

# Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Three Article Dissertation (TAD) Guidelines

Meet TAD, a new alternative to the traditional dissertation format within the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. Students may still wish to pursue a traditional dissertation format. The decision of which format to use is a serious consideration that students should discuss with their dissertation Committee based on the type of study they wish to pursue.

## Explanation of Guidelines

In order to allow students ample opportunity to publish their work, the Department supports the TAD format for dissertations. TAD format usually involves the joining of three or more full-length manuscripts (to be published) with introductory and summarizing sections. Mandatory TAD guidelines are listed below:

1. The dissertation should have a coherent topic with an introduction presenting the general theme of the dissertation research and a conclusion summarizing and integrating the major findings.
2. The student should be primary author on at least 2 of the published or publishable works.
3. In order to fulfill the dissertation requirements, 2 papers should at least be in review with journals discussed within the Committee during planning/proposal sessions.
4. If an article(s) is multi-authored, you should clearly justify or clarify the contributions of the other authors in relationship to the research project. Issues of clarification should include origins of the conceptualization and design, the collection of data, analysis and interpretation of the data, and other significant areas of contribution. The student will be involved with every aspect of the dissertation.

The nature of the study will dictate the format and nature of each of the articles. The specific TAD format may vary and should be discussed with the student's Chair and supervisory committee. The following represents some examples of how the TAD may unfold.

### TAD Format Models:

1. **Non-Experimental Format.** The dissertation is non-experiment but with unique theoretical implications, adequate independent or dependent variables or sufficient data to support three articles. The flow of the TAD will vary with each study but consider the following flow:

- a) **Introduction:** This describes purpose and nature of each the three or more articles. If the articles do not allow for a comprehensive review of literature, the literature review can be included in this introduction.
- b) **Article I:** This article should represent the primary finding for the study.
- c) **Articles II & III:** The remaining articles could represent secondary analyses of data collected during the study.
- d) **Summary:** A concluding section should include a general discussion, conclusion, applications, and ideas for future research that comes from the three or more articles.

**Single Experiment Format:** The dissertation is one experiment but with unique theoretical implications, adequate independent or dependent variables or sufficient data to support three articles

- a) **Introduction:** This describes purpose and nature of each the three or more articles. If the articles do not allow for a comprehensive review of literature, the literature review can be included in this introduction.
- b) **Article I:** This article should represent the primary finding for the study.
- c) **Articles II & III:** The remaining articles could represent secondary analyses of data collected during the single experiment.
- d) **Summary:** A concluding section should include a general discussion, conclusion, applications, and ideas for future research that comes from the three or more articles.

**3. Independent Experiments Format:** You may want to conduct three or more independent experiments with different populations, independent variables, or dependent measures. The three independent experiment areas should all be within your desired area of expertise. Each can be reported independently. The dissertation format would be the following:

- a) **Introduction:** This describes the purpose and nature of each article. If the articles do not allow for a comprehensive review of literature, the literature review can be included in this chapter.
- b) **Article I:** Is a complete article with introduction, methods, results, and conclusions for Experiment A and written within the guidelines for the identified journal.
- c) **Article II:** Again, this is a complete and independent article with introduction, methods, results, and conclusions for Experiment B.
- d) **Article III:** This third article is also independent for Experiment C.
- e) **Summary:** A concluding section should include a general discussion, conclusion, applications, and ideas for future research that comes from the three experiments A, B, and C.

**4. Interdependent Experiments Format:** In the case of progressive experiments, you may want to use the interdependent format. You may want to determine the outcomes of part of the experiment before proceeding with the next portion of the experiment. Again, there may be unanswered questions that could be determined with a third experiment:

- a) **Introduction:** This describes purpose and progressive nature of each article. If the articles do not allow for a comprehensive review of literature, the literature review can be included in this chapter.
- b) **Article I:** This article would be an independent article with introduction, methods, results, and conclusions for Experiment A.
- c) **Article II:** The experiment would build on Experiment A and lead into Experiment B. It would be an independent article with an introduction, methods, results, and conclusions for Experiment B.
- d) **Article III:** Article C would build upon experiments A and B as an introduction to Experiment C.
- e) **Summary or Conclusions and Discussion:** A concluding section should include a general discussion, conclusion, applications, and ideas for future research that comes from the three experiments A, B, and C.

