Guidelines for Preparation of the

Doctoral Dissertation

UTHealth Houston
Cizik School of Nursing
PhD in Nursing Program

PhD Program
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Introduction to the Manual

The manual is intended to provide the student with guidelines for completing the dissertation research project. The appendices to the manual also contain examples of approval forms, biosketch, title page, the table of contents, and evaluation forms.

The student is encouraged to read the entire manual, including the appendices, before beginning the process of dissertation work and to obtain necessary clarification from faculty. The student is responsible for the timely and appropriate use of forms necessary to complete dissertation requirements. The forms are included in the appended materials of this manual. A calendar of deadlines, available from the Registrar's Office, lists graduation requirements and deadline dates. Final dates for submitting papers and manuscripts cannot be waived. Each degree candidate, not the faculty advisor, is responsible for meeting UTHealth requirements and deadlines.

OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION PROCESS

The dissertation is recognized within academic and scientific communities as the candidate's initial research effort in a substantive area, and it is viewed as a mentored process. Working closely with the dissertation committee chairperson (chair), members, and others, the candidate conducts research that makes a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge in nursing. Because of the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of healthcare problems, the candidate works with scientists from nursing and other disciplines, but takes principal responsibility for the design, conduct, analyses/evaluation, interpretation, and dissemination of the dissertation research under the supervision of the dissertation committee chair and committee members.

The dissertation process begins after the student is advanced to candidacy for the PhD in nursing. The dissertation process consists of the following five stages: (a) approval of the dissertation topic and committee membership, (b) defense of the research proposal, (c) institutional review/s for the protection of human subjects and/or animals, (d) conduct of the study, and (e) defense and dissemination of the dissertation project. Each stage is discussed in later sections of this manual. Defense of the dissertation project from proposal approval and final project approval requires both oral and written presentations.

As an academic requirement for the PhD in nursing, the dissertation is expected to reflect high standards of research, scholarship, and scientific writing. The style, format, and substantive content of the dissertation must meet the standards of the Cizik School of Nursing and the dissertation committee. The student is

responsible for ensuring that the dissertation is clearly written, grammatically correct, and free of typographical errors. Dissemination of the dissertation findings is essential for contributing to nursing science. The final dissertation product must include three manuscripts that have been submitted or are ready for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. One of these manuscripts must include findings from the dissertation. The other two manuscripts should reflect work relevant to the student's research area. The student must be the first author on all three manuscripts.

Guidelines for the Dissertation Research Project

- The student should refer to Appendices in this manual for approval forms and sample documents relevant to the dissertation.
- The student must be enrolled for dissertation credits to hold meetings with the chair and committee members and to participate in the proposal and final defenses of the dissertation work.
- A minimum of 12 dissertation credits are required for graduation. The student must be enrolled for at least 3 credits during the semester of graduation.
- The student negotiates the scope of the research with the dissertation chair. The student may use an observational approach, with quantitative or qualitative methods, or an experimental approach to study the research problem. The approach must be justified based on what is known across disciplines about the topic. The completed dissertation project makes an original contribution to nursing science.
- The dissertation undergoes a two-level approval process. The PhD Council approves both the topic of the dissertation and the membership of

the dissertation committee. The dissertation committee approves the research proposal and the final dissertation product.

The final dissertation product must include three manuscripts that have been submitted or are ready for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. One of these publications must be data-based and report the results of the student's dissertation research. The second and third manuscripts may be data-based or focused on a related scholarly topic, such as an integrative literature review; conceptual analysis or theoretical development process; methodological issue; instrument development process; or clinical application of the research findings to practice.

The student must be the first author on all three manuscripts. Students may submit the dissertation project manuscripts in a format other than APA, if the manuscript was published in or submitted to a journal that requires a different formatting/referencing style. The student negotiates with the dissertation committee regarding the focus and content of the manuscripts and the peer-reviewed journals to which the manuscripts will be submitted before the final defense date. Dissertation committee members who made contributions to the manuscripts should be included as co-authors. The dissertation committee approves each manuscript prior to submission.

