Thesis and Dissertation Formats

The thesis and dissertation both represent culminating works of the research processes for the master’s degree and doctoral degree programs respectively in the Department of HHPR. There are two accepted formats that can be utilized for these works; either the traditional five chapter format or the alternative journal manuscript format.

The difference between the traditional and alternative format is mainly in the manner of content organization. It does not differ in quality, contribution to the field, or rigor. The final product from either format should make a novel contribution to the field, and should be a work that is publishable in a peer-reviewed outlet.

The determination of the format choice should be jointly made by the student, thesis/dissertation chair, and thesis/dissertation committee; it is not a decision made solely by the student. Once this determination has been made, it should be documented on the Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Form and signed by the student and committee members and submitted to the HHPR Graduate Program Director. Regardless of format selected, the thesis/dissertation should conform to the Guidelines for Preparing the Dissertation and Thesis published by the Baylor Graduate School.

Traditional Thesis/Dissertation

The traditional format consists of five chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Method, Results, and Discussion.


As an alternative to the traditional thesis/dissertation style, chapters 4 and 5 of the traditional model may be replaced with journal manuscript(s) first-authored by the student (i.e., the text of one or more manuscripts, submitted or to be submitted for publication, and/or published articles, reformatted according to thesis/dissertation requirements as described below). For the thesis 1-2 journal manuscripts would be included, and for the dissertation 2-3 manuscripts would be included. Each paper must be judged by the thesis/dissertation committee to be of publishable quality in journals deemed by the committee to be of high quality.

The determination of the number of journal manuscripts, and which journals the papers target, are joint decisions of the student, the thesis/dissertation chair, and the thesis/dissertation committee; it is not a decision made by the student alone. For multiple journal manuscript projects, the papers must have a cohesive, unitary character, making them a report of a single program of research. This connection between multiple journal manuscripts will be described in both the Introduction (chapter 1) and Conclusion (a chapter to follow the final manuscript). According to Graduate School policy, the Conclusion chapter would be required for any thesis/dissertation with multiple manuscripts.

The purposes of the journal-manuscript dissertation format are to: (a) train students to report research findings in a format traditionally used by their scientific and professional
communities; (b) facilitate the submission of publications from the thesis/dissertation research; and (c) allow for other students and professionals to review the student’s thesis/dissertation research in a concise reporting format.

Thesis/Dissertation Proposal

For either format of thesis or dissertation, the student will prepare a proposal to present to the thesis/dissertation committee. The format of this proposal will vary depending on the dissertation format, but will typically consist of an introduction, a review of pertinent literature, and at least an outline of the proposed methods.

For doctoral students, the dissertation proposal can only be completed after having passed the preliminary oral examination.

Once the student and the thesis/dissertation chair believe the proposal is sufficient, an approval of the committee must occur. At least two weeks prior to this approval, the student must send a copy of the proposal to all committee members.

If the committee approves of the proposal, the thesis/dissertation chair will need to complete the Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Form and return a copy to the HHPR Graduate Program Director and to each committee member.

After the committee members have approved the proposal, the student will submit the required paperwork to the Human Subjects Committee (Institutional Research Board [IRB]). Any project that deals with human participants, whether the data are primary or secondary in nature, must obtain prior approval from the IRB before the data collection can commence. Only after IRB approval, may the student begin to solicit study participants and to collect data.

Approved by Vote of the Graduate Faculty on 12/17/13
Approved by Chris Rios – Graduate School on 1/24/14
HHPR Thesis and Dissertation Formats

Department of HHPR    Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Form

Name __________________________________________ BU ID #______________________

Candidate for Degree of ___________________________ Major ________________________

Thesis/Dissertation Title _________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Thesis/Dissertation Format (indicate one)  _____ Traditional 5 Chapter format

___________________________________________________________________________

_____ Journal-Manuscript format

Target Journal(s) for Manuscript Model 
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Number of Manuscript(s) Designation          _______ (1-2 for thesis, 2-3 for dissertation)

Disposition of Data – All research data shall be preserved in the custody of, or as arranged by,
the Principal Investigator (student) on behalf of the University. Investigators on research teams
have obligations to discuss responsibilities of data acquisition, use, management, access and
retention with other members of the research team. Students are encouraged to seek scholarly
publication of their research, and should do so in a timely fashion. After _____ year(s) from the
defense of the thesis or dissertation, the committee chair reserves the right to move forward with
the submission of scholarly work from the research if it has not been pursued by the student.

Committee Chair Signature  _______________________________________________

Committee Members Signatures _______________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Student Signature & Date   _______________________________________________

____________________________________

Student to submit one copy to the HHPR Graduate Program Director and to each committee member