AVOID COMMON MISTAKES WHEN PREPARING A PROPOSAL

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AGENDA

COMMON MISTAKES IN PROPOSALS
TIPS TO AVOID COMMON FORMAT AND STYLE MISTAKES
PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS
CTU RESOURCES
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
BIGGEST PROPOSAL MISTAKES

• Not using the **CTU Dissertation Template** (aka Template)
• Not following the **CTU Dissertation Checklist**
• Not consulting the **Proposal and Dissertation Rubric** (aka Rubric)
  The Dissertation Checklist supersedes the Rubric for all areas except where indicated in the presentation.
• Not ensuring alignment among the problem, purpose, and research question.
• Not including sources (citations) for content that is not the student’s original thought.
BIGGEST PROPOSAL MISTAKES

Use Citations

1. To support content, facts, and arguments you may have
2. To distinguish content that is not your original thought,
3. To provide a resource for the reader.
4. To give credit the the original author

When to Cite

• Unless the content is your own words, your ideas, your original research, facts found in many sources, things that are easily observed, or common sayings, citations should be offered.
• Provide a citation for content that is paraphrased, summarized, or quoted.
• Providing one citation for a section or paragraph is not sufficient. Review this blog post from the APAstyle website http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2011/03/citing-paraphrased-work-in-apa-style.html Make sure to see the authors' comment on dated November 21, 2012 at 05:36 AM
COMMON MISTAKES IN PROPOSAL

• Conceptual Framework
  • Missing from Chapter 2
  • Not Explained/Described

• Method
  • Not Clearly Defined
    • Process for Data Collection or Data Analysis
    • Strategies For Reliability & Validity (Quant) / Credibility & Trustworthiness (Qual)
  • Instrument not included

• Section(s) Not Fully Addressed
COMMON MISTAKES IN PROPOSAL

• **Resources for Content Issues**
  • CTU Dissertation Template
  • Research Proposal and Final Dissertation Template

• **Additional Common Mistakes**
  • 22 Most Common Issues With Submitted Proposals
COMMON FORMATTING / STYLE MISTAKES

• **Excessive APA 6th style errors**
  • Resources
    • APA 6th Publication
    • CTU Library – APA Style for CTU Students

• **Organization CTU Noncompliant**
  • Resource - CTU Dissertation Template

• **Excessive Grammar Errors**
  • Resources
    • CTU Writing Support Center
    • Grammarly
Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Introduce the topic and briefly establish the main ideas and context.
  o Details will be presented in the Topic Overview/Background section.

• Include an overview paragraph that tells the reader what the chapter is about and how it is organized.
CHAPTER 1: TOPIC OVERVIEW /BACKGROUND

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Why is topic of current interest (what is going on now to make this important?)
• Lay the groundwork for what has been done in the research area.
• Why is the research area of importance to practical concerns (discuss as a practical issue for stakeholders, for example managers in the areas of your concentration).

Considerations/Organization

• Provide the context (who, what, when, where).
• Citations should be utilized.
• Use a paragraph for each of the bullets in the requirements.
CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

- Discuss the general issue/observation that in practice leads to the need for a study
- Problem identified is a practical problem versus a theoretical problem
- Problem is directly connected to degree type and concentration
- Citations are 5 years old or less from peer-reviewed literature or Government databases

Considerations/Organization

- Start the section with a **succinct** statement on the problem or the opportunity:
  - The problem to be address in this proposed study is ..........
  - The opportunity to be addressed in this proposed study is.....

- **Suggestions (All of this can be in one paragraph a sentence on each, with a citation)**
  - Include a cited statement of the problem (use a scholarly source).
  - Anchor the problem using a number or statistic to illustrate its significance for doctoral research.
  - Identify the gap in the literature regarding the problem.
  - Indicate how the proposed study might fill the gap.
CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

- Concise statements describing the intent of the study
- Aligns with the problem
- Indicate the reason for the study
- Research method and research design is identified
- Identity – Quantitative: variables/constructs / Qualitative: phenomenon/concepts
- Identify specific population and number of participants
- Identify the geographic location of the study

Considerations/Organization

- Start the section with a succinct statement on the purpose, which is aligned to the problem
  - The purpose of this proposed <method> study is ……
- Identify
  - Research method and Research design
  - Phenomenon/concepts (qualitative) or variables/constructs (quantitative)
  - Specific population and Number of participants
  - Geographic location of the study
CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH QUESTION

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Questions are aligned with problem and purpose (i.e., research questions are the problem stated as a question).