Dissertation Chairperson and Committee

To qualify as dissertation chair, the individual must hold a doctoral degree, be a full-time member of the Cizik School of Nursing faculty, and be approved by the PhD Council. A list of faculty who meet the requirements is available on the PhD webpage on the Cizik School of Nursing website. The chair is not only the major professor who guides the student through the dissertation process, but also one who has expertise in

the substantive area of the student's research problem. The role of the chair includes:

a. assisting the student in selecting committee members and resources
b. assisting the student in formalizing researchable hypotheses, or research questions, and methods
c. critiquing the student's drafts for clarity, logic, and substance, suggesting revisions as appropriate within 15 working days of submission
d. approving cognates before the dissertation proposal defense
e. assisting the student in formal preparation of the proposal, Institutional Review Board (IRB) and agency forms, final report, and manuscript(s)
f. deciding if the IRB and agency forms are ready for submission
g. chairing the student's dissertation proposal and final defense meetings
h. deciding with the other committee members if the proposal and final report meet quality standards that merit approval and submission.

Committee Members

Together with the chair, the student identifies and recruits members for the dissertation committee. A minimum of 3 members, including the chair, is required, with a maximum of 5 members possible. Two of the committee members, including the chair, must be full-time, doctorally prepared faculty at Cizik School of Nursing. At least 1 member must be from a discipline other than nursing. Additional members may be from nursing, other disciplines, and other institutions, and, in every case, must have an earned doctorate or hold the terminal degree of their profession and have substantive evidence of scholarship. Members may be selected to provide

expertise in methods, the target study population, the theoretical base for the project, an interdisciplinary perspective, and/or other areas that enhance the quality of scholarship. The role of the committee member includes:

a. assisting the student in formalizing researchable hypotheses, or research questions, and methods

b. critiquing student drafts of the proposal and the final dissertation product forwarded by the chair and suggesting revisions as appropriate; each committee member will be given a maximum of 15 working days to communicate their critiques and comments to the chair and student

c. suggesting cognates before the dissertation proposal defense

d. participating in the student's dissertation proposal and final defense meetings

e. deciding with the chair if the proposal and final report meet quality standards that merit approval and submission.

Changes in Committee Membership

On occasion, a committee member may leave the university or a conflict may arise among committee members. In the case of major disagreement, committee members will make every effort to resolve their differences. If a change in the chair or in the dissertation committee membership becomes necessary, the student is required to obtain proper approval, as outlined below. In addition, any work that the student completed before the change may be subject to revision (See Dissertation

Policy).

a. To change a committee member, the student informs the chair of the rationale for considering a change. If the chair approves the request, the student meets with the committee member for whom replacement is proposed to discuss the rationale for the change. The student then sends revised Form D-1 to the Office of Academic Affairs with a memo outlining the change and the rationale. The student and the committee chair sign the memo.

b. To change a committee chair, the student needs to obtain the approval of the PhD Council. A memo, signed by the student and the faculty member to be replaced as chair, is sent to the chair of the PhD Council. The memo explains the rationale for changing the chair and includes the name and qualifications of the faculty member being recommended as the new chair. A revised Form D-1 and biosketch of the proposed new chair are attached to the memo. Upon approval of the change by the PhD Council, the student files the revised Form D-1 with the Office of Academic Affairs.

Approval of Dissertation Topic and Committee

PhD Council approval of the dissertation topic and committee membership is required before the student may proceed with development of the dissertation proposal. The purpose of this first-level approval is to ensure that the resources that are necessary to support the student are also appropriate for the particular nature and scope of the research.

The student submits a completed Approval Form D-1 to the chair of the PhD Council. On the form, the student lists the working title of the dissertation and the proposed members of the dissertation committee. The title may not exceed two lines and conveys the substantive area of study, the target population, and the general methodological approach. The number of signature lines matches the number of committee members. If the number of committee members is less than 5, the student deletes lines from the form as appropriate. In all other aspects, the format of Approval Form D-1 must be the same as that shown in the Appendices Section. Approval Forms D1, D2, D3, Appendix A -Printable Forms. In addition, the student attaches a curriculum vitae or a PHS 398 Biosketch for each proposed committee member, including the chair. The form can be found in Appendix B.

Upon approval of the proposed topic and committee membership by the PhD Council, the student files the final Form D-1 with the Office of Academic Affairs and distributes a copy to each member of the dissertation committee. The student then proceeds with development of the dissertation proposal.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Students are required to use APA format for the dissertation proposal and advised to use a software referencing program. Student pricing is available on the websites of referencing software.

Content of Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal comprises two main sections: 1) Introduction (Specific Aims, Background and Significance, Innovation, Preliminary Studies) and 2)

Research Approach. The contents of the sections are detailed below.

Title Page

The dissertation title page should contain the Dissertation title, submission information, student name, month and year. The format can be found in Appendix C.

