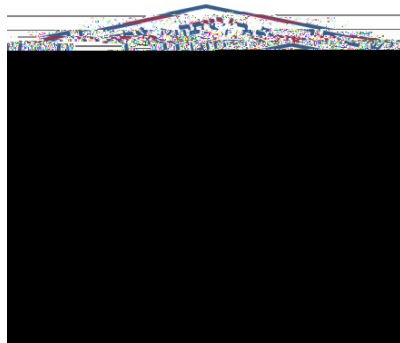


Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration

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* This Guide has been adapted from the Guide written by the Wurzweiler School of Social Work.

GUIDE FOR THE WRITING OF THE DISSERTATION

January 2006
YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

GUIDE FOR THE WRITING OF THE DISSERTATION

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YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

GUIDE FOR THE WRITING OF THE DISSERTATION

The purpose of this guide is to define the format for and clarify expectations regarding the writing of the dissertation. Students are required to use this guide in the preparation of the dissertation. Please note that this Guide builds upon the *Guide for the Writing of the Dissertation Proposal* and is consistent with the specifications therein.

This document undergoes periodic revisions. Changes made from previous versions

[COVER SHEET FOR THE DISSERTATION]

by
Student's Name
(please use the exact name recorded in the official University's record)

DISSERTATION
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of EDD
Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education
Yeshiva University
New York

(Date of Submission Below)

.....

Table of Contents

The section headings are picked up in the table of contents so that a clear outline of each section of the proposal is made visible to the reader in a way that illuminates its organization.

See Example below:

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The committee for this doctoral dissertation consisted of:

Advisor's Name _____

Committee Member _(WSSW faculty)_____

Committee Member _(Outside WSSW)_____

Committee Member**** _____

****When applicable

The overview is just that – a panorama of your study – what it is about, why it is important, how its need is justified, how the results contribute to the professional knowledge base, the approach taken and why, the research problem, study questions and hypotheses, and a summary of the methodology used, including sampling size and population and study limitations. This first chapter should also include an introduction to the literature to the extent that such an introduction justifies and highlights the importance of the study. This overview of relevant literature should lead logically to the rationale for your specific study and to the statement of the problem, research questions, and hypotheses. Scope and limitations of the study should also be provided here, but still as an overview.

CHAPTER TWO: THE STUDY PROBLEM

In this chapter, identify and formulate the study problem in depth. This includes current statistics which demonstrate the scope and significance, duration and intensity of the problem area under inquiry. This chapter should also be relatively brief, approximately 5-10 pages in length.

Remember that the study problem is the larger issue/context of your area of inquiry. Review the history of the problem and its place in Jewish Education and Administration concerns and practice from an analytic perspective. This means going beyond what happened to include why things evolved as they did and what historical trends tell us about the present situation. Identify the practice and/or s

the literature as you collect and analyze your data, as this is an ongoing process.

It is generally best to approach the literature review deductively, using heading and sub-headings throughout the chapter. Begin with the general literature concerning your topic area and become increasingly more focused on and specific about your area of research and your research questions. There should be an orderly and logical flow so that the reader can follow and understand why your area of inquiry and your specific research focus is needed and justified.

Although 15-20 pages of narrative are recommended, there is no one set length or format for the literature review, but avoid the “kitchen sink” approach. Focus the literature review and demonstrate your skill in synthesizing a body of knowledge. One approach is to begin with a brief introduction to the topic (about 3 pages), including an introduction to key concepts and terms and a statement concerning the scope and organization of the literature review and your criteria for what literature is included. It might be helpful to identify the theoretical or conceptual literature and then the empirical literature. This introduction is followed by a focused literature review that is meant to be summative or descriptive as well as critical or evaluative. This means that you assess the merits of the literature you review. It is unacceptable to state findings of studies as facts or as something commonly known without noting and commenting on the merits of how we came to know what is claimed. For an assessment of empirical studies, for example, this means saying something about the adequacy of the research design and the appropriateness of conclusions. This chapter concludes with a statement of the research question. Remember that the justification for your study lies in what is *not* known or is insufficiently explored.

