



# REGENT UNIVERSITY

**Doctoral Program in  
Clinical Psychology (PsyD)**

## **Dissertation Handbook**

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**Program Handbook Policy**

This handbook summarizes the policies regarding the dissertation requirement in effect for the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology at the start of the 2025-2026 academic year. All policies and requirements are subject to change. Students are expected to regularly review program announcements that accompany such changes and then abide by the changed policies. Students from all cohorts are obligated to follow current program policy and procedures as they evolve unless otherwise stated.

Please note that all Handbooks are updated each year. Students must adhere to the handbook for the current academic year for all program requirements, with the exception of requirements for program progression as outlined in the University Catalog.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The mission of the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology (DPCP) at Regent is to strive to:

1. Educate doctoral students in a broad and general clinical practitioner-scholar model to obtain careers in health services psychology.
2. Educate students in the integration of psychology and Christian worldview

The dissertation should reflect the student's emerging ability to provide scholarly leadership in these areas. Such leadership involves making a substantial contribution to the field of psychology. A commensurate level of excellence is required in the conceptualization, development, and manuscript writing of the dissertation. The project itself may take many forms, including:

- A program development and evaluation
- A quantitative analysis of the relationship between psychological constructs
- A qualitative or descriptive analysis of a psychological phenomenon
- The creation of a new scale or psychological measure
- The replication of a previously published research study
- The creation of a new intervention with an in-depth case study applied to an individual, family, or group
- A service project to meet the needs of a community
- A needs assessment of a community
- An in-depth case study
- An in-depth literature review
- A clinical or psychological experiment
- Another project exploring psychology and approved by the dissertation committee

### **Christian Integration**

The dissertation should address issues or areas of relevance related to matters of Christian faith or worldview. Such connections should be explicitly examined in a manner sensitive to the diverse religious perspectives relevant to the topic. In such discussions, the level of interaction with the field of psychology should be of a level commensurate with advanced doctoral candidates.

If the topic of the dissertation doesn't include Christian integration students should write a section of their discussion section addressing Christian integration with their topic.

### **Regent PsyD Peer Discussant Scholarly Standard**

Regent's Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology (Psy.D.) is committed to a practitioner-scholar model of training with the primary goal of preparing its graduates to be professionals who apply the discipline and science of psychology in a practice setting. Although research skills and field science abilities are part of the competencies we aim to instill in our graduates, we are not attempting to prepare our modal graduates for traditional research careers. Consistent with this

training vision, our students must demonstrate a *peer-discussant* standard of scholarship in their dissertation projects. A peer discussant standard is evident when one demonstrates mastery of the scholarship in an important psychological area and an ability to make a meaningful application, utilization, extension, or novel contribution to that area.

In contrast to traditional research-focused degrees, the peer discussant does not require students to make substantial novel contributions to the scientific body of knowledge. While such an achievement would demonstrate that the peer discussant standard has been met, other suitable applied scholarly goals than novel scientific discovery may also satisfy this standard. Thus, this handbook outlines diverse types of acceptable dissertation projects that could meet the Regent standard.

## **THE REGENT PSYD DISSERTATION PROCESS**

### **Formulating a Topic**

An appropriate dissertation stems from a well-formulated topic that is pertinent to the field of psychology. A variety of activities, such as completing guided readings or participating in a faculty research team, can act as catalysts for the development of the dissertation topic. Students should actively work on developing their research topic as soon as they get established in the doctoral program (e.g., spring semester first year). Often early academic projects, such as term papers or student presentations, may provide the impetus for the dissertation topic. Intellectual curiosity and diligence in mastering a research area are valuable factors in arriving at a good dissertation topic.

Although students are encouraged to pursue dissertation topics that are of personal interest, it is vital that these interests are consistent with existing scholarly interests, expertise and/or activities of the Psy.D. faculty. Some dissertation topics may lie outside the areas of expertise or interests of current faculty. In such cases, securing a dissertation chair and committee may be difficult. Students are expected to find a topic within the research interests and competence of Psy.D. faculty. The most natural way to accomplish this is to coordinate the formulation of the dissertation topic with ongoing faculty research projects.

### **Writing a Proposal (PSY 700)**

All Psy.D. students enroll in the Dissertation Methodology seminar (PSY 700) in the spring of the second year. The course focuses on the following areas:

- Exposing the student to the variety of dissertation options available.
- Reviewing foundational research strategies and dissertation procedural details.
- Writing of the initial draft of the Dissertation proposal. The dissertation proposal includes a draft of the literature review and method section of the dissertation.
- Reviewing the Journal Article Reporting Standards

The length of a proposal is generally 25 pages of writing (not including tables, appendices, and references).

