this chapter. You are reporting what others have said.
- F. Summarize periodically the major theme (use transitions from section to section.)
- G. Good writers synthesize rather than follow one direct quote with another.
- H. Direct quotes must follow the style found within the publication manual of the American Psychological Association (4th Edition). Be sure you understand how to write direct quotes and citations before submitting your first draft to your adviser. If you're confused, look at citations within a recent journal. You must know this before you meet with your adviser.

STEP 7 Write Chapter III - Discussion - Synthesis and Evaluation

- A. In this chapter you are free to present your personal perspective only after you have built a case from what the literature reports.
- B. State how you agree and/or disagree with the current literature.
- C. Support your position (1) with the relevant literature presented in Chapter II, then (2) share your personal experience, then (3) your own unique conceptualizations or models.
- D. End with summarization, conclusions and recommendations.
- E. Have at least one other person read your draft for spelling and

- grammar before giving it to your adviser.
- F. Submit to your adviser, Chapter I, II and III for comments (typed but not final copy.) Your adviser will proof it for content and format and help you editorially. APA style must be utilized. S/he should not find more than two spelling, grammatical or citation problems per page. If so, expect it back!
 - G. This **MUST BE DONE BY THE FIFTH WEEK AFTER THE START OF THE SEMESTER WITHIN WHICH YOU EXPECT TO GRADUATE.** This is typically the same time the GS Form 25 ("Application for Graduation") must be turned in to the Graduate School.

STEP 8 Prepare Final Copy

- A. Include title page, acknowledgements, table of contents, and references.
- B. Paper must be typed with pages numbered.
- C. Each chapter should start on a separate page.
- D. The second draft must be submitted to your adviser at least three weeks prior to your scheduled orals. Your adviser will edit the paper as critically as possible so that you will do well in your orals.
- E. Make corrections and third draft (hopefully second draft with minor typing corrections) **MUST** be given to committee ten days before oral exam.

STEP 9 Oral Exam

- A. The candidate is responsible for establishing the date, time, and place for the oral exam. Check with your adviser to determine who will officially notify committee members. It is suggested that you reserve Room #207 in the in the Education Building by calling 491-6316.
- B. The focus of the exam is the defense of the paper.
- C. The candidate is expected to discuss other issues pertaining to one's graduate education during the oral exam.
- D. The candidate should be prepared to demonstrate their most professional image and skills with their committee colleagues.
- E. The meeting should take from 1-1 1/2 hours.
- F. This is your chance to shine! It should be fun and stimulating with you as the expert!
- G. Bring your GS Form 24 to the meeting. Type in all details.