



TRIDENT

at American InterContinental University

Glenn R. Jones College of Business

The Doctor of Business Administration (D.B.A.) Program Handbook 2020

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 4

 1.1 THE PURPOSE OF THE DSP 4

 1.2 DSP COMPARED TO DISSERTATION..... 4

 1.3 ACCEPTABLE TYPES OF RESEARCH (DBA) 6

 1.4 WRITING A DSP USING SPECIFIC DESIGN FORMATS 6

 1.4.1 CASE STUDY FORMAT 6

 1.4.2 ACTION RESEARCH FORMAT7

 1.4.3 PROCESS IMPROVEMENT FORMAT..... 8

 1.5 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTORAL STUDY PROJECT..... 8

2 THE DSP PROCESS..... 9

 2.1 THE DBA CURRICULUM..... 9

 2.2 THE DSP PROCESS AND MILESTONES.....10

 2.2.1 DBA DOCTORAL STUDY PROJECT MILESTONES..... 11

 2.3 DSP CHAPTERS CONTENT13

Chapter I: Introduction to the Doctoral Study.....13

Chapter II: Literature Review13

Chapter III: Methodology.....13

Chapter IV: Data Collection and Data Analysis.....14

Chapter V: Application to Practice and Discussion14

 2.4 THE 800 COURSE – DSP MILESTONE REPOSITORY / TRACKING.....14

3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....15

 3.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DSP CHAIR 17

 3.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DSP COMMITTEE MEMBERS (NON-CHAIR).....18

 3.3 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB).....18

 3.3.1 The Special Case of the Organizational Analysis19

 3.3.2 After IRB Approval of Your Research Plan.....19

 3.3.3 HOW TO OBTAIN THE IRB TRAINING CERTIFICATE19

4 DSP PROGRESSION 20

 4.1 THE DSP PROSPECTUS IN DOC690 20

 4.1.1 PROCEDURE OF THE DSP PROSPECTUS PRESENTATION21

 4.1.2 OUTCOME OF THE DSP PROSPECTUS PRESENTATION 22

 4.2 THE DSP PROPOSAL 22

 4.2.1 PROCEDURE OF THE DSP PROPOSAL DEFENSE..... 23

4.2.2	OUTCOME OF THE DSP PROPOSAL DEFENSE	24
4.3	THE FINAL DSP	24
4.3.1	PROCEDURE OF THE DSP FINAL DEFENSE.....	25
4.3.2	OUTCOME OF THE FINAL DSP DEFENSE	25
4.4	ORAL DEFENSE TIPS	26
4.4.1	PROCEDURES FOR ORAL DEFENSES.....	26
5	WRITING THE DSP PROPOSAL AND REPORT	27
5.1	WRITING SUGGESTIONS	27
5.2	DSP REPORT FORMATTING GUIDELINES	28
5.2.1	GENERAL FORMATTING GUIDELINES.....	29
5.2.2	ARRANGEMENT	30
6	RUBRICS APPLIED IN THE DBA PROGRAM.....	31
6.1	DOC690 - DSP PROSPECTUS RUBRIC.....	31
6.2	DOC700 - DSP PROPOSAL CHECKLIST	33
6.3	DOC700 - DSP PROPOSAL DEFENSE RUBRIC.....	34
6.4	DOC702 - DSP FINAL CHECKLIST	36
6.5	DOC702 - DSP FINAL DEFENSE RUBRIC.....	37
6.6	DSP FEEDBACK TRACKING FORM.....	39
6.6.1	FEEDBACK TRACKING FORM INSTRUCTIONS.....	40
7	ACADEMIC INTEGRITY	41
8	DOCTORAL TITLES AND ETIQUETTE	41
9	DBA LETTER OF INTENT	42
9.1	LETTER OF INTENT TO ALLOW RESEARCH - TEMPLATE	43
10	REFERENCES	44
11	DISCLAIMER	44
12	DSP FLOW CHART	45
13	UPDATED DSP-RELATED TEMPLATES.....	46

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE PURPOSE OF THE DSP

The Doctoral Study Project (DSP) is a formal, comprehensive document that details the purpose, background, project approach, project implementation, and conclusions of an applied practitioner-oriented project. Completion and defense of the DSP is a requirement for graduation from Trident at AIU with a Doctor of Business Administration (D.B.A.). Although preliminary work on a student's DSP may begin while the student is still completing coursework, formal work on the DSP is undertaken after all core academic coursework is completed.

The DSP is intended to:

- Enhance your understanding of your field of study;
- Provide experience conducting research in your field of study;
- Develop your ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate data and conclusions in your field of study;
- Make a significant contribution to your field of study;
- Include a thorough review of associated professional literature;
- Demonstrate your ability to design and carry out an individual research project;
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of basic research principles, techniques, and ethics;
- Demonstrate evidence of your ability to analyze and synthesize data, as well as draw and evaluate conclusions;
- Develop skills in project planning, time management, organization, and implementation; and
- Show evidence of a high level of professional competence.

It is important to keep in mind that the DSP is not simply another graduate school assignment. The DSP is intended to help the student develop both personally and professionally. It must be scholarly, succinct, and of sufficiently high quality to be published, in part, in a peer-reviewed journal. DSP research may be cataloged and available to other researchers—seasoned professionals and academics, as well as future students—all over the world.

1.2 DSP COMPARED TO DISSERTATION

The DSP is a culminating research project for students enrolled in the Trident at AIU D.B.A. program. It is equivalent in research rigor to a traditional dissertation but allows students more flexibility in designing and conducting a research project with an applied focus, which is more in line with the practitioner-scholar philosophy of D.B.A. degree. The differences between a DSP and a dissertation are detailed in the table below.

D.B.A. (**DSP**)

PH.D. (**DISSERTATION**)

Intent	Demonstrates expert knowledge of the literature in a focused area of practice and an ability to conduct independent research.	Demonstrates expert knowledge of the literature in a focused area of business research and an ability to conduct independent research.
Role of Theory	Apply existing theories.	Extend existing theories.
Research Focus	Typically investigates an aspect of applied practice.	Examines a gap in the research literature on a topic within the field of study.
Format	Five-chapter format involving case study analysis / applied research: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, and Application to Practice and Discussion. Follows APA.	Traditional five-chapter format: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, and Discussion. Follows APA.
Standards	Outlined in the DSP Criteria Rubrics and Checklists of the DBA Handbook.	Described in the Dissertation Checklist Appendix of the PhD Handbook.
Time required	Min. 9 months. Length depends on completion of deliverables. Students may need to retake a course if they did not complete expected milestones.	Min. 12 months. Length depends on completion of dissertation. Students may need to take additional dissertation courses if dissertation was not completed.
Types of Studies	Studies with an applied focus, including Case Study, Action Research, or Process Improvement. (See Sec. 1.3)	Can vary from applied studies to more basic science; typically, a positivistic approach.
Intended Audience Process	Applied practitioners. Works with a project chair and committee to develop and carry out the project.	Academic scholars in the field. Works with a project chair and committee to develop and carry out the research.
Sample	Depends of the type of study. About a min. of 15 participants and 3 sources of data (i.e. Interviews, participant observation, focus groups, etc.).	Depends on the number of variables and GPower. About a min. of 200 participants.
Publication	Required publication in Proquest.	Required publication in Proquest.

1.3 ACCEPTABLE TYPES OF RESEARCH (DBA)

The following examples are types of DBA research projects that could be carried out in alignment with DSP standards at Trident at AIU. This list is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive; students are permitted to propose creative ideas for research that adheres to quality standards:

- A single subject study that evaluates a new or innovative intervention;
- A case study that exemplifies a particular theoretical prediction, or a novel or rare phenomenon;
- An Action Research or Participatory Action Research project;
- A program evaluation;
- The development of a novel intervention, training program, instructional manual, or other programmatic guide that is grounded in solid research literature, accompanied by an implementation and evaluation plan;
- A field study that examines theoretical predictions;
- A survey study examining opinions, attitudes, or practices within a field or discipline;
- A business process improvement; or
- A review and integrated analysis of the literature within a topic area of the profession (articles published in *practitioner-based journals* may be used as a guide).

As these examples indicate, all project topics require an extensive knowledge of the literature pertaining to the particular subject areas, a synthesis and application of this knowledge, and sophistication on how a project is developed and presented. Conducting these projects provides students with experiences that create expertise in their focused areas and prepare them to be effective practitioner-scholars. To achieve this goal, it is recommended for students to pursue a topic where they already have extensive practical experience. (That is why work experience is required.)

1.4 WRITING A DSP USING SPECIFIC DESIGN FORMATS

It is important that you understand the variations that can occur in the format of the DSP based on the type of research design chosen. This section will highlight the three most common research designs used in the DSP: Case Study, Action Research, and Process Improvement. Mixed methods designs are acceptable. Due to the time required for creation and validation of quantitative instruments, it is highly recommended that quantitative components are used as triangulation of data through secondary data sources, such as government database records.

1.4.1 CASE STUDY FORMAT

The first thing you need to understand is the meaning of a case study. This means that you take a real case (contemporary phenomenon) to investigate in depth and within its real-world context. For example, if you are to write a DSP on a marketing related problem, then you need to visit a business or organization on their physical location. You will need sufficient access to data for

your research – to interview people, review documents or records, or make field observations. The topics of case study research vary widely. For example, case studies of programs, events, persons, processes, institutions, social groups, and other contemporary phenomena have been completed.

- The first step is to develop your focus of research and define the question you will address in your paper. You can develop this focus by creating questions regarding your provided situation.
- The second step in your Case Study is to design the process. You need to create a roadmap for the real-life case(s) you will select and why you will choose them. You should also be able to explain different research methods you will adopt to collect and analyze your data.
- You need to develop a plan for collecting data because you will need real data for this paper.
- After you have a plan for the data collection, and it is approved by your committee and IRB, you can go ahead and collect your data in the field. Use the raw materials first and do not interpret any results unless you are complete with your research.
- The last step in your study is to report your data in an easy way. You need to explain the results in such a way that it is easy for the readers to understand the data and interpretations.