## The Research Proposal

Having received guidance from the supervisory dissertation committee, the formal research proposal can be developed and generally completed after all or most of the course work is completed and the comprehensive examination has been successfully completed. Posting for the Research Proposal must be made public two weeks prior to the proposal. The proposal should include the following:

- a) An introduction with theoretical foundations and the most significant supportive literature, statement of the problem, and proposed methods.
- b) An article that has already been submitted, or is ready to submit, to a peer-reviewed journal that is either a theoretical paper, position paper, results of a pilot study, or other appropriate article as approved by your graduate committee. This may serve as an article of the TAD format.

## Formal Research Proposal

The initial defense is of the dissertation proposal to the student's supervisory committee. This is a formal defense and as such, a polished proposal and professional quality presentation should be the standard. Copies of the dissertation proposal must be in the hands of the student's supervisory committee a minimum of two weeks before the proposal defense. Proposals must meet the standards for theses and dissertations as presented in Appendix A of the Department's Graduate Bulletin.

- a) The proposal draft must be distributed to the chair of the supervisory committee and least three weeks before the formal research proposal. Other committee members must receive the proposal draft two weeks before the formal research proposal.
- b) Students will be expected to present their formal research proposal to the graduate faculty, graduate students, and other auxiliary faculty and guests.
- c) Directly following the proposal, the student's graduate committee will convene to approve the proposal or recommend that a student resubmit a modified proposal at a later time.

### **Final Oral Examination**

The second defense is of the final dissertation itself. When the student and the supervisory committee consider the dissertation to be complete, the supervisory committee will conduct the final oral examination of the dissertation. This is the final formal defense and as such, a polished document and professional quality presentation should be the standard. Copies of the dissertation must be in the hands of the student's supervisory committee a minimum of two weeks before the final defense. Dissertations must meet the standards for theses and dissertations as presented in Appendix A of the Graduate Bulletin.

During the defenses, students, faculty, or other interested parties may be in attendance. However, only those who have read the document may ask questions during the defense. Defenses must be open to the public and publicly announced two weeks prior to the defense date; an electronic version of the document must also be made available at this time.

## Q & A on the TAD...

The questions below apply to doctoral dissertations (Ph.D.; Adapted with permission from the College of Education & Human Development, Texas A & M University website: [www.cehd.tamu.edu/articles/dissertation\\_formatting\\_guidelines](http://www.cehd.tamu.edu/articles/dissertation_formatting_guidelines)).

### **How does one choose the most appropriate format for a dissertation?**

The decision about which format is most appropriate should be made jointly by you and the chair of your committee. Special consideration should be given to:

- The fit of your topic to the format
- The academic field's view of the format
- The practical considerations regarding the (job) positions you wish to apply for when you finish your training (academia or private sector).

### **I have heard of an alternative to the traditional dissertation format. What is this alternative?**

The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism accepts two choices of formats for the Ph.D. dissertation:

- Traditional Format
- TAD Journal Article Format

### **What does the Traditional Format look like?**

The Traditional Format consists of five chapters organized, most commonly, in the following sequence:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction
- Chapter 2 – Literature Review
- Chapter 3 – Methods
- Chapter 4 – Results
- Chapter 5 – Conclusions/Discussions
- References
- Appendices

In this format, the student describes and discusses a focal research question/topic and the steps undertaken to answer that specific question(s). When the focal question comprises sub-questions, all questions (focal and sub-) are addressed in tandem in the dissertation reporting. For instance, the methods chapter describes all methods employed to collect and analyze data to answer the focal question as well as the sub-questions even if different data sets are employed.

