



*California Institute for*  
**HUMAN SCIENCE**  
MIND BODY CONSCIOUSNESS UNIVERSITY

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# **THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION AT CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN SCIENCE**

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**Processes, Policies, and Procedures**

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## Introduction

This document is designed to guide students as they initiate and then move through the doctoral dissertation at CIHS. It includes a consideration of the process, procedures, and policies involved in writing and presenting the dissertation. The document also serves to orient CIHS faculty who may be serving on a dissertation committee or are responsible for assisting doctoral students with academic planning.

Approaching the doctoral dissertation can be a daunting and confusing time for students, who may have many questions about the dissertation process and the dissertation as a product. This document should answer many questions and allay many concerns. At the same time, no document can address the specific circumstances of individual students; CIHS encourages all doctoral students who are undertaking dissertations to consult regularly with the Chair of the Dissertation Committee to ensure that they understand all facets of the dissertation – process and product. The Chair will be the student's primary guide through the entire dissertation journey.

The dissertation is the summative work product that represents the culmination of the doctoral degree. It demonstrates the student's ability to conduct rigorous, quality research that contributes original scholarship to a discipline or area of study. It also provides students with the opportunity to investigate in depth a topic or question for which they have a sincere interest and which may inform the direction of their career.

Again, this document is a guide. It seeks to provide answers to questions and concerns students may have, though it does not serve as an exhaustive exploration of all issues that may arise about the process or the product. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee can work with the student to fine tune answers to questions that may not be addressed here.

## Dissertation Sequence

The dissertation at CIHS is organized as a logical sequence, and students and their Dissertation Committees should follow this sequence carefully.

The Dissertation Sequence begins after completion of all required course work and proceeds through four "courses": – 896, 897, 898A, and 898B. Each course is considerably different from previous courses students will have completed by this time; it involves interaction between the student and the Dissertation Committee rather than a class with an instructor, other students, and weekly meetings. During each of the four Dissertation Sequence courses the student must work with the Committee and with the Chair in particular. Each course requires no formal attendance at classes or other meetings; it asks that the student pursue work on the dissertation independently but with regular advice and support from the Committee and its Chair.

It should be noted, too, that each of the four dissertation courses has no definite time span. While CIHS suggests that each course should be pursued in about one academic

Quarter, the time frame of one-course-per-Quarter is not required. Some students may need more than a Quarter to complete a course; others may wish to proceed more quickly than one-course-per-Quarter, though that possibility must never compromise the production of quality dissertation chapters or a quality dissertation as a whole. On average, CIHS students should plan on a year or more to complete the four courses and deliver a finished dissertation that meets the expectations of the Committee and the standards for excellent research expected at CIHS.

The four dissertation courses are described below. Each course includes steps that the student and the Committee should follow carefully and, in most cases, according to the order in which they are listed. Each also includes learning outcomes that should inform the progress of the student.

- 1) **896 Dissertation Topic Research.** This first course in the Dissertation Sequence includes five crucial steps – “a” to “e” --, each of which must be completed successfully before the student can move on to the next course. The student should register for the course through the regular CIHS registration process and then proceed to complete the following deliverables. The course focuses on a consideration of what a dissertation is and what is expected for a quality dissertation, and it culminates in the completion of a draft of the first two chapters. Students have the opportunity to review previous course work with the Committee, explore several possible dissertation topics or questions, discuss personal research interests or passions, and then focus their interests into a topic that is interesting, manageable, and meaningful for both the student and the Committee. Through the completion of the first two chapters the student will have the opportunity to hone the focus, explore several literatures relevant to the topic, and ensure that the research pursued will make an original contribution to the discipline or field.

Steps to be followed and deliverables for the 896 course:

- a. **Formation of a Dissertation Committee.** The Committee is composed of three or four members -- a Chair and at least two others. The Committee is considered formed when all Committee members, the Dean of Academic Affairs, and the student sign the Dissertation Committee Acceptance Form (attached here). This form is filed with the Registrar. The Dean of Academic Affairs, working with the Chief Financial Officer, finalizes contracts with the Chair and Committee Members and ensures that those contracts are appropriately filed.
- b. **Formal Advancement to Candidacy.** The student must successfully complete the Candidacy Examination, which includes an oral component and a written component (See *Candidacy Exam* attached). Upon successful completion of the examination, the student is advanced to Candidacy. The Dissertation Committee Chair must sign the Advancement to Candidacy Form (attached) and submit it for filing to the Registrar.

- c. **Review of Dissertation Assessment Rubric.** The Committee Chair reviews the Dissertation Assessment Rubric (attached here for each academic program) with the Candidate.
- d. **Completion of dissertation Chapters 1 and 2 draft.** The student must deliver an initial draft or outline of Chapter 1, "Introduction/Statement of the Problem," and Chapter 2, "Literature Review" (See the *Dissertation and Thesis Guidelines* attached here). NOTE: If a student elects to complete a theoretical dissertation, Chapter 2 may comprise of the "Methodology" chapter.
- e. The **896** course is completed when the Dissertation Committee Chair submits notice to the Dean of Academic Affairs that the student has completed (a), (b), (c), and (d).

Learning Outcomes for the 896 course include:

- 1. Construct a clear, unique problem statement and demonstrate its importance to the profession/discipline/field.
  - 2. Develop and examine meaningful relationships between concepts and/or variables used in the research
  - 3. Articulate the originality of the research and its contribution to a knowledge base.
  - 4. Express and critically evaluate the status of the current research literature(s) relevant to the study.
  - 5. Synthesize research findings relevant to the study and identify gaps in that research.
- 2) **897 Dissertation Methodology Review.** Once students have completed all steps for the 896 course, they should register for 897. This course provides the student with the opportunity to hone the draft of chapters 1 and 2 and then to articulate the components of the methodology or methodologies to be used in the research. The student can draw upon methodological knowledge obtained through research courses taken at CIHS or elsewhere and also explore how that knowledge can be applied to the proposed research in specific ways. In addition, students may be guided by the Committee to consider research methods that they have not studied previously but that may be especially pertinent to conducting the study. Considerations of the use of qualitative or quantitative methods or both, of sampling procedures or case study procedures, of data collection and analysis, and of data coding, reduction, or other appropriate

strategies will be considered. The student will explore the most appropriate methodological processes for the study and then articulate how those processes will be used.

Steps to be followed and deliverables for the 897 course:

- a. **Complete draft of Chapter 3.** Chapter 3 (Methodology) describes the project, sample selection, research design methods, procedures, and instruments (See the *Dissertation and Thesis Guidelines* attached here). The Chapter 3, combined with Chapters 1 and 2, comprises the Dissertation Proposal. (NOTE: In a theoretical dissertation, Chapter 3 may comprise of the “Literature Review Chapter”).
- b. **Dissertation Proposal Committee Meeting.** The student must hold a meeting with the Dissertation Committee to discuss Chapters 1-3 and to propose a plan for completing the dissertation.
- c. This course is completed when all committee members and the student sign the Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form (attached here). The form must be filed with the Registrar. Once it has been filed, both the student and the Committee must consider the first 3 chapters – and especially Chapter 3 (Methodology) -- as accepted and complete; requests for revision of those chapters or additions to those chapters are inappropriate at that point unless exceptional circumstances emerge. The Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form serves as a formal agreement between the student and the Dissertation Committee that, if the student completes the project as described in the Methodology Chapter 3, the Committee approves that the student can move forward and finalize the dissertation.

Learning outcomes for the 897 course include:

1. Develop and articulate a methodology or methodologies appropriate to the research conducted for the dissertation.
2. Assess the potential of the methodology or methodologies to yield results that can provide an original contribution to the profession/discipline/field.
3. Discuss all relevant specifics of the methodology or methodologies for the research, including research design, data collection, data analysis, sampling, the choice of and use of quantitative or qualitative methods or both, issues of generalizability if relevant, and anything else integral to chapter 3 of the dissertation.

- 3) **898A Dissertation I.** Once students have completed all steps for the 897 course, they should register for 898A. In this course students should develop and express the findings or results of their dissertation research – that is, what do the analyses reveal. The discussion of the results should be presented as honestly and objectively as possible, without comments on their significance. Charts, graphs, tables, and other means of laying out the results should be used as appropriate to display what the research has revealed. Completion of this course consists of the following deliverables:

Steps to be followed and deliverables for the 898A course:

- a. **Completion of Chapter 4.** This includes the analysis and results of the project data collection. For theoretical dissertations, this may include additional chapters pertinent to the study.
- b. This course is completed when the Dissertation Committee Chair submits notice to the Dean of Academic Affairs that the student has completed (a).

Learning outcomes for the 898A course include:

1. Express the results of the research honestly and objectively.
  2. Explore meaningful relationships revealed by the results.
  3. Utilize appropriate means to display the results.
  4. Present results in a way that is consistent with the intentions and scope of the study.
- 4) Register for **898B Dissertation II.** Once students have completed the steps for the 898A course, they should register for 898A. This course brings the dissertation sequence (and the dissertation itself) to closure. It provides an opportunity for the student to discuss the implications of the results, any conclusions that are merited and that express the originality of the findings, any limitations of the research that should be noted, and the implications of the research for future studies. This is where the student can truly articulate the significance and importance of the research and how it contributes to a profession/discipline/field. While interpretation is involved in discussing the results, that interpretation should derive from the objective presentation of those results in Chapter 4.

Steps to be followed and deliverables for the 898B course:

- a. **Completion of Chapter 5/Final Chapters.** This includes conclusions, discussion of the results, and suggestions for future research. In brief, it



includes completion of the entire dissertation. For theoretical dissertations this may include additional chapters summarizing the study.