1.4.2 ACTION RESEARCH FORMAT

The first thing you need to understand is the meaning of Action Research. Action Research is an engagement of participative communities of inquiry through systematic cycles of action and reflection. You will need sufficient access to data for your research – involving multiple cycles (or change implementations). The topics of Action Research vary widely; it is accomplished as people try to work together to address key problems in their community or organization.

- The first step is to develop your focus of research and define the question you will address in your paper. You can develop this focus by creating questions regarding your provided situation.
- The second step in your Action Research study is to design the process. You need to create a roadmap for the change implementation(s) you will select and why you will choose them. You should also be able to explain different research methods you will adopt to collect and analyze your data.
- You need to develop a plan for collecting data because you will need real data for this paper. Reflections from each cycle may alter the action implemented or the method used to collect and analyze your data in future cycles.
- After you have a plan for the data collection, and it is approved by your committee and IRB, you can go ahead and collect your data in the field. Use the raw materials first and do not interpret any results unless you are complete with your research.
- The last step in your study is to report your data in an easy way. You need to explain the results in such a way that it is easy for the readers to understand the data and interpretations.

1.4.3 PROCESS IMPROVEMENT FORMAT

The first thing you need to understand is the meaning of a Process Improvement study. This type of study provides a holistic approach to understanding how each business process interacts with the rest of the organization. Process Improvement should examine internal and/or external factors relating to a potential area of deficiency. It may also include the creation and implementation of business process change to increase areas of effectiveness, efficiency, or profitability. You will need sufficient access to data for your research – allowing for process change to be implemented and monitored. The topics of Process Improvement research vary widely based on the needs of the site organization.

- The first step is to develop your focus of research and define the question you will address in your paper. You can develop this focus by creating questions regarding your provided situation; this usually requires knowledge about the needs of an organization.
- The second step in your Process Improvement study is to determine the process that requires change implementation. You need to create a roadmap for the process(es) you will select and why you will choose them. You should also be able to explain different research methods you will adopt to collect and analyze your data.
- You need to develop a plan for collecting data ; you will need real data for this paper.
- After you have a plan for the data collection, and it is approved by your committee and IRB, you can go ahead and collect your data in the field. Use the raw materials first and do not interpret any results unless you are complete with your research.
- The last step in your study is to report your data in an easy way. You need to explain the results in such a way that it is easy for the readers to understand the data and interpretations.

1.5 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTORAL STUDY PROJECT

- Doctoral candidates should have access to data from one organization where the research project will be conducted. Ideally, this organization should be related to the area of professional expertise of the doctoral student. This organization could be their current or past employer, but that is not a requirement.
- Access to the organization must be granted in writing and following the expectations of Trident’s Institutional Review Board. No data can be collected without IRB approval.
- The methodology section of the Doctoral Study Project requires at least three different data sources with a minimum total sample size of 15 participants. The sources of evidence could be documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation or physical artifacts, etc. In Action Research, this could be three cycles of collection.
- The doctoral study should apply at least two existing theoretical frameworks in business to study the business problem. The doctoral student should be aware of the full range of theories that might be relevant to their own study. These could be individual, group, organizational, or societal theories.
- Completion of the DSP will result in an Executive Summary Report that may be provided to the organization(s) involved in the Doctoral Study Project.

2 THE DSP PROCESS

This section includes an overview of the people and processes involved in completing your DSP. It is important for all DBA students to be familiar with this information. This section covers the following:

- The DBA Curriculum;
- Phases of the DSP process and Milestones;
- Required courses, forms, and documents (student completes);
- Roles and responsibilities of individuals and boards involved in the DSP process; and
- Step-by-step process to develop a DSP.

2.1 THE DBA CURRICULUM

Required Program Courses (36 to 48 Semester Credit Hours)

DOC 600	Introduction to Doctoral Studies and Research Methods in Business	4
MGT 610*	Organizations, Management and Leadership	4
MKT 610*	Advanced Strategic Marketing	4
FIN 610*	Advanced Strategic Corporate Finance	4
DOC 640	Case Study and Action Research	4
DOC 650	Technology and Business Process Improvement	4
DOC 660	Innovation and Creativity in Business	4
DOC 670	Applied Statistics for Research in Business and Management	4
DOC 690	Doctoral Study Proposal	4
DOC 700	Doctoral Study Supervision I	4
DOC 701	Doctoral Study Supervision II	4
DOC 702	Doctoral Study Supervision III	4

ADDITIONAL DOCTORAL COURSES (not required)

DBA 680	Independent Study	1-4
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Total Degree Credit Hour Requirement

36-48 Semester Credit Hours

(*) * A completed Master's level course in Marketing, Management/Organizational Behavior, and Finance may allow the corresponding course(s) to be waived. These courses may not be required for students with a conferred Masters of Business Administration. This is subject to transfer credit rules and restrictions as outlined in the University's Policy Handbook.

The DBA curriculum supports the understanding of the process of building a DSP.

DOC600 is the first course in the program where students are introduced to the program requirements, expectations and research methods.

In the 610 courses (MGT, FIN and MKT), students will increase expertise on business areas and theories.

In DOC640, students will learn the Methodologies of Case Study and Action Research and the software for qualitative data analysis with an emphasis on applied research.

In DOC650, students should identify the business process and problem of study and write a problem statement draft. Students should collect and upload into the DOC800 course (see Sec. 2.4) the Letter of Intent (LOI) from the organization where they plan to conduct their doctoral study. Follow the template provided in this handbook (see Sec. 9.1). The letter should be signed by the respective authority in the organization.

In DOC660, students will conduct literature review related to the business research problem and the theories to be used in the DSP.

In DOC670, students will formulate an initial draft of the methodology section of their DSP.

In DOC690, students should present their first proposal draft (also known as *Prospectus*) to potential DSP committee.

A Doctoral Study Project chair will be assigned following DOC690 when the prospectus presentation is completed.

In the DOC700 courses (700, 701, and 702), students will conduct independent research under the supervision of their DSP chair. Based on the nature of the program and courses, DOC700* courses are not eligible for extensions.

2.2 THE DSP PROCESS AND MILESTONES

The DBA program requires the completion of an original DBA Doctoral Study Project (DSP) consisting of five chapters. Students begin planning their DSP in DOC650. During DOC650 and subsequent DOC6** courses, students are required to present the drafts of the DSP sections as part of the course assignments. In the third and last year, students will focus on conducting the Doctoral Study Project under the guidance of the DSP chair and committee. Students will upload required documents, drafts, and approved deliverables to each DOC7** course for a grade and to the DOC800 Course for record (see Sec. 2.4). Students should review the DSP Flow Chart for the expected progression of DSP deliverables (see Sec. 12).

2.2.1 DBA DOCTORAL STUDY PROJECT MILESTONES

Progress in the DSP process is expected based on the following milestone for each course:

Course	Course Title	DSP Required Milestone	Submission to DOC800
DOC 600	Introduction to Doctoral Studies and Research Methods in Business	Read/Review DBA Handbook, DSP Template, and DSP Presentation Template Tentative DSP topic Tentative organization for LOI	None
DOC 640	Case Study and Action Research	Tentative design approach selected (see Sec.1.4)	None
DOC 650	Technology and Business Process Improvement	Organization and topic area are identified Letter of Intent must be obtained Contact the DBA Professor of Doctoral Studies to confirm feasibility for chosen topic/LOI	CASE 5 Assignment (Introduction Draft) Signed LOI
DOC 660	Innovation and Creativity in Business	An extensive literature review about the area of study and type of organization is conducted. Contact the DBA Professor of Doctoral Studies for literature review assistance	Last cumulative assignment to be submitted (Lit. Review Draft)
DOC 670	Applied Statistics for Research in Business and Management	Quantitative analysis of secondary data related to the industry/organization of study Utilize analysis for background and/or benchmarking of industry/organization Complete IRB training	Last cumulative assignment to be submitted (Methodology Draft)
DOC 690	Doctoral Study Proposal	Initial Proposal draft called PROSPECTUS	Final prospectus document

		DSP chair is assigned following Prospectus presentation	Prospectus Presentation PowerPoint (using DBA Presentation Template)
DOC 700	Doctoral Study Supervision I	<p>Module 1: DSP Proposal draft</p> <p>Module 2: IRB documentation (Consent Form, Data Collection Instruments, IRB training certificate)</p> <p>Module 3: DSP Proposal for defense (upload after all committee members agree to schedule defense); include PowerPoint presentation</p> <p>Module 4: DSP Completion Plan (must be completed after the proposal was defended)</p>	<p>All approved DSP documents</p> <p>To pass this class student should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass Proposal • Receive IRB Approval • Be prepared to start Data Collection
DOC 701	Doctoral Study Supervision II	<p>Module 1: Report progress of data collection for chair review</p> <p>Module 2: Complete data collection; Submit the first draft of data analysis (Chapter 4)</p> <p>Module 3: Make revisions for data analysis based on feedback</p> <p>Module 4: Submit updated draft of data analysis (Chapter 4)</p>	<p>All approved DSP documents</p> <p>To pass this class student should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Data Collection • Submit Data Analysis Draft
DOC 702	Doctoral Study Supervision III	<p>Module 1: Complete the DSP Chapter 5 Draft</p> <p>Module 2: Complete the Full DSP for defense</p> <p>Module 3: Complete the Full DSP presentation and Executive Summary Report (ESR) draft</p> <p>Module 4: Complete Final Revisions to DSP and ESR</p>	<p>All approved DSP documents</p> <p>To pass this class student should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize DSP • Pass DSP Defense

2.3 DSP CHAPTERS CONTENT

Chapter I: Introduction to the Doctoral Study

- Formal problem statement – *what?*
- Background of the organization (context) – *why?*
- Conceptual framework (foundation) – *what?*
- Methodological approach (justification) – *how?*

A draft of Chapter I of the study is due by the end of the DOC650 Technology and Business Process Improvement. Students should identify the organization and the type of business problem and process (if applicable) that will serve as the focus of the study.

