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Frostburg State University Doctor of Education

College of Education

Dissertation Style Guide

Dissertation Format Guide

This Format Guide for the Dissertation describes the required format for dissertations.

Aspects of format and style not covered in this guide are to be found in the seventh edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA). Where differences occur, the Frostburg State University style guide should be used as the primary source.

Your applied dissertation must be correct in all aspects of style, including--but not necessarily limited to--the following:

- 1. Writing clearly and concisely
- 2. The mechanics of style
- 3. Displaying results
- 4. Crediting sources
- 5. Reference examples

Included in this document you will find:

- Description of formatting various sections of your document
- Sample manuscript

Editing

It is expected that your document/manuscript will be submitted to your committee and chair prior to your oral defense in a format that meets the formatting presented in this style guide and APA Publishing Manual (7th edition) requirements. You are responsible for editing and proofreading your dissertation prior to submitting it to your committee chair or to the committee. Proofread carefully for typographical, grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors.

If you and your committee chair determine that professional editing assistance is needed for the preparation of the manuscript, you may hire a private editor. Editors must not make changes that affect the content of the applied dissertation.

Formatting Review

After receiving final approval from your dissertation committee, you will be expected to submit your final manuscript as both a Word document and a PDF to the program coordinator for external formatting review. You should **not** submit this document with the expectation that the reviewer will provide assistance with formatting and editing. The reviewer does not review content or grammar; these concerns are to be fully attended to by the student, chair, and committee. The expectation is that a professional manuscript has been approved by the chair and meets the Ed.D. department's formatting requirements and APA style.

The reviewer will **not** review the document if it is submitted without meeting the minimal format guidelines. If the document does not meet these minimum requirements, the formatting

reviewer will return the dissertation to the student to revise prior to completing their review. The reviewer will provide required revisions, and the student is expected to promptly complete these revisions in full. The revisions (Word document and PDF) should then be emailed to the program coordinator to continue rounds of revision as required.

The process must be complete by the deadline on the Dissertation Deadlines document shared at the beginning of the academic year, or the student will need to register for an additional dissertation credit the following semester.

Final Approval and Steps

Following the formatting review, the program coordinator will send the student a list of final steps to upload the dissertation to ProQuest. The student will also need to complete the Lewis J. Ort Library Manuscript Release Form and return it to the program coordinator. The process of completing these steps will take the student approximately one hour. The library will print your final document from ProQuest, bind it, and house it within the library.

Margins & Alignment

The standard manuscript margins are:

Top margin: 1 inch
Bottom margin: 1 inch
Right margin: 1 inch
Left margin: 1.5 inch

The bottom margin should be as close as possible to 1 inch but not smaller than 1 inch. Please note: In order to make the margin 1 inch for all text after adding page numbers, you will likely need to set the bottom margin at less than 1 inch. This may vary depending on your use of PC or MAC and version of Word. The library lib guides recommend trying .5 as a bottom margin setting, but be careful to check to see if this works on your document to set all text to no more than one-inch margins.

Make sure that the widow/orphan control in your word-processing program is unchecked. This guideline applies also to the References section.

Begin each chapter at the top of a new page. Be sure to insert a page break so that this new page is formatted correctly.

An exception to the 1-inch bottom margin requirement is a stand-alone subheading (APA Level 2), which should not appear on the last line of a page.

Continue the narrative text to the bottom margin on a page with a short table or figure (i.e., one that is less than a full page) and on a page that precedes a page with a table or figure.

The hyphen that separates two words may appear at the end of a typed line. Do not hyphenate a single word at the end of a line (e.g., do not type "edu-" at the end of a line and "cation" at the beginning of the next line).

The following sections have different margins:

- Title page Top margin: 2 inches; Bottom margin: 1.5 inches; Left margin: 1.5 inches; Right margin: 1 inch
- Copyright page (optional) Top margin: 6 inches; Left margin: 1.5 inches; Right margin: 1 inch
- Approval page Left margin: 1.5 inches; Right margin: 1 inch
- Appendices section Margins may be larger, but not smaller than the standard margins, to accommodate materials from other sources.