• Research questions are not answerable with a “Yes” or “No” response.

Considerations/Organization

• Only one research question unless approved by a lead faculty member.
CHAPTER 1: HYPOTHESIS / PROPOSITION

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• **Quantitative**
  • Rationale for the hypotheses is provided
  • Both null and alternative hypotheses are provided
  • Hypotheses are testable with each variable operationalized
  • Phrasing of hypotheses reflects nature of analysis (i.e., comparison, relationship, or association)

• **Qualitative**
  • Provide statements that direct the focus of the study

Considerations/Organization

• This section is not overview of the method.
• Quantitative studies should use Hypotheses (remove Propositions).
• Qualitative studies should use Propositions (remove Hypotheses).
  • Propositions are statements that relate key concepts in a logical way.
    • Researchers use propositions to assert a universal connection between the concepts.
    • Think of a proposition as a statement of fact deduced by reasoning.
      • What statements do you have that are a foundation of this research?
    • Include citations for propositions that are supported in the literature.
CHAPTER 1: ASSUMPTIONS / BIASES

Dissertation Checklist Requirements
• Discuss how basic assumptions underlie the research topic
• Provide a clear statement of researcher experience with the research problem/questions
• Provide a clear statement recognizing the possibility of biases
• Discuss possible personal biases or preconceived ideas and values

Considerations/Organization
• At least two paragraphs; one for assumptions and another for biases.
  • Paragraph 1, start with a definition of assumptions with citation. Then, address your assumptions specific to your study, discuss assumptions on the topic as well as the method.
  • Paragraph 2, start with a definition of biases with citation. Then, address your biases specific to the study.
  • Discuss how research biases must be removed or reduced
  • Provide a clear statement of researcher responsibility to collect valid and reliable data
• Include your experience in either paragraph.
  • IRB will be interested in the probability of bias because of pre-existing topic knowledge
CHAPTER 1: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• A global reason for the study and its uniqueness
• The anticipated value or impact to the problem domain (i.e., what specifically to management or computer science)
• Who will benefit from the study’s results (i.e., the academic field, to society, to a profession, to the community, and/or to a particular population)

Considerations/Organization

• Do not discuss why this study should be conducted.
• Identify the stakeholders (people and groups with a vested interest in the phenomenon or study).
• Discuss how will the study benefit the stakeholders of the study.
CHAPTER 1: DELIMITATIONS

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Discuss delimitations are the bounds of the study
• Discuss the variables the researcher can control (or limit) that are applicable to the study

Considerations/Organization

1. Start with a definition of delimitations with citation.
2. Address the delimitations specific to your study
   • Think of any constraints you have created or the boundaries you have placed on the study
     • Number of participants?
     • Location of participants?
     • Time?
     • Type of organizations?
CHAPTER 1: LIMITATIONS

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Discuss limitations - The research aspects the researcher cannot control (i.e., the potential weaknesses).
• Discuss the variables the researcher cannot control or limit
• Indicate any limitations because of instrument validity/reliability issues.

Considerations/Organization

1. Start with a definition of limitations with citation.
2. Address the potential weaknesses or limitations
3. Indicate any limitations because of instrument validity/reliability issues, for example.
CHAPTER 1: DEFINITIONS

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Discuss definitions representing key operational terms or words that are unique and/or critical to reader understanding (i.e., defined in an unusual manner or have more than one definition)
• Definitions are supported with citations while minimizing quotations.

Considerations/Organization

• Do not include common terms.
• May provide theoretical and operational definitions.
  • Include the theoretical, then offer the operational definition
  • For the purpose of this study……..
• Present the terms alphabetically
  • Use the following format
    Term - The term is . . . (reference, year).
    Phrase of words - The phrase of words is . . . (reference, year).
• Provide a source (citations) for each term.
  • Do not use dictionaries.
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Present a synopsis of the research methodology/design and why they are appropriate for the study (from chapter 3)

• Identify and generally describe
  • Research method and design and why they are appropriate for the study.
  • Research procedures (e.g., action research, long interviews).