Chapter II: Literature Review

- Literature search strategy
- Industry and organizational analysis
- Synthesized scholarly/practitioner literature review. This should include a minimum of two theories/models utilized for the foundation of your topic. The literature review should also examine the major concepts and sub-concepts relevant to the DSP topic.
- Review of the literature on the research method and design being utilized to provide an explanation of why this method and design is selected for the DSP.

A draft of Chapter II of the study is due by the end of DOC660 Innovation and Creativity in Business.

Chapter III: Methodology

- Choose and explain appropriate research method and design.
- Choose and explain appropriate data collection processes (interviews, surveys, focus groups, secondary data, etc.). Data collection requires a minimum of three processes and a minimum total sample size of 15 participants. Each process should be detailed as a step-by-step procedure.
- Choose and explain appropriate data analysis process(es). Each process should be detailed as a step-by-step procedure.
- Discuss ethical assurances to mitigate risk to human subjects.

A draft of Chapter III of the study is due by the end of DOC670 Applied Statistics for Research in Business and Management.

The drafts of the first three chapters and proposal defense PowerPoint should be saved in the DOC800 course of the doctoral student.

Proposal Defense: The DSP proposal (the first three chapters) should be defended during DOC700. Students should include DSP completion plan with timelines in accordance with the DBA handbook. Noted revisions will be added to the completion plan following

the defense. Students must defend the proposal, receive committee approval of the proposal defense, receive IRB approval, and start data collection in DOC700.

Chapter IV: Data Collection and Data Analysis

- Focus on collection and analysis of real data from the Doctoral Study Project.
- Provide summary of results; relate results to the research question(s).
- Provide a brief evaluation of findings.

Students complete data analysis under the supervision of the DSP chair in DOC701. A draft of Chapter IV of the study is due by the end of DOC701; students should have all data collected and mostly analyzed.

Chapter V: Application to Practice and Discussion

- Construct the Application to Practice report for the Company/Organization that served as the focus of the study.
- Provide implications and recommendations for research or practical application.
- Following Chapter V, students will provide an Executive Summary Report.

A final version of the DSP is due by the end of DOC702.

The final DSP and DSP defense PowerPoint should be saved in the DOC800 course of the doctoral student.

DSP Defense: The DSP (all five chapters) must be defended during DOC702. Students must receive committee approval of the DSP defense in DOC702.

Students must pass the defense to pass DOC702 and graduate. Students are only allowed to repeat DOC702 up to two times.

2.4 THE 800 COURSE – DSP MILESTONE REPOSITORY / TRACKING

The 800 course is a session-less course available to each doctoral student enrolled in the DBA program. The purpose of this course is to provide a scalable platform to record students' progress towards the completion of a Doctoral Study Project (DSP). The course contains a series of droboxes that match the DSP milestones defined for the program.

- Each student has an “800” course available while the student is enrolled in the program.
- In Module 1, students will submit documents for any progress made toward the DSP at the end of each session. These submissions **will not** be graded. They are uploaded simply for storage purposes. Submissions requiring a grade must be uploaded in the 700 courses.
- In Module 2, students will submit any **approved** document completed toward the DSP process during the 700 courses. These documents are submitted for DSP tracking purposes and will be evaluated by the DSP Chair. These submissions **will** be graded as a

pass/fail requirement acknowledging that the student is ready to move to the next deliverable. Submissions requiring a grade must also be uploaded in the 700 courses.

Module 1 – DSP Draft Documents

- 650 DSP drafts completed in DOC650
- 660 DSP drafts completed in DOC660
- 670 DSP drafts completed in DOC670
- 690 DSP drafts completed in DOC690
- 700 DSP drafts completed in DOC700
- 701 DSP drafts completed in DOC701
- 702 DSP drafts completed in DOC702

Module 2 – Final Documents for Approval – Graded Pass/Fail by DSP Chair

- 1001 Approved LOI
- 1002 DSP Proposal Defended
- 1003 IRB Training Certificate
- 1004 IRB Application
- 1005 Final DSP Defended

Instances of Approval

Documents for approval	Who will approve
1001 Approved LOI	Professor of Doctoral Studies (PDS)
1002 DSP Proposal Defended	DSP Committee, PDS, and Program Director
1003 IRB Training Certificate	Trident at AIU IRB
1004 IRB Application	Trident at AIU IRB
1005 Full DSP Defended	DSP Committee, PDS, Program Director, and Dean

3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As you work on your DSP, you will interact with various people and review boards. Major responsibilities for the following individuals/groups are described in the table below:

- You (the student)
- DSP Chair
- DSP Committee
- Site Facilitator
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) – Dr. Stephen Pollard
- Professor of Doctoral Studies – Dr. Christopher Linski
- Doctoral Studies Director – Dr. Indira Guzman

Role	Responsibility
You (the student)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow University Policies established in the University Catalogs and DBA Handbook. ● Submit assignments on time ● Follow IRB requirements ● Fulfill requirements to pass each class ● Communicate any delays or concerns in a timely manner ● Complete all: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Steps in the DSP process, in order; ○ Required DOC courses, including DSP Planning Courses and DSP credits; ○ DSP assignments in DOC courses; and ○ Required forms, properly signed and submitted, either by yourself or your DSP Chair, in a timely fashion. ● Work closely with your DSP Chair and Committee.
DSP Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guides and assists the student in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defining and finalizing a research topic; ○ Preparing for DSP research; ○ Developing a timeline to complete the DSP; ○ Choosing committee member(s); ○ Developing the DSP Proposal; and ○ Overseeing the research and analyzing data. ● Responsible for quality and rigor. ● Reviews, provides feedback, and approves student's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DSP Proposal (in conjunction with the Committee); ○ IRB Application (for submission to IRB); ○ DSP Documents (in conjunction with the Committee); and ○ Final DSP submission. ● Oversees and evaluates the student's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposal Oral Defense ○ Final Oral Defense ● Will share drafts to committee members when the document is ready and ensure appropriate completion of recommended revisions.
DSP Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oversees, evaluates, and provides feedback to the student's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposal Oral Defense ○ Final Oral Defense ● Provides feedback for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DSP Proposal ○ Final DSP

Site Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal individual of contact for site research. • Principal agent for Letter of Intent and Site Permission (as required by IRB). • May attend DSP defense, when possible.
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Dr. Stephen Pollard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures ethical research practices among students and faculty. (<i>Anyone affiliated with Trident at AIU who is pursuing a research project must receive approval from the IRB before data collection.</i>) • Reviews and approves in the 800 course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IRB Training Certificate ○ IRB Application
DBA Professor of Doctoral Studies Dr. Christopher Linski	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides advice to DBA students regarding DSP. • Ensures quality of DSP. • Reviews Letter of Intent. • Reviews and provides feedback for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DSP Proposal ○ Final DSP
Doctoral Studies Director Dr. Indira Guzman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews and approves the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Final DSP Proposal ○ Final DSP Document • Signs Request for DSP Committee Assignments/Change

3.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DSP CHAIR

The DSP Chair will:

- Assess your capability to undertake the study and defend the DSP Proposal and Report. If necessary, the Chair may require you to address any deficiencies by taking courses, studying independently, or reading additional material.
- Determine that the Proposal meets DSP standards. The Chair should consult with the Committee to provide scholarly and professional guidance for the DSP. The Chair is responsible for the initial review and approval of the Proposal; he or she will then direct you to cycle it through the other committee member(s) for additional feedback and approval, to move toward submitting to the D.B.A. Program Lead(s) and scheduling the Proposal Oral Defense.
- Advise you on the selection of the other committee member(s).
- Act as a liaison between you and the other Committee member(s), as well as the Trident at AIU administration.
- Ensure that you have done all that is necessary to develop, conduct, and write a quality applied project.
- Be aware of and follow all Trident at AIU procedures, as well as ensure that you stay on track. The Chair is expected to reinforce deadlines and discourage postponements.

- Sign off on required forms to help you move from one step to the next in the DSP process.
- Complete Checklists and Rubrics, as needed.
- Provide course grades in DOC7** courses and pass/fail grades in the 800 course.
- Sign the completed and approved DSP.

3.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DSP COMMITTEE MEMBERS (NON-CHAIR)

The DSP Committee will:

- Review and provide feedback and comments on the DSP Proposal.
- Attend, participate in, and evaluate the Proposal Oral Defense.
- Review the final draft of the DSP Report and provide feedback and comments.
- Attend, participate in, and evaluate the Final Oral Defense.
- Mentor and advise the student on the DSP to ensure scholarly work.
- Advise and guide the student regarding applicable funding sources for the research.
- Advise and guide the student in the data collection and analysis process.
- Advise and provide guidance regarding suitability for publication and promotion of collaborative writing of publication(s) based on the DSP Report.
- Committee Members may also rely on additional subject matter experts as consulting members of the Committee for research support.
- Committee Members shall sign the completed and approved DSP.

3.3 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

Trident at AIU has a standing committee known as the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This committee exists for the protection of human subjects and requires students and faculty conducting research involving human subjects to submit their research to the appropriate IRB committee. Following notification by the Doctoral Program Director, and email acknowledgement by the DSP Chair that all preparatory IRB documents have been reviewed, IRB will email an application form and instructions to the student. Students may also access the IRB policy and procedures, membership and sample forms on the University website. Following completion of the IRB application, students should submit to the DSP Chair for review. Upon approval, the application will be uploaded by the student into the corresponding 800 course module.

Once your committee has approved your proposed research plan, review and approval of the plan by the IRB is a crucial final step before you may begin interventions or to collect and analyze data. Federal law and regulations require an IRB review of all research involving human subjects. The purpose of such reviews is to ensure that your research complies with established ethical standards and principles. To complete this review, you must have completed IRB training and submit the IRB application (through your 800 course) summarizing the project and the human subjects protection issues that it poses (a copy of the research methodology and any

relevant forms and/or data gathering instruments is generally attached to the application). The IRB Chair then makes the determination as to the nature and extent of the review.