Introduction

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents should outline the elements of the Dissertation. An example of a Table of Content can be found in Appendix D.

Specific Aims

This section concisely and briefly introduces the reader to the problem of interest and sets the context for the substance of the proposed research, followed by the specific aims of the dissertation research. The hypotheses, or research questions, to be addressed are listed.

Background and Significance

This section of the proposal provides a critical evaluation and synthesis of the literature leading to the proposed research. Include the following:

1) A literature review reflecting current research from multidisciplinary sources.
2) Clearly, logically, and concisely articulated gaps in knowledge that the dissertation will address. This section should explain the importance of the problem, how the proposed project will improve knowledge and describe how the concepts being proposed will drive the field if the aims are

achieved.

3) A description of the importance of the proposed research to health and nursing by relating the specific aims to the broad, long-term objectives.
4) A description of the theoretical and/or conceptual framework guiding the research.

Innovation

This section should explain how the proposed research challenges and seeks to shift current research. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions that will be tested.

Preliminary Studies

This section provides an account of preliminary work done by the student that is related to the proposed research. Examples of previous work include the student's literature review paper, pre-testing of instruments, pilot studies, and clinical observations as long as those are consistent with the dissertation research topic. A dissertation using secondary data can include preliminary work that pertains to methods for secondary data analyses or other relevant topics. The purposes of the Preliminary Studies section are to demonstrate (a) cumulative study in the substantive area of the proposal, (b) the feasibility of the project, and (c) the student's competence to conduct the research.

Research Approach

This section describes the overall strategy for the study. The elements include the following: research design, setting, population, sample, sampling procedures,

instruments, intervention(s) as appropriate, procedures for data collection, procedures for data analysis, how the data will be interpreted, study limitations, potential problems with the proposed procedures, alternative approaches to achieve the specific aims, and human subject considerations.

1) Research Design and Setting: Briefly identify the study design and setting.
2) Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedures: Identify the sample composition, explain how the sample will be obtained, and provide justification for the sample size. The sample is described in enough detail for the reader to determine the feasibility of obtaining a suitable sample size to test the hypotheses, if applicable.
3) Variables and Instruments: Provide conceptual definitions and operational definitions of the variables. Detail and define each instrument used to measure the variables, with reliability and validity information if appropriate to the study design. Evidence of the psychometric or biometric properties of the proposed instrument(s) is presented, with plans for further testing in the dissertation as appropriate.
4) Data Collection Procedures and Intervention(s): for studies testing an intervention include the measurement points and application of the intervention(s); for descriptive studies describe the measurement points; for qualitative studies describe data collection procedures; for secondary data analyses, describing data downloads, data cleaning, and the merging of multiple datasets or multiple data points as appropriate.
5) Data Analysis: Restate each hypothesis or specific aim. Detail the analysis

procedures to address each hypothesis or aim and how the data will be interpreted. Data analysis procedures must be justified and should specifically address the testing of each specific aim and hypothesis or research question.

6) Study Limitations: Acknowledge potential problems and limitations of the proposed procedures and identify alternative approaches to achieve the specific aims.
7) Human Subjects: Include a paragraph on the protection of research participants that details approvals that will be sought, consent that will be obtained, potential risks to research participants, and procedures proposed to reduce the risks. The inclusion of women and members of minority groups appropriate to the scientific aims of the dissertation project is addressed. A minority group is a subset of the U.S. population that is distinguished by racial, ethnic, or cultural heritage, as defined in the PHS 398 guidelines. Unless a clear and compelling rationale shows that the inclusion of women and minorities is inappropriate to the purpose of the dissertation research, research participants must be recruited from these populations. The composition of the proposed study population with respect to gender and minority status is described, and justification for strategies that will be used to recruit and select participants is provided.

Human participants. The student is responsible for adhering to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations for the protection of human participants (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

2023). The following 3 points are enumerated and succinctly addressed:

a. A description of the proposed involvement of human participants in the research is provided. The number, age range, and health status of the study population(s) and criteria for inclusion or exclusion in the research are described. In addition, the involvement of vulnerable participants, such as fetuses, pregnant women, children, or institutionalized individuals, is justified.

b. Potential risks to the participants from study participation are identified, and for each potential risk, a justified assessment of the likelihood of occurrence and seriousness of risk is provided. All potential risks (physical, psychological, social, legal, or other) are included.

c. The procedures that will be used to minimize the aforementioned potential risks, including the risk for loss of confidentiality, are described.