## **Timeline for Dissertation**

### ***Spring of Second Year (or during PSY 700)***

1. Selection of committee and topic.
  - a. As part of PSY700, students should have identified a faculty member in the doctoral program who is willing to serve as their dissertation committee chairperson.
  - b. The Dissertation Topic Approval form requires the student to obtain a dissertation chair, list a topic approved by the chair, and finalize the dissertation committee.
  - c. The minimum dissertation committee will consist of two individuals, a chair and a member. The Chair is generally a member of the Psy.D. faculty (core faculty or affiliate).
  - d. **Any exception must be approved by the Program Director** (please see Approval Process for Exception to Core/Affiliate Faculty Chair Policy below).
2. Roles of Committee and Chair
  - a. The Chair of the Dissertation works as the primary mentor, guide, and oversight of the dissertation process from the selection of the topic through final revisions. The chair is generally the second author of any presentations or publications. In general, all drafts and revisions of a dissertation are completed with the dissertation chair prior to submitting the work to the committee member/s.
  - b. The Committee member/s provides insights and approval of the project. The committee member reads the proposal and gives feedback, attends the proposal and defense meetings, and provides approval of the project.
3. Qualifications of a Dissertation Committee (Chair or member)
  - a. The dissertation chair or committee member holds a doctoral degree, such as a Ph.D. or Psy.D., that reflects expertise in the field of clinical psychology or a field closely associated with the student's particular project. For example, a student working on a theoretical paper that focuses on theological as well as psychological concepts may want a committee member who holds a Th.D. or D.Min. Similarly, a student working on an empirical study related to a medical issue may want a committee member who is a healthcare professional with expertise in the specific area and training/experience in research who holds an appropriate degree consistent with the profession (e.g., MD, PhD, DPT, etc.).
  - b. An external member must be approved by both the committee Chair and the Psy.D. Program Director. Note: The approval is given through the signature of the program director on the Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval Form. **Advance discussion between the chair and the director to ensure approval will be granted prior to formally asking an external member to be the committee member is expected.**

4. Approval Process for Exception to Core/Affiliate Faculty Chair Policy:
  - a. The student should discuss the proposed chair with the PsyD program director to ensure approval will be granted prior to formally asking for an external chair.
  - b. The student coordinates with the Program Director and ASM to obtain the proposed chair's signature on the Adjunct Dissertation Chair Statement of Understanding form, and to generate a contract.
  - c. Submit the Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval form (with chair and committee signatures) to the Program Director for approval.
  - d. The signature of the Program Director on the Dissertation Topic/Committee Approval Form constitutes form approval.
  - e. If an exception is approved for the chair not to be a core faculty member, then the committee member must be a core faculty member.
5. Completion of the first complete draft of the dissertation proposal is required for a student to pass PSY 700.
  - a. Students who do not complete the requirements for PSY 700 will receive an incomplete and have one semester to complete the requirements.
  - b. If still incomplete, they will receive a failing grade and must take PSY 700 again.
  - c. They will also be unable to take PSY 718 until passing PSY 700, which slows down their progression in the program by a year. This is because students must propose their dissertation in order to take their comprehensive exam and must pass their comprehensive exam to continue in the program. Students who are falling behind on their dissertation proposal should be aware of this "roadblock" in the program and consult with their advisor on issues that prevent them from timely completing the requirements for PSY 700 and PSY 718 and proposing their dissertation on time.
  - d. Multiple drafts are typically required. Therefore, students should plan to work steadily on the proposal for the year following completion of PSY700 to ensure completion by the required date.

***Summer of Second Year and Fall of Third Year (or Summer and Fall after PSY 700)***

Students will work closely with their dissertation chair to craft revisions of the proposal. Typically, this will include 3 -7 drafts of the paper. A two-week turnaround time is expected by both parties (ie, both the student and the faculty members involved).

**Accelerated Timeline:** Students attempting to defend their dissertation prior to internship interviews will need to work on an accelerated timeline in which they propose their dissertation by the end of the fall of the third year, collect data in the spring of the third year, and defend the dissertation in the fall of the fourth year. Students should discuss their plans for a timeline with their dissertation chair and realistically plan for the increased workload involved in this timeline. Students who have already defended their dissertations by the time they complete internship interviews typically receive higher ratings from the internship site.

### ***Spring of Third Year (or during PSY 718)***

In a standard timeline, students will propose their dissertation in the spring of the third year. Students following a typical Student Educational Plan (SEP) and moving towards internship applications in the fall of 4th year should register for PSY 718, Professional Development and Dissertation Proposal Development for the spring of the third year.

In order to pass PSY718, the dissertation chair must endorse a passing grade, indicating that the chair of the committee has approved the final written draft of the dissertation proposal and that the student has successfully proposed their dissertation. The course instructor for PSY 718 must hear from the dissertation chair that the student has passed, or a “no pass” will occur. In order to meet this timeline, the dissertation proposal must occur prior to the end of the spring term. It is important to plan to have the dissertation proposal completed by the time PSY 718 grades are due (end of spring term) and to discuss methods for continuing in the summer when needed.

If expected to go beyond this date, a formal extension request should be submitted. An extension to the date of completion required for clearance to take the comprehensive examination (June 30) is the maximum typically considered.

### ***Summer of Third Year (or summer following PSY 718)***

Students who have not proposed their dissertation by the end of June of the summer of the third year will not be approved to take Comprehensive Exams in July of the third year. Passing the Comprehensive exam is a requirement to engage in fourth-year training and preparation for an internship.

Students who do not pass PSY 718 or who have still not successfully proposed their dissertation by the end of the summer semester will be enrolled in PSY 719 Proposal Continuation until they successfully pass their proposal. In such instances, the student may need to add a year to their SEP and take the Comprehensive Exam the following year.

In order to maintain a good pace, students should submit an application for IRB Review as soon as their proposal has been accepted (ideally in the summer of the third year). Please note that the IRB does not operate during a portion of the summer (June 15 until the first day of classes for the fall term).

### ***Fall of Fourth Year (or Fall of Doctoral Candidacy)***

Students must submit an IRB application for their dissertation and successfully have it approved prior to being approved by the Director of Clinical Training (DCT) to apply for the internship. The deadline for project approval is October 1. Students are expected to collect data or implement their project in the fall of the fourth year.

### ***Spring of Fourth Year (or Spring of Doctoral Candidacy)***

In an ideal timeline, the student has completed their data collection or project and drafts their

dissertation defense in the spring of the fourth year. While students can leave for an internship without completing this stage of the dissertation, this is not recommended. Students are required to present the results of their dissertation in poster format as part of the Practitioner Scholar Research Symposium (see Present Dissertation at Practitioner-Scholar Research Symposium (PSRS) section below).

