

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION OF
A RESEARCH PROJECT
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION, SPORT, AND HUMAN PERFORMANCE**

To the Master of Science Degree Candidate

This document contains the guidelines for writing a research project. The purpose of the document is to provide MS in Sport and Fitness Administration (SPFA) advanced candidates with answers to questions frequently asked about the preparation of the project and to provide candidates with the framework on which to build their research projects.

Submitting the master's research project is the final step in completing degree requirements for the MS in SPFA degree. The written project is presented to one's research advisor, the primary reader of the project, and then to the department chair for final approval. Once all individuals involved in the process have approved the project and signed the Project Approval page, the advanced candidate will then be given a grade for PHED 691 – Research Project.

Style Manual

The PESH Department requires research projects to adhere to the *American Psychological Association Style Manual* (6th edition). All copies must be typed and printed on 8 1/2 x 11 inches, white, and three hole-punched paper. Only one side of the paper may be used.

Spacing

Throughout the paper, use double spacing except in footnotes, indented quotations set off from the text (block quotations), reference entries of more than one line, and materials such as captions or table and appendices of data. See APA Guidelines for any specific questions on spacing.

Typeface

The use of uniform typeface and font sizes is required for the research projects. The required font is Times New Roman with a 12 - point font size.

Margins

The left-hand margin must be one and one-half inches. The right hand margin must be one inch. Top and bottom margins must be at least one inch and not more than one and one-half inches measured from the edge of the paper. Page numbers must be at the bottom of the page and no less than one inch from the edge of the paper.

In general, all pages of the text must have the eight and one-half inch edge of the paper at the top of the page. It may be necessary to place some pictures and tables landscape (i.e., lengthwise) on the paper. When this is done, the top of the table figure should be on the non-binding edge side. Except for prefatory matter (i.e., table of contents, dedication), numbered with lower-case Roman numerals, a research proposal should be numbered consecutively beginning with Arabic number 2 after the opening page.

All pages except the title page should be numbered. This includes full page photographs, charts and graphs, the references, and appendices. For the preliminary pages, use small Roman numerals (ii, iii, etc.). Page i is the approval page followed by the title page, but the page numbers are not required on these pages. The Table of Contents follows the title page and is numbered with Roman numeral iv. Following the Table of Contents, candidates may have a list of tables or illustrations.

Format and Chapters in Research Projects.

Research project consist of five chapters. As such, the following order should be observed:

1. **Approval page.** All research projects have an approval page and a sample is included in Appendix A.
2. **Title page.** All research projects submitted to the Department must contain a title page in the exact form found in Appendix B of this document.
3. **Table of Contents** – The format for the Table of Contents is included in Appendix C.
 - A. Includes all sections of the proposal identified with page numbers.
 - B. Each chapter is a major heading followed by each section of the chapter as a subheading.
 - C. References is a major heading
 - D. Appendices is a major heading
4. **Chapter One - Introduction**
 - A. Introduction
 - 1) No more than two or three paragraphs
 - 2) Does not use a heading for the “Introduction”
 - 3) Establishes the rationale and significance for the study
 - a. Why is this research important?
 - b. Why have other researchers investigated this question?
 - c. What does the study contribute to the discipline or body of knowledge?
 - d. Provides an overview on why the topic is important
 - B. Statement of the Problem
 - 1) Use a heading for this section of the proposal - Statement of the Problem
 - 2) Must be directly related to the content of the introduction.
 - C. Followed by research question(s) or hypothesis(es)
 - 1) Can be stated as a null hypothesis
 - 2) Can be stated as a directional hypothesis
 - 3) Can be a numbered list
 - D. Delimitations
 - 1) Set by researcher to define the scope of the study
 - 2) Can be a numbered list
 - 3) Narrows the scope of the study to a manageable size
 - 4) Affects generalizability
 - 5) Choices the RESEARCHER makes and controls in the study
 - a) Might be delimited by the sample used (number of participants or

who is in the group)

- b) Might be delimited by the instrument used or the assessment method incorporated
- c) Defines who is in the sample and how the assessment is being made regarding the sample population

E. Limitations

- 1) Shortcoming, weaknesses or influences that affect results that cannot be controlled by the researcher
- 2) Limitations can be a product of your delimitation
- 3) Can be a numbered list
- 4) Limitations include such things as – “Researcher could not control for the honesty of the answers provided by participants on the survey” or “the use of volunteers may bias the data.” This is anything that a researcher cannot directly control.

