

DRAFT- Policy on Alternative Dissertation Formats

A dissertation at Florida Atlantic University is the pinnacle scholarly or creative work produced by a doctoral student for the purposes of demonstrating to a committee of the faculty that the student is able to produce and execute an original project of scientific or creative value. The dissertation is the culmination of doctoral study, and work that is created is the demonstration of the doctoral student's mastery of the requirements of their given discipline at the highest level. Traditionally, this takes the form of independent research that is conducted and written into a formal document. The structure of the dissertation typically follows a multi-chapter outline with chapters devoted to an introduction, literature review, methods, results and discussion of the results (commonly referred to as IMRD). However, there are many disciplines where this format either does not adequately display the doctoral candidate's scholarly production, are not relevant to related industries, or does not afford the student the ability to fully disseminate their work in the form of publishable manuscripts.

In recognition of these considerations, the Graduate College with the approval of the Graduate Council of Florida Atlantic University support the use of alternate formats for dissertations, in addition to the traditional dissertation format. Typical "alternative" dissertations include:

- Manuscript-style Dissertation- Generally several manuscript-length self-contained articles (either previously published, or ready for journal review) with Introduction and conclusion chapters.
- Complex Dissertation- Comprised of 2 or more self-contained research studies that have a common literature review, methods, and discussion chapters.
- Topic-Based Dissertation- Generally a qualitatively based design that is organized around a central theme or topic with the separate chapters exploring subtopics aligned with the central aims of the dissertation.

Other formats and approaches may also be utilized based on discipline standards and practices.

The Graduate College empowers colleges and programs to develop policies and practices for incorporating alternative dissertation formats and report them to the Graduate College for approval(?). Specifically, these policies and practices should address:

1. What the specific format for the dissertation will be.
2. How any copyrighted or previously published material will be handled.
3. How the alternative format will be assessed by the dissertation committee (i.e., how many manuscript-length articles will suffice).