Doctoral Dissertation Handbook
for the
Doctor of Business Administration
in Management

American Business Management
and
Technology College, Switzerland

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Part I: Introduction

1.0   Introduction to DBA Dissertation Handbook

Welcome to American Business Management and Technology College (ABMTC), Switzerland, and its doctoral and master level degree programs. ABMTC has designed this DBA Dissertation Handbook to make the process of writing proposals and dissertations rigorous, yet as efficient as possible. It does not, however, constitute a contract between students and American Business Management and Technology College (ABMTC). Nothing in this Handbook is intended to alter the admission or graduation requirements of a program as published in the official Catalog. American Business Management and Technology College (ABMTC) reserve the right to update or amend this Handbook at any time according to American Business Management and Technology College (ABMTC) DBA program needs. The dissertation is a requirement for earning a DBA degree. It also provides a permanent record of original research. American Business Management and Technology College (ABMTC) is committed to the preservation and dissemination of this research. The first section of this Handbook provides a general overview of degree requirements and policies. The subsequent sections address dissertation requirements, procedures, and responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee Chair and members, Dissertation Guide and mentors. The guidelines for writing and formatting of the dissertation manuscript are detailed in Appendices A, B and C. *Please note that ABMTC uses the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association ($6^{th}/7^{th}$ editions) as the main source for developing its own Style Guide as delineated in Appendices A, B, and C.*

1.1   Introduction to DBA Degree Program

American Business Management and Technology College (ABMTC), doctoral degree prepares you to achieve the highest level of formal study as scholar-practitioners. Completing your doctoral degree program also represents a new beginning: your entry into the community of scholars within a field of study. Your doctoral studies will empower you to support the discovery of new knowledge and contribute to your professional field through scholarship, practice, and service.

Reading and returning to this Handbook as well as to the ABMTC Dissertation Process Guide and ABMTC Academic Progress, Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal Policy frequently will help you understand the components and specific requirements of your degree program and maintain satisfactory academic progress. Careful attention to the way the components of your program work together will inform your decision making and success throughout your studies.

The entire ABMTC community is here to support you, and we hope this resource will provide guidance that strengthens your sense of purpose and promotes your scholarly development at each stage of your degree program. We wish you a rewarding academic journey and great success as you pursue a doctoral degree at ABMTC.

1.1.0   Degree Requirements

The degree requires a total of 60 Credit hours of coursework and dissertation manuscript. Of these 45 credits include 12 courses/36 credit hours of didactic coursework on selected business management topics and 3 courses/ 9 credit hours focused on research, methodology and scholarly writing skills. In the 9 credits interlocking suite of 3 courses, the student began to complete the embedded qualifying comprehensive exam in the form of a pre-dissertation research paper/capstone project that ultimately serves as an outline of the student's research proposal/plan. Following the completion of the coursework and admission to DBA candidacy, the students will continue to work on their dissertation which is of 15 credit hours (see *Degree Requirements* box below).

Degree Requirements

Didactic Preparation Requirement	36 credits	12 courses of didactic coursework on selected business management topics.

Research Preparation:
  A. Pre-Dissertation Research Preparation Courses Requirement
 	
  B. Pre-Dissertation Proposal/Plan as Candidate
Qualification Exam Requirement
	9 credits	3 courses specifically focused on research, methodology and scholarly writing skills culminating in an embedded qualifying comprehensive exam in the form of a pre-dissertation research paper/capstone project that ultimately serves as an outline of the student's research proposal/plan.

Original Research Dissertation Requirement	15 credits	Implement dissertation plan, and write, submit, and have approved a scholarly-level dissertation in the area of study.
Degree Award	Total = 60 credits	Doctor of Business Administration in Management

American Business Management and Technology College DBA degree programs require a five-chapter dissertation format, i.e., an introduction to the study, a literature review, an explanation of methodology, a report of the results and findings, and finally, a discussion that includes implications

of the study, and recommendations based on its results and findings. The required dissertation manuscript is an extensive, original research project concerning the research topics that were generated by the student during the pre-dissertation research proposal/plan stage of the student's studies with the assistance of a faculty guide and approved by his/her dissertation committee. The student, as a DBA candidate, executes his/her approved pre-dissertation research proposal under the guidance and leadership of the dissertation committee consisting of a Chairperson, guide and an outside member.

1.1.1   Institutional Grading:

a.   The Institutional Grading Scale for the 15courses/45 credit hours is:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
F	69 and Below

b.   The Institutional In-Progress Grading Scale for the 15 credit Dissertation Course:

#	Grading Symbols	In-Progress Grades
1	**S**	Satisfactory Progress
2	**U**	Unsatisfactory Progress

Part II: Pre-Dissertation Process and Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan

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Note:

- ABMTC recommends a page length of *30 to 40 pages for your Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan*.

- ABMTC recommends the use of *Part III, Sections 3.6, 3.7, and 3.8* of this **Handbook** for directions and instructions in writing the Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology sections of the *Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan.*

A. Research Preparation Process

2.0   Overview of the Pre-Dissertation Stage

The completion of the ABMTC DBA 60 credit program requires approximately 36 credit hours of specific business area didactic coursework; plus 9 credit hours of a suite of 3 courses (DBA 1013, 1014, and 1015) which prepares the students for completing of the embedded qualifying comprehensive exam, aka the pre-dissertation research proposal/plan; and finally, 15 credit hours for the dissertation. The didactic coursework helps the DBA student become familiar with literature research and with theories in the business management field. The suite of 9 credit hours (taken in Term IV) helps the DBA student to develop advanced competencies in the research, literature review, scholarly writing and critical thinking skills areas.