Vertebrate animals. The student is responsible for adhering to the U.S. Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals for the Protection of Animal Subjects. The following 5 points are enumerated and succinctly addressed:

a. A description of the proposed involvement of animal subjects in the research is provided. The species, strains, age, sex, and number of animals to be used and criteria for inclusion or exclusion in the research are described.

b. The use of animals, the choice of species, and the numbers proposed for use are justified.

c. The veterinary care that the subjects will receive is discussed.

d. Potential risks from study participation are described, and for each potential risk, a justified assessment of the likelihood of occurrence and seriousness of risk is provided. As appropriate, the method of euthanasia to be used is described and justified.

e. The procedures that will be used to minimize the aforementioned potential risks are described, including the use of analgesics, anesthetics, tranquilizers, and restraining devices to minimize discomfort, distress, pain, and injury.

References

Include all references for the Introduction and Research Approach sections.

Appendices

The appendices should include the following materials:

a. Approval Forms D1, D2, D3 (printable)

b. Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) or Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) approval letters

c. Surveys, questionnaires, data collection instruments, and clinical protocols

d. Glossy photographs or color images of biological or histological data

e. Participant consent form/s

Procedures for Oral Defense and Institutional Review of Dissertation Proposal

Oral Defense - Proposal

Oral defense of the dissertation proposal is mandatory. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the candidate has a well-developed dissertation plan and the necessary resources to successfully conduct and disseminate the dissertation research.

When the student has prepared a proposal that is acceptable to the dissertation chair, the student sends copies of the proposal for distribution by the chair to the committee members. When all committee members agree that the student is ready to defend the proposed research, the student arranges an oral defense. Two weeks prior to the selected date and time for the oral defense, the student provides notice of the date, time, place, and title of the defense to the Office of Academic Affairs, and the student obtains Form D-2 (online). A sample Form D-2 appears in Appendix A of this manual. Although the standard duration of the oral defense is approximately 2 hours, the actual time allocated should be long enough to ensure an adequate oral presentation and committee comment.

DISSERTATION CHAIR & COMMITTEE DEFENSE RESPONSIBILITIES

The dissertation chair should follow these guidelines at the student's defense:

1. Welcome the committee members and the student.
2. Introduce the student and the title of his/her dissertation.
3. Introduce each of the members of the committee, including their place of employment and title.
4. Explain the procedure of the defense:

a. The student presents his/her research study.

b. The committee is then asked if they have any questions.

c. After the committee is finished with their questions, the student leaves the room.

e. After the student leaves the room and the committee deliberates. Others can stay with the student.

f. The outcome options are: i. Approval ii. Approval with Reservations iii. Disapproval.

5. In deliberation, the committee decides on the outcome of the defense.
6. If Approval with Reservations is the decision, the chair can be responsible for the changes or the committee can choose to review the changes.
7. All members sign the Form D2. If Approval is decision, the student is provided with a copy and the original D2 form is submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs. If not, the form is withheld until all stipulations are completed.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES - ORAL PROPOSAL DEFENSE

At the oral defense, the student presents the proposed research in the order of the sections of the written proposal, inclusive of specific aims through research design, methods, findings, and implications for future research. After the presentation, members of the dissertation committee may ask questions, make recommendations, and offer comments. After the student leaves the room, the committee deliberates and votes on the acceptance of the proposed research for implementation.

COMMITTEE ORAL PROPOSAL DEFENSE OPTIONS

Majority decision of the committee prevails. The committee decision takes one of the following forms:

a. Approval: If the proposal is followed precisely as detailed, the student's research design will not be challenged later.

b. Approval with Reservations: Changes may be made under the supervision of the chair without further committee meeting.

c. Disapproval: The student must revise the proposal and meet again with the entire committee.

After the committee makes their decision, the student is invited back into the room and the dissertation chair files Form D-2 with the Office of Academic Affairs. If the committee decision is disapproval, a new Form D-2 is generated and filed after the second proposal defense.

Institutional Review(s)

Upon approval of the proposal, the student prepares the appropriate UTHealth Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS)/Institutional Review Board (IRB) forms. The United States Department of Health and Human Services stipulates the necessary elements of an informed consent process. These elements provide the basis for guidelines used by IRBs of academic and clinical institutions within the United States. IRB guidelines for research with human participants or animal subjects are available from the Center for Nursing Research or from the UTHealth IRB office. To uphold the right of every human being to know about and give consent to any investigational procedure, ethical review by the UTHealth CPHS is required for

dissertation research that involves humans. To assure subject welfare and protection from discomfort, ethical review by the UTHealth AWC is required for research that involves animals. Human participation consent forms must be in language that is understandable to the participant. Consent forms should be written at the sixth-to-eighth grade reading level.