- b. **Dissertation Defense Meeting.** A meeting of the Dissertation Committee is held to formally present the completed dissertation. This includes a general presentation which is usually open to the public.

The Dissertation Committee can choose to exercise three options once the dissertation has been delivered and the dissertation defense has been completed -- pass with no revision necessary, pass with revision necessary (and this must be clearly articulated to the student in writing by the Chair), or failure (This should rarely if ever occur at this stage of the process). The option selected by the Committee must be unanimous among all members; if one member doesn't agree with that option, then the Committee must deliberate until it arrives at a unanimous decision.

The Committee Chair should communicate all recommended revisions to the student and then establish a time frame for completion of all revisions and submission of the final dissertation.

- c. Committee signs the Dissertation Acceptance Form (attached here). The 898B course, the dissertation process, and the doctoral degree are completed when the Committee members sign the Dissertation Acceptance Form and submit it to the Dean of Academic Affairs, and then only after the student has submitted two printed copies and a fee for binding to the Dean of Administration. Congratulations!

Learning outcomes for the 898B course:

1. Discuss and interpret the analysis of the results in a scholarly manner.
2. Discuss conclusions that derive from the results and reflect methodological and conceptual rigor.
3. Articulate how the research offers a substantive and original contribution to the profession/discipline/field.
4. Discuss the limitations of the research.
5. Discuss possible future research related to the focus of the study.
6. Present the study orally to an audience of students, faculty, and others who may be invited at the dissertation defense.

Time limits: Each of the dissertation courses (896, 897, 898A, 898B) can ideally be completed in one Quarter, and CIHS recommends that the student follow that timeline. But extension beyond a Quarter is allowed up to three additional Quarters. If any of the four dissertation courses extends beyond four Quarters to complete, a dissertation extension fee of \$250 per quarter will be applied until the course is completed and the student is advanced into the next course in the Sequence.

The dissertation process is an important and essential part of doctoral degree education at CIHS. Both the student and the Dissertation Committee must ensure that the process is followed carefully and that all necessary documentation is completed in a timely fashion.

The Chair of the Dissertation Committee is the final arbiter of any conflicts or disputes that may arise during the dissertation process, though the Chair should at all times ensure that appropriate input has been received from the student and all other Dissertation Committee members. Should the Chair be unable to make a decision on a conflict or dispute, that Chair should bring the matter to the Dean of Academic Affairs, who will make a timely decision in consultation with the Chair. Should the matter extend to a formal grievance on the part of the student, the student will be directed to the *CIHS Student Handbook's* procedure for filing a formal grievance and must follow the procedural steps listed therein.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- 1) A Dissertation Committee will have a single Chair who will be responsible for making decisions for the Committee, but only after receiving necessary and appropriate input from the other Committee members. At no time can a Committee have Co-Chairs or no Chair.
- 2) The Dissertation Committee will have 3-4 members. At least 3 of those 4 members must be CIHS faculty or staff. An external Committee member may serve as a 4<sup>th</sup> member if the Chair agrees.
- 3) The Dissertation Committee must have a consensus of all 3 CIHS members in making decisions. If one of the 3 is opposed to the other 2 on any dissertation-related matter, then the Dean of Academic Affairs must work with the Committee Chair to make a decision. At all times, all Committee members, under the leadership of the Chair, should seek to come to consensus on any decision.
- 4) Dissertation Committee members should resign or withdraw from Committee membership only under special circumstances. The Committee should make every effort to ensure that resignations or withdrawals do not occur. Should a resignation or withdrawal become absolutely necessary, the member who wishes to resign or withdraw must submit a letter of resignation/withdrawal to the Dean of Academic Affairs, who must then work with the Committee Chair and the student to find another Committee member.

- 5) The Dissertation Committee and the doctoral student who is writing the dissertation should seek at all times to communicate with each other with dignity, respect, and a spirit of academic collegiality, even while the norm of academic freedom is preserved in all discourse and all exchanges. Should the communication at any time evidence a lack of dignity, respect, and/or academic collegiality, the matter should be referred by the Committee Chair to both the Dean of Student Life and the Dean of Academic Affairs, who will confer and bring appropriate policies from the *Student Handbook* or *Faculty Handbook* to bear on whatever decisions they choose to make, which may include means of resolving conflicts or disputes, possible disciplinary action, or something else they consider appropriate. At all times, it should be noted, the student should bear in mind that Committee members are trained, professional educators who provide advice and direction intended to help the student and promote quality dissertation work; though dialogue with them is encouraged, the student should avoid challenging them inappropriately or questioning their expertise and knowledge.
- 6) All Dissertation Committee members have an obligation to read each chapter – and Chapter 3 (Methodology) in particular -- carefully and to provide advice/recommendations to the student via the Chair in a timely fashion. At no time should the student be surprised after the fact – that is, after a chapter has been read/reviewed by the Committee and the student has addressed all suggestions submitted by Committee members to the Chair.
- 7) During the time the student is completing the 4 Dissertation Sequence courses, the Committee (and the Chair in particular) should be available to the student and should promote an interactive dialogue with that student. Likewise, the student should be encouraged to reach out to the Committee members (and the Chair in particular) with any questions/problems/issues, or simply to discuss the focus and direction of the dissertation. At no time should the student feel as though he or she is working alone and not receiving the support and advice needed to move forward successfully. With that in mind, CIHS recommends that open communication between the student and the Committee be encouraged through the following means (These are guidelines, not requirements):
  - The student should submit monthly progress reports (an email message would be sufficient) to the Committee Chair, and the Chair should respond to those reports as soon as possible;
  - The student and the Chair should meet in person or online once each Quarter;
  - The student should feel free to reach out to any member of the Committee at any time; Committee members should respond in a timely fashion and always copy the Chair on their responses;
  - The Committee Chair should work with the student to ensure that all forms have the requisite signatures and are submitted in the expected time frame noted above;

- The student should develop a weekly schedule for working on the dissertation and should adhere to that schedule as closely as possible.

The expectation for dissertation work is that the student must pursue the work largely on his or her own; the work provides an opportunity to define and pursue original research which the student should own and enjoy. At the same time, the Dissertation Committee – and the Chair in particular – should be available to the student and guide the student through regular interaction and feedback. Likewise, the student should feel free to reach out to the Committee at any time and should expect timely responses to questions, concerns, or issues.

The 4-course structure for the dissertation and the importance of getting signatures on and then submitting the 4 forms noted above provide a coherent frame for ensuring that the student stays on track throughout the Sequence. Students will not be allowed to progress to the next course or next step in the Sequence until they have secured the signatures on the appropriate forms. It is the student's responsibility to maintain appropriate progress during the Sequence, while it is the Dissertation Committee's responsibility to monitor that progress and to ensure that the student has appropriate advising and support across the 4 courses.

In addition to the Dissertation Committee, students in the Sequence may seek advice from recent CIHS graduates. For the names and contact information of alumni who are eager to assist, please contact the Dean of Academic Affairs. Students should always bear in mind, however, that advice obtained from CIHS graduates should never substitute for advice from the Dissertation Committee.

## **Doctoral Candidacy Exam**

The following description of the *Doctoral Candidacy Examination* for doctoral students at CIHS is based upon research on candidacy policies and procedures at other universities and upon feedback from all members of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) gathered at the IEC meetings in September 2020.

Candidacy, as generally defined at universities offering doctoral degrees, is the demonstration by an enrolled doctoral student of a readiness to conduct dissertation research and complete the dissertation; it includes having the requisite writing skills (with facility, in the case of CIHS, to use American Psychological Association [APA] Style as set out in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the APA Style Manual), the requisite research skills (including quantitative and/or qualitative methods, with the emphasis on the methods to be used in the dissertation), and the requisite thinking skills (including a capacity to develop compelling questions or pose compelling problems, a capacity to review and think across multiple sources, a capacity to utilize research methods appropriately to conduct a well-planned study, the capacity to derive and clearly present the results of the research, and the capacity to discuss the findings – e.g., conclusions reached, implications for additional research, limitations of the research).

The candidacy exam at CIHS includes 2 components, as noted below. Each academic School (Psychology, Integral Health, Comparative Religion and Philosophy) has the freedom to operationalize the 2 components as it chooses and to determine whether or not the candidate has completed the exam successfully and may therefore initiate “dissertation sequence” courses (896, 897, 898 A & B) and work with a dissertation committee to develop the dissertation. All students who take the *Doctoral Candidacy Examination* must have completed the required CIHS course work, including completion of core course credits and elective course credits.

### **Oral Examination:**

The oral examination of candidates should be a 45-60 minute session in which at least 2 members of the School and the Dean of Academic Affairs are present. The intent of the oral examination is to test the student’s broad knowledge of the principal concepts and practices in the fields that are relevant to the School and that are the focus of the School’s curriculum. The examination can be oriented to the specific coursework pursued by the student and/or to the students’ expressed interests, and the 2 members of the School who will be examining the student can choose to leave the examination open-ended and provide no advance guidance or to discuss examination parameters with the student in advance of the examination and even provide to the student the questions it will ask in advance. In brief, the 2 members of the School and the student can work together, if the 2 members wish, to determine the precise nature of the examination. We believe the examination should be an opportunity for the student to demonstrate his or her knowledge of the fields relevant to the School and his or her passions and interests within those fields. The examination should allow the student the opportunity to shine – that is, to share with others the excitement of intellectual discovery he or she has accumulated in the School to that point. It should be an enjoyable experience for everyone present – the student, the 2 members of the School, and the Dean.