In some cases, it may be necessary to arrange tables and figures on landscape-oriented pages. In order to provide a consistent manuscript, landscape pages' margins should be adjusted accordingly. The following margins allow landscape pages to be printed, rotated 90 degrees, and bound with the rest of the manuscript:

Top margin: 1.5 inch
Bottom margin: 1 inch
Left margin: 1 inch
Right margin: 1 inch

For most of the manuscript, align the text to the left margin and use a ragged (i.e., unjustified) right margin. The following sections are exceptions:

- Title page Centered
- Copyright page Centered
- Approval page Mixed alignment (see sample approval page for format)
- Table of Contents: Justified
- List of Figures: Justified
- List of Tables: Justified

Do not use running heads.

Page numbers are placed within the bottom margins (middle). Refer to the *Pagination section* for more details.

Typeface and Size

Use only 12-point Times New Roman throughout the document text.

A 10- or 11-point type may be used in tables and figures, if necessary, to fit material within the left and right margins or on a single page. Where reduction is necessary, reduce also the tables' numbers and titles. Consistency should be used throughout the manuscript, so whatever font size is chosen for one table/figure must be used for all.

Italics should only be used as permitted by the APA manual (sections 6.22-6.23, pages 170-172).

Do not use underlining or colors in text.

Superscript and subscript use should conform to the APA requirements (see APA manual, section 6.45, page 188).

Use boldface only as instructed in the APA manual (see section 6.44, p. 187), for headings (see APA manual, section 2.27, pages 47-48), and table title and number (see section 7.9, page 199).

Lists

Lists should follow APA format (see APA manual, sections 6.49-6.52, pages 189-191). Bullets are acceptable only as outlined by APA style (see APA manual, section 6.52, pp. 190-191). Numbers are generally used to indicate sequential order (see APA manual, section 6.51, pp. 189-190). Refer to the *Indentation section* for further details.

As per the *Indentation section*, numbered and bulleted lists should be indented for the number or bullet to begin at a quarter-inch and the list line to begin at half-inch. (Refer to the sample dissertation's page 2 for an example.)

Line Spacing

Double-space between all lines of text, between paragraphs, between headings and subheadings, between headings and text. Table text can be single or doubled spaced; however, there must be consistency throughout the document.

Single-spacing is required in some sections of preliminary pages. Single-spacing is permissible in table bodies however, consistency throughout the manuscript is required. Refer to the sample.

Spacing after Punctuation

Provide one space after *sentence-ending* punctuation. APA style is used for all other spacing after punctuation (see APA manual, section 6.1, page 154).

Pagination

Page numbers are centered and aligned in the middle of the 1-inch bottom margin (i.e., approximately 0.5 inch from the bottom of the page).

The Title page, Copyright page (optional), and Approval page are unnumbered. The remaining preliminary pages (Acknowledgments, Abstract, Table of Contents, List of Figures, and List of Tables) are numbered with lowercase Roman numeral page numbers, beginning with the number ii. Please note: If there is no Acknowledgements section, the preliminary page numbering (ii) begins on the Abstract page(s).

The main body of the manuscript (from Chapter 1 to the end) uses Arabic numerals, beginning with 1, for page numbers.

The typeface and size of page numbers should be the same as the manuscript type.

Use landscape pages in the document only when necessary for proper display of data and/or visual imagery. As per the *Margins section*, margins should be adjusted accordingly. Place the page number vertically in the left margin of the landscape page(s). This will ensure that the page number is consistent with the manuscript's other pages when printed and bound. See the library's ETD LibGuide (http://libguides.frostburg.edu/etd) for details.

Indentation

The first line of each paragraph must have a consistent indentation of a half-inch. In the Table of Contents, use a half-inch indentation for Level 2 headings and, if included, a one-inch indentation for Level 3 headings. The second paragraph of block quotations in the main text, and for the second and subsequent lines of a reference entry (hanging tab format) in the References section. In numbered lists, indent the first line of each item; second and succeeding lines should be flush left. Numbered and bulleted lists should be indented for the number or bullet to begin at a quarter-inch and the list line to begin at half-inch.

Headings

Use no more than the five levels of headings as are described in the APA manual, section 2.27, pages 47-48.

Level 1 headings are used for:

- Acknowledgments
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- Chapter titles
- References (as a section)
- Appendices' titles

The wording of headings must match the wording of the corresponding headings in the Table of Contents.