### ***Summer of Fourth Year (or Summer of Doctoral Candidacy)***

Students who have not completed their defense should be making strides to do so before leaving for internship. After the defense, any edits must be made and approved, and then the dissertation is processed through ProQuest before a student is officially done with their dissertation. **To allow ample time to meet all requirements, students should plan on defending no later than mid-July or be prepared to be registered for PSY 704 Dissertation Continuation in the fall term.**

### ***Internship Year***

Students must have submitted a complete draft of their dissertation defense to their chair by the graduation deadline (typically early December of the internship year prior to the winter break) in order to be included in the graduation ceremonies.

Students must defend their dissertation successfully by February 15 in order to be included in a graduation ceremony\* in May. Students should remember, however, that the graduation ceremony is a ceremony - it does not convey the PsyD degree. The degree is not conveyed until all coursework and the final version of the dissertation are submitted to and accepted by the University and ProQuest, and internship evaluations are received as passing internships for training directors.

\*Students are responsible for completing a University Graduation Application by the University's deadline in order to be considered to participate in these ceremonies.

## **WRITING STANDARDS FOR PSYD DISSERTATIONS**

Students should carefully review the current edition of the APA Publication Manual to ensure they are correctly following APA style. The APA Publication Manual, 7th Edition, also includes [Journal Article Reporting Standards](#) (JARS). The JARS guidelines consistent with the type of study being conducted (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method) should be followed when writing the dissertation. As noted above, the dissertation scientific article format will have additional information beyond the content required in the JARS standards (e.g., discussion of ethical concerns and Christian integration).

## **DISSERTATION MEETINGS**

### **Dissertation Proposal and Defense Meetings**

Students will present their proposal for a dissertation to their committee prior to beginning their project in writing and in a formal meeting. This is called the dissertation proposal meeting. The Proposal Competency Review form is located on the [PsyD Resource Page](#) (see Appendix C) and must be completed by the student's dissertation committee at the time of the proposal. Any student who has not successfully completed a dissertation proposal by June 30 of the summer semester of their third year will not be eligible to take the Comprehensive Exam or be considered for doctoral candidacy. This is essentially a "roadblock" where students who have not proposed by the end of the summer semester of their third year will not be able to take comps, take any further courses, or apply for the internship. If a student is behind on a dissertation, they must take 1 credit of Dissertation Proposal Continuance (PSY 719) each semester thereafter until the dissertation proposal is completed. The grade for PSY 719 will be an "IP", or "in process" until the student proposes and will be reflected on their transcript each semester until completion.

Once the written final draft of the defense is ready, students will meet with their chair and committee for a dissertation defense meeting, sometimes called an "oral defense." There are several Defense Competency forms to complete at the defense meeting available on the [PsyD Resource Page](#). Students cannot walk in graduation ceremonies if they have not successfully defended their dissertation by February 15 of their internship year. Once the dissertation is accepted by the library for ProQuest, the IP on all dissertation courses will change into a "P", or "pass".

In order to pass the proposal or defense, the student must receive a passing rating by the committee on all relevant competencies.

Note that many dissertations spring from research team involvement. In these cases, data collection and work on the dissertation may be viewed as a research team activity. If a student has any questions about this aspect of the dissertation project, they need to consult with their dissertation chair.

### **Proposal & Defense Meeting Process**

1. The committee Chair will open the meeting with prayer and present the student to the committee.
2. The student should be prepared to give a detailed 20-minute presentation of the study being proposed or defended. The presentation should review pertinent literature, highlight the importance of the study, outline the design, and predict the anticipated results. The presentation should include the limitations of the study and important issues for future research. A PowerPoint presentation and/or handouts are recommended to aid the presentation.
3. When the student has completed the presentation, the committee chair will open the

floor for questions by the committee members and then by any faculty members present. Questioning will not be open to other observers present. Areas upon which inquiries are made can include research methodology, theoretical issues, and Christian integration or worldview issues.

4. When the questioning period has been completed, the committee discusses the student's proposal defense, with particular emphasis on the areas delineated in the Proposal Defense Competency Review form (See Appendix D). The committee will make one of three recommendations: Pass, Pass with recommendations, or Fail.
  - a. A "Pass" signifies that the student has sufficient grasp of the project,
  - b. A "Pass with recommendations" suggests that the student has a sufficient grasp of most elements of the dissertation; however, additions or revisions may be necessary to the existing document prior to approval.
  - c. A "fail" indicates that the student has not met sufficient criteria in some aspect of the competency form. In this case, recommendations are made and the student must seek a second proposal or defense meeting, addressing the concerns of the committee.
5. Note that the majority of students achieve a "Pass with recommendations". This is because the proposal or defense meeting is a time when both student and Committee members discuss, refine, and even change aspects of the dissertation.
6. It is recommended that the student provides the Program Academic Services Manager a program defense flyer (this is only done at defense, not proposal) announcement at least 2 weeks in advance. The flyer template is available on the [PsyD Resource Page](#). Information provided should be limited to one page only and include the date, time, location, and how to access an online defense. Students, faculty, and friends are welcome to attend the oral defense. If PsyD students or other members of the SPC faculty were to request to participate in the video conference, that should be accommodated.
7. NOTE: Students planning to walk in graduation ceremonies in May must defend their dissertation no later than February 15th.

