

**TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES
HDFS DOCTORAL DEGREE**

GUIDELINES FOR ALTERNATIVE THESIS/DISSERTATION FORMAT

The HDFS Department will implement, on a limited, experimental basis, an alternative format for students' Master's theses and doctoral dissertations. The final product for either a thesis or dissertation would consist of a journal manuscript-length report of the project, with an extended literature review chapter (from the proposal defense) added as an Appendix.

1. RATIONALE

- The new format is aimed at expediting submission of a manuscript to a journal as quickly after the final defense as possible.

2. CONTENT-BASED GUIDELINES

The main report, containing all the typical elements (Intro, Methods, Results, Discussion) should not exceed 40 pages, including tables, figures, and references. This is intended more as a target, rather than an iron-clad rule. The literature-review Appendix should not exceed 30 pages. The following areas are ones that might be addressed in the Appendix:

- A fairly comprehensive review of previous studies bearing on the student's focal empirical question. Such a review should not be a simple recitation of findings; rather the student should also DRAW CONCLUSIONS from the previous findings.
- A fuller elaboration of some theory or methodological technique than would be possible in a journal-length report.
- A background report on the epidemiology of some phenomenon (i.e., what percent of the population has experienced some psychological disorder, and how estimates were obtained).

3. INITIATION OF ALTERNATIVE FORMAT

- Advisors can inform their students that this new, alternative format is currently available, or students can raise the idea with their advisors. Once the student and advisor agree to use this format, the student and/or advisor should mention this fact to prospective committee members as early as possible, so that the latter can make an informed decision as to whether they would like to participate in this "experimental" venture.

4. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSAL AND FINAL DEFENSE STAGES

- Proposals under the alternative approach will probably look much like they currently do, in that a thorough literature review is necessary, which may largely be placed in the Appendix of the final version. Also, as with the traditional format, at the proposal defense the student would be examined largely on the literature review, conceptualization of the problem, hypotheses, and methods for conducting the study, whereas at the final defense, the focus would shift to the student's results and the interpretations, conclusions, implications, and applications the student drew from the findings.