Before being admitted to the DBA candidacy and the writing of the dissertation manuscript DBA students must complete the following:

a. *Completion of the required 15 courses/45 credit hours with a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 with all courses passed with at least a grade of "C" or higher;*

b. *Completion of a draft Pre-dissertation research proposal/plan which should be started in Term IV during the student's enrollment in the suite of the 9-creditinterlocking courses of DBA 1013, 1014, and 1015. In the draft Pre-dissertation research proposal/plan the student should be able to:*

　　1. *synthesize and apply business theory and theoretical concepts;*

　　2. *review and use scholarly business literature; and*

　　3. *exhibit an understanding and application of statistical and related tools and methodologies in scholarly research writing.*

The purpose of this format for the qualifying comprehensive exam, aka the pre-dissertation research proposal/plan, is to directly assess the DBA student's preparedness to design, implement, analyze and report on independent and scholarly dissertation-level research.

The qualifying comprehensive exam, aka the pre-dissertation research proposal/plan, is designed to challenge the DBA student to step back from the special deliverables expected in the 12 didactic courses and to reflect critically on his/her abilities to synthesize, integrate, apply and utilize his/her higher knowledge, skills and experiences across significant topics in his/her academic discipline of business management.

The DBA qualifying comprehensive exam, aka the Pre-dissertation research proposal/plan is started in the 9-credit hour suite of DBA interlocking courses - DBA 1013, 1014, and 1015 – which are taken by TERM IV students. The suite of 3 DBA courses, which focuses on such areas as the research topic and proposal, literature review, qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods, case methodology, and statistical tools and techniques, serves as the foundation for producing the dissertation research proposal/plan. Please refer to this online Handbook for details for developing, refining and formulating your research topic and for outlining your dissertation research proposal/plan. Successful completion of the qualifying comprehensive exam, aka the dissertation research proposal/plan signals the DBA student's transition to DBA candidacy and is a significant achievement.

In summary, the topics and content of this three-interlocking suite of courses – DBA 1013, 1014 and 1015 - provide our students with the fundamentals and in-depth knowledge of research methodology, literature review, research and scholarly writing skills to produce their dissertation research proposal/plan. The Term IV students are strongly urged to readily use these three courses, the topics and contents covered and the expertise of their professors, to begin the drafting of their pre-dissertation research proposal/plan by sufficiently and succinctly adhering to and following the required eight (8) elements of the ABMTC's STRUCTURE of DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL/PLAN as delineated in this Handbook (Part II: Section 2.3) and in the Dissertation Process Guide (Part 2. Milestones 1, 2 and 3).

c. Payment of all required tuition and fees as verified by the Admissions and Records Office.

2.1   Getting Started in Drafting your Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan

When a student takes the initial courses in the program, he/she should begin to review literature and identify a general research topic of interest based on his/her interest, background, and academic goals. The student should follow the instructions stated in the courses. The student's professors, mentors, pre-dissertation faculty guide, and dissertation guide throughout this process will assist the student to evaluate, record progress and send feedback based on which the student can make revisions to his/her research.

As students continue in the program with Terms II and III, they should begin to narrow down their research topic and questions in concert with the course assignments. The professors and mentors can help the students to evaluate and use the course research assignment to record progress and send feedback on CANVAS, the College's Learning Management System platform. Students can make revisions based on feedback.

As students continue the DBA program, especially in Term IV, they will conduct more in-depth literature reviews and interact with their professors and mentors on clarifying the focus of their own research, identifying their study knowledge gap, and developing a draft of the problem statement and introduction.

Also, students should start describing the methodology section of their dissertation research when they take methodology courses. Students should follow the instructions

stated by their professors and mentors.

Some major approaches to help you get started in drafting your research proposal/plan include the following.

2.1.1   Conceptualization and Introduction: Where and How to Begin

One of the most difficult aspects of research -- and one of the least discussed -- is how to develop the idea for the research project in the first place. It is based on concept mapping method and/or other methods discussed in the three-interlocking suite of courses DBA 1013,1014 and 1015.These courses, with the assistance of the professors, not only help students to clarify and map out the key research issues in an area, but also help them operationalize the programs or interventions or the outcome measures for their study. The concept mapping method isn't the only method around that might help researchers formulate good research problems and projects. Virtually any method that's used to help individuals and groups to think more effectively would probably be useful in research formulation. Some of the methods that might be included in our toolkit for research formulation might be: brainstorming, nominal group technique, focus groups, Delphi methods, and facet theory. And then, of course, there are all of the methods for identifying relevant literature and previous research work.

2.1.2 Organizational Perspectives: Networking and Sharing

Organizational perspectives is one of the important aspects of research. It covers the different areas of organizational perspective so as to enhance the student's ability to work in groups and teams, while also enabling students to take individual responsibilities.