Expectations for the breadth of the literature review include searches of:

- Key authors and journals identified through major search engines, such as Medline, Nexus Lexus, EBSCO, and ProQuest
- Bibliographic reference sources, including dissertations
- Computerized literature searches, including media outlets (major newspapers)
- Literature from other disciplines
- Literature and reports of studies produced by “think tanks” such as the Urban Institute, Brookings Institution, and Ford Foundation.

Use primary sources. Look up the original article rather than citing secondary sources. Avoid the popular press, such as *Time Magazine*, *Newsweek*, or *USA Today*.

There is a tendency in literature reviews to present only one side of an argument, viewpoint, or findings. However, it is important to show the differing findings and viewpoints. In doing so, you are also showing why further research may be needed to reconcile the different arguments, views, or findings. Although you may include commentary and descriptive literature, the major focus should be on empirical investigations.

The literature review focuses on analysis rather than description or summary. The distinction is important. Merely reiterating what is said in the literature is not sufficient. An

analytic approach includes the significance of what has been written, how it ties together, its value and utility, adequacy of past research in regard to method, design, measurement, and results, contributions of the literature, gaps left to explore (which lead to a justification of your study). You want to synthesize the literature, bringing it together in regard to

CHAPTER FOUR: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The review of the literature should logically lead to the theoretical framework that guided your study. The checklist provided on p. 17 in the *Guide for Writing of the Dissertation Proposal* (January 2006 version) should be used to ensure that the objectives of this chapter are met. This chapter should be as identical as possible to what appeared in the proposal. Differences should reflect unforeseen changes that were necessary as the study was implemented. Its length should be approximately 10-15 pages. The organizing questions in this chapter are:

- What is the theoretical framework you have selected and why?
- What is the relationship between theory and research design? How does theory inform selection of research questions and design and in what ways?
- How does the inclusion of the chosen theoretical orientation contribute to an understanding of the problem being investigated? Why was this particular theoretical orientation chosen out of the field of available theories?
- How will the theoretical orientation aid in the organization of the inquiry and the analysis of data?

CHAPTER FIVE: THE RESEARCH QUESTION & RELATED HYPOTHESES

This section deals with the "big question" and related hypotheses that formed the heart of your study. Sub-questions should provide greater specificity. Each sub-question should be followed by hypotheses that broke down the "big question" into researchable form. This chapter should follow closely what appeared in the proposal, noting adjustments or changes made in the protocol in light of implementing the study. Chapter 5 should be brief, approximately 2-3 pages.

The Study Question – What was the main question or questions that the study addressed? Did it flow from the literature review and theoretical framework?

Hypotheses

Construction of hypotheses should have been guided by the following considerations:

- a) Were the hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework and/or literature delineated in the previous sections? If not, delete them because they should have been!
- b) Were the hypotheses testable? That is, were they capable of being shown to be true or false, to hold or not hold? If not, delete them because they should have been!
- c) Were they statements of fact? If not rewrite them so that they are, using simple declarative sentences.
- d) Were the variables under investigation and the nature of the relationship (positive or negative, strong or weak) among the variables clearly and correctly stated?
- e) Could every term or variable in the hypotheses be referred directly or indirectly to observable empirical events?
- f) Did the variables stated in the hypotheses refer to a particular set of observations that are capable of being defined operationally and objectively?

The form for presentation of the study questions should easily convey to the reader the flow of thought connecting the question and related hypotheses. Thus RQ1 (Research Question 1) should be followed by SQ 1 (Sub-Question 1) which in turn should be followed by H1a (Hypothesis 1a) and H1b (Hypothesis 1b); RQ2 if applicable should be followed by SQ 2 which in turn should be followed by H2a and H2b, etc. If there is only one main research question, SQ1 should be followed by H1a (Hypothesis 1a) and H1b (Hypothesis 1b).

Research questions and related hypotheses should be ordered in a logical manner, for example, from most important to least important or from conceptually or analytically anterior to posterior (referred to as lexical ordering).