Headings should use an en dash, with a space before and after, instead of a colon. For example, "Chapter 1 – Introduction". However, en dash used in the main text should have no space before and after.

As per the *Table of Contents section*, all Level 1 and Level 2 headings must be included in the Table of Contents (including the Table of Contents itself). Inclusion of Level 3 headings in the Table of Contents is optional but should be applied consistently. Level 4 and 5 headings should not be included in the Table of Contents.

Tables and Figures

Tables and figures must be formatted according to the guidelines of the APA manual, chapter 7, pages 195-250.

Tables and figures should be set aligned to the left margin, presented horizontally, and placed at the appropriate point in text (i.e., following, as soon as possible, the text reference). Avoid placing a table or figure within a paragraph, unless the table or figure is at the top or bottom of the page. Place a table or figure after the full paragraph where it is first mentioned. Tables may extend to multiple pages or can be presented in landscape format as necessary.

If you have only one table or figure in the manuscript, do not label it with a number; refer to the item as "Table" or "Figure."

Tables may use horizontal borders (i.e., lines) but not vertical ones. Do not use heavy, bold lines for borders. Horizontal lines in tables may not extend into the left and right margin areas. Refer to APA manual, section 7.17, page 205, for more details.

If you are reprinting a table or figure from another source, you must attribute this table or figure to its original source and, in some cases, receive copyright permission from the copyright holder to reprint the table or figure. This process can take some time, and you must plan ahead, or it can hold up the formatting review and delay your graduation. (See APA manual, section 7.7, pp. 198-199.)

References

Use "References" (Level 1 header in APA style, without the quotation marks around this word) for this section and continue using double spacing throughout the reference list. Each reference entry should follow the style guidelines of the APA manual, including the use the hanging indents. For more information on crediting sources and formatting references, please refer to chapter 8, pages 253-278, chapter 9, pages 281-309, and chapter 10, pages 313-352 of the APA manual.

Remove all hyperlinks, such as the underlining of URLs, and use DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers) when available. For more information on the use of DOIs, please refer to sections 9.34-9.36, pages 298-300.

Appendices

The format of appendix material may deviate from the format used for other sections of the manuscript. However, pagination must be continuous. Margins for appendix items may be larger, but not smaller, than those required for other pages of the manuscript.

Each appendix item must be on a separate page and labeled alphabetically and listed in the Table of Contents.

Each appendix should be assigned a letter in sequential order, i.e. "Appendix A" for the first appendix.

If only one appendix is included in the manuscript, label it as "Appendix" – no letter is necessary.

Preliminary Pages

The order of preliminary pages is as follows: Title page, Copyright (if applicable), Approval Page, Acknowledgments (optional), Abstract, Table of Contents, List of Figures and List of Tables.

Use your name as it should appear as author—First M. Last or, if necessary, use your legal name as recorded by the university registrar.

Title Page

The top line (title) must be 2 inches from the top of the page (including margin); the bottom line (year) must be 1.5 inches from the bottom of the page. The byline section and the fulfillment-of-requirements section should be placed so that white space is evenly distributed.

List the College, University name, and the month (May, August, or December) and year of graduation in which you expect final approval of your degree award under the university name.

Break each line of the title at a logical point (e.g., avoid the splitting of a phrase). The avoidance of a split phrase takes precedence over the use of a pyramid or inverted pyramid style. Break the lines of the fulfillment statement as shown in the sample.

Approval Page

See the sample for the required format. Keep top margin set at 1 inch and space down one double space to begin title. Title should be listed exactly as is on title page. Be certain paragraph settings are set to "0 pt" before and after.

Set signature areas to single space and use two single spaces between signature line and signature text above. Refer to sample.

Copyright Page (Optional)

If using a copyright page, leave top margin at 1 inch and space down to begin copyright text at 6 inches from top of page.

Acknowledgments (Optional)

An Acknowledgments page, if included, must be double-spaced with a paragraph indentation. Use the preferred spelling of "**Acknowledgments**" for the heading. Dedications should also be placed in this section.

Acknowledgments and dedications should be written with an academic tone and be appropriate to a scholarly manuscript.

Abstract

The applied dissertation title, your name, and the year must be identical to the title, name, and year on the title page. The abstract should be double-spaced with 250-300 words preferably on one page. The body of the abstract should be Times News Roman, 12-point font size.