2.1.3 Research Methodology: Which Method Is Appropriate and Why

A thorough grounding in research methods - quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods - and in the literature related to an area of inquiry, will prepare students to read and evaluate others' research and to conduct their own DBA level research. To achieve proficiency in research design and methodology, students need to develop proficiency in at least two research areas before they engage in their own research:

2.1.3.a. A "survey" of research methods will familiarize the student with different types of qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods including the skills needed to read and critique others' research.

2.1.3.b. A focused reading program will develop proficiency in the specific research method(s) intended to be used for research.

2.1.3.c. There are many types of research methods available, both traditional and nontraditional. ABMTC recognizes that scholarship on the interdisciplinary margins may lead to new research concepts. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods acceptable in the DBA Program include, but are not limited to the following:

- Case Studies
- Content Analysis
- Field Studies
- Participant Observation
- Action and action-advocacy research
- Evaluation research
- Biographical, literary and historical research
- Theoretical and conceptual bibliographic research
- Feminist research methods
- Arts-based research methods
- Exploratory research

Regardless of which research design and methods student choose, the dissertation proposal must include an explicit, detailed discussion of the research methods the student proposes to use and a rationale for selection of methods. Discussion of methods should be framed in such a way that other scholars will understand and can critically evaluate them.

B. Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan Structure

2.2 The Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan (A Brief Introduction)

As the term itself suggests, this is a proposal that serves as a roadway for the final dissertation project. Your pre-dissertation research proposal/plan should persuade the committee members that the proposal would be a valuable and interesting study that addresses the complex questions of your field of study. This is a shorter outline paper which serves as the foundation for writing the final dissertation manuscript. The draft dissertation research proposal/plan is very important because it is at this point that the student establishes a significant research question and develops a plan for assembling information and writing the dissertation manuscript.

2.3 The Structure of the Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan

The Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan follows the format as listed below. The student begins by clearly identifying the research proposal/plan with a title page, an example **Format for Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan Title Page** is provided on page 10. The title page is followed by the Table of Contents, which is single spaced and identifies chapter elements, references and appendices by page number, as suggested in the **Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan Sample Table of Contents** below (see biz below).

Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan Sample Table of Contents	
1. Title Page	
Table of Contents	Page No
2. Introduction to Study	XX
3. Literature Review	XX
4. Methodology	XX
5. Time Frame/Gantt Chart	XX
6. Potential Outcomes	XX
7. References	XX
8. Appendices	XX

Format for *Draft* Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan Title Page

Title of the Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan
(single-space title if more than one line)

A Draft Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan
Submitted By:

Student's Full Name
Month and Year

To:

American Business Management and Technology College

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for meeting the prerequisites for
DBA candidacy towards the degree,
Doctor of Business Administration in Management

Reviewed by:

(Signature of faculty guide)
Name of faculty member, degree

2.3.1 Introduction of the study

The Introduction for the Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan includes the following elements:

a. Objectives of the dissertation study.
    Aim for up to three (3) objectives. If your proposal/plan is too extensive at this point, it may seem as though your proposal/plan does not have a focus. It is essential to narrow your focus so that the Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan is viewed as one that can be reasonably implemented as a doctoral study.

b. Context and background of the study.
    For example, the current state of your field of study in relation to the objectives of your proposal/plan, and what, in general, have other researchers in the field determined as it relates to your objectives.

c. Purpose of your research study and research questions.
    Given the current level of knowledge in your field of study what will your research add to the field?

d. Importance of your research study.
    Why are the objectives important to the field of study, to society in general? What benefit is there to researching the questions you propose?

e. Overview of Theoretical Framework and Methodology.
    Explain your theoretical framework based on your literature review as well as the validity of your methodology to study your questions in order to reach your objectives.

f. Definitions of key words you will be using in your study.
    It is essential that you establish a clear meaning for each of the major terms in your proposal/plan, i.e., meaning that is based on the literature review of your field of study. Without this clarity misconceptions and misunderstandings can easily arise.

2.3.2 Literature Review

a. Topic Heading (Choose One)
   - Historical Context
   - Past research using your theoretical framework
   - Best practices related to your topic/dissertation title
   - Challenges/barriers in the context
   - Characteristics of a population/stakeholders
   - Reasons underlying your problem statement/problem of practice
   - Existing strategies for solving the identified problems
   - Approaches to measurement of your problem/topic that guide your study

b.Conceptual framework

c.Summary

2.3.3 Methodology

As it relates to methodology, the dissertation project can be non-empirical (if the resources come from previously published projects) or empirical (if the student collects data through questionnaires or other methods). In this section, you need to explain the methods of collecting data.

The Methodology section includes the following:
   a. Research questions
   b. Related research questions' hypotheses
   c. Overview of your research design
   d. Research setting
   e. Data sources
      1. Methods
      2. Participants
      3. Instrumentation
      4. Data collection procedures
      5. Data analysis

2.3.4   Timeframe

Create a schedule based on the completion of specific milestones as delineated in the ABMTC dissertation PROCESS GUIDE. This **Timeframe/Gantt Chart** explains how you will manage all stages of the dissertation writing within a specific time period.

The time to complete the dissertation courses for doctoral students may not exceed three years in total without written approval by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and/or the CAO's designee. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the DBA degree within their two-year track, based on their Academic Plan (AP).