If the research will involve participants from institutions other than UTHealth Houston, permission is required from the IRBs of those institutions. The student obtains a copy of clinical agency or other IRB forms from the approval-granting agency. The student is responsible for ensuring that current forms are used. Since the UTHealth CPHS/IRB uses an online application process, a copy of the approved proposal, Form D-2, and all necessary completed IRB forms are to be submitted to the chair before submission for CPHS/IRB approvals. After the chair signs off on CPHS/IRB forms the student distributes the proposal and copies of the completed electronic CPHS/IRB forms to dissertation committee members. The student completes all CPHS/IRB or AWC procedures. CPHS/IRB submissions are electronic and submission is done directly with CPHS. Animal Welfare Committee protocols are submitted online directly to the AWC. Students are responsible for checking all due dates for submission to either committee.

DISSERTATION

Content of the dissertation, procedures, oral defense, and required forms must be included in the dissertation. The dissertation addresses the following areas: (a) what the student did, (b) how the student conducted the research, (c) what was found,

and (d) how the research extends the science and practice of nursing. The dissertation represents the culmination of the candidate's doctoral training and, as such, must reflect critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, and scholarly expression of ideas.

The final dissertation product includes the following components: preliminary pages; a summary of the study with reference to appended materials; and the three manuscripts, references, and appendices. The summary section describes any changes to the approved dissertation proposal, a summary of the dissertation findings, and a summary of the manuscripts related to the dissertation research. The summary section is followed by three or more manuscripts related to the dissertation research. The manuscript section is followed by appendices that include IRB and agency approvals; consent form(s); instrument(s) used for data collection; complete, detailed study protocol(s); and curriculum vitae.

Content of Dissertation

Preliminary Pages

a. Blank sheet of paper for protection of the text.

b. Title Page –

A sample title page is found in Appendix D of this manual. It includes the title of the dissertation, student name, and date.

c. Approval page (Form D-3)

The date on the approval page is the date of the final examination. The page is prepared with the same typeface, paper, and font as the remainder of the

dissertation, following the format in the sample in Appendix A. Type all content of the Title page in upper case. Every member of the dissertation committee must sign the approval page in black ink. The number of signature lines must be identical to the number of committee members. The approval page is page ii, but the number does not appear on the page. Because PDF format is required to submit the final dissertation, this approval page may need to be scanned into the final dissertation.

d. Acknowledgments page (Optional)

This page is optional and may be used if the student wishes to express formal recognition and appreciation for extraordinary support that made possible the completion of the research. Grant support for the dissertation is acknowledged on this page. Acknowledging assistance from the dissertation chair and committee members is not necessary. This page, if used, is numbered iii.

e. Abstract

The abstract is the abstract for the entire dissertation and includes the student's name, the title of the dissertation, and the date of graduation. If the title runs to 2 lines, the second line is single-spaced and in inverted pyramid form. The abstract must not exceed 500 words and must not contain tables, figures, graphs, references, or formulas. Symbols and foreign words must be displayed clearly and accurately, with accents and diacritical marks as appropriate. The abstract will be bound with the dissertation and must conform to the specified margin and paper requirements. Elements that must be addressed include the following: the problem or purpose of the study, the general procedure(s) used, major source(s) of data, major data analysis approach, and conclusion(s). The abstract must be equivalent

to the dissertation in meeting the standards for scholarly writing. The abstract is numbered as page iii, or page iv, if an acknowledgment page is included. If an abstract is required for a manuscript included in the dissertation, it follows the form required by the journal and is placed with the manuscript(s).

f. Table of Contents

The table of contents is a list of all elements included in the dissertation, enumerated in sequential order. A sample table of contents page is found in Appendix D of this manual.

Summary of Study Section

The summary section describes any changes to the approved dissertation proposal, a summary of the dissertation findings, and a summary of the manuscripts related to the dissertation research. The final dissertation product must include at least three manuscripts that have been submitted or are ready for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. One of these publications must include findings from the dissertation. The manuscript that includes the findings from the dissertation research may not be submitted for publication until after dissertation committee approval. The other two manuscripts should reflect work relevant to the student's research area. The student must be first author on all three manuscripts. Students may submit the dissertation project manuscripts in a format other than APA, if the manuscript was published in or submitted to a journal that requires a different formatting/referencing style.