Include up to five descriptors or keywords/phrases that relate to your study. Use below sample. The term "Keywords" should be italicized and followed by a colon. However, keyword terms are not italicized. The terms should be separated by commas with no period at the end of the line. For example:

Keywords: goals, educational assessment, strategy, academic priorities

Table of Contents, List of Figures, and List of Tables

See the samples for the required format.

The Title page, Copyright page, and Approval page are not numbered or included in the Table of Contents.

All first and second-level headings should be included in the Table of Contents. Third level headings are optional; fourth and fifth should not be included in the Table of Contents. Lists of Figures and List of Tables follow immediately after the abstract. All first level headings should be flush left, and each succeeding level should be indented ½ inch from the preceding level.

Dot leaders, rather than a series of periods, must be used to join headings and titles with their respective page numbers; at least two dots must separate the heading or title from its page number. See example.

The right margin for the Table of Contents, List of Figures, and List of Tables is justified. Do not provide an additional tab (indent) for the second and subsequent lines of a heading or subheading; begin the second line of the heading or subheading at the same point as the first line. The same rule applies with respect to figures' captions in the List of Figures and tables' titles in the List of Tables. Avoid having headings, subheadings, tables' titles, and figures' captions extend into the column of page numbers.

Appendix items are presented in the Table of Contents.

Headings, subheadings, and page numbers in the Table of Contents must match the corresponding headings, subheadings, and page numbers in the text. The same rule applies to figures' numbers, captions and page numbers in the List of Figures and tables' numbers, titles, and page numbers in the List of Tables.

Do not include an identifying letter or number if you have only one appendix item, one table, or one figure; label the header "Appendix," "Table," or "Figure" and begin the title on the next line at the first tab position. Refer to the APA manual (section 6.17, pages 167-168) for capitalization rules relating to headings and title.

YOUR TITLE HERE, ALL CAPS, NO BOLD:

FOCUSED AND SUCCINCT, DOUBLE SPACED, AND TWO INCHES FROM TOP

By

First M. Last

Dissertation Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

College of Education

Frostburg State University

May 2020

Copyright © 2020 All Rights Reserved By First M. Last

(Copyright page should only be included if paying for copyright during ProQuest submission. Otherwise it should be left out. Set this page to a 6-inch top margin. Text should be centered and single spaced as shown below. This page should not be assigned a page number, and it is not included in the Table of Contents.)

SAME TITLE AND FORMAT AS TITLE PAGE:

USE DOUBLE SPACING

By

First M. Last

The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the College of Education, have examined and approved this dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

	Chair
Rusty R. Hinge, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Education Frostburg State University	
U. Need Tu, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Education Frostburg State University	
Almo S. Done, Ed.D. Assistant Professor of Education Frostburg State University	
Almo S. Done, Ed.D. Assistant Professor of Education Frostburg State University	

Acknowledgements (Level 1)

Start with indented paragraph and you may acknowledge anyone that you would like in this section. Dedication of your work can also be placed in this section. There should not be a separate dedication section.

Abstract (Level 1)

SAME TITLE AND FORMAT AS TITLE PAGE: USE DOUBLE SPACING

By

First M. Last

Abstract should be double spaced with indented first line of paragraphs.

Preferably 250-300 words. Keywords and phrases should be listed at the end as shown below (up to five). Indent and italicize keywords with commas between listing and no period at the end.

Keywords: word, phrase, word, word

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Chapter 1 – Introduction (Level 1)

This guide is to be used as a sample format and may not necessarily identify every heading and or the order in which your heading will occur in your study. Although this guide provides some of the most common elements in a study, it will not necessarily dictate how you should present your work. Your organization and structure should be determined between you and your chair. A five-chapter format is most commonly used, but you and your chair may utilize a different format (such as an article structure) provided that the essential elements of a dissertation are included somewhere in the dissertation and clearly labeled as such. You and your chair are encouraged to have a conversation with the program coordinator if you wish to utilize a nonstandard structure.

The first one to two paragraphs of Chapter 1 should include a brief overview of the topic and of the contents of this section. It should pull the reader instantly into the topic and be broad enough that the reader understands your interest area quickly.

