



ABILENE
CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY

Doctor of Ministry (DMin) Dissertation Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	OVERVIEW/OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION PROCESS.....	1
II.	COMMITTEE, ETHICS, AND PROSPECTUS INFORMATION.....	2
	Dissertation Committee (Advisors)	2
	Research Ethics Approval	3
	Prospectus.....	4
	Final Prospectus Approval.....	4
	Dissertation Registration	4
III.	GENERAL DISSERTATION INFORMATION AND POLICIES.....	5
	Dissertation Defense.....	5
	OGP SBL Reader Review	6
	Final Mechanical Review	6
	Final Submission	6
	Keywords.....	6
	Author Permission Form	7
	Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN).....	7
	Additional Information	7
	Thesis Fee	7
	Withdrawal	7
	Continuation (If Applicable)	7
IV.	STYLE AND FORMATTING GUIDE	8
	Style Manual/Citations	8
	Language	8
	General Formatting Information.....	8
	Margins.....	8
	Justification.....	8
	Font.....	8
	Footnote Formatting	9

“Ibid.” Update.....	9
Spacing	9
Page Numbering	9
Paragraph Indentation.....	9
Table and Figure Numbering and Placement	9
Tables	10
Figures.....	10
Block Quotations	10
SBL Levels of Heading	10
Order of Sections	11
Front Matter	11
Text/Body	12
Chapter Numbering and Chapter Titles	12
Suggested Outline for Dissertation	13
End Matter	13
Bibliography.....	13
Appendices.....	13
Brief Vita.....	14
APPENDIX: FAQs on Copyright and Publishing Your Dissertation	15

CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW/OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION PROCESS

For due dates and details, see the Project/Dissertation Checklist (Timeline) and the Project/Dissertation Process Canvas site, which the DMin office maintains.

1. Before beginning the project/intervention dissertation hours:
 - a. Complete appropriate ethics training during BIBM 725. Based on the prospectus, BIBM 725 professor advises on which IRB category is appropriate: Non-Research/Non-Human Research, Exempt Research, or Expedited Research. Complete appropriate application. Meanwhile, continue with prospectus revisions, etc.
 - b. Once prospectus is finalized in consultation with the Director of DMin Research, submit to Thesis Coordinator in Office of Graduate Programs for review and approval. Items to include in submission: prospectus, ethics approval letter(s), and DMin Prospectus Signature Page.
2. To be enrolled in dissertation hours:
 - a. Should already have an approved prospectus through Office of Graduate Programs.
 - b. Will have received permission from the Director of DMin Research.
 - c. Typically, should have submitted the first dissertation draft to committee.
 - d. Submit Thesis Committee Announcement to Thesis Coordinator to be enrolled in dissertation hours.
3. During dissertation hours:
 - a. Complete dissertation!
 - b. Apply for graduation.
 - c. Defend dissertation at least six weeks before graduation, although seven to eight weeks would be preferable. Submit defense report to Office of Graduate Programs via the Director of DMin Research.
 - d. Make changes requested by committee at defense.
 - e. Submit dissertation to Thesis Coordinator for SBL reader review at least five weeks before graduation. Make SBL reader review changes.
 - f. Submit dissertation to Thesis Coordinator for final mechanical review at least four weeks before graduation. Make final mechanical review changes.
 - g. Upload final dissertation to Digital Commons, and complete associated forms one week prior to graduation.

CHAPTER II

COMMITTEE, ETHICS, AND PROSPECTUS INFO

Dissertation Committee (Advisors)

The student must submit an Advisor Approval Form to formalize their primary and secondary advisor selections. Advisor selections must be approved by the DMin Director and BIBM 725 professor. Committee selection criteria is as follows: any exceptions must be approved by the Graduate School of Theology (GST) Dean and may also require approval from the Assistant Provost for Residential Graduate Programs.

1. The primary advisor (committee chair) must be ACU College of Biblical Studies (CBS) faculty, including adjuncts. They must be credentialed to teach in the content area and must have a doctorate, relevant experience, and prior experience on at least one dissertation committee.
2. Secondary advisors are typically drawn from ACU faculty, including adjuncts.
3. Committee readers are appointed later by the DMin Director and GST Associate Dean. They are typically selected from among the full-time GST or CBS faculty. In rare situations, a person outside the faculty may serve if their expertise is relevant to the dissertation topic. In such cases, the candidate may be assessed an additional fee.

