



Dissertations

Are you seeking your PhD? First, congratulations! Second, you have come to the right place. The Writing Center can help you every step of the way with writing this imposingly long essay. It is not as scary as it seems. It just takes time.

How do I even start?

The dissertation helps you to grow as a researcher and scholar, but they are intimidating when getting started. Luckily, most follow a similar process.

1. Choose a general topic, find an advisor, and find a committee.
2. Discuss your ideas with your advisor.
3. Create a schedule and set deadlines with your advisor.
4. Begin doing the preliminary research.
5. Develop different research questions.
6. Draft and submit your research proposal to your advisor.
7. Revise it until approved.
8. Begin researching and drafting the dissertation.
9. Submit chapters regularly to your advisor and other readers, and revise continuously.
10. Revise again!
11. Schedule your defense.
12. Defend your dissertation.
13. Begin formatting the dissertation.
 - e.g., title page, abstract, table of contents, margins, spacing, pagination, citations, etc.
14. Submit the dissertation to your university *after* formatting, revising, and proofreading it more than once.
15. Final approvals and paperwork.
16. Lastly, congratulate yourself, doctor!

Dissertation Tips

1. Think about your advisor and committee.

- Choose an advisor and committee thoughtfully. Will your advisor have valuable input for your topic? Will the committee challenge you and help you to grow?
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2. Speak with your advisor constantly.

- Develop a relationship with your advisor. Communicate and meet regularly.
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3. Set deadlines.

- Create research and drafting schedules with your advisor.
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4. Develop discipline.

- Stick to the schedule you create by developing healthy writing habits.
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5. Find a writing space.

- Find a comfortable space either on campus or at home where you can be productive.
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6. Brainstorm research and methods.

- Think intentionally about how you will research your topic and what questions you are asking.
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7. Use citation managers.

- *EndNote*, *Mendeley*, and *Zotero* are the most common managers. They keep track of your citations and annotations.
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8. Find research in multiple places.

- With your advisor's help, look for research in books, articles, websites, and other databases.
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9. Structure the dissertation.

- Include an introduction, a literature review, a methods section, the actual chapters, and a conclusion.
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10. Get as much feedback as possible.

- Look at other dissertations, submit drafts to your advisor and other readers, and use the Writing Center.

Dissertation Tips

11. Ask specific feedback questions.

- Ask readers to give feedback on specific areas or specific elements that you know need growth.

12. Revise, revise, revise!

- Revise as many times as you are able!

13. Change is not bad.

- Change is essential. If you change the thesis, a chapter, or the sources, know that it means your paper is developing.

14. Reward yourself and do not forget free time.

- Schedule time where you are not working and reward yourself for reaching a goal. Maintain your mental health.

15. Remind yourself why you are doing this.

- Whether you are looking forward to your degree, your career, or something else entirely, keep it in mind.

16. Be honest and confident when defending.

- Believe in the paper you have created, and be honest when asked questions. Sometimes you do not know about a specific scholar, or you did not read that book. These questions are intended to help your paper grow.

17. Format, edit, and proofread.

- Make sure you properly format the paper, revise it regularly, and proofread it more than once.