Considerations/Organization

Organize the section on three paragraphs

1. Overview of the methodology and design
2. Overview of the data collection plan
3. Overview of the data analysis plan
CHAPTER 1: SUMMARY

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

- Summarize **key points** presented in Chapter 1 (with supporting citations)
- Introduce Chapter 2, present its importance to the study, and transition the reader to Chapter 2

Considerations/Organization

- A paragraph for each of the bulleted items.
Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Presents a brief discussion of how the proposal/dissertation is organized

Considerations/Organization

• Only chapters 1, 2, and 3 are discussed in this organization of the proposal
• Make sure to include all of the three chapters
• May be presented in one paragraph.
CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

1. The introduction should begin with a summary of the purpose statement

   (Use the succinct statement provided in chapter 1)

2. Presentation continues with a brief explanation of the logical organization of the literature review.

3. Provide a brief explanation of the literature search strategy that was used and a description of the sources.

4. Finally, the introduction should indicate how the chapter is organized.
From the Template and Rubric

• The exact headings will depend on the content
  Each major section should use APA Level 1 heading.
• Literature
    • Foundational (seminal or early empirical and peer-reviewed literature)
    • Recent empirical and peer-reviewed literature (published within the last 5 years)
    • Foundational (seminal empirical, peer-reviewed, trade, industry, media, practitioner literature)
    • Recent (published within the last 5 years) (empirical, peer-reviewed, trade, industry, media, practitioner literature).
CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL / THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From the Template and Rubric
• The conceptual framework is a narrative (and visual – highly recommended, but not required)
  • Links the models, constructs, theories, researcher’s assumptions and beliefs, and any other relevant elements into a coherent framework
  • Shows the researcher’s logic for the study.
• The content in this chapter should be a completed and detailed description of the framework.

Considerations/Organization
1. Provide the complete and detailed narrative of the framework.
   • The narrative should explain the figure
   • Refer to the figure within the narrative (e.g. see Figure X.)
2. Insert the figure after the narrative.
Dissertation Checklist Requirements

- Present key points presented in Chapter 2 (with supporting citations)
- If not previously presented, contradictions, uncertainties, and gaps are highlighted to demonstrate the need for the study.
- Transition to Chapter 3
  - Present a smooth transition by indicating the problem being studied needs an execution plan to obtain a solution to the study “gap” found in the literature
  - Present a brief overview of what will be addressed in the next chapter.

Considerations/Organization

- A paragraph for each of the three major bulleted items.
CHAPTER 3: INTRODUCTION

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Restate the research problem from chapter 1
• Restate the research purpose from chapter 1
• Provide a brief overview and organization of the chapter

Considerations/Organization

• Use the succinct statement from chapter 1
• Section does not need to be very long.
• Do not include a heading
Dissertation Checklist Requirements

- **Indicate**
  - Why a methodology and design are used in research
  - What methodology will be used for study and why
  - Why other methodology options will not be used
  - What design option will be used for study and why
  - Why other design options will not be used

- **Provide appropriate citations to support these decisions**

Considerations/Organization

- Organize content in five paragraph to address each of the bullets under "Indicate."
- *Use authors who are experts in the chosen method and design.
  - Creswell is not an expert in all, you may use Creswell to find the experts.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTION

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Restate the research question / hypotheses
  • No changes are made from Chapter 1
  • Copy and paste is suggested.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

From the Template and Rubric

• Provide an overview that tells the reader what’s in the section and how the section is organized.

Considerations/Organization

• The section should be brief.
Dissertation Checklist Requirements

- Describe the population with accompanying size and relevant characteristics
- Indicate the appropriateness of the population for the study
- Sample size (number) is presented with justification and support for the number (i.e., for **qualitative** – references previous studies that have used similar sample sizes; for **quantitative** – a power analysis is used).

Considerations/Organization

- Organize in at least two two paragraphs
  - Paragraph 1 - Population
    - Start with a definition of population
    - Describe the study population, size and appropriateness for this study
  - Paragraph 2 – Sample
    - Start with a definition of a sample
    - Provide the sample size and the justification.
      - Use similar studies or experts in the chosen design
Considerations/Organization

• Organize in two paragraphs
  • Paragraph 1 – Population (use citations to support all claims)
    • Start with a definition of population (with a citation).
    • Describe the population, the appropriateness of the population and the estimated size.
  • Paragraph 2 – Sample use citations to support all claims)
    • Start with a definition of sample (with a citation).
    • Provide the sample size (number) and the appropriateness of the size for this study.
      • Qualitative - Support the size with (a) literature from with experts in the chosen design and/or (b) similar studies.
      • Quantitative - Use power analysis
CHAPTER 3: SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Describe and justify the sampling method (e.g., random, purposive, snowball, etc.) for the study.

• Provide ALL participant selection criteria.

