

ARE YOU WRITING A *Dissertation?*

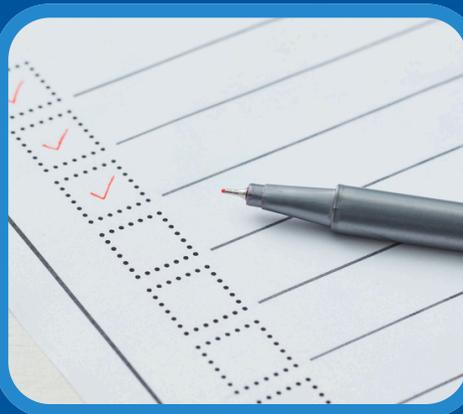
CHECK THIS OUT!

DISSERTATION TOOLKIT

In the following packet you will find the Review Process Guide,
Requirements Checklist, and Organizational Roadmap



**Review
Process Guide**



**Requirements
Checklist**



**Organization
Roadmap**

Contact Information

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DISSERTATION

Review Process Guide

This guide is designed to walk you step-by-step through Palo Alto University's dissertation review process. It outlines the key stages of review, formatting requirements, and submission procedures so that you know exactly what to expect from start to finish. In addition to clarifying timelines and responsibilities, the guide points you toward helpful resources and tools that will support you in preparing your dissertation to meet university standards

Step #1 Submit Your Dissertation



Begin by completing the [Dissertation Review Form](#) and uploading your final dissertation draft. Once your file is uploaded, you'll receive an automatic confirmation email to confirm that your submission has been received. Please review your document carefully before submitting. Your final draft should represent your best effort, incorporating all committee-approved revisions.

If you're unsure whether your dissertation is ready for submission, check the formatting checklist (see below) provided in this guide or reach out to Dr. Randolph at rRANDOLPH@PALOALTOU.EDU for support.

Generally, dissertations are reviewed in the order received, with very few exceptions. The review process typically takes up to 3 weeks. If you have urgent timeline needs, please indicate this in your submission.

Step #2 Initial Review & Feedback



Using Track Changes, the Dissertation Reviewer will carefully check your document for formatting, style, and compliance with PAU's dissertation requirements. You'll receive feedback outlining any changes that need to be made before submitting to ProQuest. Most students find that these revisions are manageable and straightforward, such as adjusting margins, citations, or headings. Treat the feedback as a checklist to guide your revisions, and don't hesitate to ask questions if something is unclear.

Step #3 Revise & Resubmit



Using the feedback provided, make the necessary revisions to your dissertation. Take your time to review the comments carefully and double-check your formatting as you go. When you're done, resubmit your revised manuscript to the Dissertation Reviewer. Simply reply to their feedback email.

Many students find it helpful to schedule a Writing Studio appointment during this stage, especially if they want a second set of eyes on formatting or APA style. Support is available to ensure your revisions are clear and accurate. Additionally, some students opt to work with a paid editor to complete their revisions (see below).

Step #4 Final Approval & Submitting to ProQuest



Once your revised dissertation has been reviewed and all formatting corrections are complete, you'll receive official email confirmation from the Dissertation Reviewer that your dissertation has been approved. At this stage, your document is considered final and ready for submission to ProQuest.

Dr. Robert Randolph, Director of the Writing Studio, will send you instructions and a submission link once your dissertation clears the review process. During this step, you'll set preferences for how your dissertation will be published and ensure your file is properly uploaded.

After submitting to ProQuest, your dissertation will be officially archived with the university library, making your research part of the scholarly record. This step completes your dissertation journey at PAU.

Paid Editorial Services (Optional)

To help streamline this process, some students opt to work with a professional editor to significantly reduce turnaround time for revisions. While working with an editor does not prioritize your dissertation in the review queue, it can significantly reduce back-and-forth revisions once feedback is received from the Dissertation Reviewer.

Here is a list of editors whom our students have successfully worked with in the past. Please note that while we cannot officially endorse any individual, these editors are familiar with PAU's dissertation formatting and APA guidelines. Contact them directly for current rates and availability:

Contact Dr. Randolph for more information.

Timeline Reminders



- Please submit your dissertation manuscript at least 60 days prior to ANY anticipated return date or deadline. These return dates and deadlines are yours, not the Writing Studio's.
- Additional time (from 1 day to several weeks) may be needed if multiple rounds of revision are required.
- Factor in time for ProQuest uploading and processing.
- Contact us early if you have specific deadline constraints.

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Requirements Checklist

Use this checklist to confirm your dissertation meets APA 7th edition and Palo Alto University formatting requirements. Page numbers refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition.