The student will take BIBM 725: Project/Dissertation Seminar II during the Spring term two years before they plan to graduate. During or in connection with this course, they will identify two faculty advisors, develop their prospectus, complete research ethics training, and submit their research ethics application(s).

Research Ethics Approval

Because all DMin projects involve humans, the student must secure **research ethics approval** from ACU. If conducting their project outside the U.S., they will also need comparable research ethics approval from the country of research.

1. Student completes appropriate application: Non-Research/Non-Human Research, Exempt Research, or Expedited Research.
 - a. After the BIBM 725 professor reviews the application and gives preliminary approval, the student submits their IRB application and prospectus to their advisors for review and feedback.
 - b. After the advisors approve the IRB materials:
 - i. **If the student is conducting their project outside the U.S.**, they must apply for ethics approval in the country where research will be conducted (e.g., HREC). Must await approval before proceeding to step c.ii or c.iii.

- ii. **If the project is Non-Research/Non-Human Research**, the student submits their application to the DMin office instead of the ORSP. The BIBM 725 professor and the DMin director evaluate and discern Non-Research/ Non-Human applications, using the Non-Research/Non-Human Research Determination Checklist. If either person is also one of the student’s dissertation advisors, then the director of research and sponsored programs audits the decision. The DMin director provides an approval letter. The DMin office retains copies of the full application, checklist, and approval letter in the student’s file.
 - iii. **If the project is Exempt or Expedited**, the student submits their application to the ORSP. The ORSP conducts pre-review, requesting edits or additional material as needed. Then the ORSP sends it to a member of the IRB for official review, requesting further edits or material as needed. The ORSP provides an approval letter and retains records. At the conclusion of the study, the student stores deidentified data with the DMin office.
2. Meanwhile, the student continues with prospectus revisions, etc.

Prospectus

The major assignment for BIBM 725 will be a 25–30-page paper—the **prospectus**. Below is a very high-level overview of the standard DMin prospectus outline. [See page 1 of this document](#) for a more detailed outline.

1. Introduction
2. Theological and Theoretical Constructs: What have others said and done that contribute to and support your dissertation?
3. Methodology: how have you studied the problem?
4. Findings and Results
5. Conclusion and implications: Why is this study significant?
6. Resources
7. Bibliography
8. Dissertation Outline

The student should develop the prospectus first with the BIBM 725 professor and then with the primary and secondary advisors, revising and submitting additional drafts as needed until the prospectus is approved by their advisors. Serious research and writing are premature until the topic and research methods have been approved by the BIBM 725 professor, primary advisor, and secondary advisor.

The prospectus serves as an agreement between the student and the committee as to the goals, methods, and potential outcomes of the study. *If the dissertation problem or methodology changes, the student should obtain approval from the committee. If the change is substantial, a revised prospectus, prospectus signature page, and/or ethics approval letter may be required. Please note: the prospectus should be polished and carefully edited. It is NOT a rough draft.*

Final Prospectus Approval

Once the prospectus is approved by both the student's primary and secondary advisors, it should be submitted to the Thesis Coordinator in the Office of Graduate Programs (OGP) either via email or Canvas. Along with the prospectus, the submission should include the [Prospectus Signature Page](#) (signed by the primary advisor) and ethics approval. After approval by the Thesis Coordinator, a copy will be returned via email.

Dissertation Registration

Before a student may be registered for dissertation credit, the Director of DMin Research or the DMin office will complete the [Thesis Committee Announcement](#) form via Adobe Acrobat Sign and email a copy to the OGP. All students are registered for dissertation hours through the Thesis Coordinator in the OGP once the Thesis Committee Announcement form has been submitted. Students will be enrolled in 6 total hours of dissertation credit, which can either be taken in a single semester or divided between 2 long semesters.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL DISSERTATION INFORMATION AND POLICIES

As a final integrative endeavor that serves as the capstone of your DMin degree, the project/dissertation is primarily an exercise in practical theology, blending academic rigor and the practice of ministry. As the name suggests, it includes both a project and a dissertation. Through the **project**, you will conduct an intervention to address a need within your ministry context in order to enrich and strengthen the church or organization. Through the written **dissertation**, you will describe and assess your work, implementing whatever theories, theologies, resources, and related disciplines may be appropriate to your chosen ministry objective(s).