• Indicate the process of
  • Identifying participants
  • Obtaining approval if using an organization

• Provide a summary of Data Collection process (details are provided in Data Collection section below)
CHAPTER 3: SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Considerations/Organization

• Organize in two - three paragraphs
  • Paragraph 1
    • Start with a definition of sampling procedure
    • Identify which procedure will be used.
    • Discuss why the chose procedure is appropriate for the study
  • Paragraph 2
    • Identify (briefly) steps to obtain permission to use a site (if applicable)
    • Discuss (briefly) Informed Consent, permission to use human participants (IRB), and permission to use a site (if applicable)
  • Paragraph 3
    • Provide ALL criteria for each potential participant
    • Identify (briefly) initial contact steps
CHAPTER 3: INSTRUMENTATION

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

- Describe the type of instrument to be used (i.e., survey, interview, focus group) and why it is appropriate for the study.
- Indicate the concept(s) measured by the instrument.
- Describe the process participants must use to complete instrument.
- Describe the process for capturing and storing raw data.
- Describe the process for ensuring participants are not harmed while the instrument is used. (May save for Ethical Considerations section).
- If an instrument is reused/modified from another researcher, permission to use/modify is obtained from the researcher (permission is included in an appendix).
Considerations/Organization

• Qualitative Research
  • Indicate the researcher is an instrument (support with source(s))
  • Describe the tool, for most it will be interview questions
  • The instrument must be presented in this section, preceded by an overview/introduction. If the instrument is lengthy, place it in an appendix and tell the reader where it can be found (e.g. see Appendix X).
    • Interview should have follow-on questions.
    • Be wary of yes/no questions.
    • Make sure to include the Interview Protocol in the appendices.
  • Describe the process participants must use to complete instrument.
CHAPTER 3: INSTRUMENTATION

Considerations/Organization

• Quantitative Research
  • The instrument must be presented in this section, preceded by an overview/introduction. If the instrument is lengthy, place it in an appendix and tell the reader where it can be found (e.g. see Appendix X).
  • Describe the tool
  • Discuss each section of the instrument
CHAPTER 3: VALIDITY

Dissertation Checklist Requirements (Quantitative)

• Describe validity applies to measurement and methodology.
• For measurement, validity means your instrument properly measures the intended content.
• For methodology, validity refers to the accuracy or credibility of your research while considering internal and external validity.
• Internal validity is the extent to which your research design allows accurate conclusions about your study’s relationships.
• External validity is the extent to which your study’s results or conclusions can be generalized to other situations.

Considerations/Organization

• A paragraph for each of the bulleted items.
  • Define the term (with a citation)
  • Identify the strategy(ies) that will be used for this study (supported with sources)
CHAPTER 3: VALIDITY

Dissertation Checklist Requirements (Qualitative)

- Describes dependability and its application to the study
- Describes creditability and its application to the study
- Describes transferability and its application to the study
- Describes confirmability and its application to the study

Considerations/Organization

- A paragraph for each of the bulleted items.
  - Define the term (with a citation)
  - Identify the strategy(ies) that will be used for this study (supported with sources)
CHAPTER 3: RELIABILITY

Dissertation Checklist Requirements (Quantitative)

- Reliability applies to measurement. Does your measuring instrument provide the same results consistently?
- Consistency must occur for accuracy; however, consistency does not ensure accuracy. Reliability is a necessary, but insufficient condition for validity.

Considerations/Organization

- Discuss how consistency confirms reliability which also support validity (with a citation)
- Identify how you will determine internal consistency
CHAPTER 3: RELIABILITY

Dissertation Checklist Requirements (Qualitative)

- Describe member checking
- Describe triangulation method

Considerations/Organization

- Organize in three or four paragraphs
  - Paragraph 1
    - Define reliability and how it applies to qualitative studies (with citations)
  - Paragraph 2
    - Define member and what strategy will be employed checking (with citations)
  - Paragraph 3
    - Define triangulation and what strategy will be employed (with citations)
CHAPTER 3: CREDIBILITY AND TRUST WORTHINESS

• May be discussed instead of Validity and Reliability for Qualitative Studies
  • Based on your professor
• From the Proposal and Dissertation Rubric
  • The outcome of a valid study must be able to demonstrate its value, support external evaluation of the methods used, and substantiate how/where/if the results may be applied (to other settings).
  • Typical measures used to ensure trustworthiness include
    • Triangulation
    • Peer Coding
    • Member-checking
    • Thick description
    • Researcher Reflection
  • The researcher must detail, in writing, how Trustworthiness and Credibility will be achieved. Appropriate citations are expected.
CHAPTER 3: CREDIBILITY AND TRUST WORTHINESS