Two to three semesters after completion of PSY 700 is considered adequate time to develop a proposal acceptable to the committee. Registering for additional semesters of Proposal continuation may result in a faculty warning and will prevent progression in the program due to the inability to take the Comprehensive Exam. Therefore, students who are deemed by the faculty to be making inadequate progress in their dissertation projections will be given a written warning with a description of the inadequate areas of performance and deadlines for remediation. This will be considered in the annual review of the students. Failure to correct deficiencies by the prescribed deadlines may seriously jeopardize a student's doctoral candidacy eligibility or status. Further, as noted earlier, students must register for Dissertation Proposal Continuance (PSY 719) until they have successfully proposed.

## **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)**

When the committee and student feel the proposal is near final form, or at the determination of the Dissertation Chair, the proposal is submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Any project involving data collection must be submitted to the IRB, even if the project is potentially exempt or at minimal risk. The IRB follows the guidelines as outlined in the Faculty & Academic Policy Handbook. No data may be collected prior to approval from the IRB.

All information about the IRB can be found at [this link](#).

## **IMPLEMENTING THE DISSERTATION PROJECT**

**Register for Dissertation credits.** Once the committee has officially approved the proposal, the student can register for dissertation hours (PSY 701-703). A minimum of 9 semester hours must be completed and must eventually be reflected on the student's transcript. Should the project be incomplete after 9 semester hours, the student must register for at least 1 hour of dissertation continuance (PSY 704) each semester until the dissertation has been successfully completed. Students are expected to take PSY 701-PSY 703 during the year prior to leaving for internship and must have completed PSY 701 and PSY 702 before leaving for their internship match while registered in PSY 703. No student can submit their dissertation to ProQuest until they are in PSY 703 or have completed it and are in PSY 704. Students must have passed their defense and all required edits in order to submit to ProQuest.

Continuous enrollment is required until the dissertation is completed and documentation is on file with the Registrar's Office. All dissertation courses PSY 701- PSY 704 are assigned a grade of "IP" or "in process" until the dissertation process is completed; this includes the dissertation being accepted by ProQuest. This may result in the need to register for more than the minimum required number of hours, and payment of corresponding tuition charges. Financial aid is not required to cover any credit hours above those required for your degree per your SEP so consult the financial aid office for any relevant policies and your situation.

**Collect data or implement a project.** It is in this phase that students will implement the project (data collection and analysis strategies) delineated in the proposal, write the text of their theoretical paper, or conduct an approved service project. For dissertations utilizing the scientific journal article format, students must write the Results and Discussion section in the proposal as two separate sections. Any remaining sections of the dissertation must then be written, including the References, Appendices, and all Figures and Tables.

**Collaborate with committee and co-authors.** All students must continue to work closely with committee members throughout the writing process. The preliminary timeline developed can be revised, and subgoal timelines can be established to help with this process. Breaking the dissertation into such reasonable sub-goals can help reduce the chances of a negative warning.

Such warnings for inadequate progress may be issued at any stage of the process.

Write drafts of defense. A draft of the dissertation should be completed with appropriate input from committee members. It is important that this draft includes any new pertinent research findings released since the creation of the original proposal. These findings will be included in an updated Introduction section. The process continues as one similar to the proposal creation to include all the requirements listed above.

**Length of written defense.** In general, a dissertation defense adds no more than 25 additional pages to the dissertation project, culminating in a maximum of 50 pages of writing. Longer dissertation writing should receive prior approval from your dissertation chair and committee. Students should carefully review the current edition of the APA Publication Manual to ensure they are correctly following APA style and JARS guidelines. -

The student will revise their dissertation under the review and supervision of their dissertation chair first. Once the chair approves a draft, then, the students submit a draft to the committee member/s for their review. It is common for several revised drafts to be requested by the chair or committee prior to giving final dissertation draft approval.

A student at this level is also expected to demonstrate appropriate initiative, problem-solving skills, and knowledge of resources needed to complete the dissertation. The academic protocol requires the faculty member to be provided with a two-week period in which to review the document. This two-week period is during the academic semester, not during academic break times (such as spring break or university breaks such as between semesters). Once all requested revisions have been adequately addressed and the committee Chair gives approval, the student may request a date for their dissertation defense.

A defense date cannot be scheduled until the defense committee gives its approval. It is the philosophy of the PsyD Program that the Dissertation Chair has discretion and ultimate knowledge of when the project and student are ready to defend their dissertation.

### **Present Dissertation at Practitioner-Scholar Research Symposium**

Each student in the fourth year of the program (or if on a longer program, the year the Advanced practica is completed) is required to present a research/scholarly presentation at the Practitioner-Scholar Research Symposium (PSRS) for that academic year. The PSRS is held in conjunction with the applicant interview weekend, usually in January or February. The poster will be based on the student's dissertation progress at the time of the PSRS submission. The PSRS poster presentation is designed to meet the APA accreditation requirement for students to disseminate research or other scholarly work. The Research Dissemination Probe will serve as the evaluation tool of the student's ability to disseminate research findings in a manner at least consistent with the minimum expectations of a professional health services psychologist (Appendix D). The following [video](#) and [template](#) links provide guidance on preparing an effective, innovative, and efficient scientific poster presentation which may be helpful for your PSRS

presentation and any conference presentation you may do. It is the student's responsibility to verify that their chair approves the use of this method prior to development.

The PSRS Coordinator (usually the Advanced Practica II course instructor) will notify participants of the dates PSRS will be held (always in conjunction with the applicant interview weekend). The Practitioner Scholar Research Symposium submission form approved by the Dissertation Chair (or if the Chair is not a faculty member, obtain approval by the Faculty Mentor) is due the Friday before fall break. Students will be assigned to present on one of the two PSRS dates (Friday and Saturday, usually in January or February) and should protect both time slots on their calendars until notified in December of the assigned presentation date.