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense must take place at least 6 weeks before graduation. This date is listed on the [Deadlines and Timelines](#) page of the OGP site. If the defense does not occur by the published deadline, the student will be excluded from commencement. ***Please note that, as of 2016, ACU no longer holds commencement ceremonies in August. According to the Office of the Provost, students who lack 6 or fewer hours to complete their degree after the spring semester (and are already enrolled in those hours during a summer term) will be allowed to participate in May commencement; however, this exception expressly excludes dissertation hours.*

In the case of **extenuating circumstances only**, exceptions to this deadline may be granted by the Assistant Provost for Residential Graduate Programs at his/her discretion. To apply for an exception, students should fill out a Request for Academic Exception form (which can be picked up in the Registrar's office), which should be submitted to and signed by the student's chair as well as the program director before being sent to the Thesis Coordinator for processing and submission to the Assistant Provost. ***Please note that these situations must be truly exceptional, meaning extraordinary, unprecedented, and rare.*

A clean copy of the dissertation should be submitted to each committee member at least three (3) weeks before the scheduled defense.

At the defense, the committee chair should sign the [Thesis Defense Report](#) form. This form should be submitted to the OGP as quickly as possible after the defense but **no later than 5 weeks before graduation**. Failure to defend and submit this form by the reported deadlines will result in the student's exclusion from commencement. Additionally, at the defense, all committee members should sign the dissertation signature page. Signatures may be physical or electronic. Please follow the [signature page template](#), filling in the degree name and committee members' names as appropriate. Once signed, this signature page should be emailed to the Thesis

Coordinator. The Thesis Coordinator will obtain the Assistant Provost's signature and insert the signature page into the finished dissertation once approved by all parties and ready for submission to the Digital Commons.

OGP SBL Reader Review

An electronic (Word or PDF, although Word is much preferred) copy for reader review must be submitted to the Thesis Coordinator as soon as all changes requested at defense are made. At this point, the primary advisor should confirm that all changes made address the committee's requests.

The OGP's SBL reader reviews the dissertation for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and clarity. Attention is also given to consistency in following this ACU DMin Dissertation Guide and the *SBLHS*. Generally, the SBL reader's review period is approximately two weeks; however, documents of greater length may take additional time. Typically, the earlier a dissertation is submitted to the OGP, the faster the turnaround. Reader edits will be returned to the student via email. If needed, the student and committee chair should meet together to review the suggested edits. It is at the discretion of the committee chair as to which edits should be incorporated into the final draft.

Final Mechanical Review

At least 4 weeks before graduation, the student must submit a Word or PDF copy of the dissertation via email for final mechanical review and approval. In the final mechanical review, the dissertation will be reviewed for correct formatting. Particular attention will be given to margins, accuracy of the Table of Contents, and page numbering. Students should use the [Formatting Checklist](#) as a guide.

Final Submission

After the Thesis Coordinator has approved the dissertation and inserted the signature page, the final electronic copy of the dissertation must be uploaded to the ACU Digital Commons library website. This must be done at least 1 week before graduation. More details about this process can be found at https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/dmin_theses/ or obtained from the DMin office. This version should be free from errors. At the time of submission, you may elect to have a Creative Commons copyright license on your work. More information about Creative Commons copyright licenses can be found in the appendix of this document.

Keywords

As part of the final electronic submission, students will be asked to submit 3–5 keywords that will allow their paper to be found more easily by search engines. Students may consult with their committee chair to determine the most appropriate keywords. These words do not need to be listed explicitly in the body of the dissertation.

Author Permission Form

The ACU Library requires this form in order to catalog an electronic version of the dissertation. Please submit the [Author Permission Statement](#) at the time of final submission.

Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN)

All Graduate School of Theology (GST) theses and dissertations must be registered with the Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN). Students must submit a signed [distribution agreement](#) along with a final PDF of their dissertation to TREN, which can be done via email. TREN contact info will be provided by the Thesis Coordinator when the dissertation is finalized.