The oral examination will be evaluated on a “Pass/No Pass” basis and in terms of (a) the student’s ability to communicate effectively to professional colleagues on areas of common interest; (b) the student’s capacity to think spontaneously and to frame coherent arguments in a professional setting; and (c) the student’s knowledge of the fields of study that are the focus of the School or of specific areas of knowledge determined by the student and the 2 members of the School. If the student receives a “Pass,” and if the written work described below is deemed sufficient to merit a “Pass,” the student can move into the dissertation sequence and initiate the dissertation. If the student receives a “No Pass,” he or she will be required to repeat the oral examination within one month, at which time he or she must earn a “Pass” to continue into the dissertation sequence. The student should indicate clearly, however, that he or she is ready to take the

oral examination, and the 2 members of the School should feel confident that the student is ready; a “No Pass” evaluation should be an unexpected outcome.

### **Portfolio of Written Work:**

The portfolio of written work should demonstrate the following two-part learning:

- I. (a) what the student chooses to share in the way of 3 summative course papers (final papers or projects) that exhibit the student’s writing skills and use of APA style (7<sup>th</sup> edition), the research skills the student has acquired that display an ability to initiate dissertation research, and the breadth of the student’s thinking across courses taken thus far; or (b) what the 2 members from the School specifically request in the way of 3 papers. The student and the 2 members of the School should dialogue about whether this part of the *Doctoral Candidacy Exam* will make use of (a) or (b) or some other means of determining what 3 papers will be submitted for evaluation.
- II. a 5-7 page summative paper that explains how the student’s learning thus far has enabled him or her to accomplish the Ph.D. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) of the School in which that student is enrolled.

All papers will be read and evaluated by the 2 members of the School. The evaluation criteria are as follows: (a) the ability of the student to write clearly, coherently, and convincingly; (b) the ability of the student to use qualitative and/or quantitative research skills; and (c) the ability of the student to think clearly, including demonstrating skills such as integrating concepts, evaluating ideas and research, applying ideas to practical contexts, analyzing ideas and data, and offering innovative ideas, approaches, or strategies that build upon a knowledge base.

The 2 members of the School who read and evaluate the papers will use the following rating scheme for each of the 3 criteria:

Score of 3 = clear pass

Score of 2 = pass

Score of 1 = no pass

The student must receive a score of 4 or higher on each of the 3 criteria from the two evaluators combined. A score of 3 or less on any of the 3 criteria will result in a “No Pass” for this “Portfolio of Written Work” portion of the *Doctoral Candidacy Exam*.

### **Final Outcome:**

In order to pass the *Doctoral Candidacy Exam*, the student must earn a “Pass” on both the “Oral Examination” and the “Portfolio of Written Work.” A “No Pass”

on the “Oral Examination” was discussed above. A “No Pass” on the “Portfolio of Written Work” will result in the necessity of a conference with the 2 faculty members and the Dean and the development of a plan for moving forward. Such a plan could include several possibilities – e.g., the consideration of additional papers submitted by the student in CIHS courses or the submission of an additional paper within one month on a topic determined by the student and the 2 faculty members. Should the student continue to receive a “No Pass” on either the “Oral Examination” or the “Portfolio of Written Work,” he or she may be subject to dismissal from the doctoral program. CIHS, however, believes that students who have been accepted into the doctoral program and have completed all course work prior to the *Doctoral Candidacy Exam* should not fail to pass the exam. Nevertheless, the possibility of failure exists for any student at this stage of the doctoral process.

### **Candidacy Exam Policy**

The “Candidacy Exam” section of the document *Doctoral Dissertation at CIHS* discusses the importance of candidacy for dissertation-level work. Candidacy is a requirement that CIHS takes seriously as an important step toward the doctoral degree and as an expectation of accrediting bodies.

In Fall 2020, CIHS created and approved a new Candidacy Exam policy. That policy is treated in detail in the “Candidacy Exam” section noted above. That policy holds for all students who completed doctoral course work in the Fall Quarter 2020 and will hold for all students who complete doctoral course work subsequent to that Quarter. Briefly, it requires a student to complete a two-part exam – one part involving the submission and acceptance of 3 papers written in the doctoral program and the other part involving an oral exam. Both parts must be completed successfully for the student to advance to candidacy.

Students who completed course work at CIHS prior to the implementation of the new “Candidacy Exam” (that is, prior to the beginning of Fall Quarter 2020) have the choice of completing candidacy requirements through either the old system – the submission of 2 candidacy papers that are deemed acceptable -- or the new system.

### **Dissertation Writing Guidelines**

**Doctoral students at CIHS should read the following guidelines carefully and make use of them as they engage in the writing of their dissertations.**

#### **Special Needs & Accommodations**

If you have special needs (such as a learning disability), please discuss this with the instructor early in the quarter so that proper accommodations can be made.

## Dissertation Style Guidelines

These guidelines provide an overview of the general requirements applicable to PhD dissertations at CIHS.

The specific format and style will be dictated by the nature and design of the research and the requirements of different programs. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, should be consulted for all questions of form and style. Students can find this information at [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org) as well. A useful summary of APA format by Plonsky is provided by University of Wisconsin free on their website: <http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/apa4bs.htm>.

Students who are unfamiliar with research and who may be writing research projects for the first time may often feel intimidated by the process, but if they familiarize themselves with the requirements and begin discussing ideas during their coursework, particularly in methodology classes, there is no need for it to be any more challenging than writing several long course papers, particularly if they begin planning and discussing it as early as possible.

### What is a dissertation?

A doctoral dissertation requires conducting an original piece of research and a written presentation that follows the guidelines of the APA publication standards.

The following suggestions may help doctoral students prepare for the dissertation process:

- Browse through this outline and manuals for which links have been suggested;
- Browse through dissertations in the CIHS library and at other schools;
- Reflect on topics that interest you and discuss those topics with fellow students and faculty members;
- Be open-minded and begin discussing/researching a methodology that may best suit your topic interests and inclinations. CIHS accepts quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical dissertations, or the use of mixed methods;
- Become competent in using APA format when writing course papers;
- Read and think about articles on your topic that have been published by “high impact factor” refereed journals; such articles often provide the kinds of elements you need to address in a dissertation – i.e., introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and discussion.

Additional useful tips and guidelines can be found at the following:

[http://www2.hmc.edu/www\\_common/writing/centweb/diss.htm](http://www2.hmc.edu/www_common/writing/centweb/diss.htm)

As each university has its own dissertation process and procedures, the following overview describes the specific process at CIHS:



## The Dissertation Process at CIHS

### Dissertation Types

The dissertation steps and overall structure and format are similar for most types of dissertation design that CIHS accepts – i.e., quantitative, qualitative, theoretical, or a mixed method design combining methods. The main characteristics of these approaches can be summarized as follows:

**Quantitative Research** – with which most students are familiar, involves collecting data that can be quantified about phenomena or represented as variables that are analyzed statistically to confirm specific hypothesized effects or relationships among variables. It is used in experimental laboratory investigations or in the evaluation of health or psychology therapeutic interventions in clinical studies that may use a quasi-experimental approach. Another type of quantitative research involves correlation studies, which attempt to demonstrate relationships between variables that evidence naturally occurring associations, some of which in some instances can be interpreted as causal effects, though students must be careful not to infer causality from correlations.

**Qualitative Research** - collects data using observation, interviewing, or textual data such as records, biographies, or case histories, or a combination of these sources of data that are analyzed and reported in verbal analysis that identifies themes and concepts (and perhaps their relationships) rather than patterns and trends that often characterize quantitative research. The data are analyzed using concepts and themes, often in order to build theories or conceptual models or to shed light on the behavior of identified groups, organizations, or populations.

**Combined or Mixed Method Research** - is becoming increasingly popular in a number of fields such as education or in outcomes research and evaluation of interventions, where researchers want to present a broader and a more integral approach to a topic, rather than only confirming hypotheses on a limited number of variables. It is particularly popular in evaluation or outcomes research as it offers more than one perspective and the opportunity for the respondent's voice to be heard as well as more detailed perspectives than those obtained from scales and instrumentation. Therefore, it can combine in-depth exploration as well as confirmation of assumptions. An example of a mixed method could include the qualitative research supporting benefits of a mantric, meditation, or breathing process. The quantitative research could evaluate physiological changes occurring during the process using biofeedback or another measurement. There are several texts and journals available on this approach.

**Theoretical Dissertations** - usually involve the critiquing or analysis of current theories or of varying definitions of concepts within a particular discipline, and in qualitative research new theoretical or conceptual models are sometimes developed. Theoretical dissertations must be far more than a summary of current theories or concepts; they must evidence rigorous efforts to analyze, evaluate, and examine similarities or differences between those theories or concepts. It is important for students to be aware

that qualitative approaches, which are often used in theoretical dissertations, can be as challenging as quantitative research and not simply a soft option that offers an escape from statistics. The equivalent level of rigor in developing research objectives and the ability to demonstrate these propositions is required. (See the Addendum “Theoretical Dissertations” for a more detailed discussion).

**Institutional Review Board (IRB):** If you are planning to conduct research on human subjects, please discuss the possible need for a CIHS Institution Review Board (IRB) panel with your dissertation Chair. This will need to be approved (or waived if applicable) if you are doing any research on human subjects that can in any way be harmful. It is also important to be aware that the protected groups – e.g., children and adolescents – would need an IRB to assure that regulatory procedures are followed. You must also create an informed consent and release for your subjects to sign and which will become part of your dissertation’s Appendix. This would have to be approved by the IRB panel as well. If there is no possibility of harm in any way whatsoever, then an IRB panel may be waived. Many theoretical dissertations do not require IRB approval, while many quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies do.

## **CIHS Dissertation Sequence**

Though the following repeats much of what has already been set out in “Dissertation Sequence” at the beginning of this document, it adds details that students may find helpful about the Sequence.