The student will complete a research poster and send the electronic copy of the completed poster to the dissertation chair/faculty mentor for approval, with enough time to allow for feedback, edits, and final approval in order to submit the final electronic copy to the Advanced Practica course instructor at least one week prior to the first PSRS date. The poster presentation should consist of a trifold board with power point slides printed and adhered to it or with a single poster sheet connected to the trifold board. It is the responsibility of the student to provide the trifold board and to bring both the board and the poster on the day assigned to present and to take the poster with them after the event.

After the PSRS, the student will receive a copy of the completed probe form within 2 weeks. The evaluation will indicate if the student "passed" or "failed" the probe (Appendix D). If the student passes the probe, it will be documented by the program as a completed probe through submission of the complete probe to the Advanced Practica course instructor by the evaluating faculty member. If the student fails the probe, the student will meet with the Advanced Practica instructor and discuss additional attempts. The student will be given 3 opportunities to complete the probe. For each of the first two probe failures, the student will have 2 weeks following receipt of the probe failure to complete or revise (whichever is deemed appropriate by the evaluating faculty) the poster and submit it to the evaluating faculty for review. Probes passed on the 2nd or 3rd attempts will re-present the passing probe at a local forum prior to the end of the semester as determined by the Program Director. A passing score on this probe is required for graduation.

In addition to the probe process, the probe rubric will be utilized by a panel of three faculty (one of whom will be the Advanced Practica Instructor) to select the winner of the PSRS Best Poster Presentation Award. The highest-rated poster will be the winner, with ties decided through a panel discussion. See the Probe Rubric in Appendix D for criteria related to the scoring process. The Best Poster Presentation Award winner will be required to ensure their poster is available for display at the PSRS on both days it is held.

Students who have presented their dissertation work previously as a conference poster or prepared a poster for presentation at an upcoming conference may utilize the same poster presentation for the PSRS requirement. However, the student should be very careful in how they

list the presentation at the PSRS on their curriculum vitae. Here is an example of how one might cite a conference presentation and PSRS as well. Note that they are combined as one citation section on the vita rather than two separate ones:

Perkins, A., Ripley, J.S, Worthington, E.L., Jr., Hill, G., Noble, N., Cain, M., Garthe, R.C., Davis, D.E., Hook, J.N., Reid, C., & Van Tongeren, D.R. (2019, August). Relational humility: Behavioral observations in couples in the transition to parenthood. American Psychological Association, Chicago, IL. Also presented at the Practitioner-Scholar Research Symposium at Regent University (2019, January), winning first place award.

See the Dissertation Proposal and Defense above for guidelines for the Defense meeting.

## **FROM DEFENSE MEETING TO LIBRARY SUBMISSION**

Dissertations that require Revisions/Comments will need the Edit Tracking Form completed and submitted before this email can be sent. If edits are required, the dissertation is not considered accepted until the date of all edits being approved. After the committee has approved all revisions, the Dissertation Defense Competency Review form will then need to be completed and sent to the Dissertation Chair and Program Director for signature. The form can be found on the PsyD Resources Page. Once the signatures are obtained, the form needs to be submitted to the program ASM at [psyd@regent.edu](mailto:psyd@regent.edu) or CRB 161B. Dissertations that require Revisions/Comments will need the Edit Tracking Form completed and submitted. If edits are required, the dissertation is not considered accepted until the date of all edits being approved. Once this form is signed off and processed, the ASM will review the student's submission to ProQuest.

Students are expected to take PSY 701-PSY 703 during the year prior to leaving for internship and must have completed PSY 701 and PSY 702 before leaving for their internship match while registered in PSY 703. No student can submit their dissertation to ProQuest until they are in PSY 703 or have completed it and are in PSY 704. Students must have passed their defense and all required edits in order to submit to ProQuest.

### **Copy Editing**

The revised dissertation manuscript must be presented to Regent University library, prepared in compliance with university guidelines(see Appendix B for checklist and Library Guide (<http://libguides.regent.edu/submitting>)). Committees may require copy editing if the student's defense has numerous problems with writing conventions. Copy editors are optional; therefore, requiring a student to use a copy editor must be approved by the department.

NOTE: Students have not completed their dissertation until the completed (after the final defense, copy-editing, and final approval from the dissertation chair) version is accepted by ProQuest and Regent University. No student can graduate until their dissertation has been accepted by ProQuest.

### **Continuous Enrollment**

The student must continue to take at least one dissertation hour until the end of the semester in which the approved dissertation manuscript has been accepted by the university (NOT just the committee meeting); thus, the student may need to register for more than the required 9 dissertation semester hours. Students are not permitted to submit to ProQuest until their Dissertation Chair has given them approval to move forward with submission. The dissertation will not be viewed until the Dissertation Approval form is completed and signed off by the dissertation chair and Program Director.

### **Publication and Presentation of Dissertations**

All students are required to present either their proposal or the findings of their research (based on the status of their project at the time) in the form of a poster presentation at the annual Practitioner-Scholar Research Symposium, conducted in conjunction with the Psy.D. admissions interview process. The date will vary by year, but the symposiums typically occur on a Friday and Saturday in February. See details in the PSRS section.

Students are also encouraged to present their dissertations at conferences and submit them for publication. Typically, the author's order should be the student, followed by their dissertation chair, and then other relevant researchers. However, there may be exceptions to this if the dissertation is a portion of the faculty's larger research program and publications. This should be clearly stated and understood prior to the dissertation proposal. Student contribution to the research should be proportional to their contribution to the research presentation and publication, in keeping with APA Research Ethics.