Please see below the   ABMTC's sample **Timeframe/Gantt Chart** for completing the dissertation manuscript and graduating with your DBA degree in Management.

Directions: Please note this is a draft **Timeframe/Gantt Chart** to be used by the DBA Student Candidate and his/her Dissertation Guide to develop an individualized Gantt Chart for approval by both parties (DBA Student and the Dissertation Committee).Your **Timeframe/Gantt Chart** should be based on completion of the milestones or steps detailed in Dissertation Process Guide**.** Please note that the DBA Student and the Guide may make adjustments in the Timeframe but please stay within the overall Timeframe of (July 2020 to January 2021), an eight (8) month time period**.**

#	ABMTC DISSERTATION TIMEFRAME/GANTT CHART	
	PARTICULARS	**TIME FRAME**
1	**1.Review and approval of DBA Student's draft dissertation research proposal/plan by the dissertation committee**. (Please refer to sections 2.3 and 2.4 the Dissertation proposal/plan of the ABMTC Doctoral Dissertation Handbook and Milestone 5 of the Dissertation Process Guide)	Jul.2020
2	**2.Research and Write the Dissertation Manuscript** (please refer to Doctoral Dissertation Handbook especially section Part III and Milestones 6a,6b,7 and 8 of Dissertation Process Guide)	Aug-Nov.2020
3	**2a.Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION** (Milestones 6a and 6b and appropriate section of Part III of the Handbook)	Aug-Sept.2020
4	**2b.Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW** (Milestones 6a and 6b and appropriate section of Part III of the Handbook)	Aug-Sept.2020
5	**2c.Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY** (Milestone 7 and appropriate section of Part III of the Handbook)	Sept-Oct.2020
6	**2d. Chapter 4:RESULTS and FINDINGS** (Milestone 7 and appropriate section of Part III of the Handbook)	Oct-Nov.2020
7	**2e. Chapter 5: DISCUSSION,IMPLICATIONS& RECOMMENDATIONS** (Milestone 7 and appropriate section of Part III of the Handbook)	Nov.2020
8	**3.REVIEW and PRELIMINARY APPROVAL of DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPT by the Dissertation Committee** (Milestone 7 and appropriate section of Part III of the Handbook)	Nov-Dec.2020
9	**4.DISSERTATION DEFENSE** (Section 4.3 and 4.3a, b, and c of the Handbook and Milestone 10)	Dec.2020
10	**5.DISSERTATION FINAL Draft** (Abstract, Dissertation, References, Bibliography, Appendices,etc.) **to be approved and signed off by Dissertation Committee Members**(Doctoral Dissertation Handbook, sections 4.4 and Milestone 11	Dec.2020
11	**6. Approval of the Final Dissertation Manuscript by ABMTC (Chief Academic Officer [CAO])** (Milestone 12 and section 4.5 of the Handbook)	Jan.2021
12	**7. Publication of the Dissertation Manuscript** (Milestone 13)	Jan.2021
13	**8. Submission of Final Grade by the Dissertation Committee** (Milestone 14)	Jan.2021
14	**9.DBA Degree Awarded** (Milestone 14)	Jan.2021

2.3.5   Potential Outcomes

Where do you think you will end up after all the research and analyzing? Explain the outcomes you expect as a result of your research.

2.3.6   References

List all references used according to the APA style of scholarly writing.

2.3.7 Appendices

2.4   Submission of Final Pre- Draft Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan

After the student's completion of DBA 1013, 1014 and 1015 and the draft dissertation research proposal/plan a.k.a. the embedded qualifying comprehensive exam, a dissertation committee is assembled, and a faculty guide and/or dissertation guide will be appointed. The student will work with the faculty guide and/or dissertation guide on improving and refining his/her proposal to assure compliance to APA Scholarly Writing and with PART II, Section B, 2.3 Structure of Pre-Dissertation Plan. The student should have a substantial draft of the proposal. The student should contact his/her faculty guide and/or dissertation guide at least once twice a week to discuss progress and any issues in the proposal. Substantive drafts of the working proposal will be uploaded to CANVAS and the Guide will provide feedback. The final version submitted in the session will be evaluated by the faculty guide and/or dissertation guide before forwarding said document to the dissertation committee.

The Dissertation Committee will review the student's pre-dissertation research proposal to ascertain that the student's knowledge, skills, and conceptual framework are sufficient for undertaking rigorous inquiry into the student's designated field. All three Committee members will review the pre-dissertation research proposal and determine if the proposal is ready for undertaking this research study. Once again, please refer to ABMTC online Dissertation Process Guide for more details.

Part III: Dissertation Manuscript: Format, Structure, and Approval Process

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A. Dissertation Manuscript: Format and Structure

3.0   Dissertation Manuscript Requirements - A Brief Introduction

American Business Management and Technology College (ABMTC) DBA programs require a five-chapter dissertation manuscript format. Through their dissertation, students must demonstrate a synthesis of their doctoral study, knowledge, and scholarship with a significant research project that contributes to general principles of knowledge in the field(s) potentially affected by the research.

3.1   Preliminary Thoughts on Outlining and Writing the Dissertation Manuscript

The DBA candidate will write descriptive chapters using a number of research methodology and approaches. The complete written dissertation will comprise the sum of these chapters. Reasonable flexibility is allowed and encouraged to meet specific needs of each dissertation, but the majority of dissertations will follow the format approved by ABMTC (see Appendices C: Dissertation Checklist). The student is required by ABMTC to follow the directions, instructions and formats below in writing their dissertation manuscripts.