The four Sequence courses begin once students have completed other required coursework and the required Candidacy Exam (see Candidacy Exam above). The numbered courses 896 and 897 for the doctoral programs are conducted with the Dissertation Chair, Dean of Academic Affairs, or Program Director advising and supervising the student; they involve writing the first three chapters of the dissertation, which comprise the dissertation proposal.

There are four courses in the CIHS Dissertation Sequence (see Dissertation Sequence above):

### **1) Course 896: Dissertation Topic Research**

During this course, the student begins researching areas of interest with an eye toward selecting a dissertation topic. This course constitutes preliminary research for the dissertation. The student must identify a Chair and Committee at this stage, and work with the Chair to conduct preliminary research on a topic.

After completion of required course work, the student should register for **896 Dissertation Topic Research**, and select a Chair. **Deliverables** include the following: (a) successful completion of the Candidacy Exam (see CIHS – CANDIDACY EXAM). Upon successful completion of that Exam, the student is advanced to candidacy; (b) preliminary rough draft of Chapter 1, Introduction/Statement of the Problem, and at least

the beginning of Chapter 2, the Literature Review; (c) a signed Dissertation Committee Acceptance Form (see CIHS – DISSERTATION COMMITTEE ACCAPTANCE FORM).

**Course 896** is a substantive investigation of the topic with the Dissertation Committee and, in particular, the Chair. The student must conduct research to ensure that the topic is clear, focused, relevant, and practical, and, most importantly, realistic and ‘doable.’ It requires the preparation of a draft of the first chapter or Introduction of the dissertation and as much as possible at this point of the Literature Review chapter (The Literature Review will often be supplemented as the project evolves). The draft of the Introduction will outline the topic, describe reasons for this choice, and explore the possible value of the proposed research (or rationale). It will also clearly identify the main concepts or constructs that will be investigated in the case of qualitative research or the variables that will be measured in the case of quantitative research.

The main theoretical foundations of the study, a discussion of the research objectives, and the underlying hypothesis for quantitative studies or assumptions that are the basis of qualitative research should all be addressed in the first two chapters. The student should review previous CIHS dissertations or dissertations at other universities to get a feel for the format and content of these first two chapters.

## **2) Course 897 Dissertation Methodology Review.**

**Deliverables** include the following: (a) a complete draft of Chapters 1, 2, and 3. Chapter 3 (Methodology) describes the project, sample selection, research design methods, procedures, and instruments. Approval of these three chapters by the Committee constitutes the formal dissertation proposal acceptance; (b) a formal Committee meeting must be conducted, followed by signing and submission of the Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form (see Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form above).

In this course, the student must work with the Chair to think through the methodological component of the study and to clarify the design of the study and the way the research will be conducted. The course concludes with the **draft proposal**, which consists of a draft of the first three chapters.

Much of the course focuses on the research methods that will be appropriate for the particular topic and the development of a draft of the third chapter of the dissertation, which describes the design and how data will be collected and analyzed. The third chapter should be discussed thoroughly with the Chair, who should seek input from the other Committee members. Once the Committee approves of the chapter and signs off on the Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form, the methodology is considered acceptable.

Once these two courses – 896 and 897 -- have resulted in an acceptable draft proposal, the student may decide to seek the help of the entire Committee in honing the writing of the three chapters.

### 3) 898A Dissertation I.

This course involves implementation of the project data collection and, as the **Deliverable**, the completion of Chapter 4 – Results. In this phase of the dissertation process, the core of the research is conducted, and data are collected and documented according to the method approved by the committee in the previous phase. This is an opportunity for the student to present in a systematic fashion the results obtained through the research.

### 4) 898B Dissertation II.

This course involves the completion of the entire dissertation and the oral defense. **Deliverables** are: (a) completion of chapter 5 – Conclusion, and thus of the five chapters that constitute the dissertation; (b) completion of the Oral Defense presentation; (c) the committee signs and submits the Dissertation Acceptance Form (see CIHS – DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE FORM).

Chapter 5 discusses and comments on the findings, gives a summary of the conclusions derived from the findings, and makes recommendations for further research. Upon completion of this chapter, the Oral Defense is scheduled and conducted, and evaluated by the Dissertation Committee. The signed Dissertation Defense Acceptance Form is then submitted to the Dean of Academic Affairs, which qualifies the student for graduation. Nevertheless, the student must still incorporate any revisions indicated by the Chair that emerged in the Oral Defense and then submit a printed copy of the complete dissertation, with adherence to all formatting specifications, to the Dean of Administration for binding and publication.

The following provides further clarification of the early chapters.

#### **Formal Proposal (Chapters 1-3)**

Before embarking on this stage of your dissertation, make sure that you feel that you have:

- a very clear conceptualization of your topic;
- a 'doable' and manageable design and method;
- a good understanding of what is required in a dissertation in terms of writing style, academic rigor and quality, and details of presentation and format.

A typical dissertation/research proposal consists of the first three chapters of the dissertation: Introduction, Review of Related Literature, and Methodology.

When these chapters have been completed, they are sent to the committee members and a meeting or conference call is arranged for approval of the proposal chapters before data are collected. Students who pursue qualitative dissertations that use biographical or archival data or who pursue theoretical dissertations may already have

their data, but committee approvals are necessary before proceeding with the data analysis and the final chapters.

The content of the initial three chapters identifies common features of both qualitative and quantitative dissertations, though it also draws attention to some obvious areas of dissimilarity. If the student is pursuing a qualitative or a theoretical dissertation, he or she should review a few of the CIHS “approved” qualitative research texts to thoroughly examine the characteristics and format for such dissertations. Three recommended texts can be found at the end of this document.

The following is the generally accepted working model for the structure of a dissertation.

If you have a strong rationale for amending this structure — for example, you want to do six chapters, instead of five – please make sure your Chair has approved of your plan.

**Chapter 1 Introduction** – This chapter can be demanding as it requires not only a personal narrative explaining the interest in the ‘what’ and ‘why’ of the topic and the reasons for your interest but also a rigorous presentation of what the study intends to explore and clear explanations and definitions of the concepts and variables that will be used.

**Background** –of the topic. This should be an introduction to the nature and theme of the study, beginning with a narrative of the ‘what’ and ‘why,’ the reason for your interest in the topic, and the possible value of the research. It will also briefly refer to the main theoretical basis of the research and the main concepts or variables that will frame the investigation.

**Statement of the Problem** – the term ‘problem’ refers to the issue or question that will be addressed and what this study will add to existing knowledge. You should think carefully about articulating the specific problem you are addressing and make sure that the problem is not actually a solution or a solution in search of a problem. Stating the problem accurately is in many ways the nexus of all your research, and it should be well-conceived and substantive. A problem such as “No one has ever investigated this before” is weak.

- **Research Objectives** – describe what is intended or what the research aims to demonstrate or establish, but be careful to avoid any bias by positing hoped-for outcomes.
- **Hypotheses** – in **quantitative research** the assumptions regarding outcomes identified in the objectives should be stated as clear hypotheses that encapsulate the assumed interaction between or among the identified variables.
- **Qualitative and theoretical dissertations** do not usually state hypotheses; assumptions may be presented in studies using grounded theory, but usually only research objectives are stated.

It is not essential to state hypotheses or assumptions at the end of this chapter as these should be introduced at the end of Chapter 3, the Methods Chapter. It is sufficient to state research objectives at this point.

**Chapter 2 Literature Review** – this chapter reviews the literature that provides a theoretical basis for research objectives and explains the key concepts or variables that have been identified in describing the topic. It demonstrates the researcher’s knowledge of experts in the field and what prior research has explored. It should also discuss any limitations in known research.

This could be developed as a historical evolution of knowledge in the particular field leading up to how your research will add to that knowledge. It might also include explanations of theories associated with the various concepts or variables you are employing. It is important to draw up an outline of this chapter in discussions with your Chair to ensure that your review covers the relevant aspects in a focused, precise, coherent, and relevant manner.

**For theoretical dissertations**, this chapter represents the ‘data’ that will subsequently be analyzed; therefore, this chapter will be the most substantial section of theoretical dissertations. It will not only present theories but will also provide an ongoing analysis in terms of the research objectives.

The following link provides some useful guidelines for writing literature reviews:

[http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature\\_review.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature_review.html)

<http://guides.library.vcu.edu/lit-review>

**Chapter 3 Method** – consists of the following sections:

- **Design** - which may be theoretical, qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method (only qualitative/quantitative can be combined) and provides details about the design, reasons for the choice of the design, and the suitability of the design for the particular study.
- **Co-Researchers** – where human co-researchers are used, the selection method and sample frame need to be discussed. Notes how co-researchers are recruited and be specific about this. If textual data such as biographies, records, or journals are used, how and why the records were selected must be detailed. For **qualitative** data, if a ‘snowball’ method of selection was used in conjunction with data analysis, this requires mention. Notes about sampling procedures and whether or not the sample will provide for generalizability may be appropriate too.
- **Data collection** – the way in which data are obtained must be fully described for both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In **theoretical studies** the ‘data’ is essentially the theories or constructs being analyzed.
- **Measures** – in addition to describing how data are obtained, all physical or

psychological assessment instruments, including devices or rating scales, tests, or questionnaires that are utilized in quantitative research, must be outlined in detail.

- **Procedure** - this describes the procedure used in each step of the data collection process.
- **Data analysis** – the method used in data analysis for both quantitative and qualitative designs needs to be elaborated. For quantitative studies the statistics utilized require detailed description. For qualitative studies the use of any software programs to sort data should be noted.
- **Hypotheses** – these are usually restated at the end of Chapter 3 even if they have been introduced earlier.

