

DISSERTATION QUICK GUIDE

FOR STUDENTS

CONCEPT PAPER APPROVAL

1	During coursework, students write a thoughtful preliminary description of the proposed research, the <i>concept paper</i> , under the guidance of research faculty.
2	Submit the concept paper to the instructor and revise, as necessary, until it is approved.
3	When the paper is approved, follow your program's guidelines for submitting a final copy of the paper to the instructor*, who will send it and any necessary forms to the Dissertation Office.
4	If the paper is not approved, enroll in a tutorial to continue developing the concept paper.
TIP	Many sections of the concept paper provide good material for the dissertation proposal. To avoid the blank page or screen as you begin crafting it, you might copy and paste concept paper sections into new proposal files.

* In addition to instructor approval, Mythological Studies students must also receive concept paper approval from their program's Research Coordinator.

DISSERTATION REGISTRATION

1	After completing necessary coursework,* students with an approved concept paper, who have met all other eligibility requirements, may register for dissertation writing. Registration is possible four times during the academic year, at the beginning of each quarter.
2	Check the current dissertation handbook for the registration deadline for your program.
3	Submit a <i>Dissertation Registration Form</i> to the Dissertation Office at least two weeks before the deadline for your program. (Financial Aid recipients should send form six weeks in advance to help ensure no interruption in funding.)
TIP	If you are planning to take one or more quarters off between coursework and dissertation writing, submit a <i>Leave of Absence Form</i> to the Registrar.

* Coursework completion requirements vary among programs, some requiring completing all three years before dissertation registration, others only two years (that is, completion at the Master's level). Check with the program for details.

SEEKING A DISSERTATION CHAIR

1	After you register for dissertation writing and the first quarter of the dissertation process begins (which starts the “dissertation clock”), you should formally invite* a member of Pacifica’s core faculty** to chair the committee.
2	Discuss the proposed study with the chair candidate, using the concept paper as an entrée to the work.
3	If the person agrees, ask him or her to submit a <i>Chair Appointment Form</i> to Dissertation Office.
TIP	Since the chair is a student’s primary mentor, think about, and discuss with the chair, what support you need. Set expectations together as clearly as possible.

* Students in the Clinical PsyD program are assigned a faculty member to chair the dissertation, they do not invite them.

** Some programs have approved a small number of adjunct faculty for chairing dissertations. Contact the program’s Research Coordinator for the names.

CONVENING THE READER

1	Consult with the Chair of your committee to find suitable candidates for the position of Reader. <i>The Reader is usually adjunct faculty at Pacifica, rarely core faculty.*</i>
2	Approach the Reader candidate to discuss the topic, using the concept paper as an entrée to you and your writing.
3	When the Reader agrees to join your committee, ask them to send a <i>Reader Appointment Form</i> to the committee chair.
TIP	It is a good idea to convene the Reader shortly after registering for dissertation writing.

* There are rare exceptions to this policy: some core faculty in the MA Counseling program and in the Mythological Studies program may serve as Readers. Contact the program for more information.

CONVENING THE EXTERNAL READER

1	Consult with the dissertation Chair on suitable candidates for the position of External Reader. The External Reader a) may NOT be core or adjunct faculty at Pacifica; b) may not be a graduate of Pacifica; and c) may not have a prior personal or professional relationship with the student.
2	Discuss the topic with the External Reader candidate, using the concept paper as an entrée.
3	If the External Reader is interested, ask him or her to send you and the dissertation chair a curriculum vitae (CV), which the chair will review.
4	When the chair approves the External Reader, ask him or her to send the <i>External Reader Appointment Form</i> to the Chair.
TIP	Students often find excellent subject area experts to serve as External Readers from the authors in their literature review.

PROPOSAL APPROVAL

1	Student works with Chair to write a dissertation proposal, then submits it for first review.
2	You and the Chair discuss needed revisions and, when it is final, submit the proposal along with an <i>Approval of Dissertation Proposal Form</i> to the Chair.
3	Review and sign the <i>Ethics Application for Research without Participants</i> and send to Chair. OR, if working with participants, submit the complete <i>Ethics Application for Approval to Use Participants</i> describing all procedures to Chair.
4	Read and sign <i>Intellectual Property and Copyright Infringement Form</i> and send to Chair.
5	Once the Chair has approved the proposal, send it to the Reader and External Reader for their review.
6	Discuss needed revisions with the Reader and External Reader, including the Chair in the dialogue. Once approved, ask committee members to send their signed <i>Approval of Dissertation Proposal</i> forms to the Chair.
TIP	Include the Chair in all emails to Reader and External Reader to foster dialogue among committee members.

FINAL DRAFT APPROVAL

1	Submit the final draft of the dissertation to the Chair and discuss revisions as necessary.
2	When all revisions have been incorporated, send the dissertation, along with an <i>Approval of Dissertation Final Draft Form</i> , to the Chair.
3	Send the final draft to the Reader and External Reader for their review.
4	Work with committee members on necessary revisions, and then ask them to send the <i>Approval of Dissertation Final Draft</i> forms to the Chair.
5	Work with the Chair to finalize the dissertation abstract and send it to the Dissertation Office.
TIP	Copy all committee members in the final draft review process so that everyone is included in the dialogue.

PUBLISHING THE DISSERTATION

1	When all three approval forms and the chair-approved abstract have been submitted to the Dissertation Office, a D2L account is created for you to facilitate the proofreading process. The Dissertation Office notifies you via email when the account is ready.
2	Log into D2L and submit a digital copy of the final dissertation, in MicroSoft™ Word, for proofreading. Be sure to follow all formatting and D2L programming requirements.
3	When the proofreader has finished reviewing the manuscript, which can take several weeks, the Dissertation Office emails you that the work is ready for you to correct.
4	Carefully review the proofreader's notes and the dissertation document to correct all instances of errors.
5	Save the corrected copy of the dissertation and submit this clean copy, via D2L, for spot-checking by the Dissertation Office.*
TIP	Microsoft Word offers many tools, especially those on the Review menu, to proceed through the corrections marked in the dissertation. You can also use Search & Replace to find and fix all instances of an error the proofreader found.

* There is no spot-checking of corrected manuscripts in the Mythological Studies Program

PREPARING FOR THE ORAL DEFENSE

1	The Dissertation Office notifies the student via email that the manuscript is correct and has been accepted for publication, then emails the Chair.
2	Chair checks with the student and committee members for two or three possible dates, at least three weeks from today's date, to hold the defense.
3	Chair requests an oral defense date (mindful of the three-week lead time) from the Dissertation Office and awaits confirmation. During busy times of year, holidays, or typical vacation times, a lead time of more than three weeks may be required
4	Dissertation Office checks the master calendar, reserves the date, room, and time, and sends email confirmation to the student and Chair.
5	The Dissertation Office mails announcements to your cohort, posts the oral defense information and abstract on Pacifica's website, and invites Pacifica faculty and staff to attend the oral defense.
TIP	Take time to write and rehearse the oral presentation of your research, planning for approximately 25 minutes at the podium.