Statement of the Problem (Level 2)

The problem statement describes the topic and focus of the question that will be the subject of your study. Do so in a manner that compels the reader to wonder and think about the problem. The problem statement should be clear and concise so that the reader is clearly seeing the problem. Below are a list of essential elements that should be addressed in Chapter 1. Although the titles below are set up as level 2 headings, your organization may be different based on your study and based on the preference of your committee. The below titles are suggested format titles for Chapter 1, but defer to your chair.

Purpose and Rationale of the Study (Level 2)

Significance of Study (Level 2)

Theoretical (or Conceptual) Framework (Level 2)

Research Design Overview (Level 2)

Research Questions (and Hypotheses) (Level 2)

Assumptions (Level 2)

These are commonly included for qualitative but not quantitative studies. Please consult with your chair and/or methodologist for further guidance.

Limitations (Level 2)

Definitions (Level 2)

Organization of the Study (Level 2)

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature (Level 1)

Introduction (Level 2)

This section should be used to provide a clear roadmap to present your literature review and the topics that will be covered. Essential elements in Chapter 2 are varied based on the individual study. However, theoretical framework is likely to be one of your headings in the literature review. Many dissertations introduce the framework in Chapter 1 and provide a more detailed review in Chapter 2 as part of the literature review.

Other elements to consider in the literature review:

- The history and background is stated to set the stage for your topic, giving the reader enough information to place the problem in the current context of education;
- A critical review of relevant scholarly literature about the topic is conducted in order to show a deep understanding of the topic as it operates currently;
- Begin to narrow the focus of your inquiry into the topic pointing out an area that,
 if investigated, would add to the broader understanding of the topic;
- The review of the current state of the topic is drawn primarily from recently published articles;
- The review should come from peer-reviewed scholarly journals; otherwise, you justify your use of other sources, such as trade books and dissertations;
- A statement about how saturation has been reached in the literature review and efforts to find related research are explained.
- Including a section about how you went about conducting your literature review is good practice.
- Synthesis, including methods used in previous studies, is key.

Theoretical (or Conceptual) Framework (Level 2)

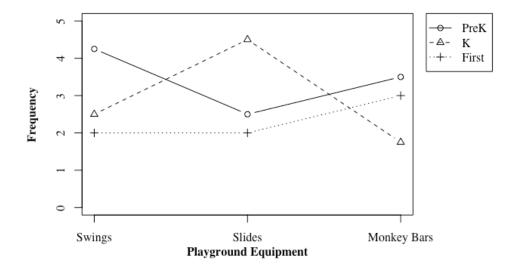
Essential elements in Chapter 2 are varied based on the individual study. However, theoretical framework is likely to be one of your headings in the Literature review. Many dissertations introduce the framework in Chapter 1 and provide a more detailed review in Chapter 2 as part of the literature review. Including a section about how you went about conducting your literature review is good practice. Synthesis, including methods used in previous studies, is key.

Essential Element (Level 2)

When inserting a figure see below for the format. Using the insert table/figures option is recommended for ease of page numbering in the list of tables page.

Figure 1

Frequency of Student Engagement with Playground Equipment



Note. Adapted from "Look, Ma, No Hands: Children's Playtime Practices," by G. Summers and L. Smith, 2001, *Journal of Child Engagement*, 46, p. 11. Copyright 2001 by the Association of Child Behavior Development Studies.

A short conclusion and transition to the methodologies chapter should be

presented.

Chapter 3 – Research Design and Methodology (Level 1)

This section should start with an introduction to your research study and design noting elemental sections of the chapter.

Research Design (Level 2)

This is where you will describe the research design and provide justification for choosing this design.

Level 3 headings can be used when you are trying to provide a breakdown of the content involved in the title of the level 2 heading. Level 3 headings are bold and italicized, title case, and flush left. For example, if you are using a mixed-methods design you may want a level 3 heading to describe each method. However, you may not need more than the level 2 heading to describe the design and justification for using the design. This is dependent upon the design and the best approach to being clear with the description.

Research Questions (Level 2)

This is an essential element. A good research question is specific and includes the population, data source, and implies a method and direction, if arguable. For example: To what extent did the first-year seminar courses predict academic success in first generation college students? How are online users experiencing or addressing privacy issues on such social networking sites as Facebook and Twitter?