    3.1.0 Recommended Page Length of the Dissertation Chapters

ABMTC recommends the following page lengths for each of the five chapters necessary for a completed dissertation.

Chapter #	Title	Recommended Page Length of Chapter
1	Introduction to the Study	15 to 20 pages

2	Literature Review	30 to 50 pages
3	Methodology	15 to 25 pages
4	Results and Findings	Variable page length based on the nature of the data and the methodology
5	Discussion, Implications and Recommendations	15 to 25 pages

3.2 Title Page

The Title of the Dissertation must be exactly the same one as submitted on your dissertation proposal. Below see the ABMTC Dissertation Title Page Template**,**

Short Title of Dissertation(top left of page)

<div align="center">

TITLE OF DISSERTATION
(single space title if more than one line)

A dissertation submitted

By

Student's Full Name (no credentials)

Month, Year

To

AMERICAN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

Upon the recommendation of the Faculty and the approval of the Board of Directors, this dissertation is hereby accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN MANAGEMENT

Approved by:

<u>(Signature of chair)</u>
Name of Chair, Degree
Committee Chair

</div>

Dissertation Guide   Committee Member

_____   _____
Name, Degree   Name, Degree

Copyright 20xx

3.3   Acknowledgements

Use no more than one page for acknowledgements and dedications.

Short Title of dissertation (top left of page)

Acknowledgements (Doubled Spaced)

3.4   Table of Contents

The table of contents contains a list of the chapters and major sections of your dissertation, along with their page numbers. A clear and well-formatted contents page is essential as it is indicative of the quality of the work you submit, and it allows for easy communication between you and your Dissertation Guide and Committee Members when discussing various aspects of your research. Below (page 17)is the **Table of Contents Format** for your dissertation document. The maximum length should be two pages.

Short Title of Dissertation (top left of page)

<div align="center">

Table of Contents (Single Spaced)

</div>

3.4.1   List of Tables (Double Spaced)

Short Title of Dissertation (top left of page)

List of Tables

3.4.2 List of Figures (Double Spaced)

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

Short Title of Dissertation (top left of page)

<div align="center">

List of Figures

</div>

Figure 1: Random Figure Title   Page

Figure 2: Random Figure Title   Page

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3.4.3 Abstract/Key Words

ABMTC recommends that you add an Abstract/Key Words Page.

You are required to write an abstract of your dissertation. The text of the abstract should be double- spaced, and should provide a concise summary of the following information:

- A statement of the problem
- A description of the research procedure or method
- An explanation of the results of the research
- A summary of your conclusions
- A list of Key words

3.4.4   Notes and Foot Notes

Footnotes are strongly preferred over chapter endnotes. A reader of a microfilm copy of your dissertation will have considerably greater access to information by including footnotes on each page. Generally, you should number footnotes consecutively throughout the entire paper. However, if there are more than 100 footnotes, number them consecutively by chapter. Endnotes, when used, should appear at the end of each chapter — never at the end of the entire paper.

3.4.5   Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Provide an introduction to the problem of practice in this first paragraph. Be as clear as possible and make sure that you are consistent throughout in how you state the problem of practice and focus of the study.

Context and Background of the Problem
Describe the context of the organization or professional field of focus in your study. Provide any background information that helps understand the nature and context of the problem of practice, such as prior attempts to address the problem of practice. Assign a pseudonym to any individual organization.

Purpose of the Project and Research Questions
Briefly state the purpose of the project. Make sure that the language you use in the prior sections is aligned with the stated purpose of the project. Introduce the research questions that will guide the study. The questions should be numbered and should appear in a list/bullet format.

Importance of the Study
Explain why it is important to study your identified problem of practice. What are the consequences of not examining the problem of practice within the organization and/or field? Use citations and the research literature to support the need to address the problem of practice. If you are examining a problem of practice within a particular organization, keep in mind the importance to that specific organization.

Overview of Theoretical Framework and Methodology
Provide a brief overview of the theoretical framework(s) guiding your dissertation. The overview should include a statement of the framework(s), a brief summary of the theory, and a brief justification of the appropriateness of the theory for the problem of practice. Provide a brief overview of the methodology (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods).

Definitions
Provide a brief one-sentence definition for key terms related to you study. Provide only definitions central to understanding your dissertation design or the approach to your dissertation. You can utilize definitions from the literature with appropriate citations. Any historical definitions can be included as part of the literature review. Use APA headings for each definition. Provide a one- to two-sentence introduction explaining what is in the section prior to providing the definitions.

First Word/Term
Write the definition here.

Organization of the Dissertation
Very briefly explain the content that will be in each of your chapters in your dissertation.