If students desire an additional layer of legal protection, they have the option to have their dissertation copyright registered through TREN for a fee of \$85. This fee should be mailed to TREN. Kenneth Crews (2012) notes, “Statutory damages and attorney fees are generally available to the copyright owner only if the owner registered the work with the U.S. Copyright Office before the infringement occurred” (Copyright Law for Librarians and Educators).

Additional Information

Thesis Fee

The OGP thesis fee, which covers the SBL reader review, is charged to the student’s account at the time of registration in the second three hours of dissertation (or during the single semester of six hours of enrollment) and is non-refundable. The thesis fee is \$295.

Withdrawal

Students should contact the DMin office and their dissertation committee chair if they decide to withdraw from dissertation hours. Withdrawal from dissertation hours must be done by the committee chair submitting a Change of Grade form to change the grade from IP to W.

Continuation (If Applicable)

Students who do not complete their dissertation by the end of the second semester in which they are enrolled in dissertation hours will be automatically registered for dissertation continuation each fall and spring semester until completion. Continuation is zero credit hours and has a fee equal to ½ hour of tuition (which varies by department). By being enrolled in dissertation continuation, the student is eligible to consult with his/her dissertation committee, thus making progress toward completing the dissertation. **A student is expected to be enrolled each fall and spring term until the dissertation is completed.** Students will not be enrolled in summer continuation unless expressly requested by the student’s primary advisor.

CHAPTER IV

STYLE AND FORMATTING GUIDE

Style Manual/Citations

All DMin students should utilize the *SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (*SBLHS*) in formatting their citations. Please note that students should not rely upon bibliography programs or citation generators. Instead, the student should rely exclusively on the *SBLHS*.

Language

The student should use the dialect of English that is most common in their country of residence. For clarity's sake, it may be helpful to declare a preferred dialect. Be sure that spellings, style, and usage are consistent throughout the entire DMin dissertation.

General Formatting Information

Margins

The margins for each page, front matter, text, and reference material must adhere to those listed below, measuring from edge of paper to first letter of type:

- Left 1 ½ inch
- Right 1 inch
- Top 1 inch (except first page of each section or chapter)
- Bottom 1 inch (no more than 1 ¼ inches)

The page number may intrude into the bottom margin. Text may extend a single line below the bottom margin in order to complete a footnote or last line of a paragraph, a chapter, a subdivision, a table, or a figure.

Justification

The use of double (left and right) justification is unacceptable since it often causes gaps within printed lines. Simply align to the left margin, and allow for a ragged right margin.

Font

A 12-point standard serif font should be used (e.g., Times New Roman). Footnotes should be 10-point standard serif font (e.g., TNR).

Footnote Formatting

The automatic footnote feature in Word should be utilized for footnotes. Footnotes should be single spaced but with a blank line between each entry. Instead of a superscripted number, the footnote number should be full size with a period after it. (This is different than the automatic footnote function in Word. If needed, [here is a tutorial](#) on how to change the automatic footnote style to adhere to the prescribed SBLHS style.) The first line of each footnote entry should be indented ½ inch with all subsequent lines wrapping to the left margin.

“Ibid.” Update

The *Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)* has now moved away from the use of “ibid.” in footnotes, [so SBLHS has changed its recommendation as well](#). In any subsequent citations, use the shortened version of the author’s name and the work title, and include a page number.

Spacing

The text of the dissertation must be double-spaced. Single spacing can be used in tables, in footnotes (with one extra line between footnotes), in block quotes, and in the bibliography (with one extra line between entries). *No extra space should be added between paragraphs or sections. This guidance aligns with the ACU Thesis Guide but differs from SBLHS.*

Page Numbering

Page numbers should be the same font and size as the rest of the text (typically 12-point Times New Roman). All page numbers should be centered at the bottom of each page of the body and appendices. *This guidance aligns with the ACU Thesis Guide but differs from SBLHS.*

The front matter should be numbered differently. The first few pages should not be numbered. Beginning with the Table of Contents, each page is *counted*, but page numbers should not appear on the pages of the Table of Contents. Number all of the pages that directly follow the Table of Contents using lowercase Roman numerals. For example, if there is a two-page Table of Contents, the page that immediately follows the Table of Contents is numbered “iii.” The body of the text and all appendices should then be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals. The brief vita at the end of the dissertation should not be numbered.