It is very important that you understand that you may not collect data before IRB approval is received, and if you do collect data before that approval, the data may not be used in the DSP (a certain degree of exploratory reconnaissance is allowed). Official submission of a project to the IRB may not take place until the Director has notified IRB of proposal approval.

IRB documents that are expected for most research studies include:

- IRB Application
- IRB Training Certificate of Completion
- Signed Letter of Intent Explaining Study Details
- Informed Consent Form (for each instrument used)
- Completed and Reviewed Instruments
- Approved DSP Proposal
- Additional Documents Relevant to Human Protections Specific to Each Study

3.3.1 The Special Case of the Organizational Analysis

You may opt to complete an organizational analysis of the organization where you are doing your research project. That analysis can take many forms and it would not ordinarily be necessary for you to submit your plan for IRB approval, as long as collection of data does not involve human subjects in the process. Analysis of ordinary and routine activity of business leaders, not involving human subjects, is not considered “research.” However, because you may use the findings of your organizational analysis in your DSP, it is important that you do submit the plan for organizational analysis to the IRB committee.

3.3.2 After IRB Approval of Your Research Plan

Once your initial plan for your applied research has been approved by the IRB committee, you can begin your research work under the supervision of your DSP chair. Keep in mind, however, that if you make major changes in your research plan, it may be necessary to go back to the IRB for approval of the changes and fill out an IRB Amendment Form. It is important to keep your DSP committee, especially your chair, informed and up-to-date on the progress of your research and aware of any changes you may be considering. Each session the chair will report to the Doctoral Studies Director on your DSP progress.

3.3.3 HOW TO OBTAIN THE IRB TRAINING CERTIFICATE

You must complete the **Human Subjects Research Online Training** available at the Protecting Human Research Participant (PHRP) Online Training website. This online training is intended for anyone involved in research studies with human subjects, or who have responsibilities for setting policies and procedures with respect to such research, including Institutional Review

Boards (IRBs). To complete the training and obtain the certificate, go to <https://phrptraining.com/#/>. Please note: The fee to complete the training is payable directly to PHRP; the student is responsible for the fees applicable to this training. Once you complete the training, upload the proof of completion in the “1003 IRB Training Certificate” DropBox folder in your DOC800, otherwise IRB will not review your application and supporting documents.

4 DSP PROGRESSION

4.1 THE DSP PROSPECTUS IN DOC690

Students put together a Proposal draft called PROSPECTUS in DOC690. A DSP prospectus is a preliminary plan for conducting a study. This is not an official, technical research proposal, but, rather, a considered analysis of the DSP proposal requirements you are likely to introduce and follow in your study. In essence, it is a preliminary DSP proposal.

The Prospectus follows the structure of the Proposal and has three chapters. Students are required to submit full prospectus document and a PowerPoint (using provided DSP Presentation Template) for discussion with the committee. This presentation will follow a Colloquium Format. (*See Sec. 13 for links to the most recent DSP and DSP Presentation Templates*)

In completing the prospectus, you should be sure to consider at least the following¹:

Business Research Problem (in Chapter 1). What is the business research problem you are trying to solve? What is the context? [A problem is a situation that, left untreated, produces a negative consequence for some group, institution or individual(s). For example, “The company employees do not seem to be doing well” isn’t necessarily a specific business problem; “the turnover rate has increased in the last five years” is.] What makes it a problem? For whom? Who says so?

Research Questions (in Chapter 1). Based on your problem, what are the research questions you are trying to answer? Why and how will answering these questions contribute to solving the research problem? Remember...a research question can be answered ONLY with evidence.

Theoretical/Conceptual Issues (in Chapters 1 and 2). What theoretical/conceptual issues arise in your proposed study? For example, “theoretically,” how would you explain this problem and the results you suspect you might get to another scholar? (Do you take a behavioral view? Social systems view? System view? Policy formulation/implementation view? Developmental view?) Are there other theoretical orientations that should be considered in the design of your study?

Literature Review (in Chapter 2). What, in general, does the literature say about your topic? How does the understanding of the literature is related to the business environment (i.e. Competitive Analysis, Strategic Alignment, Risk analysis)? [This need not be a complete review, but you should cite some of the major theory, research, and writers in the field.]

¹ Adapted from www.coedu.usf.edu

General Research Plan (in Chapter 3). In general, how would you propose to conduct this research study so that it answers your research questions? What kind of data will you gather (specify type, such as surveys, observations, interviews...or some combination of these types)? From whom will you gather it? Why them? Is this feasible?

How will you analyze the data - make sense of it? (in Chapter 3). How will you assure that the data are of high quality?

Anticipated Difficulties and Pitfalls (in Chapter 3). What kind of difficulties and pitfalls might you expect in doing a study of this type? What will you do to prevent them or minimize their effects?

Anticipated Benefits (in Chapter 3). Who will benefit from the fact that this research is undertaken? How? Why? Who might be disturbed this proposed study? How? Why?

This should be a thoughtful, reflective paper that presents a balanced view of the proposed study - both its problems and its opportunities. It should serve as a first, solid communication with your committee and potential DSP chair about the kind of thinking you have been doing on an anticipated area of inquiry that might comprise at least a portion of your DSP work.

4.1.1 PROCEDURE OF THE DSP PROSPECTUS PRESENTATION

The student should assemble a MS PowerPoint describing the study, following the prescribed format covered in the DSP Presentation Template. The DOC690 professor will determine the dates of the presentations during Module 5 of the course. Students will be separated into groups for each presentation session. The presentation shall be sent to the DOC690 professor at least one week prior to scheduled date. Potential DSP Chairs will be invited to the presentation as Prospectus reviewers and shall receive the current presentation to review in advance.

The Prospectus Presentation normally takes from 1 to 1 1/2 hours. The presentation will be by teleconferencing in a colloquium format where two to three students will be presenting and a committee of three faculty members will evaluate the prospectus. Each student should expect to present for 10 minutes, with up to 5 minutes for audience questions.

The purpose of the oral presentation is:

- To have the student to communicate his or her observations and interpretations to others;
- To assure that ethical and professional standards of the profession have been followed;
- To demonstrate the candidate's readiness to pursue independent applied research under the supervision of a DSP chair; and
- To demonstrate the candidate's understanding of the relationship of this work within the fields of business administration.

4.1.2 OUTCOME OF THE DSP PROSPECTUS PRESENTATION

Once the students have completed their oral presentation, he/she will be asked to exit the room so the reviewing committee can deliberate on the outcomes. The outcomes are decided by an open vote of the committee. The committee makes one of two recommendations:

- Pass. Ready to begin formal DSP work under DSP Chair supervision.
- No Pass. The student is not ready to begin formal DSP work. Student needs to retake DOC690.

At the oral defense, only the members of the reviewing committee have the authority to decide whether the student passes or fails. Both the DSP itself and the candidate's performance in the oral presentation are grounds for the committee's majority-rule decision to pass or fail. The DOC690 faculty or Doctoral Program Director will notify the student of the outcome and provide the Prospectus Rubric with recommendations from the reviewing committee.

4.2 THE DSP PROPOSAL

As noted earlier, the process of completing an applied research project will often involve changes and adjustments in the plan for the research.

During the development of the DSP the candidate will maintain regular contact with the DSP Chair through coursework (DOC 700, 701, and 702) and seek counsel and advice on each of the major steps in the research project. Students should use the feedback received during the Prospectus presentation.

As elements of the DSP research are completed and chapters written according to the formatting requirements detailed in this Handbook, the DSP Template, and the DSP Proposal Checklist (see Sec. 6.2), the DSP Chair shall work with the student to select committee members, from the authorized faculty roster. The DSP Chair will request availability of the selected committee members who, upon agreement, will provide feedback to the student. When a draft of the DSP is judged by the committee to be ready to defend, the Committee also will complete the DSP Proposal Checklist. When all checklist items have been confirmed by the DSP Chair and Committee, the oral defense can be scheduled. The DSP Proposal defense shall take place in DOC700. Students must have a final draft of the DSP Proposal completed during Week 9 of the course in order to successfully defend during DOC700. Students who have not reached this milestone will need to retake DOC700.

The DSP Proposal should include the first three chapters of the DSP:

- Chapter I: Introduction to the Doctoral Study
- Chapter II: Literature Review
- Chapter III: Methodology

4.2.1 DOC700 PROPOSAL TIMELINE

WEEK	TASKS AND ASSIGNMENTS DUE
1	Initiate communication with assigned DSP Chair
2	Module 1 Due Required draft of the DSP to Chair following handbook and DSP template
3	Receive Chair feedback and conduct necessary revisions
4	Maintain communication with Chair regarding feedback and next required steps Submit revised proposal draft for revised grade in Module 1
5	Module 2 Due Prepare IRB documentation, complete IRB training (if not completed previously), data collection instruments drafted, and informed consent template completed.
6	Receive Chair feedback and conduct necessary revisions
7	Maintain communication with Chair regarding feedback and next required steps
8	Module 3 Due Revised proposal draft must be submitted to DSP Chair for review and submission to the DSP Committee.
9	DSP Chair/Committee review of proposal; final week to schedule defense
10	Final week for defending proposal
11	Final Proposal edits must be approved by DSP Chair/Committee and submitted to Director; Submission to IRB required.
FINAL	Module 4 Due DSP Chair must finalize all grades in DOC700 and the 800 Course

4.2.2 PROCEDURE OF THE DSP PROPOSAL DEFENSE

The student should assemble a MS PowerPoint describing the study, following the prescribed format covered in the DSP Presentation Template (See Sec. 13). The presentation should be sent to the DSP Chair and Committee two weeks prior to defense. In consultation with the DSP Chair, the student shall find a day and time at which it is possible for all members of the DSP Committee to participate.

The DSP Proposal Defense normally takes about 60-90 minutes. The presentation will be by teleconferencing where the student will present, and the DSP Committee will evaluate. Students should expect to present for 20-30 minutes.