The decision whether to actually present or submit an article-length version of the manuscript should be made by the student and their Chair. For example, some dissertations represent sections of a professor's ongoing program of research within their research teams. In these cases, the professor and student may decide to include the dissertation as part of a larger article or conference presentation at some future time.

## **FORMATTING THE DISSERTATION**

Students should consult the [ProQuest instructions for dissertations](#) when doing the final formatting of their dissertation; this link also includes a video tutorial on using the ProQuest system. Dissertation chairs will verify all formatting requirements have been met prior to signing off on the dissertation defense. If formatting corrections are required, then the student should receive a Pass with edits, and an Edit Tracking Form needs to be completed and submitted once the chair approves the dissertation as ready to submit to ProQuest. Students requiring any type of edits should not receive a full Pass.

Tips for creating an account on ProQuest:

- For Institutional ID: enter your Regent ID number (9 digits, usually begins with a "B")

- followed by 8 numbers)
- Select your publishing option, Traditional or Open Access Publishing. The fee varies depending on your selection.
  - Convert your manuscript to a PDF and check each page before uploading the PDF to ProQuest.
  - Decide if you want to copyright your work or not. There is an additional fee for copyrighting.
  - Students should not request an embargo on their dissertation. If a student wishes to do this they must speak with their chair first and inform the program ASM that they have approval.
  - Order printed and bound copies of your manuscript (only if you desire). Printed copies are no longer required by the University. You may also find resources on the internet to have your manuscript printed and bound that are less expensive.
  - Pay the charges online directly to ProQuest. Fees (subject to change as directed by the University administration/ library)

Appendix A contains example formatting following Regent and APA guidelines. The following table provides an overview of standard sections of the dissertation document.

Pages	Formatting
<b>Prefatory pages</b>	The prefatory pages should be numbered in the bottom center using small-case Roman numerals. Page numbers should be omitted from the title page. No running head is to be included at any place in the dissertation manuscript.
<b>Title page</b>	The title page includes elements enabling the rapid identification of the subject, author(s), date completed, and university supervising the study. The title itself should concisely reflect the main research or theoretical issues investigated.
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>The abstract summarizes the dissertation as a whole. Common abstract elements include a statement regarding the project's purpose, a brief description of the project's methodology, and the results of any empirical design. Theoretical dissertations have appropriately modified abstracts.</p> <p>Abstracts must not exceed 350 words. Most APA journals set the maximum at 120 words. In anticipation of later publication, students are encouraged to keep the abstract word count closer to this lower number. See the JARS guidelines in the APA Publication Manual for specific guidance on expected content.</p>

<b>Acknowledgment page (optional)</b>	The acknowledgments page provides the opportunity for the student to thank those people who influenced the writing and completion of the dissertation. Such persons can range from family to administration and faculty.
<b>Table of Contents</b>	The table of contents lists the various sections of the dissertation along with the first-page number of the section. Table of Contents should be single-spaced.
<b>List of Tables</b>	The list of tables cites the various tables in the dissertation along with the first page number of the section This list enables readers to rapidly find tables in the dissertation. The List of Tables should be single-spaced.
<b>List of Figures</b>	Similar to the list of tables, this list enables the reader to rapidly locate the figures presented in the dissertation. The List of Figures should be single-spaced.
<b>Body of the text (traditional)</b>	The main body of the dissertation will typically be double-spaced with a few exceptions. Table headings and long quotations may be single-spaced. Figures and Tables should follow APA guidelines for insertion. Main body pages are to be numbered in the center and bottom of the page using Arabic numerals. The first page of the main body text should start with number 1.
<b>Body of the text (non-traditional)</b>	Non-traditional dissertations include theoretical papers, service project reports, and other approved alternatives to traditional quantitative psychological research. The main body of the non-traditional dissertation will also typically be double-spaced with a few exceptions. Table headings and long quotations may be single-spaced. Figures and Tables formatting should follow APA guidelines. Main body pages are to be numbered in the center and bottom of the page using Arabic numerals. The first page of the main body text should start with number 1.
<b>Introduction and Literature Review</b>	The introduction describes the research problem or theoretical issue to be addressed and the background studies that have been done in

	<p>the area. A thorough literature review is expected. The review provides a synthesis and critical analysis of the existing literature. The student's conclusions regarding the literature and the study's hypotheses end this section. See the JARS guidelines in the APA Publication Manual for specific guidance on expected content.</p>
<b>Method or Proposed Project</b>	<p>As in the proposal, the methods section delineates the specific design of the study, identifies the subjects and their method of selection, defines the procedures carried out, and describes the measures used. See the JARS guidelines in the APA Publication Manual for specific guidance on expected content.</p>
<b>Results or Outcome of Project</b>	<p>Results pertinent to each hypothesis are presented in this section; however, they are not interpreted here. The statistical treatment of data is described, citing the test of significance, the degrees of freedom, and probability levels. See the JARS guidelines in the APA Publication Manual for specific guidance on expected content.</p>
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>In this section, the student will typically discuss the results in light of the literature reviewed and the hypotheses presented in the introduction section, limitations of the study and its generalizability, comparison of findings with those of other studies, a critical analysis of the additional contributions made by the study, recommendations for further research and potential applications of the findings. See the JARS guidelines in the APA Publication Manual for specific guidance on expected content.</p>
<b>References</b>	<p>Following the text of the article, a list of all the references cited in the text is given. Individual references should be single-spaced with a double space between reference citations. Continue numbering the pages through the references.</p>
<b>Appendices</b>	<p>The dissertation appendices may include numerous aspects of the dissertation that are important for the reader but which would be excessive detail for the main body of the text. Typical examples are the inclusion of a survey in the form given to respondents for the dissertation or more extensive verbatim transcripts of narrative material, which is summarized in the main body text, extended</p>

literature review, HRSC approval letter, Handouts from interventions, etc..
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## **REGISTRAR'S OFFICE POLICY REGARDING PASSING THE DISSERTATION**

