

University of West Georgia
Tanner Health System School of Nursing
Dissertation Guidelines

The dissertation will be prepared using a three-manuscript format, with each manuscript presenting different aspects of the student's scholarly work. The dissertation will be supplemented with introductory, theoretical, methodological, and discussion/conclusion materials as necessary to create a cohesive body of work that supports the research question/hypothesis.

Three-Manuscript Dissertation Format

<p><u>Format:</u> Three-Manuscript Format</p>
<p><u>Body:</u> Chapter 1 Introduction Chapter 2 (Manuscript #1-Knowledge Synthesis Method) and Traditional Chapter Two (and Conceptual or Theoretical Framework for qualitative dissertations) Chapter 3 (Manuscript #2-Theoretical Framework or Methodology or Concept Analysis or Systematic Review of Theoretical Frameworks or topic as selected by dissertation chair) and Traditional Chapter Three Chapter 4 (Manuscript #3-Results/Conclusions/Recommendations)</p>
<p><u>Requirements:</u> Dissertation Committee (3 members or more) Hours of dissertation credit per plan of study</p>
<p><u>Defense of Dissertation Proposal:</u> Oral Presentation</p>
<p><u>Advancement to Candidacy:</u> Completion of Proposal Defense of Proposal Committee approval to conduct research (IRB)</p>
<p><u>Dissertation Defense:</u> Oral Presentation</p>

*****The dissertation proposal will consist of Chapter 1, Chapter 2 (which includes Manuscript #1-Knowledge Synthesis Method), and Traditional Methodology of Chapter 3.**

The candidate must be the first author of the three manuscripts; the first manuscript can

be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal prior to the dissertation defense. To allow students to incorporate committee member's feedback and research findings, the second and third manuscript will be submitted to peer-reviewed journals after the dissertation defense.

The peer-reviewed journals may be nursing or another discipline (Example: Education). Interdisciplinary journals will be evaluated on the basis of Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) or the Science Citation Index (SCI), when available. Also, if the interdisciplinary journal is listed in SSCI or SCI that will be sufficient to qualify the journal on the basis of likely impact. Lastly, the relevance of any peer-reviewed journal (nursing or another discipline) must be decided upon by the dissertation committee chair and committee members.

Acceptance of the first manuscript for publication is not a requirement for the dissertation defense. Students are advised to carefully consider journal selection prior to submitting their manuscripts for publication. Should the first manuscript be published, the student must be able to obtain permission to include copyrighted material in the dissertation as failure to do so would break U.S. copyright laws. All copyright permissions must be secured before final formatting of the dissertation.

Overall Guidelines

The **final** dissertation will conform to the specifications outlined in the Graduate Studies [Thesis & Dissertation Formatting Guidelines Handbook](#). The main body of text of the dissertation will consist of four chapters:

1. **Chapter 1** (Introduction) The introduction should include a clear statement of the study's purpose and research hypothesis/question to be tested with background information to justify the study
2. **Chapter 2** (Manuscript #1-Knowledge Synthesis Method) and Traditional Chapter Two (and Conceptual or Theoretical Framework for qualitative dissertations)
3. **Chapter 3** (Manuscript #2-Theoretical Framework or Methodology or Systematic Review of Theoretical Frameworks or topic as selected by dissertation chair) and Traditional Chapter Three
4. **Chapter 4** (Manuscript #3-Results/Conclusions/Recommendations) The results will summarize and synthesize the findings of the three manuscripts into a synopsis that relates the work to the extant literature, advances nursing education research, and discusses the study's strengths and limitations. The manuscript will also offer implications for further research in nursing education.

Chapters 1 through 4 will be written in APA format. Final submission of the dissertation for graduation will require the student to see the Graduate Programs site for required university editorial guidelines, [Thesis & Dissertation, UWG General Guidelines for Formatting and Processing](#), as the final dissertation will conform to the specifications outlined by Graduate Studies.