• Considerations/ Organization
  • Include a discussion on the use of credibility and trustworthiness instead of validity and reliability (with citations(s))
  • Identify which strategies will be employed supported with citation(s)

• Possible Source
  • “Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects” by Andrew K. Shenton
CHAPTER 3:

• Pilot Study May be Required To Ensure Validity or Trustworthiness & Credibility

• When is it needed
  • All studies in which instrument was created
  • Studies in which the existing instrument is used in a different way

• Include the discussion in one the following sections
  • Validity
  • Reliability
  • Trustworthiness & Credibility
CHAPTER 3: DATA COLLECTION

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Research questions should guide the data collection process necessary to capture needed information
• Indicate the step-by-step process used to capture data while using the Instrument.

From the CTU Dissertation Template

• This section details the protocol from initial contact with the participants through handling and storage of the data.

Considerations/Organization

• Ensure that ALL steps to collect the data are included
  • This is part of the “recipe” for your study, providing sequential and specific steps that could be replicated by other researchers.
  • Regarding the data, describe the raw data transcription (from tape recordings)/transference process and data storage (how long and where it will be stored).
Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Provide a step-by-step process for analyzing the collected study data and arriving at the study conclusions

Considerations/Organization

• Ensure that ALL steps to analyze the data are included
  • This is the second part of the “recipe” for your study, providing sequential and specific steps that could be replicated by other researchers.

• Review detailed requirements for a qualitative or a quantitative study in the Dissertation Checklist
CHAPTER 3: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the Template and/or Rubric

• To be completed by Investigators using engaging Human Subjects for their research.
• Discuss the following
  • The reason for human subject protection (Be brief but thorough. Citation(s) needed).
  • Possible risks for participants (all studies engaging human subjects carry risk to the subject. You must discuss!)
  • Specifically, how you will mitigate or minimize the risk to your participants.
  • How participant’s privacy will be protected (confidentiality).
  • Disclose any conflicts of interests you may have.

Considerations/Organization

• May use the Belmont Report (make sure to cite and reference)
• Most students forget to discuss risk and potential conflicts.
Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• Describe the type of instrument to be used (i.e., survey, interview, focus group) and why it is appropriate for the study.

• Indicate the concept(s) measured by the instrument.

• Describe the process participants must use to complete instrument.

• Describe the process for capturing and storing raw data.

• Describe the process for ensuring participants are not harmed while the instrument is used. (May save for Ethical Considerations section).

• If an instrument is reused/modified from another researcher, permission to use/modify is obtained from the researcher (permission is included in an appendix).
CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT

• Start the section with a succinct statement on the problem or the opportunity:
  • The problem to be address in this proposed study is ........
  • The opportunity to be addressed in this proposed study is.....
• From the Dissertation Checklist
  • Discuss the general issue/observation that in practice leads to the need for a study
    • A cited statement of the problem (use a scholarly source)
    • Anchor the problem using a number or statistic to illustrate its significance for doctoral research
  • Problem identified is a practical problem versus a theoretical problem
  • - Problem is directly connected to degree type and concentration A cited statement of the problem (use a scholarly source)
  • Anchor the problem using a number or statistic to illustrate its significance for doctoral research
  • Identify the gap in the literature regarding the problem
  • --Indicate how the proposed study might fill the gap
  • All of this can be in one paragraph a sentence on each (with a citation)
    o Why is topic of current interest (what is going on now to make this important?)
    o Lay the groundwork for what has been done in the research area.
    o Why is the research area of importance to practical concerns (discuss as a practical issue for stakeholders, for example managers in the areas of your concentration).
CHAPTER 1: REFERENCES

Dissertation Checklist Requirements

• References are single spaced with a blank line between each reference
• Use APA 6th ed.
• No retrieval dates (i.e., Retrieved on July 12, 2014)
• Every reference should include digital information; two options are allowed, but only one must be presented:
  • doi
  • URL of the journal homepage
    Do not provide the URL to the library database as these will not work for non-CTU readers; reference the journal’s homepage instead
• One space after punctuation in the references section
• Only sources cited are listed in the reference list.
• There is a minimum of 80 references for the proposal
CHAPTER 1: APPENDICES

Include the Following in the Proposal (if applicable)

• Interview questions and or Interview Protocol
• Informed Consent Form
• Site Permission Letter
• Table/Figure Permission(s)
• Instrument Permission(s)
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

• Ensure that your interview questions will provide content to answer your research question.