The purpose of the oral DSP Proposal Defense is:

- To describe and add context to the proposed research problem as it relates to the selected site / organization within the context of an applied contextual research problem;

- To demonstrate understanding of the current literature within the field of study and how one identifies and articulates a need to address the problem statement through the proposed study;
- To articulate that the ethical and professional standards of the profession will be followed; and
- To demonstrate the candidate's understanding of applied research methodology and the use of research tools in professional practice as it relates to the proposed DSP and alignment between the research problem and proposed methods.

4.2.3 OUTCOME OF THE DSP PROPOSAL DEFENSE

Once the students have completed their oral defense, he/she will be asked to exit the room so the committee can deliberate on the outcomes. The outcomes are decided by an open vote of the committee. The committee makes one of three recommendations:

1. Pass with revisions that need to be approved by the DSP Chair only.
2. Pass with revisions that need to be approved by the DSP Chair and Committee members.
3. No Pass. The student needs to retake DOC700.

At the oral defense, only the members of the committee have the authority to decide whether the candidate passes or fails. Both the DSP itself and the candidate's performance in the oral presentation are grounds for the committee's majority-rule decision to pass or fail. The DSP Chair will immediately notify the student of the committee's decision, provide the Proposal Rubric with recommendations from the committee, and initiate the DSP Completion Plan according to committee recommendations. Students must complete any revisions necessary to the DSP Proposal utilizing the Feedback Tracking Form prior to the last day of DOC700 in order to submit to IRB and enroll in DOC701.

4.3 THE FINAL DSP

As elements of the final DSP are completed and chapters written according to the formatting requirements detailed in this Handbook, the DSP Template, and the Final DSP Checklist (see Sec. 6.4), the DSP Chair will provide feedback to the student. When a draft of the Final DSP is judged by the DSP Chair to be ready to defend, the DSP Chair will forward the Final DSP and the Final DSP Checklist to the DSP Committee members for review. When all checklist items have also been confirmed by the DSP Committee, the final oral defense can be scheduled. The final DSP defense shall take place in DOC702. Students must have a final draft of the DSP completed by the end of the first week of Module 4 of the course in order to successfully defend during DOC702. Students who have not reached this milestone will need to retake DOC702. The Final DSP document should include all five chapters of the DSP:

- Chapter I: Introduction to the Doctoral Study
- Chapter II: Literature review
- Chapter III: Methodology
- Chapter IV: Data Collection and Data Analysis
- Chapter V: Application to Practice and Discussion; Executive Summary Report

4.3.1 PROCEDURE OF THE DSP FINAL DEFENSE

The student should assemble a MS PowerPoint describing the study, following the prescribed format covered in the DSP Presentation Template. The presentation should be sent to the DSP Chair, Committee, and the Doctoral Program Director one week prior to defense. The emphasis should be on research settings, the problem of practice addressed, development of the applied research plan, results and implications. In consultation with the DSP Chair, the student shall find a day and time at which it is possible for all members of the DSP Committee to participate.

The oral defense of the DSP normally takes from 60-90 minutes. The defense will be by teleconferencing where the student will present, and the DSP committee will evaluate. Students should expect to present for 20-30 minutes.

The purpose of the oral defense is:

- To celebrate the successful completion of a major component of the doctoral program;
- To provide the student an opportunity to communicate his or her findings and interpretations to others;
- To assure that the ethical and professional standards of the profession have been followed;
- To demonstrate the candidate's mastery of applied research methodology and the use of research tools in professional practice; and
- To demonstrate the candidate's understanding of the relationship of this work to the fields of business administration.

4.3.2 OUTCOME OF THE FINAL DSP DEFENSE

Once the student has completed the oral defense, he/she will be asked to exit the room temporarily so the committee can deliberate on the outcome. The outcome of the oral defense is decided by an open vote of the DSP Committee. The committee makes one of three recommendations:

1. Pass with revisions that need to be approved by the DSP Chair only.
2. Pass with revisions that need to be approved by the DSP Chair and Committee members.
3. No Pass. The student needs to retake DOC702.

At the oral defense, only the members of the committee have the authority to decide whether the candidate passes or fails. Both the DSP itself and the candidate's performance in the oral presentation are grounds for the committee's majority-rule decision to pass or fail. The DSP Chair will notify the student the decision of the committee and provide the Final DSP Rubric with recommendations from the committee. Students must complete any revisions necessary to the final DSP utilizing the Feedback Tracking Form prior to the last day of DOC702 in order to submit for final Director/Dean's review and approval in DOC702.

Doctoral candidates may pass the oral defense but still be required to revise their DSP.

4.4 ORAL DEFENSE TIPS

Preparation

- Schedule the date of your Defense at least one week in advance.
- Submit a copy of your PowerPoint presentation to the Doctoral Studies Director at least two days prior to the Defense; the Director will provide the presentation URL to all committee members.
- Consider inviting others to your Defense, with your DSP Chair's permission.
- Know your Proposal or Final DSP thoroughly.
- Rehearse the presentation multiple times, possibly with an audience to get feedback.
- Make sure your presentation rehearsal fits within the time available (20-30 minutes).
- Consider which questions the Committee might ask and prepare responses for them.
- Use the DSP Presentations Template to keep the Defense organized and to stay on task.

Be sure to:

- Not read directly from your slides. Keep your presentation conversational, but still scholarly.
- Avoid putting entire sentences or too much material on the slides. These should contain an outline of what you are covering.
- Check for glaring errors on the slides (e.g., writing, spelling, and formatting).
- Consider using graphs or other visual displays to communicate your project plan or findings.

4.4.1 PROCEDURES FOR ORAL DEFENSES

Who Can Attend the Oral Defense?

The DSP defense is conducted via a teleconferencing and open the student, the DSP Committee, the Site Facilitator, the Doctoral Studies Director, the Dean, and friends or colleagues who are invited by the student.

Who Must Attend the Oral Defense?

All members of the DSP Committee must be present for the defense unless exceptions are approved by the Doctoral Studies Director or by his/her designee. Absent members of the DSP Committee must still participate in the defense through, for example, the submission of written comments and questions. Under no circumstances can more than one member of the DSP Committee be absent from the defense.

Who Can Actively Participate in the Oral Defense?

If there are others in addition to the student and the DSP Committee at the defense, it is the responsibility of the DSP Chair to ensure that time is provided for their comments; however, the

initial portion of the defense is restricted only to participation by the student and members of the DSP Committee.

Process for Defense Approval

Following the student's oral presentation of the DSP Proposal or Final DSP, the student will be asked to exit the room so the committee can deliberate on the outcome. The outcome of the oral defense is decided by an open vote of the DSP Committee. The committee shall make recommendations as provided in Sec. 4.2.2 (Proposal) or Sec. 4.3.2 (Final DSP). At the oral defense, only the members of the committee have the authority to decide whether the candidate passes or fails. Both the DSP itself and the student's performance in the oral presentation are grounds for the committee's majority-rule decision to pass or fail. Students may pass the oral defense but still be required to revise their Proposal or Final DSP. After the proposal defense, students will be notified of the outcome by the DSP Chair.

5 WRITING THE DSP PROPOSAL AND REPORT

5.1 WRITING SUGGESTIONS

As you write, keep in mind that your work will be judged not only by the quality and rigor of your project but also according to your writing style. Regardless of the merit of the project and conclusions, readers tend to have a favorable impression of a professional, well-written report and an unfavorable impression of a sloppy or casually written report.

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind throughout the writing process:

- Use Microsoft Word tools to organize and format the DSP Proposal and FinalDSP.
- Save the documents in at least two places (e.g., thumb/flash drive, hard drive, or paper copy). This will prevent data loss in the event of technical difficulties. Consider saving the documents in the Cloud, an internet-accessible site, as well.
- Stay organized; have all materials and references in an easily accessible location. Keep track of your work through a user-friendly filing system, such as separating reference materials by subtopic or the chapter in which they are used.
- Choose a logical file naming and folder system. Create a system that allows you to keep old versions of files but minimizes version control problems.
- Adhere to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.).
- Prepare an outline; it is easier to construct sentences and paragraphs when following a detailed outline.
- Aim for a concise and continuous flow of ideas. Use headings to organize and clarify the structure of the document.
- Update the References list as you write instead of completing the entire list at one time.
- Read everything you write and revise more than once before sending it to anyone to review. Your reviewers should be making constructive comments, not commenting on careless mistakes.

- Expect to write several drafts. Most students revise the DSP Proposal and Final DSP several times before it is approved by the DSP Chair and ready to submit to the Committee members for review.
- Ask a qualified outside person to read the document and make editing suggestions regarding grammar, spelling, and syntax. It is acceptable to use a professional editing service for this purpose, but you are responsible for all related fees.
- Give the DSP Chair a draft of each chapter as it is completed. This helps the Chair review the work efficiently and allows you to receive faster feedback.
- You should have the final draft of the DSP reviewed and edited at a professional level. Students are responsible for all related fees, when applicable.

5.2 DSP REPORT FORMATTING GUIDELINES

The DSP Report is a scholarly document, creating a permanent record of original research. The number of chapters or sections in the Final DSP and their content will follow the standard five-chapter DSP format. The student and the DSP Chair and Committee should collaborate on the best format for the main body of the Final DSP.

Both the content and the style of the document reflect on the student, the DSP Committee, and Trident at AIU. In order for your document to have some uniformity with other doctoral-level documents from the University, please follow the formatting specifications presented here.

Trident at AIU uses the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) as the basic style guide for all papers, as well as reports and dissertations, and it should be used as a guide for all style and formatting issues not addressed in the following table. While the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* provides a style guide for submitting manuscripts, Trident at AIU has its own modified style guide for publication, as described below.

Recommendation: Begin using the required specifications on drafts of your DSP as early as possible in order to become familiar with proper formatting and style.