1. **Chapter 1** (Introduction) the outline of chapter one will include the following:

Quantitative	Qualitative
Chapter Introduction	Chapter Introduction
Background (State of the current literature)	Background (State of the current literature)
Problem Statement	Problem Statement
Purpose Statement	Purpose Statement
Significance of the Study to Nursing Education	Significance of the Study to Nursing Education
Research Questions/Research Hypothesis(es)	Research Questions
Conceptual or Theoretical Framework	Definition of Terms
Definition of Terms	Research Plan (Specific Design)
Research Plan (Specific Design)	Limitations of the Study
Assumptions of the Study	Chapter Summary
Limitations of the Study	
Chapter Summary	

2. **Chapter 2** will include the following:

Quantitative outline:

- 1) Chapter Introduction (chapter organization of how the chapter will consist of a traditional review of literature and a knowledge synthesis method manuscript, which is manuscript #1).
- 2) Traditional Review of the Literature
- 3) Manuscript #1 of the EdD in Nursing Education dissertation may contain any one of the following types of knowledge synthesis methods (Systematic review, Meta-analysis of RCT, Meta-analysis of observational study, Qualitative synthesis, Mixed studies review, Integrative review, Scoping review, RE-AIM review, and Umbrella review) based upon the mutual decision of the dissertation chair and doctoral student.

4) Chapter Summary

Qualitative Outline:

- 1) Chapter Introduction (chapter organization of how the chapter will consist of a traditional review of literature, conceptual or theoretical framework, and a knowledge synthesis method manuscript, which is manuscript #1).
- 2) Conceptual or Theoretical Framework
- 3) Traditional Review of the Literature
- 4) Manuscript #1 of the EdD in Nursing Education dissertation may contain any one of the following types of knowledge synthesis methods (Systematic review, Meta-analysis of RCT, Meta-analysis of observational study, Qualitative synthesis, Mixed studies review, Integrative review, Scoping review, RE-AIM review, and Umbrella review) based upon the mutual decision of the dissertation chair and doctoral student.
- 5) Chapter Summary

Other considerations:

-The student will not be able to make an argument for the study without a traditional review of literature included in chapter two therefore *the gap in literature has to be addressed as well*. **The traditional review of literature will be highly synthesized as the student must demonstrate command of the literature which addresses all variables.**

-Journal guidelines should be reviewed with the dissertation chair 1st prior to development of any manuscript to ensure essential criteria are met by the student according to journal guidelines.

*In summary, the outline of chapter two will include the following:

Quantitative	Qualitative
Chapter Introduction	Chapter Introduction
Traditional Review of the Literature	Conceptual or Theoretical Framework
Knowledge Synthesis Method (manuscript #1)	Traditional Review of the Literature
Chapter Summary	Knowledge Synthesis Method (manuscript #1)
	Chapter Summary

3. Chapter 3 (Manuscript #2) will include the following for both Quantitative and Qualitative dissertations:

- 1) Chapter Introduction (chapter organization of how the chapter will consist of a traditional

methodology chapter three and manuscript two)

- 2) Traditional Methodology chapter three
- 3) Potential topics of manuscript #2: Theoretical Framework or Methodology or Systematic Review of Theoretical Frameworks or topic as selected by dissertation chair (manuscript may include the scholarly critique/exploration of selected topic based upon research results)
- 4) Chapter Summary

*A traditional methodology chapter three is necessary for the dissertation and will include the following outline:

Quantitative	Qualitative
Introduction	Introduction
Research Design	Research Design
Setting	Setting
Participants	Participants
Sampling Procedures	Researcher's Role
Sample Size	Data Collection
Recruitment	Data Analysis
Data Collection (Instrumentation)	Trustworthiness
Data Analysis	Ethical Issues
Summary	Summary

*In summary, the outline of chapter three will include the following:

Quantitative	Qualitative
Chapter Introduction	Chapter Introduction
Traditional Methodology chapter three	Traditional Methodology chapter three
Manuscript Two	Manuscript Two
Chapter Summary	Chapter Summary

4. **Chapter 4** (Manuscript #3) will include the following for both **Quantitative and Qualitative dissertations:**

- 1) Chapter Introduction (chapter organization of how the chapter will consist of a manuscript three)
- 2) Manuscript Three (research results)
- 3) Summary

Manuscript #3 is necessary for the dissertation and will include the following outline:

Quantitative	Qualitative
Introduction	Introduction
Major findings	Major findings
Limitations	Limitations
Discussion of the Findings	Discussion of the Findings
Implications for Nursing Education	Implications for Nursing Education
Conclusions	Conclusions
Recommendations	Recommendations

*In summary, the outline of chapter four will include the following:

Quantitative	Qualitative
Chapter Introduction	Chapter Introduction
Manuscript Three	Manuscript Three
Chapter Summary	Chapter Summary

All three manuscripts must represent work undertaken while the student is enrolled in the EdD program and each manuscript must be approved by the student's dissertation committee. If a manuscript is rejected by a journal during the dissertation process, the dissertation committee will decide whether or not to accept the changes requested by the journal. The student may submit the manuscript to another journal under the direction of their dissertation committee. Again, in the case of a revise and resubmit during the dissertation process, any changes to the manuscript must be approved by the dissertation committee. If an article is rejected by a journal after the successful completion and defense of the dissertation then changes/submission to a new journal will be at the sole discretion of the EdD graduate.