F. Definition of Terms

- 1) Operational definitions – How the specific term or variable is defined for the purposes of the study. Examples are listed below.
 - a) i.e., Varsity athlete is operationally defined as any individual that participates on an officially recognized interscholastic varsity sport for one complete season.
 - b) i.e., Self-efficacy Score is operationally defined as participant’s score on Bandura’s (1977) self-efficacy assessment.
- 2) Should be from a source and the source should be cited
- 3) Dependent variable(s) must be operationally defined
- 4) Operational definitions are directly linked to Statement of the Problem

5. Chapter 2 - Review of the Related Literature

A. Review of literature begins with a one paragraph introduction that identifies the various sections of the review.

- 1) Parts of the Review of Literature
 - a. All review of literatures should have at least three to five subheadings under the major topic.
 - b. For the project, each of the subheadings should have at least six - ten research studies included in each of the subheading section of the review.
 - c. At the end of the review section, there should be a summary of conclusions reached based on the review of the literature.
 - d. The Review of literature is more than a simple string of research summaries in a row. In presenting the review of the related research literature, candidates should categorize similar studies under each subheading and integrate studies that reached similar conclusions or did not support previous reached conclusions. The review of literature is not simply a menu of various studies, but an integrated approach to report

research findings in the research area.

- e. The review of literature should provide the reader with a complete summary of the related research in the topic area. By the completion of the review of literature, the advisor, reader and department chair should be convinced that candidates are experts in this research area. That candidates have read and summarized all the relevant related research associated with the topic area.

7. Chapter 3 – Methods and Procedures

A. Introduction

- 1) Should be one paragraph that identifies the purpose of the study and research Question(s).
- 2) Does restate question(s) as identified in Chapter 1

B. Participants

- 1) Identifies who was involved in the study
 - a. Number of participants
 - b. Demographic breakdown of the participants (age, gender, grade, etc.)
 - c. Participant selections, e.g., volunteers, groups of convenience, randomly assigned, selected participants, etc. must be identified in this section.
 - d. Identify any unique characteristics of the potential population group used in the study (i.e., boy varsity tennis players, college freshmen, Division I ADs., etc.)
 - e. State how participants were assigned to a group if appropriate.
- 2) Context of the setting
 - a. Describe the context or setting of the study. For example, was a public recreation program, public school, professional sports, etc. used as the setting?
 - b. Are a variety of settings used that differ in some specific context. For example, was one a lower socioeconomic school, one a middle socioeconomic school, and the third a upper socioeconomic school? Identify how you determined the various groups used.
- 3) Reference in this section, by citing the appropriate appendix, any consent forms to be used or specific instruments to be completed including the required IRB application form.

C. Research Design

- 1) Identify the type of research being conducted such as correlational, quasi-experimental, experimental, survey, descriptive, etc.
- 2) Identify the independent and dependent variables in the study.
- 3) Identify the specific statistical procedures used to analyze the data including any use of software to analyze the data.
- 4) Describe any instrument or apparatus used.
 - a) Must include information on the validity and reliability of the instrument or apparatus used.

- b) Provide rationale for the selection of the instrument/apparatus used.
- c) If you create a survey or another instrument, how did you establish face validity for the instrument? What specific procedures did you follow?

G. Procedures

- 1) Provide a complete description of how, when, and where the research was conducted. Anyone should be able to take this section of the paper and replicate the study.
- 2) How was data collected? How was permission to collect data acquired?
- 3) When was data collected?
- 4) Who collected the data? How were individual trained who collected the data? Where was data stored? How was data recorded?
- 5) Where is the data stored for safe keeping?
- 6) How was participant's confidentially protected? How were the data coded?
- 7) Who had access to the raw data?
- 8) Who had access to the final results? How were the final results reported?