## The Completed Dissertation and Final Chapters

This constitutes the addition of the final completed chapters that present and discuss research findings and provide conclusions and recommendations.

The completed work is sent to the Committee to read, and the Oral Defense is arranged for final approval. These chapters include consideration of the following: Findings, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

**Chapter 4 Findings** – This involves factual reporting of the findings (without discussion) in terms of the research hypotheses, or the research objectives in the case of a qualitative proposal. In the case of a theoretical dissertation, this chapter summarizes and provides an overview and analysis of the theories presented in the literature review in relation to the research objectives and proposes a new model or theory.

**Chapter 5 Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations** – this chapter discusses and comments on the findings, gives a summary of the conclusions derived from the findings, and provides recommendations for further research. The discussion and commentary should derive from the results/findings and avoid opinions and personal perspectives, though some speculation about possible future research directions is certainly appropriate.

### In Summary:

The four self-directed dissertation courses – 896, 897, 898A, and 898B -- are designed to be somewhat fluid while you are working predominantly with the Chair of the Committee and then sending drafts to Committee members once you and your Chair have agreed upon their contents. While the Chair and Committee members can help “guide” you, much of the work in your research will be up to you. In the process you may discover that you need to re-think some variables, perhaps introduce new variables, uncover biases within yourself, and, perhaps most importantly, gain some profound

insights into who you are and what directions you wish to pursue for the future. The writing, formatting, referencing, and all elements reflect your knowledge as a doctoral candidate.

In general, the focus on Topic and Methodology, the first two courses of the Dissertation Sequence, are designed to have the student work on Chapters 1-3, which comprise the dissertation proposal. This is often the most challenging part of the process. Chapter 1 is the Introduction, Background history, and Statement of the Problem or Investigation at hand; Chapter 2 is the Literature Review—often the biggest chapter and the most arduous; Chapter 3 is the Methodology – often the shortest chapter but in many ways the most important. Once those three chapters are approved, you have completed the proposal stage.

Dissertation I and Dissertation II, the last two courses of the Sequence, are designed for Chapter IV Results/Analysis and Chapter V Conclusion/Implications of Research/ Areas of Further Study (and any appendices with informed consents, any scales, measures, or self-assessments used, and so on).

The Oral Defense can occur on campus or remotely. If it is remote, the student must be present with one Committee member during the Skype, Zoom, or conference call session. Additionally, all requirements set out by the Bureau of Postsecondary Private Education (BPPE) and WSCUC (WASC Senior Commission of Universities and Colleges) must be met in the case of a remote Defense. Preferably, the Oral Defense is conducted on campus.

The only aspects that have no flexibility built into them are the necessity for academic rigor and the required APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition formatting.

If the student is planning to do a qualitative or phenomenological dissertation, he or she may wish to review some wonderful books that can help anchor the study/investigation within a qualitative methodology/phenomenological approach: Clark Moustakas' *Phenomenological Research Methods* [perhaps the only book you will need]; Moustakas' *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications*. Also, Peter Reason has an excellent book on qualitative design methodology entitled *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research*. In addition, the student may wish to consult work by some of the often-cited scholars in the field of qualitative inquiry – e.g., Yin, Lincoln, Corbin and Strauss.

### **Additional Resources**

These guidelines are merely a summary and overview of the research process and dissertation writing requirements. There are a number of web hyperlinks that provide useful information about many aspects of writing dissertations. In addition, the student may wish to consult the following:

CIHS uses and highly recommends the *APA Guide 7<sup>th</sup> edition* or [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)



A useful formatting book is the *Little, Brown Compact Handbook*

### **General tips on dissertation writing**

[http://www2.hmc.edu/www\\_common/writing/centweb/diss.htm](http://www2.hmc.edu/www_common/writing/centweb/diss.htm)

### **APA Format, writing style handouts and links**

A useful summary of APA format can be found on the website mentioned earlier:

<http://.uwsp.edu/psych/apa4b.htm>

UNC gives a brief free handout on citations and references as well as other useful web links to other resources and their own web links to free handouts on writing style and other aspects of dissertation advice.

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/apa.html>

### **Additional Web pages recommended by UNC:**

- If you're wondering how to cite a book, email, or movie, WCU's Writing Center lists examples of many resources, especially e-sources:  
[http://www.wcu.edu/writingcenter/isource.asp?page=apa\\_format.html](http://www.wcu.edu/writingcenter/isource.asp?page=apa_format.html)
- If you are worried about APA style for the whole paper, the University of Indiana's page is almost as extensive as the APA manual itself:  
<http://www.ipfw.edu/casa/WC/NavBarLinks/handouts.html>
- If you need to find more examples of quirky sources (like listservs, newsgroups, and FTPs), the Bedford/St. Martin's publishing company website is easy to navigate and also gives guidelines for MLA, Chicago and other styles:  
<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/citex.html>

Feel free, too, to peruse The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and other interesting sites:

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/>

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-reviews/>

<http://www.duluth.umn.edu/~hrallis/guides/researching/litreview.html>

<http://www.freefullpdf.com/#gsc.tab=0>

### **Dissertation Help**

<http://www.dissertationrecipes.com/hello-world/>

The Bureau of Private Post Secondary Education (BPPE), which provides CIHS with a license to operate, mandates the following provisions in terms of the quality and procedure for dissertations. CIHS remains strictly in compliance with all of the

procedures set forth by the regulations below. We provide them here so that the student can become familiar with them as well. The regulations are located on the BPPE's website [www.bppe.ca.gov](http://www.bppe.ca.gov)

### **Doctoral Committees:**

- (a)(1) Each Doctor of Philosophy program shall include a minimum of two formal evaluations of the student by a doctoral committee.
- (2) The first evaluation shall consider the student's qualifications, including the student's knowledge, skills, and conceptual framework, for undertaking rigorous inquiry into the student's designated field.
- (3) The second evaluation shall consider the design procedures and products of a formal original inquiry proposed and completed by the student.
- (b) The doctoral committee shall be composed of at least three members of the institution's own faculty.
- (c) All of the faculty who serve on each student's doctoral examining committee shall have all of the following qualifications:
  - (1) All of the faculty shall have doctoral degrees.
  - (2) The chair and the majority of the committee shall have degrees related to the student's field of investigation.
  - (3) A minimum of 50% of the faculty on the committee shall have degrees conferred by an institution accredited by an accrediting association recognized by the United States Department of Education or the American Bar Association, unless the accreditation does not exist.
  - (4) All of the faculty shall have three or more years of field or research experience related to their degrees obtained after they obtained their degrees.
  - (5) All of the faculty shall have been active in their field of scholarship or profession within the five year period preceding their participation on the committee.
- (d) The formal evaluation procedures shall provide the committee as a whole with the opportunity to jointly examine the candidate.

(e) If the candidate is not physically present and the evaluation must take place by telephone or other means of electronic communication, one of the following shall apply:

(1) One faculty member on the student's doctoral committee from the main location (i.e., the state in which the program is licensed or otherwise officially approved) must be present at the location where the doctoral student is examined.

(2) A proctor, selected and approved by the doctoral committee, shall sit as an observer with the student at the distant location and verify, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California, the identity of the student and the facts that the student received no prompting by anyone and did not have access to unallowed materials during the evaluation process.

(f) If a project includes more than one student, the individual student's role and contributions shall be clearly identified and documented.

(g) The institution shall maintain a written record of the evaluations. This record shall include the names and signatures of all committee members who participated in the evaluations.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 94305 and 94337, Education Code. Reference: Sections 94301 and 94310, Education Code.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is using someone else's work as your own. Plagiarism means using another person's writing, words, ideas, research, graphics, programs, music, pictures, data, and/or other creative expression without giving the other person full credit.

**NOTE:** *Students must enclose another person's words in quotation marks, cite the appropriate source(s), and give citations when using the ideas of another person, even if those ideas are paraphrased. Any time information from a source is used, it must be cited.*

### **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

**CIHS maintains a strict Academic Dishonesty Policy. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism may result in an 'F' on an assignment, depending on the severity, and also generate an Academic Dishonesty report that goes in the**

***student's permanent file. Such a report places the student on academic probation. Papers may be subject to review for plagiarism at any time.***

**Plagiarism and the Internet:**

The Internet has become a very popular resource for information for student assignments. The same rules regarding plagiarism apply to resources found on the internet as they do to a printed source: When a student refers to work, writing, words, ideas, and the like or quotes from an internet site, he or she must cite that source. Many of the same rules apply when using visual information from an internet site; the source of the visual information or graphic must be cited.

**Useful Strategies to Avoid Plagiarizing Another Person's Work:**

If words, sentences, phrases, and the like are copied from a text, put what is copied in quotation marks. This is especially important when taking notes.

When paraphrasing, do not just rearrange or change a few words. A useful technique is:

1. Read the area to be paraphrased carefully;
2. Cover up the text or close the book or computer page so the words cannot be seen;
3. Write out the idea in your own words without referring back to the words;
4. Check the attempt at paraphrasing against the original text to be sure the same phrases or words have not been used and that the information is accurate.

Be aware, of course, that you may be borrowing the ideas of another person even when you are not borrowing the words, graphics, ... You should acknowledge the use of another's ideas unless those ideas are widely used and accepted as general knowledge within a knowledge domain or discipline. For example, you may provide a footnote and then say something such as the following to explain the footnote: "This concept of \_\_\_\_\_ stems largely from \_\_\_\_\_'s book \_\_\_\_\_"; "I am borrowing heavily here from ideas developed by \_\_\_\_\_ in her article \_\_\_\_\_."