The research questions and hypotheses should have been deduced and developed from the theoretical framework delineated in the previous section. Hypotheses should have been presented as either a comparison between two or more groups or terms of a dependent variable or as a relationship of two or more independent and dependent variables. Keep in mind that hypotheses take the form of declarative statements about the relationship between two variables. They should be stated either as null, predicting no relationship between variables, or in experimental or evaluative form, that is, as positing a relationship (direction) between variables. Hypotheses may be either direct (two variables changing in the same direction, whether increasing or decreasing) or inverse (two variables going in opposite directions: as the values of one increase, the values of the other decrease). Direct and inverse relationships are used interchangeably with positive and negative relationships. Be advised that when one talks about positive or negative (positive or negative) relationships they should do so when the relationship is expected to be linear.

It is helpful, but not always necessary, to state the direction of the relationship (e.g., the higher the cost of services, the more selective agencies are in including the service in the case plan). Make sure to avoid stating research questions, sub-questions, and related hypotheses in terms to which the response is “yes” or “no”.

The checklist provided on pp. 18-19 in the *Guide for Writing of the Dissertation Proposal* (January 2006 version) should be used to ensure that the objectives of this chapter are met.

In every dissertation proposal the study questions are intended to answer the basic question of the inquiry: What is it that we wish to find out? For those students whose dissertation is qualitative in nature and/or is not hypothesis driven, the study questions must be explained in detail. In many instances, even exploratory studies, hypotheses may be used in qualitative studies. Given a good literature review and sound theoretical framework, some hunches or speculations of what to expect are in order. Sub-questions are absolutely relevant.

CHAPTER SIX: METHODOLOGY

This chapter should also follow closely what appeared in the proposal, noting adjustments or changes made in t

function of what you want to study and how it is best to go about doing so. Also, some designs may overlap. For example, in doing evaluation research that assesses the effectiveness of an intervention, experimental or quasi-experimental designs are often used. **Note:** survey is not a research design per se, but rather a way or method of collecting data.

- (a) Experimental or Quasi-experimental include subtypes classical experimental, ex-post facto, Solomon four-group designs or single group (time series), nonequivalent groups, and factorial respectively. In general, many of the same methods are used for experimental or quasi-experimental research, although quasi-experimental research does not use random assignment

- (d) Evaluation Research – It is often the case that social work researchers are involved in evaluation research or “evidenced-based” research. Evaluation research is not a research design, although it makes use of experimental, quasi-experimental, causal-comparative, and correlational designs. Evaluation research makes judgments about the merit or worth of service programs or interventions, products, or organizations and is usually undertaken to assist administrators and practitioners making professional decisions. There is some controversy regarding whether evaluation research is a legitimate type of research. Features distinguishing it from research are as follows: It is parochial (i.e., focusing on a single entity); it examines multiple aspects of the unit being studied; it often originates with a client, not the researcher; it is often undertaken when a decision must be made. The parochial nature of this research is its most vulnerable aspect, since such a study is not likely to make a significant contribution to knowledge if it reaches a conclusion of this sort: “Service X is inferior.” Parochialism can be overcome, however, if the evaluation research accomplishes one or more of the following purposes: provides an early test

to children and youth (residential vs. non-residential, profit vs. non-profit, public vs. private) because such information is

helpful in organizing data for analytic purposes. Be sure you described and cited the analytic approach to the qualitative study.

- b) **Protection of human subjects:** All plans, letters, consent forms related to protection of human subjects, as applicable.
- c) **Information sheet and explanation of study for participants (appendix).** Note: these materials should be found in the Appendix.
- d) **Limitations of the study.** Acknowledge the boundaries of the study (what was not investigated) and also the problems in being representative of the data gathered.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RESULTS

In this chapter, you are to present the results of your study. Every statistical test or analytic framework used to test your hy

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

Focus on what your results mean. This is the time for analysis and interpretation of the findings. It is not the time to bring in new or additional findings. First, discuss hypotheses in the order originally presented, briefly restating each and indicating whether or not they were found to be statistically significant. (There is no need to repeat the actual statistics or the methods used to determine them.) What do the results say about the relationship between independent and dependent variables? Are there alternative explanations for your findings? If hypotheses were not supported, explore possible explanations, ranging from instrumentation, sample size or characteristics, to inadequate manipulation of the independent variable, to faulty or otherwise inadequate or inappropriate modeling.

