

NSU Doctor of Education Prospectus

The NSU Catalog (2020) states, “near the end of coursework, the student will write a dissertation prospectus, which will be sent to the committee for approval. The approved prospectus will function as the guide for the development of the dissertation proposal and dissertation” (p. 143).

The purpose of the dissertation prospectus is to serve as a plan for the development of the dissertation proposal and full dissertation. It is approved by the full dissertation committee and helps ensure that both the student and committee agree on the basic framework and elements of the proposed research.

The prospectus is the opportunity for the student to demonstrate to the committee that they have a sound and practical plan for a worthwhile research project. As such, it is a structured concept document rather than a detailed proposal. It also illustrates to the committee that the student can produce high-quality writing that is required in a doctoral dissertation.

The prospectus process is iterative and multiple iterations of the prospectus may be needed for the final approval of the full committee. Once the initial prospectus draft is submitted to the committee, the committee members will have the opportunity to request revisions. Once committee revisions are complete, a prospectus defense meeting will be held. The outcome of this meeting is either an approved prospectus or the need for additional revisions. Following the successful prospectus process, the student and committee complete the Prospectus Approval form and a copy of the form and the final prospectus are filed with the NSU Graduate School. Committee approval of the prospectus is required for the student to proceed with the dissertation process.

The prospectus document conforms to the style provided in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.) and contains the following elements: Title page, body of the prospectus, and reference list. It is double-spaced and has approximately 10 pages in the body, not including title and reference pages.

NSU Doctoral Dissertation Prospectus: Annotated Outline

- **Title Page**
- **Statement of the Problem (2-3 paragraphs)**
 - Describe the problem with evidence of the problem from local evidence and/or literature, including referred journal articles and pertinent government reports.
 - Significance of the Problem
 - Present why the problem is current, important, and to whom it is important (support with literature and/or evidence).
- **Purpose and Significance of the Study (2 -3 paragraphs)**

- The purpose of the study is a description of the overall intention of the study. What is it that the study will accomplish? This could be to determine the *impact* of the *intervention* on the *problem* or to *gain an understanding that will impact the problem*.
- Significance of the Research
 - How will the study contribute solving the issue identified in the statement of the problem?
 - How will the study inform professional practice/application or contribute to the field?
 - Might the study make a broader contribution to society - how?
- **Review of Literature (3-5 pages)**
 - Provides a representative presentation of the contemporary scholarship and background on your topic in the form of an *extended annotated bibliography*. The *overall* review of literature should address all items in the following list. Each source and annotation should be no longer than 1-2 paragraphs and address one or more of the items below.
 - Be organized thematically or topically.
 - Present the current state of knowledge about the problem.
 - Support your assertions in the statement of the problem.
 - Include primary sources and multiple types of a variety of sources (e.g., available data from affected organizations, referred journal articles, information from magazines, newspapers, white papers and pertinent government reports)
 - Support the effectiveness of or informs the purpose of the study, problem, and/or the solution/intervention you will study.
 - In a concluding paragraph to the review of literature, describe how your study will differ from, and connect to, previous work.
- **Research Question (1 paragraph)**
 - Question(s) the research will seek to answer.
 - Question(s) are sufficiently specific to suggest or state the research variables and/or the specific understanding that will impact the problem.
 - Study may have separate quantitative and qualitative questions.
- **Nature of the Research (1 – 2 pages)**
 - Describe and provide details on the research approach (qualitative, quantitative, mixed, other, etc.) that will be used and how the approach aligns with the problem statement and research question.
 - Specify if the study action or traditional educational research and rationale for your choice.
 - Provide possible data sources, instruments, and types of data that could be collected.

- Suggest potential approaches to organizing and analyzing the data.
- **Feasibility (2 paragraphs)**
 - Is the study practical? Identify an estimated timeline and the resources available to you to complete the study.
 - Identify any anticipated challenges, barriers, or limitations to successful completion of the study.
- **References**
 - Include primary sources when possible. Include multiple types of a variety of sources (e.g., available data from affected organizations, referred journal articles, information from magazines, newspapers, white papers and pertinent government reports).
 - Sources that are not subject to editorial or refereed review are usually not acceptable as a source. Any such source requires approval.

Approved, NSU Graduate Council 2020