Repeat each sub-section below for every component or phase of a mixed methods study. You might also organize based on the research question. Repetition may occur for the sake of clarity.

Setting (or Research Context) (Level 2)

If your research is focused on a particular setting or context, such as one

institution of higher education or a specific school district, you will include this section describing that context and its demographics.

Population and Sample Selection (Level 2)

This is an essential element which addresses how you selected a sample and why the method of sample selection is appropriate. The level of heading is likely to be level 2 or level 3 depending on your design.

Study Participants (Level 2)

This is an essential element where you describe your study participants, including sample size and relevant demographic information, such as age, gender, grade level, etc.

Data Source (or Instrument or Materials) (Level 2)

This is an essential element where you describe your data source, instrument, or materials, including coding and levels of measurement in relation to constructs.

Data Collection Procedures (Level 2)

This is an essential element as well. Explain, step-by-step, how data will be collected, recorded (if applicable), and managed. The level of heading is likely to be level 2 or level 3 depending on your design.

Data Analysis Procedures (Level 2)

This is an essential element which explains, step-by-step, how data will be screened, analyzed, and interpreted. The level of heading is likely to be level 2 or level 3 depending on your design.

Validity and Reliability (Level 2)

This is an essential element which addresses issues related to legitimacy, consistency or trustworthiness. Risks and benefits of issues are weighed.

Role of Researcher (Level 2)

This is an essential element which describes your role and potential bias in relation to the study.

Measures of Ethical Protection (Level 2)

This is an essential element which addresses issues related to IRB protections and procedure.

Chapter 4 – Findings (Level 1)

Finding 1 (Level 2)

The elements in this section will be determined by your study. You present your study findings in this chapter. Tables and/or figures can be used to report demographics or quantitative study findings.

When inserting tables use the format illustrated by Table 1 and Table 2 below (refer to APA guidelines). YouTube can be a good source if you are trying to learn how to format a table. Some examples are available through the ETD LibGuide (http://libguides.frostburg.edu/etd).

When inserting tables, you should never have a table begin on one page and roll over to the following page. Tables should not span multiple pages. As shown below, the table number and table title should be placed above the table. Notes can be placed below the table to include any explanations of the table contents (i.e., identification of significance level used, explanation of abbreviations used).

Table 1

Demographics by Age and Participation Group

Age	Participator	% Participator	Non- Participator	% Non- participator	Total	%Total
29 or less	1	.01	2	.04	3	.02
30-39	14	.17	7	.15	21	.16
40-49	24	.30	9	.19	33	.26
50-59	20	.25	12	.26	32	.25
60+	22	.27	17	.36	39	.31
Totals	81	1.00	47	1.00	128	1.00

Note. Respondents were not required to answer every question.

Table 1Demographic Data of Faculty Participator and Nonparticipator Groups

			College of	
_	College of	College of	Liberal Arts	
Group	Business	Education	and Sciences	All Colleges
Non-participator				
Count	5	12	31	48
% non-participators by college	.10	.25	.65	1.00
% respondent non-participators within college	.23	.40	.40	.37
% of total respondents	.04	.09	.24	.37
Participator				
Count	17	18	47	82
% participators by college	.21	.22	.57	1.00
% respondent participators within college	.77	.60	.60	.63
% of total respondents	.13	.14	.36	.63
Total				
Count	22	30	78	130
% of total respondents	.17	.23	.60	1.00

Make sure you are reviewing tables and figure guidelines in the APA manual. You may, if you wish, use color for your tables and figures. However, you should consider how the readability/visibility of the table or image is affected when printed in black and white or grayscale by the reader. You can read more about ProQuest's recommendations regarding color here:

 $\frac{https://media2.proquest.com/documents/Preparing+Your+Manuscript+for+Submission+Revised+31jul2015.pdf}{}$

Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Implications (Level 1)

Discussion and Conclusions (Level 2)

This is an area for discussion of results and conclusions.

Implications for Practice (Level 2)

This is an area where you should discuss the implications of your findings.

Limitations (Level 2)

This is an area where you should present and discuss the limitations of your study.

Summary (Level 2)

References

- Gandhi, S. (2003). Academic librarians and distance education. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 43(2), 138-154.
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Appendix A – Title of Appendix (Level 1)

Appendix B – Title of Appendix (Level 1)