This is also the time to go back to the past empirical and theoretical work you have discussed in chapters 3 and 4 as they pertain to your findings. Are your findings consistent with past empirical work? In what way do your findings shed new light, support, or deviate from prior research? What do we know now that we did not know before? Does such knowledge conform to your expected findings? If not, why not? What might the explanation(s) be for any deviations?

Since your study was framed in theory, you also need to go back to your framework to see to what extent your findings “fit.” In what ways do your findings contribute to theory affirmation or new theory development? How do your findings further inform the theory you have selected as your framework? How do the findings contribute to knowledge building? What if any aspects of the theory should be reconsidered?

Implications and Contributions

The implications of your study (process and results) should be examined, as appropriate, in relation to: your area of research, including the study population or problem area; practice methodology and/or practice theory; Jewish Education. Be sure to stay close to the data and do not go too far beyond it. To the extent you feel compelled to do so, however, be sure to indicate that you are speculating as such. Come back to the “So what?” question and answer it in relation to the contributions of your study to knowledge building in _____ How do your findings improve our understanding of the phenomenon you investigated?

Areas of Future Research

Also address whether and to what extent you accomplished what you intended in regard to answering unanswered questions. What is left unanswered? The limitations of your study should also provide guidance about how future researchers may replicate or extend your research design to the same or similar questions. Does your study suggest new factors that are important to control in future investigations? Do your findings have implications for improvements in design and measurement?

In regard to the significance of your study, note substantiated implications clearly

and forcefully while avoiding the temptation to make more out of the findings than is warranted. Discuss the limitations of your study in regard to what you did not attempt to do or succeed in doing. What would you do differently now to overcome the weaknesses in the design or implementation of your study?

A good place to end is with a research agenda that builds on what you just accomplished. This means that you tell others what questions and issues might be examined in the future in light of your findings.

APPENDICES

Appendices must be referenced in the text. Appendices provide specific details about your study that will enable another researcher to replicate your study or that might be important to committee members in determining that you approached your study in a competent way. Copies of instructions to study participants, consent forms, data collection instruments, and permissions are examples of appropriate materials for inclusion in appendices. Be sure to include all letters giving permission for use or modification of research instruments and letters from agencies authorizing the use of their site and/or access to their staff or clients for your research.

Appendices should appear in order of their appearance in the text of the dissertation.

FORMAT AND STYLE REQUIREMENTS

References

All proposals and dissertations must adhere to APA style; see American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th ed. Washington, DC: Author.

In citations, derivative material, such

TIMETABLES

Time Frames

All students in their **fourth year (if not earlier)** and beyond will be working on their dissertations and most students will be able to bring their studies to a successful conclusion during the fourth or fifth year. Once the dissertation proposal is accepted, the student must be continuously registered for Doctoral Dissertation Research, even if the required 24 credit hours of research and or the 60 credit hours necessary for the degree have been completed.

Those students who require additional time **beyond the sixth year** will request an extension for one year. If recommended by their faculty advisor, subject to the review and approval of the Doctoral Faculty Committee, the extension will be granted. The Doctoral Committee has the authority to grant such extensions up to and including a tenth year of study. (Formally approved leave of absences are not counted against this time limit.) Each year, the advisor must request an annual extension based upon the continuing productivity of the student's work. The intent of this policy is to hold both student and advisor accountable for the appropriate fulfillment of their respective roles in assuring the progress of the dissertation work.