Other Key Points/Reminders for Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction
- *Presents the context and the knowledge gap, the study purpose, what was done in the study and how it fills the knowledge gap.*
- *Reflects the specific characteristics of the study that is already conducted.*

Problem Statement
- *Novel and significant study.*
- *Problem clearly identified; knowledge gap, study significance and novelty clearly addressed*
- *Study purpose and aims stem clearly from the problem statement and knowledge gap.*
- *Clearly presented, focused and specific*
- *Theory-based*

Research Questions
- *Question(s) clear, articulated and specific corresponding exactly to the study purpose.*
- *Thought provoking; provide original insights to the issues.*
- *Promise of contribution to discipline, and or communities is clear and compelling.*

- *Clearly addressing the knowledge gap.*
- *Comprehensive in scope. Includes main and subquestions.*
- *Refers to the main constructs and their relationships (relationships to be investigated in the study).*

3.4.6   Chapter 2: Literature Review

Provide introduction for literature review by introducing the topics you are reviewing in this chapter.

Topic Heading
Repeat the heading formatting for different topic headings as necessary to cover all the relevant topics in your literature review. Each dissertation will vary in the number of headings in the literature review. Add subheadings as needed within each of the larger sections to help organize your review. The following topics/sections possible topics commonly found in dissertation literature reviews:

- Historical context
- Past research using your theoretical framework
- Best practices related to your topic
- Challenges/barriers in the context
- Characteristics of a population/stakeholders
- Reasons underlying your problem of practice
- Existing strategies for solving the problem
- Approaches to measurement of your problem/topic that guide your study

Focus on synthesis in the literature review, rather than a series of summaries for individual sources. Some sources can be summarized if they are particularly relevant to your dissertation, but you should be focusing on effectively synthesizing the literature for the majority of the review.

Conceptual Framework
In 2-3 pages, introduce and explain the conceptual framework for your dissertation. Begin with an overview of the theories you are using, the key theoretical principles, and how they are applied to your topic. Next, summarize the core concepts in the study (that should have been introduced in the preceding literature review) and present a graphic representation of your framework (e.g., table or concept map). See Grant and Osanloo (2014) for more.

Summary

Provide a brief summary of the main ideas from your literature review here. There should be no new literature reviewed in this section.

Other Key Points/Reminders for Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review contains the following elements:
- *There is a relevant synthesis of empirical and the theoretical literature.*
- *Critical understanding of literature is evident in style, organization and content*
- *Mastery of appropriate canon is evident. Sources cited are rich and diverse.*
- *Recent publications are included.*
- *The knowledge gap is clearly Identified and discussed*
- *It is comprehensive in scope.*
- *Key issues are included; it addresses all the components of the research question/s (main constructs and their associations)*
- *Multiple citations from diverse literature are woven together cogently.*

Theoretical Orientation and Conceptual Framework
- *The theory, theories, theoretical models, or mechanisms have been identified and are relevant to the research questions and associations understudy.*
- *The concepts and the relationships among the constructs/variables are presented clearly and logically.*

3.4.7   Chapter 3: Methodology

In one paragraph, provide an introduction for this chapter. Include a brief statement of the purpose of the study and how this chapter is organized.

Research Questions

Restate your research questions and add the research questions related to your hypotheses.
Please be mindful that your hypotheses:
- *should correspond to the research questions*
- *are relevant and flow logically from the theory used*
- *are accurately stated*
- *are testable based on operationalized variables.*

Overview of Design

Provide an overview of your methodological design, including whether or not you are using qualitative or quantitative or mixed methods. Briefly discuss each of your data collection methods and provide a rationale for your choices. Complete and include a data sources' table, e.g.:

Table 1
Data Sources

Research Questions	Method 1	Method 2	Method 3
RQ1: [Insert RQ]		X	
RQ2: [Insert RQ]	X		X
RQ3: [Insert RQ]	X		

[If you have figures, use the *Insert Caption* option under the *References* tab in Word and select *Figure* or *Table*. For your List of Tables/Figures, the APA formatting is different as the title is in italics (Word can pull the title from below the caption – use a Shift-Return)]

Table 2
Random Table Title

Figure 1
Random Figure Title

Research Setting

Describe the setting(s) in which your study will occur. Provide relevant details (e.g., number of people served, number of employees, demographics, etc.) that will enable the reader to better understand the context. Justify the selection of your setting/site and why it is appropriate to address your research questions. Provide an overview of the participants that were involved in the study and the rationale for their inclusion based on your research questions.

The Researcher

Offer a brief description of the researcher, including your positionality and your relationship to setting and participants. Make sure you address assumptions and biases and how these could affect your study. These biases may be the result of your race/ethnicity/socioeconomic status and/or the fact that you work for the Organization or have experience as a member of the field within which your study is taking place. Discuss how you will mitigate potential assumptions and biases. Support your approach with citations.

Data Sources
Include a brief introduction here. If you are using multiple methods, discuss the timing and sequence of your data collection activities.

Method 1
Introduce this method (e.g., interview, survey, observation, secondary data, etc.).
Method 2
Introduce this method (e.g., interview, survey, observation, secondary data, etc.).
Method 3
Introduce this method (e.g., interview, survey, observation, secondary data, etc.).

Participants
Discuss your sampling and recruitment approach for this method (e.g., purposeful sampling, random sampling, census). Include the total number of participants and relevant demographic details. After data collection, describe subjects in enough detail so the reader can visualize the subjects.

Instrumentation
Discuss the instruments used to collect data (e.g., interview protocol, observation checklist, rubric, survey, etc.) and the rationale for their selection/creation. Discuss the types of questions and content on instruments and how they relate to your research questions and conceptual framework. Reference and put instruments in the Appendix.