Paragraph Indentation

All paragraphs should begin with a ½-inch indentation. Subsequent lines of the paragraph should wrap to the left margin.

Table and Figure Numbering and Placement

- Each table or figure must be numbered independently and consecutively in Arabic numerals, and each table or figure must have a unique title. The title should be brief and explanatory. The number and title should be aligned to the left margin.

- Tables and figures should be referred to by number (e.g., “table 1” or “figure 2”), not by “the following table” or “the figure below.” Tables and figures should appear on the same page as their call-out. If that is impossible, they should be placed on the next page.
- If a table or figure is too wide for a page, turn it ninety degrees so that the left side is at the bottom of the page (your software may orient the page this way automatically). The margin at the left binding edge must be 1 ½ inches and all other margins at least one inch. The caption should also be placed horizontally. The placement of the page number must be consistent with the rest of the dissertation. Do not put any of your main text on a page containing a landscape table or figure.

Tables

- The same font used for the dissertation must also be used for tables. Sometimes it is necessary to alter the size of the font to fit the table within the required margins.
- Table text should be single-spaced.
- Table titles should appear above the table with the word “table” in all caps, an Arabic numeral followed by a period, and a table title in sentence case (e.g., TABLE 1. Data supporting topic).
- See *SBLHS* 2.1.3.6 and *CMOS* 3.47–3.88 for info on tables. See CMOS Figure 3.11 for an example table.

Figures

- Photographs must be of professional quality.
- Figure titles should appear below the image with the word “figure” in all caps, an Arabic numeral followed by a period, and a figure title in sentence case (e.g., FIGURE 7. Picture of something interesting).
- [Consult the SBL blog](#) as well as *CMOS* 3.3–3.46 for specifics on formatting for figures.

Block Quotations

Indent quotations with five or more lines ½ inch from the left margin. Block quotations do not need quotation marks. Single-space the block quotation.

SBL Levels of Heading

Note the appropriate formatting of SBL headings, which are described below. Chapter titles should be all caps, centered, and not bold. Headings within each chapter should follow SBL formatting, which is described below. *Do not put extra space before headings. (The SBL Student Supplement recommends this, but it contradicts both the ACU Thesis Guide and the recommendations of this ACU DMin Dissertation Guide.)*

Level 1: Bold, centered

Level 2: Centered, not bold

Level 3: Left-justified, bold, italics

Level 4: Left-justified (no bold or italics)

Order of Sections

The dissertation consists of three parts: front matter, text, and end matter. The sections are arranged in the order listed below. Some sections are optional and may not be included in all dissertations.

Front Matter

- **Abstract**: The abstract consists of an essay-style statement of the dissertation problem, a brief exposition of the method used, a condensed summary of findings or results, and conclusions. The maximum length of the abstract is 350 words, which is approximately 1½ double-spaced pages. The text begins with the heading ABSTRACT in all capital letters at the top of the first page of the abstract. The heading is centered 2 inches from the top of the page and the text begins two lines (or one double-space) below the heading.
- **Thesis title page**: The title appears 2 inches from the top of the page. Format the title in title case. The date at the bottom of the page should be 1½ inches from the bottom of the page. Follow the title page template.
- **Dedication** (optional): The dedication is brief and centered on the page. No heading is necessary. It begins two inches from the top of the page and customarily begins with the word “To.” No page number should appear on this page.
- **Acknowledgments** (optional): This section begins with the heading ACKNOWLEDGMENTS centered in all capital letters 2 inches from the top of the page. The text is double-spaced and begins two lines (or one double-space) below the heading. No page number should appear on this page.
- **Table of Contents**: There are two approaches to creating the Table of Contents. One is to utilize the automatic Table of Contents in Microsoft Word. This requires some work to set up on the front end, but once you have it set up, you can automatically update the Table of Contents when you make any changes. The second option is to create the Table of Contents manually at the end. This takes less time initially, but it does require you to re-check page numbers at every stage after you have made changes.
 - The Table of Contents may vary in the amount of information included. However, the following items must be shown:
 - List of Tables (if included)
 - List of Figures (if included)
 - Chapter titles
 - First- and second-level headings (further levels of heading are optional)
 - Bibliography
 - Appendices
 - Table of Contents checklist:
 - Page numbers are not shown in the header or footer of any page of the Table of Contents.
 - The heading TABLE OF CONTENTS in all capital letters is centered without punctuation two inches from the top of the first page only; neither a continuation notice nor any part of the heading appears on subsequent pages.
 - Entries in the Table of Contents should exactly match the corresponding