At times students accused of plagiarism claim that their plagiarism occurred without their knowledge or intent. Since ignorance of this fundamental rule is not a reasonable defense, it is best to become thoroughly familiar with the various ways in which plagiarism can occur and how to avoid plagiarizing someone's work. Students also need to avoid "self-plagiarism." This occurs when a student uses material from a previously submitted paper from a prior class. If there are any doubts or questions, take the responsibility to ask the instructor for clarification.

**One Final Note:**

Writing a thesis or a dissertation should be a meaningful, productive experience for the student; it should not be an inordinately arduous journey that causes undue stress and anxiety. Enjoy the journey, seek out advice from the Committee, and recognize that the

work product, as important as it may be, is not likely “to set the world on fire.” So be realistic: Dissertation work prepares the student to conduct research and/or to be a better employee, administrator, practitioner, thinker, and, in the broadest sense perhaps, a person who has augmented his or her skills in thinking about problems, gathering and analyzing data, and drawing conclusions from analyses of data. It may not prepare the student to win a Nobel Prize, though of course we at CIHS do hope that he or she may win various prizes as a result of doctoral work, particularly the “prize” of being a more integrated human being who can contribute substantively to the world.



**Dissertation Committee Acceptance Form**

Note to Student: This form formalizes your Dissertation Committee members' acceptance to serve on your committee.

Committee Members: Signing here formalizes to the student your acceptance to serve on the Committee. Contact CIHS administration regarding a separate contract for your service.

**Dissertation Committee Acceptance**

The undersigned formally accept to serve on the Dissertation Committee for project provisionally entitled \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____	_____
Printed name of Committee Chair	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Printed name of Committee member	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Printed name of Committee member	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Printed name of student's Program Director, or Dean Representing CIHS	Signature	Date



**Advancement to Candidacy Form**

Note to Student: Upon successful completion of the oral and written parts of the candidacy exam, the student will advance to candidacy.

Committee Members: Signing here formalizes to the student your acceptance of the oral and written parts of the candidacy exam.

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**Student Name**

**Advancement To Candidacy Acceptance**

_____ Printed name of Committee Chair	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of Committee member	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of Committee member	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of student's Program Director, or Dean Representing CIHS	_____ Signature	_____ Date



### **Dissertation Proposal Acceptance Form**

*Note to Student:* The main idea of having a formal proposal approved by the Committee is that approval allows the student to execute the research project with the knowledge that the problem, method of investigation and method of data analysis have all been essentially “settled” in advance of actually collecting data. This means that the student can realistically look forward to completing the dissertation, whatever practical, conceptual, or literary problems may arise, secure in the knowledge that his/her committee has formally endorsed the research plan as explicated in the proposal. Disputes with Committee members after the acceptance of the proposal can be viewed positively by the student as problems settled which cannot arise again. The typed document should follow the style and form set out in the 7th Edition of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual.

The proposal consists of near final drafts of chapters 1 through 3. This includes the statement of the problem, the literature review, and the methodology – which is usually the shortest chapter. It also includes a proper title page and reference page. Thus, when your proposal is accepted, Chapters 4 and 5 are what remain to be completed. Sections of chapters one, two, and three may be revised, but in general they are deemed acceptable. In essence, the first three chapters should be complete and as final as they can be at this point (prior to the research being conducted.). It should be noted that amendments and some revisions may need to be made to the literature review in particular as the research process evolves.

*Instructions to Committee Members:* This proposal acceptance form is a formal agreement between the Committee and the dissertation student that the areas delineated below have been accepted by the Committee. It is, therefore, a contract with the dissertation student. This form should not be signed if the proposal does not adequately address any of the following:

1. The problem to be investigated has been adequately identified and adequately justified in terms of importance by a sophisticated selection and review of relevant conceptual and empirical literature (the literature review is sufficient for a proposal, if not for the final document).
2. The student’s proposed approach to investigate the identified problem (to shed light on the problem) seems realistic and sophisticated enough to qualify as dissertations research. It is expected that the proposed method is likely to generate important information vis a vis the identified problem.
3. The student’s proposed approach to investigation is considered original, that is, the proposed method of investigation is not merely a replication or duplication or previous research. In addition, the student’s proposed method of investigation



specifically addresses research problems and research limitations already discussed in the literature. The student addresses why his/her proposed method overcomes some problems or limitations that have been previously identified in the literature.

4. The student has outlined a realistic and adequate plan not only for generating relevant information but also for treating (analyzing, making use of, drawing conclusions from) the information obtained. The Committee is satisfied with the student's plan for analyzing/making use of the information obtained.
5. If the research plan involves human subjects, the student has adequately addressed him/herself to realistic informed consent on the part of potential subjects. In addition, the Committee feels that participating in the proposed research is not likely to result in harm to subjects. The proposal has adequately addressed these matters.

Once the dissertation is complete, with chapters 1 through 5 or 6, and the Committee unilaterally agrees the student is ready to proceed to the Oral Defense, that Defense is scheduled. This consists of an approximately two-hour meeting in which the student formally presents the study to the Committee using visual aids, audio aids when appropriate, or any other means to accurately convey the study. This should be completed in person if at all possible. If it is going to occur via Skype or Zoom or other remote means, one person on the Committee must be present at the Oral Defense. The student should keep this in mind while choosing Committee members. The Committee Chair, who must be a CIHS faculty member, will be the leader of the Committee and will make all final decisions after receiving input from the other members. Two additional members need to be CIHS faculty. If the student chooses, one other member may be an outside faculty member who is closely aligned with the field of study which the student is examining.

The process described above should be conducted by working closely with the CIHS Dean of Academic Affairs and the Director of the student's academic School. Any changes to the Committee membership must be approved by the administration. It should be noted that this process is consistent with what occurs at most private post-secondary institutions and as set forth by the Bureau for Private Post-secondary Education (BPPE)'s education code.

The undersigned dissertation Committee members formally accept that the dissertation proposal entitled:

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Submitted by Candidate:

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fulfills specifications 1-5 outlined above.

_____ Printed name of Committee Chair	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of Committee Member	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of Committee Member	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of student's School Director	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of Dean of Academic Affairs	_____ Signature	_____ Date



**Dissertation Acceptance Form**

Completion of this form indicates that the student has successfully completed the Oral Defense of the dissertation and has thus completed requirements for the doctoral dissertation.

Name of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that the committee met on the above date with the above named student for evaluation of his/her knowledge at an Oral Defense. The student has now satisfied all requirements for completion of the doctoral dissertation.

Dissertation Title:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

_____ Chairperson	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Committee Member	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Committee Member	_____ Signature	_____ Date



California Institute for  
**HUMAN SCIENCE**  
 MIND BODY CONSCIOUSNESS UNIVERSITY

**Change of Dissertation Committee Member Form**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures here indicate that all persons have been appropriately informed of the change noted, have been included as an integral voice in the change, and approve the change.

Name of person who proposed the change:

\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for the proposed change:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Committee Member Leaving the Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Committee Member Leaving the Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

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 Program Director

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Or

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 Dean of Academic Affairs

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## ADDENDUM 1: Theoretical Dissertations

In a theoretical dissertation, the data consist of already published material that the student augments and reworks in order to develop, support and advance new ideas. The approach typically falls under the methodological umbrella of “hermeneutics,” which means the art and discipline of interpreting texts to find new meaning. The length of a theoretical dissertation is usually between 150 and 200 pages or between 50,000 and 70,000 words. Please discuss the projected length with the committee chair. The average length of the main chapters is 30-40 pages although the first chapter and a final concluding chapter are typically shorter. Consult with the chair of your committee if you have questions regarding length. The following guidelines apply in writing a theoretical dissertation.

### Chapter 1

**Introduction:** The introduction clearly indicates the topic of the study and states the specific ways in which the study will question and expand the topic. Here the student seeks to address the fundamental problems or questions to be addressed via the study, and situates the study within a broader intellectual or theoretical framework. While crafting the introduction students should keep in mind possible titles for the dissertation. An ideal title is a succinct and meaningful description of the content that arouses the interest of potential readers. The title should not exceed 3 or 4 lines, with each line no more than 45 characters including letters, spaces, and punctuation. To avoid creating a title that is excessively wordy, imagine the title on a book cover.

### Chapter 2

**Methodology:** The methodology chapter will focus on students discussing in detail the methodological framework which will guide the formation of the theory for the study. The methodology can include many different orientations: e.g., grounded theory, intensive literary/narrative theory (via Derrida, Barthes, Foucault, Ricoeur,...), hermeneutics (via Gadamer, Dilthey, Schleiermacher, van Manen...), semiotics (via Saussure, Peirce,...), political theory (via Marxism, engaged theory, critical theory), ethical theory (via Kant, Rawls, Kohlberg, Gilligan,...), educational theory (via Dewey, Piaget, Gardner, andragogy,...). Should the study be a more focused and intensive self-exploration, approaches based upon heuristic inquiry models (Moustakas) should be included.

### Chapter 3

**Review of the Literature:** The review of the literature situates the intellectual context in which the dissertation belongs. Imagine it as giving the reader a preview or tour of the student’s personal library, explaining how each author or field of discipline relates to the dissertation subject. Materials selected in the literature review should serve to contextualize the dissertation.

The review of literature, however, is not the place to open the discussion in significant detail. Instead, give the reader a sense of which authors of relevant studies will be the student's primary sources and why or how the student will use them towards the student's own ends. In other words, the literature review is not an annotated bibliography that summarizes the work of others. Nor is the literature review an exhaustive account of all the resources from which one will draw. It essentially orients the reader to the critical works on which the student will build or from which the arguments will differ. In this way it also signals the main disciplinary currents informing the work, by indicating which sources are germane to the approach. For example, if the project will include a discussion of the hero from Joseph Campbell's perspective, the student should explain how Campbell's approach will be adopted or critiqued. If a critique, then the student might consider the point of view upon which to base the critique: is the student bringing in authors who examine Campbell's concept of heroism from a feminist perspective? (Don't get into the detail of the argument, just announce it). Or will the student analyze and criticize the method of comparative mythology? The student should note which side will be emphasized and list the allies in that selection. Since the student will bring up all those authors again in subsequent chapters, a review of literature should not be a summary of the dissertation but an exercise in intellectual orientation, a delineation of the territory as well as naming the intellectual allies and those who hold contrary or challenging views.