Manuscript 1

Include the manuscript that has been published or is ready for submission.

Manuscript 2

Include the manuscript that has been published or is ready for submission.

Manuscript 3

Include the manuscript that has been published or is ready for submission.

Appendices

The appendices provide additional information to that in the proposal and manuscript so that study replication by others is possible. Institutional approvals, consent forms, instruments used for data collection, and detailed study protocol(s) are placed in the appendices. Data not included in the manuscript are presented in tabular or figure format. The appended materials must not repeat information in the proposal or manuscript. Rather, they serve to supplement the major components of the dissertation. Appended materials are organized sequentially according to the first mention in the text. Each appendix has a title page that includes the sequential capital letter for the identification and name of the appended material.

Dissertation Procedures and Oral Defense

Final defense of the dissertation is mandatory. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the candidate has satisfactorily implemented the dissertation plan and prepared a scholarly dissemination report of the research. The dissertation must be approved 4 weeks before the last class day of the semester. The deadline for oral defense will be published in the calendar of events for each semester. To meet the deadlines, the student should work with the dissertation chair to devise a schedule.

The schedule should provide enough time after the oral defense for final printing and preparation of the dissertation.

- When the student has prepared a final dissertation product that is acceptable to the chair, the student makes copies of the dissertation for distribution by the chair to the committee members. When all committee members agree that the student is ready to defend the research, the student arranges an oral defense. At least 2 weeks before the scheduled defense, the student provides notice of the date, time, place, and title of the defense to the Office of Academic Affairs. At the same time, the student will send an email of their abstract and names of the chair and committee members with their credentials to the Office of Academic Affairs. Although the standard time period for the oral defense is approximately 2 hours, the actual time allocated should be long enough to ensure an adequate oral presentation and committee comment.
- At the oral defense, the student presents the research in the order of the sections of the dissertation, inclusive of specific aims through recommendations for further research. The majority of the presentation time is focused on the findings and interpretation, discussion, conclusions, and implications for practice and the profession. After the presentation, members of the dissertation committee first, followed by guests, may ask questions to the doctoral candidate, make recommendations, and offer comments. After all questions and discussion end, guests are asked to leave the room. The student is then further questioned by the committee and then asked to leave the room. After the student leaves the room, the committee deliberates and votes on the acceptance of the proposed research

for implementation.

The committee decision takes one of the following forms:

a. Approval: The committee recommends that the student be approved for the degree of PhD in nursing and completes D3 Form (see Appendix A) and PhD Dissertation Evaluation Form (See Appendix E).

b. Approval with Reservations: Suggested changes are to be made under the supervision of the chair without further committee meeting. After receiving notice from the chair that the changes have been made, the committee will then recommend that the student be approved for the degree of PhD in nursing and complete D3 Form (see Appendix A) and PhD Dissertation Evaluation Form (See Appendix E).

c. Disapproval: The research needs to be repeated or modified, or the dissertation needs to be rewritten extensively and resubmitted for another meeting of the committee. A second formal defense of the dissertation may not be scheduled in the same semester as the first formal defense.

Instructions for Preparing the Dissertation

Specific guidelines for preparing the dissertation are given on the following pages. The dissertation must be grammatically correct and free of typographical errors. The student, not the chair or committee, is responsible for submitting a dissertation that reflects a high standard of scholarly writing. The student has full responsibility for the form, accuracy, and completeness of the dissertation.

Format

- The dissertation should be arranged as indicated by the content checklist in Appendix D of this manual.
- Funding agencies are credited in the Acknowledgments section of the dissertation.

Paper

- Two copies on 8½ X 11-inch white paper are acceptable.

Typing

- The font size must be 12. The same font should be used consistently throughout the dissertation. The dissertation should be double-spaced. If the proposal was single-spaced, it should be converted to double-spaced, and referencing software should be used to convert references to APA format if necessary. Appendices, figures, tables, charts, and references may be single-spaced with prior approval of the dissertation committee.
- The print should be of letter quality. The dissertation will be rejected for uneven print quality, smudges, or uneven alignment. Computer printouts with small and difficult-to-read print are unacceptable.
- Margins must be 1-½ inches on the left and at least 1 inch on the top, right, and bottom for binding purposes.
- Pages should be numbered ¾ inch from the top of the page and aligned with the right margin. All pages are to be numbered consecutively from the Summary section through the appendices, including figures, tables, charts, and

photographs. The introductory pages are numbered ¾ inch from the bottom center of the page in lowercase Roman numeral letters.