This message is a reminder of the Registrar's Office's policy regarding dissertation completion (or any culminating experience) and degree clearance. It is vital to have your dissertation accepted by ProQuest before the last day of the term. There may be significant impacts if the end-of-term deadline is missed, even if only by a day. For example, the student must wait until the end of the next term to have their degree posted, which is oftentimes inconvenient or even costly for these students (delays impending raises may cause financial aid issues, etc.).

This message serves as an important reminder to every student that failure to have their degree posted can result in many delays, especially in the award of the degree. This means the student cannot accrue residency hours toward licensure. Thus, all students should pay careful attention to library deadlines and Registrar Office deadlines, in addition to SPC and Psy.D. deadlines.

## **APPENDIX A: Sample Dissertation Prefatory Pages**

The manuscript must be prepared with 1" margins on all sides. If planning to purchase bound copies use a 1 ½" left margin.

Insert first line of title, 2 inches from the top of the page

**Title of the Dissertation**

All text on the title page is to be double spaced.

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the School of Psychology & Counseling

Regent University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Psychology

Clinical Psychology

By

**Student Name**

**Month Year**

Insert full name but do not include any titles or degrees

Only date the Month and Year (should reflect when the dissertation was approved (this is not always the date of defense but the date the dissertation is fully accepted including any edits) to be submitted to ProQuest)

School of Psychology and Counseling

Regent University

This is to certify that the dissertation prepared by:

**Student Name**

Titled

**TITLE OF THE DISSERTATION**

Has been approved by their committee as satisfactory completion of  
the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Psychology

Approved By:

**Jane Smith, Ph.D.**, Committee Chairperson  
School of Psychology and Counseling

**John Williams, Psy.D.**, Committee Member  
School of Psychology and Counseling

**Rachel Stephens, Psy.D.**, Program Director  
School of Psychology and Counseling

**Month Year**

For committee members and Program Director please include their full name followed by their highest degree.

**Example:**

Anna S. Ord, Psy.D., Committee  
Chairperson

Carletta N. Artis, Psy.D., Committee  
Member

Confirm titles with your committee  
members.

No actual signatures are included.

**Space exception:** use single space in this  
section with the names/ titles of  
committee members

## Abstract

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*Keywords:* depression, anxiety, psychological assessment, spirituality

All text on the title page is to be double spaced.
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## Acknowledgments

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This is an optional page; it provides the opportunity for the student to thank those people who influenced the writing and completion of the dissertation. Such persons can range from family to administration and faculty.

## Table of Contents

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Acknowledgments.....	26
List of Tables .....	28
List of Figures .....	29
<b>Chapter I: Chapter Name.....</b>	<b>30</b>
Level 1 Heading.....	30
Level 2 Heading.....	30
Level 3 Heading.....	30
References .....	1
Appendix A.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Appendix B.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## List of Tables

Table Number	<i>Table Title</i> .....	31
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## List of Figures

<b>Figure Number</b>	<b><i>Figure Title</i></b> .....	<b>31</b>
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## **Chapter I: Chapter Name**

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### **Level 1 Heading**

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### **Level 2 Heading**

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### ***Level 3 Heading***

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**Level 4 Heading.** Level four and five headings are a little tricky. Use the Level four or five heading style to format the heading, and then go to the search bar at the top of your MS Word screen and search for “style separator.” Use that feature to add a separator, and then you can select the “body text” style to start adding your paragraph text to the same line.

**Level 5 Heading.** Level four and five headings are a little tricky. Use the Level four or five heading style to format the heading, and then go to the search bar at the top of your MS Word screen and search for “style separator.” Use that feature to add a separator, and then you can select the “body text” style to start adding your paragraph text to the same line.

**Table Number**

*Table Title*

**Figure Number**

*Figure Title*

## References

- Ord, A. S., Slogar, S. M., & Sautter, S. W. (2021). Lifestyle factors, cognitive functioning, and functional capacity in older adults. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00914150211009467>
- Ord, A. S., Stranahan, K. R., Hurley, R. A., & Taber, K. H. (2020). Stress-related growth: Building a more resilient brain. *Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, 32(2), 207-212. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.neuropsych.20050111>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Self-regulation and the problem of human autonomy: Does psychology need choice, self-determination, and will? *Journal of Personality*, 74(6), 1557-1586. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2006.00420.x>

## APPENDIX B: Dissertation Checklist Form

This form is intended to outline the final steps for formatting and submitting the completed dissertation to the Library through ProQuest.