5.2.1 GENERAL FORMATTING GUIDELINES

ELEMENT	SPECIFICATIONS
Font – main text	Times New Roman, 12-point
Font – footnotes	Times New Roman, 10-point
Margins (all pages, including those with tables and figures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Left: 1 ¼ inches (to allow for binding) • Top, right, bottom: 1 inch
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Left: justified • Right: ragged (not justified) • No hyphenation at the right margin
Spacing (lines)	<p>Double-space all pages, including the Abstract, except for the following (which should be single-spaced):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headings, subheadings, and table or figure captions exceeding one line in length; • Table of contents entries exceeding one line in length (double-space between entries); • Footnotes (although individual footnotes are single-spaced, double-space between each separate footnote if more than one appears on a page); • Long, block-indented quotes or narratives; • List entries (double-space between numbers); • Individual entries of more than one line in the References section (although individual reference entries are single-spaced, double-space between each separate reference); • Table titles, table column and row headings, table text (double-space between rows), and table notes; and • Lengthy material in tables and appendices.
Spacing (sentences)	<p>Single-space after all punctuation except internal periods in abbreviations (e.g., i.e., U.S.). However, insert two spaces between sentences. See section 4.01 in the <i>Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association</i> (6th ed.) for more detail.</p>
Paragraphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each paragraph should be indented one-half inch. • Leave no extra spaces between paragraphs.
Footnotes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List consecutively at the bottom of the page where they first appear; or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place footnotes in consecutive order on a separate page titled, <i>End Notes</i>, following the References section.
Pagination	<p>All pages (except the title/cover pages) bear a page number. The preliminary pages are arranged and numbered as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If any of the preliminary pages exceed one page, advance the page numbers consecutively; Preliminary page numbers are shown in Roman numerals at the bottom center of each page; Chapter 1 begins on page 1; and Number pages sequentially from Chapter 1 through the end of the manuscript, in Arabic numerals centered in the footer at the bottom center of each page, in Times New Roman, 12-point font.
Headers and Footers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No text or page numbers in the header. Page number at the center of the footer.

5.2.2 ARRANGEMENT

In its final form, the DSP should be arranged in the following order: *preliminary pages* (title page, abstract, copyright page, acknowledgements/dedication, table of contents, list of tables and figures, list of appendices), *text* (introduction, main body of text, summary or conclusion), and *references and supplemental sections* (footnotes and appendices). Required appendices include, at a minimum, any LOIs or site authorizations, informed consent forms, and protocols or other instruments utilized in the study. The DSP should follow the standard five-chapter format (see DSP template in Sec. 13).

Title Page

Each copy of the DSP Report must include a title page prepared in accordance with the example shown in the DSP Template. The title page does not bear a page number (although it is understood to be page i). Include the student's full legal name as it appears in Trident at AIU records. The title page will also include the names of the Dean, Director, DSP Chair, and DSP Committee members, along with their credentials (e.g. John Smith, Ph.D.).

6 RUBRICS APPLIED IN THE DBA PROGRAM

6.1 DOC690 - DSP PROSPECTUS RUBRIC

To be used to assess DSP Prospectus draft and presentation by evaluating committee. Evaluation is to determine minimum understanding of concepts to move into proposal phase of DSP.

Student Name: (insert name)

Date: (Month DD, YYYY)

Evaluators: (insert names)

Doctoral Studies Director: (insert name, if present)

Assessment

	Condensed Version of Components Required	Satisfactory	Needs Improvements
	Chapter I: Introduction to the Study		
1	Background of Topic and Organization (context)		
2	Statement of the Problem		
3	Purpose of the Study		
4	Conceptual Framework		
5	Research Questions (alignment to problem)		
6	Significance of the Study		
	Chapter II: Literature Review		
7	Industry and Organizational Analysis		
8	Organizational Benchmarking		
9	Scholarly/Practitioner Literature Review (must include two theories/models)		
10	Method and Design Literature Review		
	Chapter III: Methodology		
11	Rationale for Methodology (Qual/Mixed Method)		
12	Rationale for Design (Case Study, etc.)		
13	Population Traits, Sample Size, and Process		
14	Data Collection Instruments and Process		
15	Data Analysis Approach		
16	Alignment of Problem Statement, Method, Design		
17	Feasibility of the Proposed Study		
18	Overall Level of Doctoral Writing		
	Totals	0	0

Evaluating committee will vote on whether student has been successful in the Prospectus Presentation. A "Pass" means the committee believes student can move to Chair supervision.

Faculty Comments and Recommendations:

1. Insert list of comments/recommendations from faculty here.
2. Etc.

In addition to the recommendations above, all students should conduct a final review of spelling, grammar, and APA format throughout the document. Upon completion of all edits, students should conduct a final update of the Table of Contents using the MS Word capabilities.

Overall Recommendation:

- Pass. Ready to begin formal DSP work under DSP Chair supervision.
- No Pass. Student is not ready to begin formal DSP work. Student needs to retake DOC690.

6.2 DOC700 - DSP PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

To be completed by Student and DSP Chair first; when approved by DSP Chair, provide to each Committee member. Provide an "X" when each criterion is approved.

Item	Deliverable	Task	Completed		
			Student	Chair	Committee Members
1	Preface	Title page and Table of Contents updated.			/
3	Chapter 1	Overview of topic provided.			/
4		Problem and Purpose Statements are aligned.			/
5		Conceptual framework is properly outlined.			/
6		Research Questions are open ended; align to the Problem.			/
7		Overview of Method and Design provided.			/
8		Significance of study is appropriate.			/
9		At least 5-10 key words are defined (and cited).			/
10	Chapter 2	Introduction to chapter is provided.			/
11		Analysis of industry and organization provided.			/
12		Internal and/or external benchmarks are explained.			/
13		Scholarly/Practitioner literature shows proper knowledge base.			/
14		Minimum of two theories/models serve as foundation.			/
		Method and Design literature examines prior empirical work.			/
15		Total page length is at least 30 pages.			/
16	Chapter 3	Methodology (Qual/Mixed Methods) rationale is explained.			/
17		Design (case study, etc.) rationale is explained well.			/
18		General population, target population traits, sample size, and sampling process are appropriate for study design.			/
19		A minimum of three sources of data and 15 total participants.			/
20		Validity/reliability process (expert review, pilot study, member checking, etc.) is explained.			/
21		Step-by-step data collection process explained for each source of data in the sequence of collection.			/
22		Data analysis process cited from the literature; explained in step-by-step process (per instrument or combined analysis).			/
23		Triangulation of data sources is explained.			/
24		Ethical concerns addressed – Authorizations, participant protection, data storage, and data protection explained.			/
25	References	References are academic/practitioner-related and APA format; all references have corresponding in-text citation.			/
26	Appendix	LOIs, instruments/protocols, recruitment material, Trident Informed Consent forms (and cited in the text).			/
27		IRB training completed and certificate received.			/
28	ALL	DSP is in appropriate template; All template guidance (blue text) has been removed.			/
29		Final spelling/grammar/APA formatting review conducted.			/

6.3 DOC700 - DSP PROPOSAL DEFENSE RUBRIC

To be used to assess DSP Proposal draft and defense by DSP committee. Evaluation is to determine feasibility of proposed study and readiness to submit to IRB.

Student Name: (insert name)

Date: (Month DD, YYYY)

DSP Chair: (insert name)

Verification: (Yes)

DSP Committee Members: (insert names)

Doctoral Studies Director: (insert name, if present)

Assessment

		Excellent	Proficient	Developing	Emerging
	Complete Version of these Components	4	3	2	1
	Chapter I: Introduction to the Study				
1	Background of Topic and Organization (context)				
2	Statement of the Problem				
3	Purpose of the Study				
4	Conceptual Framework				
5	Research Questions (alignment to problem)				
6	Significance of the Study				
	Chapter II: Literature Review				
7	Industry and Organizational Analysis				
8	Organizational Benchmarking				
9	Scholarly/Practitioner Literature Review				
10	Method and Design Literature Review				
	Chapter III: Methodology				
11	Rationale for Methodology (Qual/Mixed Method)				
12	Rationale for Design (Case Study, etc.)				
13	Population Traits, Sample Size, and Process				
14	Data Collection Instruments and Process				
15	Data Analysis Approach				
16	Alignment of Problem Statement, Method, Design				
17	Feasibility of the Proposed Study				
18	Overall Level of Doctoral Writing				
	Total points	0	0	0	0

DSP committee will vote on whether student has been successful in the Proposal Defense. A "Pass" means committee believes student can submit to IRB by the end of DOC700.

Summary of committee suggestions to the student's post-defense revision:

1. Insert list of comments/recommendations from committee here.
2. Etc.

In addition to the recommendations above, all students should conduct a final review of spelling, grammar, and APA format throughout the document. Upon completion of all edits, students should conduct a final update of the Table of Contents using the MS Word capabilities.

Overall Recommendation:

- [] 1. Pass with revisions that need to be approved by the DSP Chair only.
- [] 2. Pass with revisions that need to be approved by the DSP Chair and Committee members.
- [] 3. No Pass. The student needs to retake DOC700.

Procedure after the proposal is approved by the committee:

Any recommended revisions will be addressed using the **Feedback Tracking Form**. This Form and the revised Proposal will be submitted to the DSP Chair. If required, the DSP Chair will provide revisions to the committee for approval. Then, the DSP Chair will submit these documents to the Doctoral Studies Director with a recommendation of approval of student's advancement to candidacy. Additional revisions may be requested by the Director if any problems/issues have been found. Once those revisions are addressed through the Feedback Tracking Form, an email with final Proposal approval will be sent to the student with a copy to the DSP Committee, Dean, and IRB. IRB will notify the student of the required instructions on how to apply for IRB approval. **No data collection can be conducted prior to IRB approval.**

All required revisions must be completed and approved prior to the final day of DOC700 or the student will repeat DOC700.

Proposal review by the Doctoral Studies Director will be completed within one week from the Chair recommendation.

The final approved proposal must be uploaded into the "1002 DSP Proposal defended" dropbox in the 800 course of the student.

6.4 DOC702 - DSP FINAL CHECKLIST

To be completed by Student and DSP Chair first; when approved by DSP Chair, provide to each Committee member. Provide an "X" when each criterion is approved.