*The number of chapters may vary according to disciplinary fields and/or methodological approaches. At times, historical studies or critical analyses*

*may comprise seven or eight chapters. The five-chapter format, however, has been the most common within schools/colleges of health.*

### **What does the Journal Article Format look like?**

The Journal Article Format allows the presentation of dissertation research in the format of...

- Journal manuscripts published during a candidate's doctoral training
- Journal manuscripts submitted for publication during a candidate's doctoral training
- Journal manuscripts to be submitted for publication immediately following dissertation defense proceedings

The decision regarding the number of manuscripts is inseparably tied to the number and types of research questions being posed, however the expectation is that at least **2 articles** will be submitted for review.

The Three Article Dissertation format contains the following sections:

- Chapter 1 - Introduction
- Chapter 2 - Manuscript # 1
- Chapter 3 - Manuscript # 2
- Chapter 4 - Manuscript # 3
- ....
- Chapter X – Summary / Conclusion
- References
- Appendices

### **What does the final product look like in the TAD format?**

**ADD EXAMPLES OF PDFS...eventually refer to library.**

### **What is the purpose of the Introduction chapter in the TAD format?**

- It describes the broad research question/topic being investigated;
- It presents the over-arching goal of the study (of the individual research reports, considered in tandem) as well as the specific objectives of each individual study report (each 'piece');
- It functions as the chord that weaves the various manuscripts together and describes, for the reader, their 'collective meaning' and 'combined contribution' to the field;
- It allows the reader to connect the various manuscripts in the dissertation in a logical and meaningful manner;
- It provides the reader with a comprehensive literature review;

- Without the introduction, a Journal Article Formatted dissertation would read as a 'pile of articles,' apparently related but not intimately linked.

**What is the purpose of the Conclusion chapter in the Journal Article Format?**

- The conclusion chapter 'ties' everything together;
- The conclusion chapter focuses, as does the introduction chapter, on helping the reader see how the various manuscripts, taken together, make a contribution to a particular field;
- The conclusion chapter may present/discuss research imperatives, or knowledge gaps, not visible when each manuscript is considered individually.

**Does the Department of PRT have a required or preferred format?**

- No. The Department of PRT believes having alternatives provides much-needed flexibility for doctoral candidates, yet the goal remains that of excellence in education and human development research. The format for disseminating such research should reflect the best choice, the best "match" for the type of study being conducted.

**My dissertation chair and my committee have no experience working with the TAD Format. What should I do?**

- Not all faculty members have experienced using this format. Nonetheless, faculty who wish to learn about the format may do so, through the Department of PRT, and by working collaboratively with other faculty who have directed TAD Format dissertations. Models are available and experienced faculty can mentor those desiring to master this approach.
- If your chair/committee members do not feel comfortable advising a dissertation in this format, you have two options:
  1. to adapt your research question and project to the Traditional Format, knowing that your chair and committee members will be able to contribute more successfully to this format, given their experience and expertise;
  2. to change chairs or committee members and seek out faculty who do have experience with the Three Article Format.

**What are the strengths and limitations of each format?**

**Traditional Format Strengths**

Some scholars argue the Traditional Format mirrors the scientific process itself: identifying and stating a problem and hypotheses, situating the problem within the current scientific dialogue, developing a plan to collect

and analyze data, and conducting the analysis and critical interpretation of the findings.

Many studies have a single focal question that does not lend itself, easily, to reporting in separate manuscripts. In this case, the traditional format is well-suited for reporting on a single study.

### **Traditional Format Weaknesses**

The amount of rewriting and reshaping required to publish a traditionally formatted dissertation as journal article(s) or a book is the major drawback. The rewriting demands, coupled with recently graduated students' new professional roles, oftentimes preclude publication of the dissertation.