Dissertation Proposal

The proposal of the dissertation will consist of chapters 1 through 3 with traditional methodology of chapter three only. Please see the following details:

1. **Chapter 1** (Introduction) The introduction should include a clear statement of the study's purpose and research hypothesis/question to be tested with background information to justify the study.
2. **Chapter 2** (Manuscript #1-Knowledge Synthesis Method) and Traditional Chapter Two (and Conceptual or Theoretical Framework for qualitative dissertations)
3. **Chapter 3** Traditional Methodology of Chapter Three

The proposal defense will be a closed meeting and will consist of only the student, dissertation chair, and committee members. During the proposal defense the student will offer a short presentation of their proposal within a timeframe of no longer than 10-15 minutes.

Dissertation Committee

A dissertation showing ability to conduct independent research and skill in organization and presentation must be prepared by each student on a nursing education topic. It must constitute a definite contribution to knowledge.

A. Dissertation Committee Composition

The dissertation title must be approved by the student's dissertation chair and committee members. A dissertation committee with chair will supervise the preparation of the dissertation. The dissertation committee shall not have fewer than three committee members. The following committee forms, [Dissertation Chair Approval](#), and [Dissertation Committee Member Approval](#) are available on the Ed.D. in Nursing Education website. All members of a dissertation committee must be regular [Graduate Faculty](#) or [limited-term Graduate Faculty](#). An additional Outside Committee Member may also serve on the dissertation committee with evidence of a terminal degree. The dissertation chair must give permission for an Outside Committee Member to be present on the committee and the Outside Committee Member must apply for [limited-term Graduate Faculty](#) status. Lastly, see the Graduate Programs site for required university editorial guidelines, [Thesis & Dissertation, UWG General Guidelines for Formatting and Processing](#).

B. Defense of the Dissertation Proposal with the committee

At the inaugural meeting of the committee, all members must be present (physically or virtually):

1. The student will present their dissertation proposal via a short presentation within a time frame of no longer than 10-15 minutes.
2. The committee will decide to accept or call for modifications to the dissertation proposal. Should the committee decide that substantial revisions are needed; the committee may

opt to hold a second meeting. *If editing to the dissertation proposal is required, the student must make those changes within 14 days and submit those changes back to the committee.*

3. A unanimous is required by all committee members to accept the proposal and the committee may sign at this time the [Dissertation Proposal Approval](#) form.

After approval of the proposal, the student must keep the committee apprised of the dissertation progress as each manuscript must be approved by the student's committee prior to any submission. Prior to the student's public defense ([Report of Oral Defense](#)), it is assumed that a complete draft of the dissertation has been distributed and read by all members of the committee.

C. Public Final Defense of the Dissertation

Following approval from the chair/committee to proceed to public defense, the committee chair will inform the program director and Associate Dean of the intent to defend. The student and dissertation chair/committee will identify the date for the defense. This date must be at least 30 days prior to the end of the semester in order for the student to officially graduate within that semester.

The School of Nursing will publicly advertise the dissertation defense ([Oral Defense Notification](#)) at least one week prior to the scheduled final defense date. The final defense will be open to the public and will be chaired by the committee chairperson. The student will present his/her presentation orally (in-person or virtually). At the conclusion of the oral presentation, the student will be required to field questions from the audience.

D. Dissertation Approval

Following public defense, the dissertation committee will meet in executive session. All members of the committee must be present at this meeting (physically or virtually). At this meeting, the committee may opt to ask additional questions pertaining to the student's chosen field and/or ask for further clarifications on the student's data. The committee may call for additional editing of the written dissertation at this time. The committee chairperson will then call for a vote to approve and the document [Report of Results of Defense of Dissertation](#) can be signed by all dissertation committee members at this time. If editing to the dissertation document is required, *the student must make those changes within 14 days and submit those changes back to the committee.*

Additional Guidelines:

University of West Georgia School of Nursing does not assume responsibility for any travel-related expenses incurred by external committee member(s).

Rights clause of the SON Graduate handbook:

The Tanner Health System School of Nursing reserves the right to amend, modify, add to, or delete our rules, policies, and procedures.

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