Item	Deliverable	Task	Completed		
			Student	Chair	Committee Members
1	Preface	All preface material (abstract, acknowledgement, dedication, TOC, etc.) updated.			/
2		List of Tables and Figures completed (if applicable)			/
3	Chapters 1-3	All conditional proposal approval edits completed; DSP Completion Plan followed.			/
4		Proposal chapters updated to past tense following research study completion.			/
5	Chapter 4	Data collection process successfully completed according to approved proposal (Chapter 3).			/
6		Data analysis process successfully completed according to approved proposal (Chapter 3).			/
7		Results are explained; includes necessary descriptive data; applicable Figures/Tables recommended.			/
8		Findings are adequately explained, related to conceptual framework and theoretical foundation.			/
9		Triangulation of data sources is explained.			/
10		Research questions are directly answered by the findings/themes extracted from the data.			/
11	Chapter 5	Implications of study explained.			/
12		Recommendations for practice and future research explained.			/
13	Executive Summary Report	Practitioner report provided following Chapter 5 to summarize the study related to the organization(s) involved in the study. Focus on organizational impact. Use practitioner language.			/
14	Appendix	Any updates to instruments are provided following expert review/pilot study. Additional appendices may include site authorizations, informed consent, or other necessary documents (and cited in text).			/
15	ALL	DSP is in appropriate template; All template guidance (blue font) has been removed.			/
16		Final spelling/grammar/APA formatting review conducted; no errors remaining.			/

6.5 DOC702 - DSP FINAL DEFENSE RUBRIC

To be used to assess Final DSP and defense by DSP committee. Evaluation is to determine completion of all DSP requirements and readiness to submit to Director/Dean.

Student Name: (insert name) **Date:** (Month DD, YYYY)
DSP Chair: (insert name) **Verification:** (Yes)
DSP Committee Members: (insert names)
Doctoral Studies Director: (insert name, if present)

Assessment

		Excellent	Proficient	Developing	Emerging
	Complete Version DSP (Five Chapters)	4	3	2	1
1	Title Page, Abstract, TOC Updated				
2	Chapter I: Introduction to the DSP				
3	Chapter II: Literature Review				
4	Chapter III: Methodology				
5	Chapter IV: Data Collection and Data Analysis				
6	Chapter V: Application to Practice and Discussion				
7	Executive Summary Report				
8	Organized Presentation of Results and Findings				
9	Follows DSP Template and APA Style				
10	Overall Level of Doctoral Writing				
	Total points	0	0	0	0

DSP committee will vote on whether student has been successful in the Final DSP Defense. A “Pass” means committee believes student can submit to Director/Dean by the end of DOC702.

Summary of committee suggestions to the student’s post-defense revision:

1. Insert list of comments/recommendations from committee here.
2. Etc.

In addition to the recommendations above, all students should conduct a final review of spelling, grammar, and APA format throughout the document. Upon completion of all edits, students should conduct a final update of the Table of Contents using the MS Word capabilities.

Overall Recommendation:

- 1. Pass with revisions that need to be approved by the DSP Chair only.
- 2. Pass with revisions that need to be approved by the DSP Chair and Committee members.
- 3. No Pass. The student needs to retake DOC702.

Procedure after the DSP if approved by the committee:

Any recommended revisions will be addressed using the **Feedback Tracking Form**. This Form and the revised DSP will be submitted to the DSP Chair. If required, the DSP Chair will provide

revisions to the committee for approval. Then, the DSP Chair will submit these documents to the Doctoral Studies Director with a recommendation of approval of student's advancement to graduate. Additional revisions may be requested by the Director and/or Dean if any problems/issues have been found. Once those revisions are addressed through the Feedback Tracking Form, an email with final DSP approval will be sent to the student with a copy to the DSP Committee, Provost, and Registrar. By way of this email, the Registrar will be notified and start the degree audit (check) to make sure that all of the academic and other requirements have been met for this degree. If satisfied, the Registrar will confer the degree.

All required revisions must be completed and approved prior to the final day of DOC702 or the student will repeat DOC702.

Final DSP review by the Doctoral Studies Director or Dean will be completed within one week from the Chair recommendation. Students do not need to re-enroll in DOC702 after submission to the Director/Dean for review. The final approved Final DSP must be uploaded into the "1005 Final DSP defended" dropbox in the 800 course of the student. Defense must be scheduled no later than June 14th to participate in our graduation ceremony.

Following the final approval of the DSP, students are required to submit their approved DSP to ProQuest for publication. There are two options for publication:

- Students must submit immediately upon final DSP approval by the Director/Dean, or
- Students must agree to submit within a future timeline, based on a request from the site organization.

Exceptions for publication may be requested by the student to the Doctoral Studies Director if provided as a condition by the site organization. The condition must be part of the Letter of Intent and be physically signed by the Site Representative. This condition must be approved by the Doctoral Studies Director prior to the DSP Proposal approval.

6.6 DSP FEEDBACK TRACKING FORM

DSP Title: Student Name: Date Completed: Feedback Tracking For (Select One): Proposal Final DSP		
State Each Reviewer Recommendation (per Completed Defense Rubric)	Briefly Describe How Recommendation was Addressed (or Why it was not Addressed)	Provide Page Number(s) Where Addressed
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
Add additional rows, if necessary		

DSP Chair Confirmation

By providing an electronic signature (typed name) below, I attest that the student’s submission meets all milestone document requirements provided in the Proposal/DSP Checklist and that all reviewer feedback have been satisfactorily addressed.

DSP Chair: _____ Date: _____

Please upload this document together with the revised document into DOC700 or DOC702, as appropriate. Final revisions should be uploaded to the 800 dropbox, when approved.

6.6.1 FEEDBACK TRACKING FORM INSTRUCTIONS

The Feedback Tracking Form should be completed at the end of the following milestones:

- DSP Proposal Defense in DOC700
- DSP Final Defense in DOC702

A detailed tracking form simplifies the review process and indicates to the reviewer (i.e. chair, committee members, director or dean) who provided feedback that the author has demonstrated a clear and thorough response to comments.

Reviewer comments are not intended as an exhaustive list. It is the student's responsibility to correct any additional errors that are not specifically noted by the reviewers and to address the requirements of the DBA Handbook throughout the manuscript.

If, after discussion with the DSP Chair, the author chooses not to make a requested change, the author must provide a brief rationale, and describe how they addressed concerns.

At the bottom of this form, the DSP Chair must signify that the student has carefully reviewed the manuscript and can confirm that all requirements have been met prior to resubmission.

Submissions will not be accepted without a completed and signed feedback tracking form.

7 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Trident regards academic integrity as vital to the success of its students and to the reputation of the University as an institution of higher learning. Students attain their educational goals and enjoy an enriched academic experience only when there is effective learning. Effective learning occurs when students conduct their own research and are the sole authors of their work. The assessment of that learning is undermined when originality of students' work is questionable.

Trident utilizes TurnItIn to examine the originality of student work. While there is no cutoff score, the general rule is that the Similarity Score provided by TurnItIn should remain less than 15%. A higher percentage may be seen as a red flag that the student relied too heavily on information from other sources and may encourage additional review. This may not be true of assignments that require multiple drafted submissions, such as chapters of the DSP, which will show higher percentages based on prior work.

As a student in this program, you hereby acknowledge the academic integrity policy and agree to adhere to the requirements of originality for all submitted assignments.

8 DOCTORAL TITLES AND ETIQUETTE

Throughout the D.B.A. program, students are authorized the use of varying doctoral titles based on their progress in the Doctoral Study Project. These titles include **doctoral student**, **doctoral/D.B.A. candidate**, **D.B.A. (ABD)**, and **Doctor/D.B.A.** The appropriate use of doctoral titles and etiquette is important when addressing both the academic and practitioner community. It also ensures that students do not inadvertently misrepresent their credentials.

Doctoral Student – Authorized title for students who have been admitted to, and currently enrolled in, the D.B.A. Program. Students can refer to themselves as doctoral students, but they are not authorized post-nominals when providing their name in writing.

Doctoral Candidate, D.B.A. Candidate – Authorized titles for students who have successfully completed all D.B.A. coursework leading to, and including, the passing of the Doctoral Study Project Prospectus Presentation (all required courses from DOC600 through DOC690). Students can refer to themselves as any of the provided titles, and they are authorized the post-nominals of **D.B.A.(c)**. *Examples: John Smith, D.B.A. (c)*.

Doctoral Candidate, D.B.A. (ABD) – Authorized titles for students who have successfully completed all D.B.A. coursework leading to, and including, the Director approval of the Doctoral Study Project Proposal (all required courses from DOC600 through DOC700). Students can refer to themselves as any of the provided titles, and they are authorized the post-nominals of **D.B.A. (ABD)**. *Example: John Smith, D.B.A. (ABD)*

Students lose the authorized title of **Doctoral/D.B.A. candidate** if they disenroll in the D.B.A. program, unless provided an approved Leave of Absence.

Doctor, D.B.A. – Authorized titles for students who have successfully completed all D.B.A. coursework leading to, and including, the Director/Dean approval of the Final Doctoral Study Project (all required courses from DOC600 through DOC702). Students can refer to themselves as any of the provided titles, and they are authorized the title of **Doctor [name]** or **Dr. [name]** and the post-nominals of **D.B.A.** when providing their name in writing. *Examples: Doctor John Smith, Dr. Smith, or John Smith, D.B.A.*

Students may be recognized *informally* as **Dr. [name]** by the DSP Chair and Committee following the successful completion of the Final Doctoral Study Project Defense, including any approval with modifications. *Formal* designation occurs following the approval by the Director/Dean and official recording of all program requirements by the University Registrar. Students who complete the Final Doctoral Study Project Defense but do not complete all required modifications, or they fall below the satisfactory G.P.A. required for degree conferral, are not authorized the provided titles.

9 DBA LETTER OF INTENT

The Letter of Intent (LOI) is designed to communicate with your selected research site / organization, the intention of your intended research of the site / organization and the topic that you will be investigating. The LOI will allow for identification and establishment of the professional relationship between you as the researcher and the various principle stakeholders involved.