Data Collection Procedures
Discuss the logistical procedures for collecting data including when you will be conducting data, estimates of how long it will take to complete each method (e.g., interviews lasting 60 minutes; surveys lasting 15 minutes), locations of data collection, general procedures, how you will capture data (e.g., field notes, recordings/transcriptions, online surveys), and translation procedures (as appropriate). Include rationale for your choices and citations to support decisions.

Data Analysis
Discuss how you analyzed your data. Use citations to support your choices.
- Method 1
    Discuss method 1.
- Method 2
    Discuss method 2.
- Method 3
    Discuss method 3.

Validity and Reliability
Discuss the overall strategies used for maximizing the validity and reliability for your study. Use citations to support your choices. Consider what you are doing regarding alignment to RQs and conceptual framework, site and participant selection, sampling, instrument development, data collection strategies, and data analysis. Be specific and choose strategies that are realistic and feasible. Use citations as appropriate.

For quantitative methods, be sure to discuss the strategies you will use to maximize the reliability and content validity of surveys/assessments (See Chapter 6 in Salkind (2014)). If you are adopting any existing tools for your study, include the psychometric data associated with those tools. Discuss sampling and recruitment strategies for increasing reliability and what you will do to maximize response rates.

For qualitative methods, be sure to discuss the specific strategies you will use to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (e.g., triangulation, member checking, etc. - See Merriam &Tisdell (2016).

Ethics
Explain your responsibilities with respect to involving human participants in your research. Describe your approach to informed consent, ensuring participation is voluntary, confidentiality of the data and of their participation, gaining permission to record, and storing and securing the data. Support your approach with citations.

Limitations and Delimitations

Given how you have decided to bound the study, how you have chosen your conceptual framework, and the methods you have chosen, discuss what the possible limitations and delimitations are. Include the anticipated limitations (those things you cannot control—i.e., the truthfulness of your respondents) and Delimitations (choices you make that have implications for the data you collect, i.e., the questions you ask, the number of observations you conduct) of your study.

Other Key Points/Reminders for Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Design
- *The design is accurately identified and described.*
- *The design is appropriate and it will answer the study's hypotheses.*
- *The design includes sufficient information on protection for Human Subjects.*

Study Population
- *Populations have been identified and described*
- *Recruiting and sampling procedure have been identified.*
- *Power analysis, effect size have been calculated, are sufficient and correctly presented.*

Data Collection Tools
- *Measurement instrument, etc. are valid, reliable, and correctly presented.*
- *Measures exist for all variables.*
- *Variables - Independent and Dependent Variables(subheading).*
- *Operational zed variables are identified and discussed.*
- *Each variable described based on type (nominal, continuous etc.)
and role in the analysis (IV/DV).*

Statistical Analysis
- *There is a correspondence between the research questions-measures variables-analysis*
- *Multivariate statistics was performed unless the study was a randomized double-blind clinical trial for which equivalence of study groups is clearly demonstrated. Multivariate*

3.4.8   Chapter 4: Results and Findings

Provide introduction for results and findings.

Research Question 1: [Insert RQ]
Provide answers for each of your research questions. Use subheadings as necessary for multiple findings/themes. Similar to synthesizing for a literature review, you will provide assertions that are answers to your research questions. Support your assertions with evidence from your data collection.

Research Question 2: [Insert RQ]
Provide answers for each of your research questions. Use subheadings as necessary for multiple findings/themes. Similar to synthesizing for a literature review, you will provide assertions that are answers to your research questions. Support your assertions with evidence from your data collection.

Research Question 3: [Insert RQ]
Provide answers for each of your research questions. Use subheadings as necessary for multiple findings/themes. Similar to synthesizing for a literature review, you will provide assertions that are answers to your research questions. Support your assertions with evidence from your data collection.

Summary
Briefly summarize your findings.

3.4.9   Chapter 5: Discussion (Findings, Recommendations, Implications)

Provide an overview of what you are including in this chapter.

Discussion of Findings
Discuss how your findings connect back or are aligned to the literature you reviewed and your conceptual framework. How do your findings align with the literature and the conceptual framework? How do your findings address the problem of practice?

Recommendations for Practice
Discuss the general outline for recommendations.

Recommendation 1: [Insert Recommendation]
Clearly state each recommendation for practice. Each recommendation should be aligned with your findings. Make clear connections to both your findings, research that supports your recommendation, and your conceptual framework.

Recommendation 2: [Insert Recommendation]
Clearly state each recommendation for practice. Each recommendation should be aligned with your findings. Make clear connections to both your findings, research that supports your recommendation, and your conceptual framework.

Recommendation 3: [Insert Recommendation]
Clearly state each recommendation for practice. Each recommendation should be aligned with your findings. Make clear connections to both your findings, research that supports your recommendation, and your conceptual framework.

Limitations and Delimitations
Describe the limitations and delimitations of your research.

Recommendations for Future Research
Recommend future research that may help further address your problem of practice. Your recommendations should stem from your own study and the additional questions that often arise while engaging in data analysis. You can also recommend future research that addresses the limitations and delimitations you discussed in the previous section.