7. Chapter 4 - Results and Discussion

A. Results

- 1) In this chapter candidates report the statistically or qualitative results of the study.
- 2) If candidates used SPSS to analyze the results, report those results in tables (would be in the Table of Contents under List of Tables or appropriate figures).
- 3) All candidates do in this section is report the results found based on the data. Candidates do not give opinions, discuss how the results different from what was found in the literature, etc. This section is just the facts and the reporting of statistically evidence related to the research question(s). This is usually the shortest chapter in the project.
- 4) In this section, candidates must report the results for every question asked in the project.
- 5) Report the most significant findings first and report data in an aggregated format (do not report raw data).
- 6) Report data for each research question/hypothesis in the study. Report the data in the same sequence as you used in Chapter 1.
- 7) Make sure all data tables are clearly labeled.
- 8) For each analysis conducted, include the name of the statistic and the particulars. This includes p values that were selected and why they were selected at that level, include standard deviation and sample size, sample size for significant effect for ANOVAs, and the magnitude and direction for a correlational study.
- 9) Results section is the place for maximum clarity. It will be repetitive.
- 10) Check your APA manual for the required conventions for reporting results.

B. Discussion

- 1) This is the section where candidates discuss findings from the results chapter and place those findings into context.
- 2) Summarizes the findings using as little statistical jargon as possible. Place results in terms that a lay person could understand.
- 3) Interpret the findings.
 - a) How did the findings related to previous research cited in the review of literature section? Did the findings support or call into question previous results?
 - b) How were the results explained in relationship to previous research?
- 4) Place results in context
 - a) Does the research extend pervious research?
 - 2) How does the study contribute to the existing literature?
- 5) Implications
 - 1) What do the findings imply for future researchers?
 - 2) What might have changed the results for study?
 - 3) What did the researcher learn conducting the study that might be helpful to future researchers?
 - 4) What practical implications might the results have on the discipline?
- F. Future Directions - What recommendations could be made for future research studies based on the project? What part of the research question needs further exploration?

5. **Appendices**

- A. Must include a completed IRB application.
- B. Must include any permission request for participation in the study such as parental consent, assent, etc,
- C. Must include a copy of any instruments used in the study.
- D. Might include any protocols to be followed when collecting data.
- E. Might include data collection instruments or forms.
- F. Might include the raw data from the study.

6. **References**

- A. This section includes any previous studies, articles, or instruments cited in the paper.
- B. Must follow current APA format for a reference list.

All final copies of research projects should be submitted to Mrs. Jane Bailey. Three copies will be printed at the Winthrop University printing services on thesis paper and the advanced candidate will reimburse the department for the printing costs. Each candidate should order Avery Brand Durable EZ-Turn Ring ½ binder in Gray. These are a special order item at Staples. Once the binders and three copies of the research project are received, Mrs. Bailey will prepare binder cover inserts and have all

parities sign the approval page. One copy goes to the research project advisor, one goes into the departmental library, and one copy goes to the reader.

TIME LINES

December Graduation:

If the advanced candidate is seeking a December graduation, the final copy of the research project must be submitted to the department chair for final approval by November 1.

May Graduation:

If the advanced candidate is seeking a May graduation, the final copy of the research project must be submitted to the department chair for final approval by April 1

August Graduation:

If the advanced candidate is seeking an August graduation, the final copy of the research project must be submitted to the department chair for final approval by August 1.

THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS FOR THESE DATES!

Appendix A

(Sample Approval Sheet for Research Project)

Date _____

To the Dean of the Graduate School:

We are submitting a research project submitted by _____ entitled _____. We recommend acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Sport and Fitness Administration.

Advanced Candidate

Project Advisor

Reader

Department Chair

Appendix B

TITLE

A Research Project
Presented to the Faculty
Of the
Richard W. Riley College of Education
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the
Requirements for the Degree
Of
Master of Science
In Sport and Fitness Administration
Winthrop University

August, 2010

By

Author

APPENDIX C

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	1
<i>Significance of the Study (Introduction)</i>	
<i>Statement of the Problem</i>	
<i>Research Question</i>	
<i>Delimitations</i>	
<i>Limitations</i>	
<i>Definition of Terms</i>	
Chapter 2 –Review of the Related Research Literature.....	
<i>Introduction</i>	
<i>Subheadings in the review (must have at least three subheadings)</i>	
Chapter 3 – Methods and Procedures	
<i>Introduction</i>	
<i>Participants</i>	
<i>Research Design</i>	
<i>Procedures</i>	
Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion.....	
Should have a subheading for each of the hypothesis(es) or research question(s).....	
References.....	
Appendices.....	
<i>IRB Form</i>	
<i>Permission forms</i>	
<i>Copy of the Instrument</i>	
<i>Data Collection</i>	
<i>Others as needed</i>	