Students are strongly encouraged to complete their dissertations within six years of their enrollment in the program and extensions should be an exception. Note: under some exceptional circumstances, students are able to complete and defend their dissertation prior to the point at which they have earned the 60 credits required for graduation. Under no circumstances can this credit requirement be waived. It is the responsibility of the student to plan for and pay all applicable tuition and fees.

Completing the Dissertation

Hopefully, you have kept your advisor informed about the progress of your work and consulted with him or her, as appropriate, throughout the writing of your dissertation. As you begin the analysis of your findings, if you have not done so beforehand, it is time to discuss with your advisor the appointment of a second committee member who has either the content or methodological expertise needed. The second member of the dissertation committee is selected from within the WSSW faculty. You might also consider who might be an appropriate third committee member, one from outside the WSSW faculty, although this decision can come after the chair and committee member have reviewed revisions of an entire first draft.

Decisions regarding the composition of the committee are made in consultation with the student, dissertation advisor, and director of the doctoral program. The final decision in regard to all committee members resides with the director of the doctoral program.

It is important to consult with the research member of your committee about how you will approach data analysis. Do not attempt this without such consultation!

When you submit your first full draft, your advisor will read it and provide feedback. Remember, this is a draft, not the finished product. At any time, your advisor may ask that the second committee member be assigned and available to read sections of your dissertation as needed.

Depending on the response to your first draft, you may have minor or major changes to make. Frequently, students need to conduct further analyses of their data or amplify the explanation of the findings. Your advisor may conclude that certain parts of the first draft need to be reviewed by the second committee member, at his or her discretion. The revised version, or second draft, will go to both committee members. Students are expected to provide the first draft along with the revisions so that the changes made are easy to identify. It is often helpful if a student also provided a summary description of what changes were made and where they can be found in the revised version. (This procedure is common practice for manuscripts submitted to peer-reviewed journals, so it is a good habit to develop. Speak with your advisor about expected time frames for his or her review of the draft documents. A realistic turnaround time is four weeks for advisors and committee members who are familiar with your work and from four to six weeks for advisors on reading the first full draft of the dissertation and for committee members who are seeing the manuscript or any parts of it for the first time.

After you receive feedback on your first draft and begin work on revisions, you and your advisor should discuss possible outside readers who might be willing to serve on your committee, if you have not already done so. The third committee member is someone from the practice community or academia who is an expert in the area of your dissertation research. You25 rfy 9.658 3bw658 0 TdTj1(es)c.6580 0 1 88.658 0 Td(also p2u6rom3o s)T04 aScri

- Be sure to change the language from future (“this study will”) to past tense (“the purpose of this study was to...”; “the method used was...” and the like.
- Sections become chapters.
- The ordering of the chapters should follow those in this manual, the dissertation guidelines.

It is important to understand that there are three different readers who may approach the review of your dissertation from three different perspectives. Each may have a set of issues that they want you to address. It may be appropriate to meet together if there are differences of opinion. Your advisor is the key person to see you through this process. It is possible that one of the committee members judges the manuscript to be unacceptable and sufficiently deficient to a formal hearing or defense of the manuscript, even after revisions and discussions with the student and other committee members. Should this situation arise, the judgment precluding a formal defense stands. It is not acceptable policy to change committee members at this point.

You may want to review WSSW dissertations completed within the last year or two to get a sense of what the final product looks like, both visually and in terms of organization and content. Keep in mind, however, that you might be one of the first students whose work was guided by the *Guide for the Writing of the Dissertation Proposal* (January 2006 version). Only the most recent dissertations might reflect these changes.

The student should consult the academic calendar for information regarding deadlines for submission of the proposal in time for faculty consideration and for graduation. In the Spring semester, the end of the Passover holiday break is usually the deadline for submission of dissertations which can be considered before the end of the semester for expected graduation in May. Students approaching deadlines should be in touch with their advisors with respect to the particular issues of timing which will govern

dissertation.

A suggested outline for the oral presentation includes:

- State the problem.
- Explain how and why the problem is important.
- What theories have been used in the study?
- What are the hypotheses tested?
- Methodology and data collection: where, how, when?
- What problems did you

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