*"Thus, most theses [and dissertations] are not submitted for publication. Ironically, the time-honored, scholarly style of the conventional thesis/dissertation actually acts as an impediment to one of the integral parts of the research process, which is the dissemination of the results" (Thomas, Nelson, & Magill, 1986, p. 118).*

Recently, the availability of dissertations on the Internet has minimized the problem of disseminating dissertation findings through publication (as dissertations become more widely available). Nevertheless, distribution of the dissertation through electronic means does not usually carry the same weight as refereed publications do. Authors, therefore, are often eager to enhance their chances of 'getting published.'

### **Journal Article Format Strengths**

Allows the candidate to write in a format with which he/she is familiar. As the currency in most research-intensive/extensive universities is refereed journal publications, the sooner doctoral students learn to master this format for communicating their inquiry, the easier it will be to become productive academics.

Increases the odds that the dissertation (or portions of the dissertation) will be published soon after defense/completion (and, oftentimes, prior to defense).

### **Journal Article Format Weaknesses**

The Journal Article Format is inappropriate for some types of research questions and topics that do not involve multiple experiments, various data sets, or different types of analyses.

The Journal Article Format follows specific journals' formatting and word/page limitations. Oftentimes, authors are not allowed to provide as much detail as they would be able to in a Traditional Format. However, such weakness can be compensated by attaching appendices to the

dissertation text, with reviews of the literature, methods or procedures, and analytical techniques, written in elaborate detail for committee members and other interested scholars.

The Journal Article Format requires careful consideration of authorship and copyright issues (see these topics addressed in other FAQs).

### **What type of study is best-suited for the TAD Format?**

- A study involving more than one focal/substantial research question. The questions are related, but each can 'stand alone' and have its own research report.
- A study involving mixed methods (e.g., qualitative and quantitative) for which the author does not want to aggregate findings (i.e., wishes to report findings separately for each approach/method).
- A study involving more than one experiment.

In summary, studies requiring more than one journal article to be fully described because they contain multiple dimensions, data sets, sub-questions, or analyses are best in the journal article format. Determining whether a study is suited for the Journal Article Format requires careful consultation with the dissertation chair and committee members.

### **When should I decide which format I will use for my dissertation/record of study?**

- As early as possible because the reporting format and the research design oftentimes go hand-in-hand.
- The decisions regarding format should not drive the research, however. It is not recommended that a doctoral student choose the format first, then attempt to 'fit' his/her research question into that format. The format choice should follow the development and framing of the research question(s).

### **Can I change my mind concerning the format I chose?**

Yes. Keep in mind, however, that changing from one format to another requires reorganizing one's thinking about the reporting of the study. It can be challenging to move from one format to another but not impossible.

### **Does the Journal Article Format generate redundancy?**

It may. For instance, portions of the literature review may need to be cited in the various articles because it delineates the entire historical background of the study's focal topic.

Redundancy can be carefully avoided by citing one's own work. For instance, in a literature review, the author might mention, "For a more detailed treatment of this topic, see So-and-So (candidate's name and year of publication)." At the very least, you can cite your own dissertation (if no publications are yet available for referencing).

Avoid self-plagiarism. Authors self-plagiarize when they "reuse their own previously written work or data in a 'new' written product without letting the reader know that this material has appeared elsewhere."

### **May I publish a 'piece' of my dissertation before the defense?**

- **Yes.** More than one article may have been published prior to the defense with the approval of the committee.
- The main or primary author of that 'piece' before the dissertation is defended must be you, the doctoral candidate.
- If the article has co-authors, the doctoral candidate must be the primary author, and the role(s) of the co-authors should be clearly outlined for the dissertation committee.
- You must request copyright permission from the publishing journal to include the article in your dissertation.
- If you do not request permission, you will be breaking U.S. copyright laws.
- When asking for permission to include the article in your dissertation, you should notify the journal editor that University of
- Make sure you have all copyright permissions before you finalize the proposal and formatting of your dissertation. You may run into copyright peculiarities with your journal and decide it's not worth the trouble to include that specific 'piece' in your dissertation. Consider all of these issues early on in the process.