The following elements required within the LOI template should include the following items:

- Title of proposed research
- Organization identified
- Principal stakeholder acknowledging the intended research and site selection
- Principal stakeholder offering permission to conduct said research on site / organization
- Any additional information or stipulations to the proposed research and site selection

NOTE: The Letter of Intent (LOI) does not substitute or replace the standard Site Permission Letter required within the IRB Application process.

9.1 LETTER OF INTENT TO ALLOW RESEARCH - TEMPLATE

Date

Name of Student/Principal Researcher

Address

RE: Intent to Allow Research - (Title of Research)

Dear Student/Principal Researcher:

In response to your request to conduct applied research at (Organization Name), as (Position/Title), I hereby confirm the intention to allow your research on (area of research/topic) to be conducted subject to final approval of your proposal and formal approval from the institutional IRB, if applicable.

The following list of conditions must be adhered to in order to conduct research at our organization: (delete if no conditional approval requirements)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Once your proposal is finalized and approved, you will be provided a formal approval to conduct your research at (Organization Name). This research may involve interviews and/or surveys with our personnel, observation of activities, secondary analysis of available data, and/or other data collection methods. All data collection will be reviewed and approved by us prior to implementation. The formal approval to conduct research will set forth any restrictions or limitations to your access or activities.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call. (Name) will serve as a point of contact and can be reached at (000) 000-0000 or email@organization.com.

Sincerely,

←Physical Signature Required (delete this text)

Name of Authorizing Administrator

Position in the Organization

10 REFERENCES

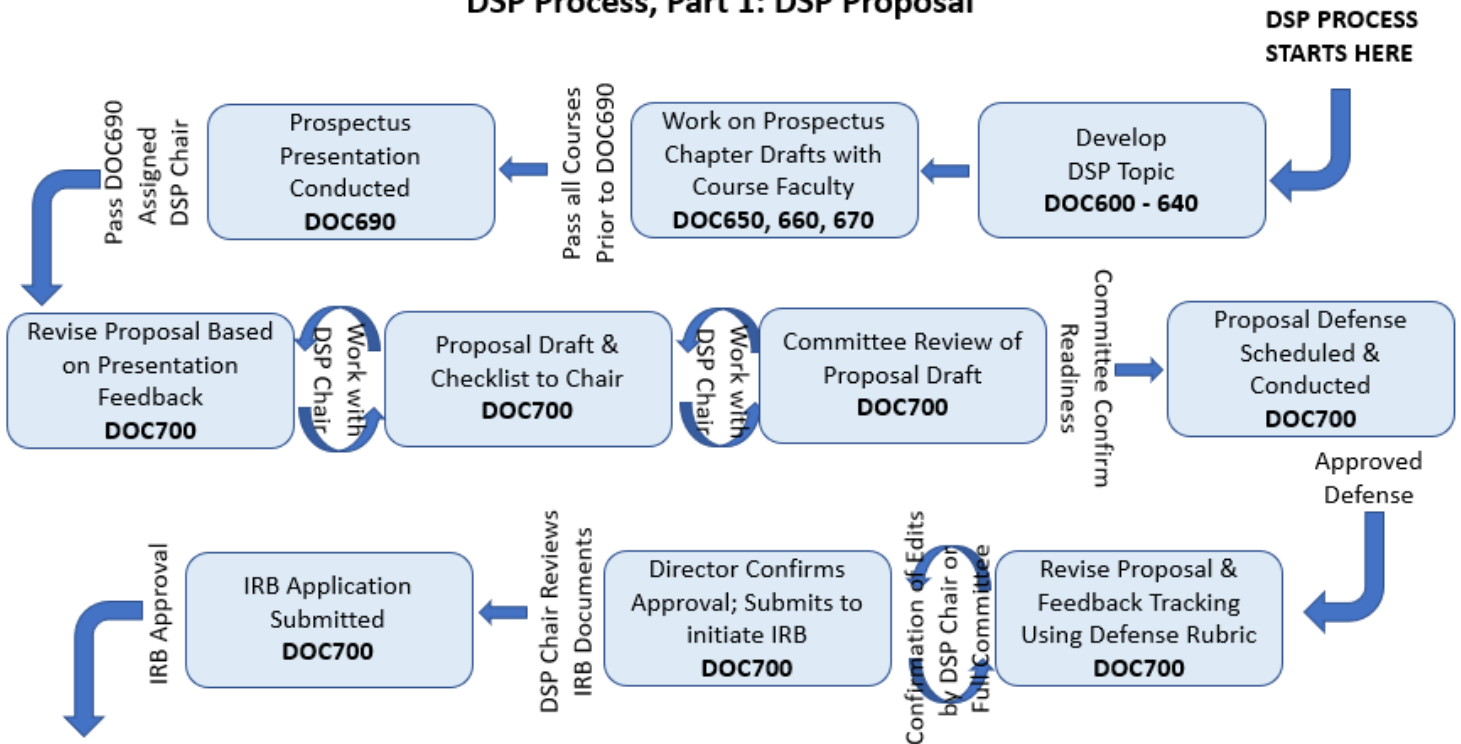
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11 DISCLAIMER

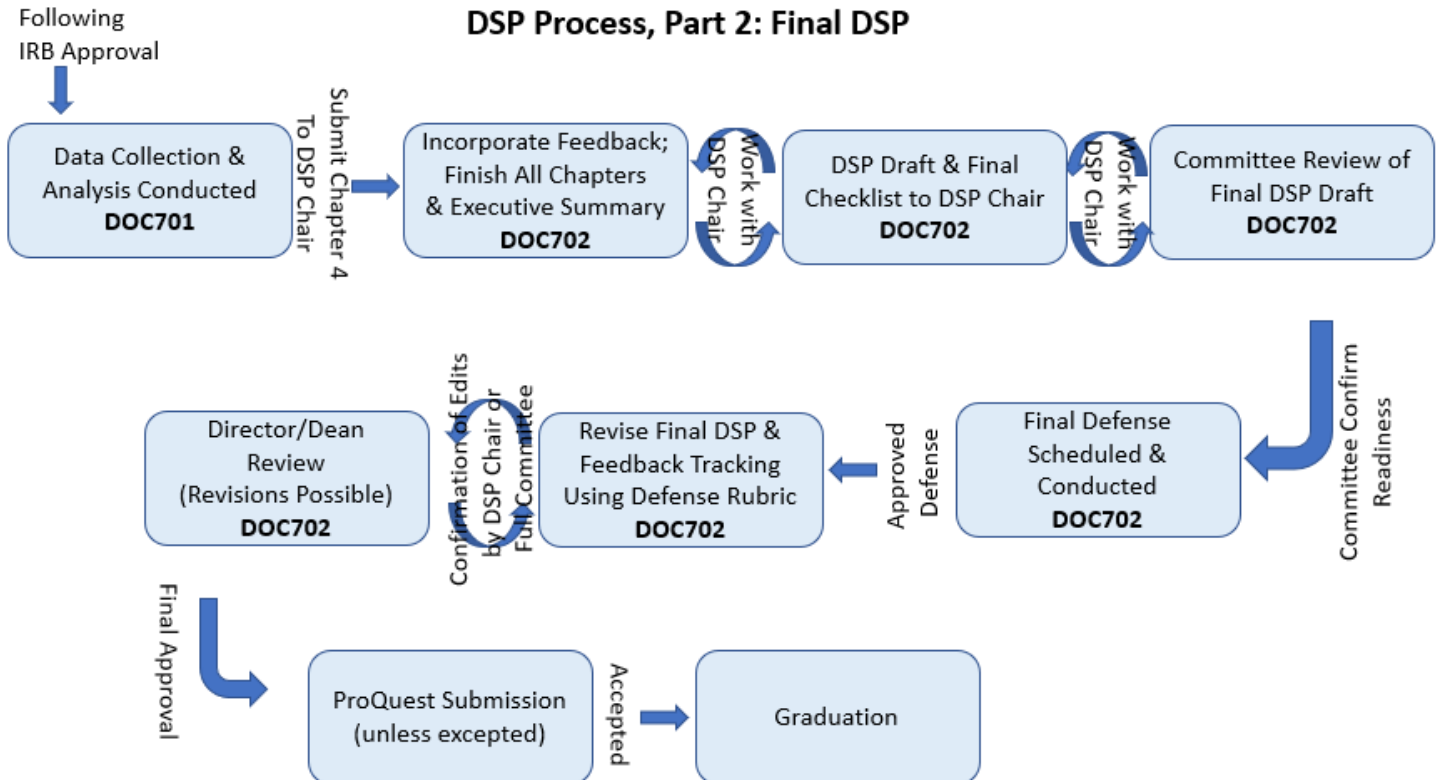
The DBA / DSP Handbook has been designed as a guide and overview of process and procedures in order to assist you in navigating through the DBA program and the development of a DSP as a DBA Doctoral Student. This handbook is not mutually exclusive or restricted to the policies and procedures displayed within the body of this handbook and the Trident at AIU Policy Catalog available at <https://www.trident.edu/catalog/>. Requests for approved modifications and adjustments should be submitted to the Doctoral Program Director, Professor of Doctoral Studies, or other authorized members of Trident at AIU. Changes or adjustments regarding the procedures outlined within this handbook will be properly communicated to all doctoral students and accommodations or adjustments will be considered when changes are necessitated.

12 DSP FLOW CHART

DSP Process, Part 1: DSP Proposal



DSP Process, Part 2: Final DSP



13 UPDATED DSP-RELATED TEMPLATES

The following templates should be used in conjunction with the DBA Handbook. Use the following link to download required DSP-related templates:

<http://dbatrident.pbworks.com/w/page/134701296/DBA%20Forms%20and%20Templates>

Doctoral Study Project Template – Updated July 2020

Doctoral Study Project Presentations Template – Updated July 2020

Informed Consent Template – Institutional Review Board – Updated June 2020

Example Protocols/Instruments

- Interview and Focus Group Protocol Example
- Questionnaire Example
- Observation Protocol Example