**Organization of the Study:** The purpose of this section is to indicate the theme of each of the chapters in the study and how it presents a progression of the arguments. Here the student explains the table of contents and how each chapter relates to the overarching argument or theme of the dissertation. Descriptions here should be brief. It should not be a repetition of the review of the literature; the student should now be centered on creating an original contribution.

### **Chapter 4 and beyond**

The fourth chapter begins developing the topic from one of these chosen perspectives.

### **Subsequent Chapters**

The chapters that develop and complete a theoretical study comprise additional perspectives initially identified in the proposal. Since the chapters will vary in number and content depending upon the specific dissertation, the student should consult with the committee to discover how best to organize them.

### **Summary Chapter**

The summary chapter of a theoretical study delineates the principal themes of the previous chapters, specifying the new understandings and insights that the study has developed. This chapter also integrates the student's insights into a reasonably comprehensive statement that expands the original topic and research questions.

Finally, the summary chapter should include suggestions for future lines of inquiry while noting the limitations of the student's own work.

### **Works Cited and Appendices**

The final section of the manuscript includes a complete listing of books and articles cited in the body of the work. Only those authors that have been quoted should be listed. This is not a bibliography. Do not include works that are not quoted or paraphrased in the dissertation. The appendices usually contain original material referred to in the text but too lengthy to be footnoted. The student should discuss with committee members what material is significant enough to be reproduced in its entirety in appendices.

## **ADDENDUM 2: Changing the Dissertation Committee**

The Dissertation Committee is formalized when the student, all Committee members, and the Program Director or Dean of Academic Affairs have signed the “Dissertation Committee Acceptance Form” (included in this document). That signed form is considered an agreement that the Committee has been established and will carry through until the student has defended the dissertation, the dissertation has been bound and published, and the “Dissertation Acceptance Form” (included in this document) has been signed and submitted.

If at any time between the signing of the “Dissertation Committee Acceptance Form” and the submission of the “Dissertation Acceptance Form” the student should wish to change a Committee member, or if during that same period a Committee member should wish to recuse himself or herself from the Committee, a “Change of Dissertation Committee Member Form” (included in this document) must be completed and submitted. If a Committee member will no longer serve on the Committee, a new Committee member must be secured and a new “Dissertation Committee Acceptance Form” submitted. The student, with input from the other Committee members, should seek a new member as soon as possible.

Whenever a Committee change is proposed, whether by the student or by a Committee member, the change should be discussed with the Program Director or Dean of Academic Affairs, who should seek to hear the perspectives of the student, the specific Committee member involved, and the other Committee members before any decision is made and approved.

Any change proposed late in the student’s dissertation process (e.g., after Chapters 1-3 have been approved) should be regarded as unusual and approved only in extraordinary circumstances – e.g., where there is a significant conflict of interest, where there are irreconcilable differences, or where a Committee member is, as determined by the student and the Program Director or Dean of Academic Affairs, not providing or incapable of providing appropriate assistance to the student or to the other Committee members.

Any change of a Committee member should be conducted through a sensitive process that respects the student, the Committee member, and the other members of the Committee, and includes all relevant voices, including the Program Director’s or Dean of Academic Affairs’ if appropriate.



The following rubric is to be used for evaluation of the quality of dissertations both at the proposal (Chapters 1-3) and defense (Chapters 1-5). Each chapter of the doctoral dissertation must achieve or be rated at Performance Level 3 or 4. Failure to meet these standards requires rewrites until the standards are met. Individual departments may add other rubrics to measure discipline-specific or methodology-based approaches.

Dissertation Element	Performance Level 1	Performance Level 2	Performance Level 3	Performance Level 4	Achieved Performance Level
<b>Chapter 1/ Articulation and originality of a question of interest/ Problem statement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement lacks articulation and does not describe the issue under study.</li> <li>The problem statement mimics previous work and lacks uniqueness.</li> <li>Does not define a holistic perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement is presented and begins to describe the topic of study.</li> <li>Shows limited distinctiveness in the area of study.</li> <li>The importance of the research is minimally presented and does not follow through on holistic intention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement is presented and articulated in a clear and unique way.</li> <li>The importance of the research is presented and relationships between concepts and/or variables under study are examined.</li> <li>A new perspective on previous research is presented.</li> <li>A holistic intention is included but needed to be strengthened.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement is presented and articulated clearly and uniquely, and its importance to the profession/field is demonstrated.</li> <li>Meaningful relationships between concepts and/or variables under study are analyzed and add a new perspective on previous research regarding the topic.</li> <li>A credible argument that the study will uniquely and significantly contribute to knowledge in a holistic field of psychology.</li> </ul>	
<b>Chapter 2/ Comprehensive literature review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not discuss status or gaps in current research literature focusing on psychospiritual or holistic focus.</li> <li>Literature review does not establish a theoretical framework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited discussion of status and gaps in current research literature on the topic especially related to psychospiritual or holistic focus.</li> <li>Limited establishment of theoretical framework for current research.</li> <li>Topic, question, or hypothesis is simply stated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature review presents status of current research literature on the topic under study.</li> <li>Begins to describe a research topic, question, or hypothesis that has the potential to contribute to knowledge in the field/profession including</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature review presents in an accurate and comprehensive manner the status of current research literature on the topic under study.</li> <li>Literature review is synthesized into a research topic or question</li> </ul>	

			<p>psychospiritual and holistic focus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins to establish a theoretical framework for the current research questions and gaps in literature.</li> </ul>	<p>that has the potential to contribute to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge in the field/profession and particularly to a psychospiritual or holistic focus.</li> <li>• Identifies gaps where further research is needed.</li> <li>• Establishes a theoretical framework</li> <li>• for investigating those gaps and questions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Chapter 3/ Methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not discuss a methodology for collection of data or developing a product.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited discussion of suitability of methodology for collection of data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents a methodology suitable and systematic for the topic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An understanding of the methodology's suitability to the dissertation as contribution to knowledge is demonstrated.</li> <li>• Presents and assesses the suitability of the methodology to the topic.</li> </ul>	
<b>Chapter 4/ Communication of results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not present results of the data collection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are simply stated in an objective manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are presented in an objective manner.</li> <li>• Results of the data collection are described limitedly to reveal meaningful relationships that exist in the data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results of the data collection are presented in an objective manner.</li> <li>• Results of the data collection use</li> <li>• techniques that describe the data and reveal meaningful relationships that exist in the data.</li> <li>• The results are interpreted, which allows for a speculation on new/hidden relationships.</li> </ul>	
<b>Chapter 5/ Discussion of results/ Implications for future research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An analysis of the results is not present.</li> <li>• Conclusions do not clearly follow from the results and little is offered from a holistic perspective.</li> <li>• Does not discuss either the clinical, professional, or academic implications. Shows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conclusions follow from the results and are explained in terms of the analysis of the data.</li> <li>• Addresses only one of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clinical, professional, holistic or academic implications.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are analyzed in an objective manner, employing</li> <li>• several different perspectives on the same data.</li> <li>• Conclusions follow from results and are explained in terms of the analysis of the data, which shows methodological and conceptual rigor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete discussion of analysis of results from many different perspectives in a scholarly and objective manner.</li> <li>• Conclusions clearly follow from results, are accurately described in detail in terms of data analysis and show</li> </ul>	

	<p>no awareness of place of current study in the body of knowledge on the topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not discuss either the limitations of research methodology, findings, or implications of these limitations with regard to the study's efficacy and value.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Shows limited awareness of the study's applicability to the topic.</li> <li>○ Shows a lack of awareness of at least one major area of limitation in the research methodology and/or findings.</li> <li>○ Cannot or does not recognize how the current study may be improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses at least two of the following areas: Clinical, professional, holistic or academic implications.</li> <li>• Can describe the significance of the study within the contextual history of research on the topic.</li> <li>• Discusses possible limitations in research methodology. Connects these limitations to results and possible implications of results.</li> <li>• Makes only a limited attempt to describe changes which would strengthen the study.</li> </ul>	<p>methodological and conceptual rigor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes a significant contribution to holistic psychology.</li> <li>• Fully accounts for the study's clinical, professional, and academic implications. Understand the place of the study in history and meanings associated with research on topic. Is capable of using the current study as a platform for discussion of the topic globally and historically.</li> <li>• Fully describes possible limitations to research methodology,</li> <li>• alternatives for operational definitions of constructs, and possible researcher influences.</li> <li>• Connects these limitations clearly to outcomes and results. Designs changes to study that would account for the above-mentioned limitations.</li> </ul>	
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<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	
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## Rubric for Evaluation of Dissertations

The following rubric is to be used for evaluation of the quality of dissertations both at the proposal (Chapters 1-3) and defense (Chapters 1-5). Each chapter of doctoral dissertations must achieve or be rated at Performance Level 3 or 4. Failure to meet these standards requires rewrites until the standards are met. Individual departments may add other rubrics to measure discipline-specific or methodology-based approaches.