- Running headers are not permitted except in the manuscript portion.
- Left justification (i.e., hanging margin) is used.

Illustrations

- Charts, graphs, diagrams, maps, figures, photographs, and other pictorial components must be clear, clean, and pertinent to the substance of the dissertation. Symbols or labels are preferred for identification of graphs and charts rather than color. Lettering and symbols must be large enough to be easily readable. If colors are essential in interpreting illustrations, then they must be reproduced accurately and precisely for inclusion in the dissertation. Note that the color blue does not photocopy and should not be used in graphic illustrations. Unless the student uses photo elicitation techniques, photographs should be professional-quality black and white.
- Original illustrations (not copies) must be included in all copies of the dissertation submitted to the Cizik School of Nursing.
- If any materials do not fit within the margins, the student may request that the binder place the material in a packet at the back of the dissertation. An example of such materials include questionnaires, which due to copyright laws cannot be shrunk.

References

- References are to be prepared in APA format. References must be in the form of

the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA Manual)*.

- Electronic media should be referenced as specified in the APA Manual.
- Electronic correspondence is cited as personal communication in the text.

Submission

- Signatures in black ink must be obtained from every member of the dissertation committee on Form D-3. The signed form may need to be scanned for inclusion in the dissertation for electronic transmission and storage.
- One copy of the final dissertation on any type of paper is first submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs for review of the quality of scholarship, format, and style. The student must adhere to the timetable deadline for dissertation/thesis/ clinical project approval. Students who do not meet the deadline will need to enroll in one more semester to graduate.
- After the final dissertation is approved by the Office of Academic Affairs, the student must submit the items listed below to the Office of Academic Affairs no later than the last day of the semester. Again, this deadline must be met to graduate; otherwise, the student must enroll for an additional semester. Note that prices are subject to change. Therefore, students should confirm prices with the Office of Academic Affairs during the semester in which the dissertation is submitted. The following process must be completed with the Office of Academic Affairs:

a. The original copy previously reviewed by the Office of Academic Affairs, with all markers in place, is to be reviewed again for the corrections required.

b. When the Office of Academic Affairs notifies the student that the dissertation meets the standards of scholarship and the dissertation guidelines, the student submits the completed copies to be bound. Forms and letters to be included in the bound copy may need to be scanned into an electronic file.

c. Providing a bound copy of the dissertation to the dissertation chair is common practice. Additional bound copies can be ordered at the same time, if desired.

d. A payment to the HF Group, LLC covers the cost of binding the dissertation.

Together with the dissertation chair, the student selects manuscripts for presentation of the dissertation work. Manuscripts should represent scientific rigor, critical analysis and synthesis, logical development of arguments, and justification for research decisions. In addition, manuscripts require the student to meet the academic standards for scholarly writing and expression of ideas.

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association. (2021). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Office of Human Research Protections. (2023). *Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46*. Retrieved from https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/45-cfr-46/index.html

APPENDIX A

D-1 Dissertation Committee Membership

D-2 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Approval

D-3 Dissertation Approval

Approval Form D-1

UTHealth Houston
Cizik School of Nursing

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Dissertation Title: _____

_____

Dissertation Committee Membership

(Include name and degrees, institution and position, and area of expertise for dissertation research).

1. _____

_____
Chairperson Signature

Biosketch Included ____

2. _____

_____
Signature

Biosketch Included____

3. _____

_____
Signature

Biosketch Included ____

4. _____

_____
Signature

Biosketch Included ____

5. _____

_____
Signature

Biosketch Included ____

File a copy of this form with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and with each Committee member.

ADAA USE ONLY
DNP/PhD Committee Approval Date: _____
DATE RECEIVED IN ADAA: _____

SIGNATURE (ADAA PERSONNEL):

UTHealth Houston
Cizik School of Nursing

Approval Form D-2

APPROVAL OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Student Principal Investigator: _____

Title of Study: _____

_____

This research proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Principal Investigator's Dissertation Committee.