- headings in the text word for word.
- Each chapter should be numbered with Roman numerals. The chapter title should be indented ½ inch from the Roman numeral.
- Level 1 headings should align with the chapter title (not the Roman numeral).
- Each level of heading after level 1 in the Table of Contents should be indented ½ inch further than the previous entry.
- Entries in the Table of Contents should be double-spaced.
- If an entry has multiple lines, the second line will be indented ½ inch. The page number is placed opposite the last line of each entry in the Table of Contents.
- Page numbers and dot leaders are right aligned. If creating the Table of Contents manually, use the dot leader feature in Word (see Table of Contents Help). Manually adding the dots will lead to uneven alignment.
- All page numbers in the Table of Contents must match the page numbers in the text.
- **List of Tables (if applicable) and/or List of Figures (if applicable)**: The heading(s) LIST OF TABLES and/or LIST OF FIGURES in all capital letters is centered without punctuation two inches from the top of the first page only.
 - The page numbers should be shown in lowercase Roman numerals centered at the bottom of the page. (Remember: start counting with the Table of Contents. The List of Tables or List of Figures should not be page i.)
 - Tables and figures should be listed by number. Do not include the word “Table” or “Figure.”
 - All table/figure numbers and captions are listed exactly as they appear in the text with respect to wording, capitalization, and punctuation.
 - Captions are listed in their entirety, except when the caption consists of several phrases separated by periods. In that case, the first phrase (the material up to the period) may be entered in the List of Tables or List of Figures as the caption.
 - If an entry has multiple lines, the page number is placed opposite the last line of each entry.
 - The page number must match the page on which the caption appears.
 - Page numbers and dot leaders are right aligned. As with the Table of Contents, the dot leader feature must be used. Do not add dots manually.

Text/Body

Chapter Numbering and Chapter Title

Each chapter is numbered consecutively with uppercase Roman numerals. The word “CHAPTER” and its number are centered 2 inches from the top of the page. The chapter title is centered in capital letters one double-spaced line below the chapter number. Neither the chapter heading nor the chapter title should be bold.

Chapter numbers and chapter titles are primary divisions of the entire dissertation body and are not part of the subdivision scheme. They are not considered levels of heading.

Levels of heading are used in much the same way as an outline. Just as there would not be an A without a B in an outline, there always must be at least two subsection headings within any given section.

Each chapter does not have to contain the same number of subdivisions. However, the levels of heading used must be consistent throughout the text. Two levels of heading will typically suffice; however, some students may use three or four levels of heading.

Suggested Outline for Dissertation

For a more detailed description of the recommended outline, [see pages 2-3 of this document](#).

1. Chapter I: Introduction (description of the ministry context; statement of the problem; statement of the purpose (including a description of the intervention); basic assumptions; definitions, delimitations, and limitations)
2. Chapter II: Theological and Theoretical Constructs (description of theological themes pertaining to the project; description of theoretical frameworks or models contributing to the project; application or integration of the theological and theoretical perspectives to the project)
3. Chapter III: Methodology (overview of the format of the project intervention; sampling; description of the project sessions; evaluation methodology)
4. Chapter IV: Findings and Results (evaluation of findings)
5. Chapter V: Conclusion and Implications (interpretations; trustworthiness; significance and implications; questions still not answered or that warrant further research)
6. End Matter (Bibliography; Appendix/Appendices (if applicable); Brief Vita)

End Matter

Bibliography

A dissertation must include a list or lists of materials used in the preparation of the manuscript. Note that the bibliography should only include sources that are cited in the footnotes of the dissertation. (Although additional sources may have been consulted in the creation of the intervention and/or the document, those should not be included in the bibliography unless cited directly.)

Appendices

An appendix allows detailed information to be included that would be distracting to the reader if introduced in the text of the dissertation.