Part 1: Overall Structure & Formatting

- Margins are set to 1 inch on all sides.
- Preliminary pages (Title Page, Copyright Page, Abstract, Table of Contents) follow the templates.
- Headings follow APA 7 levels (see APA 7, pp. 47–49).
- The document has been reviewed for awkward page breaks, large white spaces, or formatting errors.

Part 2: References & Citations (see APA 7, Ch. 8–9)

In-Text Citations (pp. 253–278)

- Every in-text citation has a matching reference list entry, and every reference list entry is cited in text.
- Direct quotes include a page or paragraph number; block format is used for 40+ words (pp. 272–273).
- Works with 3+ authors use “et al.” from the first citation (p. 266).
- Multiple sources in parentheses are alphabetical and separated by semicolons (e.g., Adams, 2020; Baker & Chen, 2019; Davis et al., 2021) (p. 263).

Reference List (pp. 281–309)

- The entire list is in alphabetical order.
- Article and book titles use sentence case (capitalize only the first word and proper nouns) (p. 291).
- DOIs are formatted as clickable URLs (pp. 298–300).
- Journal articles include italicized volume number and issue number (e.g., *Journal of Psychology*, 25(3), 112–120).
- A space appears between author initials (e.g., Smith, J. D.) (p. 286).

Part 3: Tables & Figures (see APA 7, Ch. 7, pp. 195–250)

- Tables and figures are numbered sequentially (Table 1, Figure 1, etc.).
- Titles are clear, descriptive, and italicized.
- Formatting follows APA 7 style, with consistent borders, labels, and source notes if adapted.

Part 3: Writing Style & Grammar

- Active voice is used where possible (e.g., “I analyzed the data...”) (p. 118).
- Verb tense is consistent: past or present perfect for Literature Review/Methods; past for Results; present for Discussion/Conclusions (p. 118).
- Word choice is precise: use “because” for causation, “since” for time, and “while” for simultaneous events (p. 123).
- The serial (Oxford) comma is used in lists of three or more items (e.g., apples, oranges, and pears) (p. 155).
- Numbers follow APA guidelines (pp. 178–181):
- Numerals for 10 and above.
- Words for numbers below 10, unless paired with a unit of measurement.
- No leading zero for decimals less than 1 (e.g., $p = .025$) (p. 180).

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Organization Roadmap

The traditional dissertation is organized into five chapters and includes the following elements and pages:

For step-by-step guidance on your writing timeline [click here](#).

Traditional Dissertation Organization



1. Title Page (*aka cover page*)
2. Signature Page (*aka committee page, but without signatures*)
3. Copyright Page (*strongly recommended to protect your scholarship*)
4. Abstract (*we emphasize spend quality time refining the abstract as it's widely read*)
5. Dedication Page (*optional*)
6. Acknowledgments Page (*optional, but highly recommended*)
7. Table of Contents (*we recommend that you use auto-formatting with Word headings*)
8. List of Tables (*if applicable*)
9. List of Figures (*if applicable*)
10. Dissertation Body | Five Distinct Chapters:
 - Chapter I: Introduction*
 - Chapter II: Review of Literature*
 - Chapter III: Methodology (Research Design & Methods)*
 - Chapter IV: Presentation of Research (Results)*
 - Chapter V: Summary, Implications, Conclusions (Discussion)*
11. Footnotes (*if separate from dissertation*)
12. References
13. Bibliography (*rare but valuable for other researchers – ask your chair*)
14. Appendix (*can include consent forms and other research documents*)

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DISSERTATION Organization Roadmap

The following outline is designed to give you an idea of what might be included in various dissertation chapters. It is offered as suggested elements gleaned from PAU dissertation handbooks. Your particular program might have other expectations of the chapter titles and their sections.

Chapter I: Introduction

- Introduction
- Background of the Problem
- Statement of the Problem
- Purpose of the Study
- Research Questions
- Significance of the Study
- Definition of Terms
- Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations
- Conclusion

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

- Introduction
- Search Description
- Conceptual or Theoretical Framework
- Review of Research (organized by variable or themes)

Chapter III: Research Methodology (Qualitative)

- Introduction
- Research Design
- Research Questions
- Setting
- Participants
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Conclusion

Research Methodology (Quantitative)

- Introduction
- Research Design
- Research Questions and Hypotheses
- Population and Sample
- Instrumentation
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Conclusion

Research Methodology (Mixed)

- Introduction
- Research Design
- Research Questions and Hypotheses
- Setting and Sample
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Conclusion

Chapter IV: Presentation of Research (or Results)

- Introduction
- Findings (organized by Research Questions or Hypotheses)
- Conclusion

Chapter V: Summary, Implications, Outcomes (Discussion)

- Introduction
- Summary of Findings
- Conclusions (organized by Research Questions or Hypotheses)
- Discussion
- Suggestions for Future Research
- Conclusion

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