<b>Step 1: Defense</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schedule dissertation defense	It is the student's responsibility to coordinate the time and the format of their dissertation defense with their committee members. You do not need to reserve a classroom or the conference room if you are defending virtually (ie, over Zoom). If you need a classroom or conference room reserved, ask the Academic Services Manager to reserve one; you must give two weeks' notice for this request.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Announce dissertation defense	When your dissertation defense has been scheduled, you should prepare an announcement. Request the template from the Academic Services Manager and once completed, send it back to them for it to be sent out on the listserv. This form should be kept to one page, include when and where the defense is, if online it should include how to access the defense (this could be including your email for people to contact you for access) and should be submitted in PDF form to <a href="mailto:psyd@regent.edu">psyd@regent.edu</a> two weeks before your defense date.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Defend dissertation	Once the defense has been completed, submit the appropriate defense forms to the Program ASM.
<b>Step 2: Manuscript Formatting</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure formatting is complete	Make sure to check your dissertation handbook and the ProQuest pages on the University Library's website for formatting instructions. Ensure all corrections and changes recommended by your committee are completed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy editor review (if applicable)	After all required changes have been completed by the student, if problems with copy editing still exist your

		<p>dissertation chair may require you to submit the finished Dissertation manuscript to a copy editor. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements to have the copy editing performed within 8 weeks of the dissertation defense and to pay the copy editor directly. Plan at least 4-6 weeks for the copy editing to be completed.</p>
<p><b>Step 3: Final Approval and Submission to ProQuest</b></p>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Confirm Chair approval</p>	<p>Your Chair must approve your final, edited, and formatted manuscript. If you received a full pass at defense, then your dissertation is considered to have met all requirements and be ready to be uploaded to ProQuest.</p> <p>Your Chair must give university approval of your final, edited, and formatted manuscript by approving the dissertation approval form sent to them in Genisys. This form will be generated by the Academic Services Manager upon their receiving an email from you, the student, including: your banner ID, Dissertation Title as it appears on your title page, date of passed dissertation defense, date of all edits being approved (if edits were required), name of your dissertation chair. Make sure to send the email to <a href="mailto:psyd@regent.edu">psyd@regent.edu</a> and CC your dissertation chair.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Submission to ProQuest website</p>	<p>A student MAY NOT submit their dissertation to ProQuest until their Chair has signed off on the dissertation defense form and or the edit tracking form. Dissertations are not reviewed until the University approval form has been completed and signed off by the dissertation chair and the Program Director.</p>

## **APPENDIX C: Dissertation Forms**

All dissertation forms are located on the [PsyD Resources Page](#), along with the Dissertation Handbook.

## APPENDIX D: Research Dissemination Probe Rubric

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Scoring Criteria:

1 = Shows significant deficiency in the area.

2 = Failure to meet the minimum standard required to show competence.

3 = Meets the minimum standard required to show basic competence.

4 = Exceeds the minimum standard required to show competence with excellence.

5 = Demonstrates masterful work.

Students must obtain a passing score (2 or higher) on all sections to pass. Guidelines provided for failing (scores of 1). Ratings between 2 and 5 provided stratification for award and as means of developmental feedback. Award given to highest percent score across research and scholarly poster presentations.

Domain	Guidelines	Rating
<p><b>Formatting:</b>            Displayed on Trifold Board.            Poster includes sections consistent with the nature of the work. (Posters in which data will be or are used should contain a methods section and a planned analyses/results section with clear section breaks/headers: title, authors, affiliations, background/review, discussion, references. Margins, font style and size, line spacing, indentation, color, etc. for aesthetically pleasing and scientific product.            Tables, figures, charts, spacing, color/shading, size for aesthetically pleasing and scientific product.</p>	<p>Fail:            Failure to have adequate visual distinction between sections and sub-headers. Student formatting choice results in unprofessional appearance. Fonts smaller than 14 points.            Table/figure/chart was unclear due to formatting choices.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5            Notes:</p>
<p><b>Poster utilizes APA style</b> for citations, language, statistics, and references.</p>	<p>Fail:            Poster significantly deviates from APA style in language (bias, point of view, tense), statistics citations or references</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5            Notes:</p>

Overall poster <b>content is professional</b> , accurate, and uses appropriate citations.	Fail: Content of poster lacks sufficient citations. Content of poster is unprofessional or inaccurate. Poster contains a spelling or grammatical errors that detract from the professionalism of the presentation.	1 2 3 4 5 Notes:
<b>Title, authorship, and affiliation</b> are indicated in a professional, accurate manner and appropriate level of authorship.	Fail: Failure to identify title, authors, or affiliations. Presenting student is not first or second author.	1 2 3 4 5 Notes:
<b>Background section</b>	Fail: Background section is too lengthy and draws attention away from the current project or insufficient to give context to the poster.	1 2 3 4 5 Notes:
<b>Project goals and/or Hypothesis</b>	The current project's goals or hypotheses are not included or lack clarity.	1 2 3 4 5 Notes:
<b>Methods section (Research Only)</b>	Fail: Methods section fails to provide enough information to understand the study or does not include relevant sections and subsections such as participants, materials, procedures .	1 2 3 4 5 Notes:

<p><b>Results section (Research only and data has been analyzed)</b></p>	<p>Fail: Section fails to communicate the analysis method(s) used or to indicate the expected or realized results in a way that gives meaning to the audience and is consistent with the methods.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 N/A Notes:</p>
<p><b>Discussion section</b></p>	<p>Fail: For research with analyzed data, the poster and/or presentation fails to give implications of the study, limitations, and recommendations for future research (clinical or research). For scholarly project or research with data partially analyzed, section fails to utilize background knowledge and current study results to advance dialogue on the topic. For scholarly project or research with no data analyzed, section fails to note the current status of the project and the limitations inherent in the design for interpreting future results</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 N/A Notes:</p>

<b>Overall</b>	Fail: Poster failed to show adequate organization or flow or appropriate attention to detail such as inconsistent formatting resulted in an unprofessional presentation.	1 2 3 4 5 Notes:
<b>Circle One:</b> <b>Pass (No scores of 1)</b> <b>Fail (Any score of 1)</b> <b>Overall Score for Award (total pts):</b>		
<b>Research Project utilizing data:    /50 =    %      Project not utilizing data:    /40=    %</b>		