### **What if journal reviewers want me to make changes to a manuscript I have submitted, but I still haven't defended my dissertation?**

Reviewers' comments, suggested changes and your plan for addressing those suggestions should be shared with your dissertation committee members and approved by all of them before you enact the changes.

Changes can be made to the manuscript, as long as the dissertation committee members are in agreement (and are aware) of the changes being made and their rationale.

### **What about authorship issues if I plan to submit AFTER defense?**

You, the doctoral candidate, should be the primary author of at least two articles of your dissertation. Keep this in mind when publishing with your dissertation chair or with members of your dissertation committee.

While having co-authors (who are not members of your committee) is permitted, their role must be clearly specified to and approved by the dissertation committee.

Some journals are now asking for a clear explanation, in writing, of each author's contribution to the manuscript. Make sure you can clearly state each author's main contribution without difficulty.

### **What is the role of the dissertation chair/advisor regarding co-authorship of manuscripts from dissertations?**

When the dissertation chair is co-author with the doctoral candidate on one or more manuscripts:

- If the piece has been previously published, the role of the co-chair must be explained to (and approved by) all members of the dissertation committee.
- If the piece will be submitted upon defense, the co-author must maintain the role of dissertation chair or committee member (and not the role of co-author) until the dissertation defense. The work must document the candidate's ability to conduct independent research and should not reflect the chair's/committee member's contribution as a co-writer or co-author on at least two articles. After defense, the chair and/or committee members may assume a more active, co-author role or whatever may be appropriate. .
- When issues of co-authorship are unclear, discussions with the candidate's committee members and/or with the department head are recommended.

### **Do I need to be careful regarding copyright issues with the Journal Article Format?**

Yes. If after you follow the steps outlined below, you still have questions or need clarification regarding copyright issues, you should discuss the issue with your Chair and they will help you 'navigate' through the copyright issues.

## **Regarding copyright issues, what must I do, when I am ready to submit my manuscripts for publication?**

Before anything else, check with University of Utah's Thesis Office. Some journals have given 'blanket approval', so there is no need to mention to the editor of the journal that the manuscript was part of your dissertation. Some journals have imposed serious restrictions and will not allow releasing the dissertation on the Internet if they publish one of your dissertation 'pieces.' This existing list will help you decide where your particular journal stands.

Not all journals are covered on this list or have replied to University of Utah's request for a disposition, so your particular journal may not be listed. In this case, you have two options:

1. Submit the article and wait for its acceptance. When accepted, you'll need to sign a copyright release form. At that time, contact your journal and explain that your text is part of your dissertation and has already been released on the Internet by University of Utah.
2. When submitting the manuscript, describe on the submission/cover letter to the editor the status of the manuscript as a piece of your dissertation, which has been posted on the Internet. Better yet, contact the journal, directly and in person, and ask how you should proceed.

**The issue** - some journals are not familiar with this dissertation format and are not ready to have their manuscripts 'published' both in their journals and on the World Wide Web. Most journals (especially those in the science fields) are very familiar with this format, having dealt with this type of formatting for over two decades.

**The strategy** - when in doubt, *ask*. Ask the Thesis Office at University of Utah and ask the journal to which you've submitted. Do not ignore these copyright issues. It is unethical and can be illegal to do so.

### **Is the TAD Format easier than the Traditional Format?**

Not at all. Some claim it may be more difficult to conceptualize and to write in this format than in the traditional manner (given the page restrictions journals impose). Candidates writing in the Traditional Format need worry only about satisfying their program's requirements and the dissertation committee members. Candidates writing in a TAD Format must consider, alongside their program and committee members, the audience for whom they are writing, the journal reviewers who will scrutinize their work, and the journal editor making final dispositions about the manuscript.

### **Is there anything written about the TAD Format in University of Utah's Graduate Catalog?**

“The style and format are determined by departmental policy and registered with the thesis and dissertation editor, who approves individual dissertations in accordance with departmental and Graduate School policy. The dissertation is approved by the student's supervisory committee.”