• Do not ask the participant your research question.
  • The analysis of the data will answer the research question.

• Avoid closed (yes/no) questions.
  • May be acceptable if including open follow-up questions.

• Include follow-up question(s) for each question to obtain more information.

• Review the following documents on developing interview questions,
  • “Writing Interview Protocols and Conducting Interviews: Tips for Students New to the Field of Qualitative Research”
  • ”Guidelines for Developing Interview Questions”
TIPS TO AVOID COMMON FORMAT AND STYLE MISTAKES

• **Page Numbers**
  - Not on title page
  - Placement – centered on the bottom of all pages after the title page
  - Roman numerals start on the copyright page (e.g., i, v, x …)
  - Arabic numerals start on chapter 1 (e.g., 1, 5, 10…)


TIPS TO AVOID COMMON FORMAT AND STYLE MISTAKES

• **Format / Organization**
  - Margins 1 inch
  - Font 12 point, Times New Roman
  - Page titles and APA 6th level 1 headings centered based on the margin
  - Each new chapter, the reference list, and each appendix starts on a new page
  - Remove comments and accept/reject all changes
TIPS TO AVOID COMMON FORMAT AND STYLE MISTAKES

• Single space after ending punctuation
  • Common mistake – two spaces after period

• Use consistent APA 6\textsuperscript{th} level of headings
  • Follow the CTU Dissertation Template

• Double space throughout the manuscript
  • Exception – within each reference listing
  • Common mistake – extra spacing between sections
TIPS TO AVOID COMMON FORMAT AND STYLE MISTAKES

- **Quotations (minimal use)**
  - Enclose in quotations in quotation marks
  - Block quotations 40 words or more
  - Include the author last name, year, and page number in the citation

- **Citations**
  - List authors alphabetically if more than one is included is the parenthetical citation
TIPS TO AVOID COMMON FORMAT AND STYLE MISTAKES

• **Numbers and Statistics**
  - General Rule: Use digits for numbers 10 or greater and when expressing time
  - Use % symbol when preceded by a number and when discussing statistics

• **Items in a Series**
  - Use (a), (b), (c) etc., when the list is presented within a paragraph:
    
    The participants choices were (a) working with another participant, (b) working with a team, and (c) working alone. (APA 6th, p. 64)

  - Use 1., 2., 3., etc., when the list is presented vertically:
    1. Chapter 1
    2. Chapter 2
    3. Chapter 3

  - Place a comma before the conjunction of the last item in a series of three or more items
TIPS TO AVOID COMMON FORMAT AND STYLE MISTAKES

Tables

• Number sequentially from the start of the document
• Column headings should be parallel (APA 6th 5.13)
• Table number and title format (APA 6th 5.12)

Table 1

Example of a Table Title

Table 1

Sample Table with Correct Formatting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
<th>Column 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Row 1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 4</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Table notes are located below the table. See APA Manual sections 5.07-5.19 for more information about table formatting and many examples.*
TIPS TO AVOID COMMON FORMAT AND STYLE MISTAKES

Figures

• Number sequentially from the start of the document
• Figure number and caption (APA 6th 5.23)

Figure 1. Example of a figure caption.

See the APA Manual section 5.20-5.25 on figure formatting.
TIPS TO AVOID COMMON FORMAT AND STYLE MISTAKES

• **References**
  - Be sure all sources cited are listed and sources listed are cited within text
  - Sources need to be listed alphabetically - in the case of multiple works by the same author, the oldest work is cited first.
  - Double space between each reference

• **Appendices**
  - Label in the order in which they are mentioned in the manuscript
CTU RESOURCES

• **CTU Library - Dissertation Resources**
  
  For the Proposal and Dissertation
  • CTU Dissertation Template
  • CTU Research Proposal and Dissertation Rubric
  • Creating a Grammarly Report on your Dissertation

  For the Proposal
  • Common Issues Found in the Proposal Review
  • Proposal Review Application
CTU RESOURCES

• CTU Library - Dissertation Toolbox
  • Dissertation Formatting for Publication
  • Formatting Page Numbers on the Dissertation Template

• CTU Writing Support Center
  • Graduate Writing
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

APA 6th Style

- [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)

Recite Works* (in beta) -- reference and citation crosschecker

[reciteworks.com](http://reciteworks.com)

*Caveat: Double check the results after using tools*