Implications and Conclusion
Conclude the dissertation by giving a _brief_ overview of the study. However, _move beyond_ just summary to talk about the importance and impact of the study. Why should we care about the findings of your study? It may be helpful to look back at the Importance section at the beginning of the dissertation to align with your statements there.

Short Title of Dissertation (top left of page)

3.4.10 References

Short Title of Dissertation (top left of page)

3.4.11 Appendices

Short Title of Dissertation (top left of page)

3.4.12 Protocols

Start content here (flush left, no indent). Add appendices for each of the data collection protocols and/or instruments that you are using in your study. For instance, if you are collecting data through interviews, with a survey, and through document/artifact analysis, you should have a separate appendix page for each. Include the actual questions you are asking for each.

B. Dissertation Manuscript: Approval Process

3.5   Submission of Final Draft Manuscript for Review by Dissertation Committee

The student with help, assistance and guidance of the dissertation guide prepares his/her draft dissertation manuscript for submission to the Dissertation Committee. Please refer to the ABMTC online Dissertation Process Guide for more details.

3.5.1   Pre-defense of Dissertation Manuscript with Recommended Corrections

After the student has submitted his/her dissertation manuscript to the dissertation guide, the Dissertation Committee will meet and reach one of three conclusions:

- o The dissertation manuscript is approved as presented (with minor adjustments only).
- o The dissertation manuscript is approved but with major adjustments. These adjustments must be reviewed and approved by dissertation guide before re-submission.
- o The dissertation manuscript will be approved only after significant restructuring. The manuscript must be defended again after the restructuring; the second defense will be scheduled not later than one month after the first defense.

3.5.2   Dissertation Defense

Students will get sufficient time to prepare for a defense. The institution wants graduate candidates to be as prepared as possible when attending a defense. It's important to keep in mind that if you go into a defense with the right attitude and preparation, failing is nearly impossible. The committee wants to see how well you know your subject and your research. Student will be put under pressure to think in handling critical scenarios as to face unknown questions, but as with a job interview, practicing ahead of time will lead to a successful defense.

Facing a defense can be stressful, but think of it as an opportunity to share what you've learned. Remember that you aren't arguing points when you defend your work. Instead, a proper dissertation defense gives you and your faculty advisers the chance to discuss your topic and research in greater detail.

3.5.3   Post-Dissertation Defense

The student will upload the post-defense corrections as well as respond to all recommendations of the dissertation committee within 15 days of the receipt of dissertation committee's feedback. The Guide will review and provide feedback until all issues have been addressed. All corrections must be made by the specifications set by the Dissertation Committee/CAO.

3.5.4   Final Approval of Manuscript by the Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee has reviewed the dissertation manuscript and has ascertained that the data analysis and discussion are sufficient and is a rigorous inquiry into the student's designated field. All three Committee members sign off indicating a satisfactorily grade on the dissertation.

3.5.5 Final Dissertation Approval by the CAO

The Chief Academic Officer review and give final approval on behalf of ABMTC.

Part IV: Frequently Asked Questions

1) When can I use the title Dr.?

You may use the doctoral title only after your DBA degree has been validated.

2) What is the correct style to use? Is there a manual that explains style rules?

ABMTC endorses and uses APA style, as explained in the Sixth and Seventh editions of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. The APA style manual is your primary source for style guidance.

3) What font should I use to type my dissertation? What point size?

The serif font Times New Roman, 12-point font size is required. Tables and Figures can be presented in serif font Arial to help improve readability and appearance, if so desired.

4) Which is right: italics or underlines? Can I use bold?

Italics are correct, rather than underlines. Use bold only in heading levels (APA 3.03), for certain mathematical copy (APA 4.45), and in tables and figures, sparingly, to improve readability.

5) How do I format citations of electronic sources?

APA changed its rules for electronic citations in 2009. See APA 6.31–6.32 for overall guidance and review examples of references to electronic sources (pp. 198–215).

6) Can I single-space block quotations and reference lists?

No. The sixth edition of the APA style manual specifies double-spacing for block quotations.

7) Do all the tables and figures come at the end of the dissertation? What about table titles and figure captions?

In dissertations, tables and figures (and their titles and captions) are inserted in the text as close to where they are referred to as possible. If you plan to publish your dissertation results in a journal, please see APA's many requirements for papers submitted for publication

8) What do I do if a table goes longer than one page?

Always try to fit the table on one page. If the table must run over onto the subsequent page, type the phrase table continues in parentheses flush right at the bottom of the table on the first page. Repeat the column headings, but not the table number or title, at the top of the subsequent page.

ABMTC recommends that "Times New Roman,12-point font" be used for main text and "Times New Roman,10-point font" be used for footnotes.

9) If including a long table or figure, can I format it in landscape instead of portrait?

Yes. The "top" of the page needs to have a margin of 1.5 in. to allow for binding. The page number is placed in the same spot as the rest of the manuscript. This formatting can be accomplished electronically in Microsoft Word.

10) Do I need a running header on my dissertation?

No. ABMTC does not use running headers on dissertations.

11) Does it matter if I write Chapter Two, Chapter II, Chapter 2, or CHAPTER 2?

Yes, it matters. Per APA, only the form Chapter 2 is correct in chapter headings. Note that in the Narrative text, chapter is capitalized when followed by a number (e.g., In Chapter 2 ...)