- Treat each appendix as a separate chapter in regards to page numbering and margins.
- If there is only one appendix, the generic heading APPENDIX can be used.
- When there is more than one appendix, each should be labeled with a separate capital letter (APPENDIX A, etc.). Each appendix also should have a descriptive title underneath

the heading. The descriptive title should be in title case (not all caps).

- In the text, appendices should be referred to by their labels in title case (e.g., “see Appendix A”).
- Research ethics approval letter(s) must be included as Appendix A. Subsequent appendices should be sequenced according to the order in which they are mentioned in the body of the dissertation.

Brief Vita

The Brief Vita is a narrative summary of the writer’s academic and professional information with limited personal information. If it is included, it should be no more than one page in length. It is placed as the final page in the dissertation document. The Brief Vita is not numbered nor mentioned in the Table of Contents. Appropriate information is:

- Date and place of birth. Citizenship should be added when not apparent by place of birth.
- Educational institutions attended and degrees awarded.
- Place of current employment.
- Professional positions held (optional).
- Scholastic publications (optional).

APPENDIX

FAQS ON COPYRIGHT AND PUBLISHING YOUR DISSERTATION

Dissertation students are sometimes encouraged to take their dissertation work and disseminate it in peer-reviewed and edited venues, including journals and books. This increases visibility and viewership by interested professionals and gives you acceptance by peers. When you publish your dissertation/project in [ACU's Digital Commons](#) you will choose a [Creative Commons copyright license](#). This will protect your dissertation but also allow you, as the copyright holder, to develop derivative works from it. Below are some common questions and answers students have about copyright and future use of your dissertation/project.

Am I allowed to make multiple books/articles out of my dissertation?

As copyright holder of your scholarship, you're entitled to make derivative works and adapt or rearrange your work as you see fit, although a journal may want you to edit your work a bit to make it something different for the journal iteration. Every version or adaptation of your work is a separate work for which you hold copyright.

Keep in mind, though, that if you publish journal articles that are merely excerpted from your digital project without modification, you should be careful about assigning copyright to the journals. If you later wish to reuse the same language in, say, a manuscript for a book, you don't want to have transferred your rights to that iteration.

Will publishing my dissertation in Digital Commons affect the acceptance of publications derived from it?

In most cases, you have the right to publish work from your dissertation in other copyrighted venues even after publishing in ACU's Digital Commons. While not common, certain publishers in particular disciplines may consider theses/dissertations to be prior publications and/or limit their consideration of a subsequent journal article or book manuscript based on the dissertation. This is rare and untrue for the majority of publishers.

- To the contrary, academic publishers typically view prior [open access publication as a means to improve acceptance for a book deal](#) due to increased awareness of your work.
- While numbers vary significantly by discipline, a 2013 [study on electronic theses and dissertations](#) indicates that more than 90% of university presses will consider an open access dissertation for book publication. See also a similar [2011 survey](#).
- Keep in mind, too, that your dissertation will be revised and rewritten significantly if/when you shape it into a manuscript for a first book or journal article. Most publishers accordingly view this as entirely new work.
- If you are instead concerned about acceptance for future journal articles rather than books, take a look at the guidelines for the particular journals in which you're interested.

For instance, [Springer](#) and [Elsevier](#)—which do *not* count theses/dissertations as prior publications.

Ultimately, you should check with your advisors and the guidelines of the publishers you are considering. It is important to familiarize yourself with the policies in your field.

What is a Creative Commons Copyright license?

The Creative Commons copyright licenses and tools forge a balance inside the traditional “all rights reserved” setting that copyright law creates. Our tools give everyone from individual creators to large companies and institutions a simple, standardized way to grant copyright permissions to their creative work. The combination of our tools and our users is a vast and growing digital commons, a pool of content that can be copied, distributed, edited, remixed, and built upon, all within the boundaries of copyright law.

All Creative Commons licenses have many important features in common. Every license helps creators — we call them *licensors* if they use our tools — retain copyright while allowing others to copy, distribute, and make some uses of their work — at least non-commercially. Every Creative Commons license also ensures licensors get the credit for their work they deserve. Every Creative Commons license works around the world and lasts as long as applicable copyright lasts (because they are built on copyright). These common features serve as the baseline, on top of which licensors can choose to grant additional permissions when deciding how they want their work to be used.

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