Committee Chair: _____ Date: _____

Committee Members:

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Dissertation Committee Recommendation:

_____ Approval

_____ Approval with Reservations

_____ Disapproval

Original to Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Copy to Chair, Committee members, and IRB(s)

UTHealth Houston
Cizik School of Nursing

Approval Form D-3

_____
Date

To the Dean of the Cizik School of Nursing:

I am submitting a dissertation written by [Student's name] and entitled "[title of dissertation]." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing.

_____
[Insert Name], Committee Chair

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Accepted

_____
Dean of the Cizik School of Nursing

APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors.
Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME:

eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login):

POSITION TITLE:

EDUCATION/TRAINING *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.)*

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE *(if applicable)*	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Personal Statement

B. Positions, Scientific Appointments, and Honors

C. Contributions to Science

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

BIORHYTHMS OF CARDIAC FUNCTION IN A

PORCINE MODEL OF CRITICAL CARE

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN NURSING

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON

CIZIK SCHOOL OF NURSING

BY

[Insert Your Name Here]

Month, Year

APPENDIX D

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Sample Table of Contents

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PROPOSAL.....

Specific Aims .....

Background and Significance .....

Preliminary Studies.....

Research Design and Methods .....

Research Subject Risk and Protection .....

Literature Cited .....

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A TABLES & FIGURES
B IRB APPROVAL(S)
C DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPTS(S)
D ADDITIONAL MANUSCRIPTS/PUBLICATIONS

APPENDIX E

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston The University of Texas School of Nursing at Houston

EVALUATION OF THE PH.D. DISSERTATION DEFENSE PERFORMANCE

- The attached evaluation is proposed in an effort to assist students and faculty alike. The evaluation should be of assistance to students since it will provide guidelines as to what will be expected of students by faculty during their defense. The evaluation should be of assistance to faculty by providing guidelines for assessing student performance during the defense. The listed features are by no means the only criteria by which students may be assessed, and they are not intended to specifically dictate to faculty how to assess student performance.

- After the Ph.D. Dissertation Defense, the completed evaluation should be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator. The Dissertation Committee submits one form that reflects the composite decision of the entire Dissertation Committee.

- The evaluation is intended to be advisory. The final decision regarding the defense is to be made by the faculty serving on the Dissertation Committee. The quality of the defense should, however, reflect the scores noted on the evaluation.

Student Name:

Date of Ph.D. Dissertation Defense:

Chair of Dissertation Committee:

Signature of Chair of Dissertation Committee:

Signature of Member of Dissertation Committee:

Signature of Member of Dissertation Committee:

Signature of Member of Dissertation Committee:

Additional Comments:

Return to the PhD Program Director

Evaluated	Evaluated subfeature	Unsatisfactory (Score=0)	Passing (Score=1)	Exemplary (Score=2)	Score
Study Implementation	Adaptation of methods during implementation, with rationale (e.g. adapting survey, recruitment plan, or analysis plan to realities of study)	Poor adaptation or unacceptable rationale for changes to proposed study plans	No adaptation required or adequate adaptation to circumstances of study, with good rationale provided for changes to the proposed study plan	Adaptation to circumstances of study resulted in improved study, with good rationale provided for changes to the proposed study plan	
	Overall implementation of study (attainment of sampling goals, quality of collected data, lab assays, conducted analysis, attention to ethics etc.)	Study findings rendered unreliable due to poor implementation	Most aspects of the study were well-implemented and sampling targets were achieved (if relevant)	High fidelity study resulted from careful attention to implementation of all aspects of the study design	
Findings and Implications	Clarity of interpretation of findings and depth of discussion	Unclear or erroneous interpretation of findings and discussion is superficial	Interpretation of findings and depth of discussion are satisfactory	Clear, consistent interpretation of findings and impressive depth of discussion	
	Grasp of broader implications of project to nursing science or other relevant sciences	Unsatisfactory understanding of implications of conducted study	Main implications of conducted study were understood and explained	Implications of study were understood in-depth and subtle connections were made to relevant sciences	
Communication	Format, flow, and quality of writing of dissertation	Dissertation is not in expected format, or hard to follow due to poor flow and/or many writing errors	Mostly well written, but with minor errors or discontinuities in some parts	Dissertation flows well and is clearly written in the appropriate format	
	Quality of oral presentation	Oral presentation was hard to follow	Engaging presentation	Poised and polished presentation	
	Handling of questions posed	Did not understand the questions or did not address the question asked	Understood questions and provided adequate answers	Understood the questions and provided clear, thorough, engaging answers	