Dissertation Element	Performance Level 1	Performance Level 2	Performance Level 3	Performance Level 4	Achieved Performance Level
<b>Chapter 1/ Articulation and originality of a question of interest/ Problem statement</b>  <b>Significance of Topic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement lacks articulation and does not describe the issue under study.</li> <li>The problem statement mimics previous work and lacks uniqueness.</li> <li>Topic is not relevant to comparative religion/philosophy and/or is not presented in specific historical, philosophical, psychological, ethical and/or cultural context/s.</li> <li>Poorly written.</li> <li>Spelling and/or grammatical errors.</li> <li>Does not understand or misses relevant literature</li> <li>Lacking in original ideas, insights and observations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement is presented and begins to describe the topic of study.</li> <li>Shows limited distinctiveness in the area of study.</li> <li>The importance of the research is minimally presented and does not follow through on the significance of topic with regard to religious tradition/s and culture/s in their specific historical, philosophical, psychological, ethical and/or cultural context/s.</li> <li>Misses opportunities to completely explore interesting issues and connections</li> <li>Writing errors that impact the delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement is presented and articulated in a clear and unique way.</li> <li>The importance of the research is presented and relationships between concepts under study are examined.</li> <li>A new perspective on previous research is presented.</li> <li>Clear attention to the issue's significance with regard to religious tradition/s and culture/s in their specific historical, philosophical, psychological, ethical and/or cultural context/s.</li> <li>Well written and organized.</li> <li>Has some original ideas, insights, and observations, but is less original, significant, ambitious, interesting, and exciting than the Level 4 category.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement is presented and articulated clearly and uniquely, and its importance to the profession/field is demonstrated.</li> <li>Meaningful relationships between concepts under study are analyzed and add a new perspective on previous research regarding the topic.</li> <li>Explicit evidence that the research is relevant to religious tradition/s and culture/s in their specific historical, philosophical, psychological, ethical and/or cultural context/s. Sources may include texts, practices, beliefs and material culture</li> <li>Is very well written and organized throughout body of dissertation. Exhibits mature, independent thinking.</li> </ul>	

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connects components in a seamless way throughout dissertation.</li> <li>• Argument is focused, logical, rigorous, and sustained</li> <li>• Is theoretically sophisticated and shows a deep understanding of theory</li> </ul>	
<b>Chapter 2/ Comprehensive literature review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not discuss status or gaps in current research literature focusing on comparative religion/philosophy in specific historical, philosophical, psychological, ethical and/or cultural context/s.</li> <li>• Literature review does not establish a theoretical framework.</li> <li>• Plagiarizes and/or misuses sources within dissertation.</li> <li>• Demonstrates no awareness of cultural diversity issues. Practices of dialogue, learning and research are not equitable, with regard to religious pluralism, do not respect sacred wisdom of other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited discussion of</li> <li>• status and gaps in current research literature on the topic especially related to comparative religion/philosophy in specific historical, philosophical, psychological, ethical and/or cultural context/s.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Limited establishment of theoretical framework for current research.</li> <li>• Topic, question, or hypothesis is simply stated.</li> <li>• Little discussion of cultural and community awareness including equitable and pluralistic practices of dialogue, learning, and research that respect the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression and indigenous tradition. Student practices critical self-reflection about one's own culture-bound perceptions, assumptions, and experiences, including the effects of privilege and oppression.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review presents status of current research literature on the</li> <li>• topic under study.</li> <li>• Begins to describe a research topic, question, or hypothesis that has the potential to contribute to knowledge in the field of comparative religion/philosophy in specific historical, philosophical, psychological, ethical and/or cultural context/s.</li> <li>• Begins to establish a theoretical framework for the current research questions and gaps in literature.</li> <li>• Some discussion of cultural and community awareness including equitable and pluralistic practices of dialogue, learning, and research that respect the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression and indigenous tradition. Student practices critical self-reflection about one's own culture-bound perceptions, assumptions, and experiences, including the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review presents in an</li> <li>• accurate and comprehensive manner the status of current research</li> <li>• literature on the topic under study.</li> <li>• Literature review is synthesized into a research topic or question that has the potential to contribute to</li> <li>• knowledge in the field of comparative religion/philosophy in specific historical, philosophical, psychological, ethical and/or cultural context/s.</li> <li>• Identifies gaps where further research is needed.</li> <li>• Establishes a theoretical framework for investigating those gaps and questions.</li> <li>• Applies equitable practices of dialogue, learning, and research that respect the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression and indigenous tradition. Within this process, it is expected that students engage in critical self-</li> </ul>	

			effects of privilege and oppression.	reflection about one's own culture-bound perceptions, assumptions, and experiences, including the effects of privilege and oppression.	
<b>Chapter 4/ Communication of results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not present results of the data collection.</li> <li>• Data contains errors.</li> <li>• Includes data that are wrong or misinterpreted.</li> <li>• Bracketing and triangulation not practiced in qualitative research (to safeguard validity and trustworthiness).</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results of the data collection are described limitedly to reveal meaningful relationships that exist in the data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results of the data collection use techniques that describe the data and reveal meaningful relationships that exist in the data.</li> <li>• The results are interpreted, which allows for a speculation on new/hidden relationships.</li> <li>• Has rich data from multiple sources</li> </ul>	
<b>Chapter 5/ Discussion of results/ Implications for future research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An analysis of the results is not present.</li> <li>• Conclusions do not clearly follow from the results and little is offered from a holistic perspective.</li> <li>• Does not discuss Implications for the field. Shows no awareness of place of current study in the body of knowledge on the topic.</li> <li>• Does not discuss either the limitations of research methodology, findings, or implications of these limitations with regard to the study's efficacy and value.</li> <li>• No discussion of cultural and community awareness including equitable and pluralistic practices of dialogue, learning, research that respect the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression and indigenous tradition. Student lacking in critical self-reflection about his or her own culture-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conclusions follow from the results and are explained in terms of the analysis of the data.</li> <li>• Shows limited awareness of the study's applicability to the topic.</li> <li>• Shows a lack of awareness of at least one major area of limitation in the research methodology and/or findings.</li> <li>• Cannot or does not recognize how the current study may be improved.</li> <li>• Little discussion of cultural and community awareness including equitable and pluralistic practices of dialogue, learning, and research that respect the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression and indigenous tradition. Student practices little critical self-reflection about one's own culture-bound perceptions, assumptions, and experiences, including the effects of privilege and oppression.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are analyzed in an employing several different perspectives on the same data.</li> <li>• Conclusions follow from results and are explained in terms of the analysis of the data, which shows methodological and conceptual rigor.</li> <li>• Can describe the significance of the study within the contextual history of research on the topic.</li> <li>• Discusses possible limitations in research methodology. Connects these limitations to results and possible implications of results.</li> <li>• Makes only a limited attempt to describe changes which would strengthen the study.</li> <li>• Some discussion of cultural and community awareness including equitable and pluralistic practices of dialogue,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete discussion of analysis of results from many different perspectives in a scholarly and objective manner.</li> <li>• Conclusions clearly follow from results, are accurately described in detail in terms of data analysis, and show methodological and conceptual rigor.</li> <li>• Fully accounts for the study's Implications to the field. Understand the place of the study in history and meanings associated with research on topic. Is capable of using the current study as a platform for discussion of the topic globally and historically.</li> <li>• Fully describes possible limitations to research. Connects these limitations clearly to outcomes and results.</li> <li>• Analysis is comprehensive, complete, sophisticated, and convincing</li> </ul>	

	<p>bound perceptions, assumptions, and experiences, including the effects of privilege and oppression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No discussion of correlations between spirituality and mental and/or physical wellness, or the way that spirituality intersects with integral health and psychology to create existential coherence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little analysis and evaluation of correlations between spirituality and mental and/or physical wellness, and the way that spirituality intersects with integral health and psychology to create existential coherence</li> </ul>	<p>learning, and research that respect the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression and indigenous tradition. Student practices some critical self-reflection about one's own culture-bound perceptions, assumptions, and experiences, including the effects of privilege and oppression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some analysis and evaluation of correlations between spirituality and mental and/or physical wellness, and the way that spirituality intersects with integral health and psychology to create existential coherence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student analyzes and evaluates the correlations between spirituality and mental and/or physical wellness, and the way that spirituality intersects with integral health and psychology to create existential coherence</li> </ul>	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>					

The following rubric is to be used for evaluation of the quality of dissertations both at the proposal (Chapters 1-3) and defense (Chapters 1-5). Each chapter of doctoral dissertations must achieve or be rated at Performance Level 3 or 4. Failure to meet these standards requires rewrites until the standards are met. Individual departments may add other rubrics to measure discipline-specific or methodology-based approaches.

Dissertation Element	Performance Level 1	Performance Level 2	Performance Level 3	Performance Level 4	Achieved Performance Level
<b>Chapter 1/ Articulation and originality of a question of interest/ Problem statement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement lacks articulation and does not describe the issue under study.</li> <li>The problem statement mimics previous work and lacks uniqueness.</li> <li>Topic, question, or hypotheses poorly developed.</li> <li>Does not define a holistic perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement is presented and begins to describe the topic of study.</li> <li>Shows limited distinctiveness in the area of study.</li> <li>Topic, question, or hypothesis is simply stated.</li> <li>The importance of the research is minimally presented and does not follow through on holistic intention.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement is presented and articulated in a clear and unique way.</li> <li>The importance of the research is presented and relationships between concepts and/or variables under study are examined.</li> <li>Topic, question, or hypotheses adequately developed.</li> <li>A new perspective on previous research is presented.</li> <li>A holistic intention is included but needed to be strengthened.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The problem statement is presented and articulated clearly and uniquely, and its importance to the profession/field is demonstrated.</li> <li>Meaningful relationships between concepts and/or variables under study are analyzed and add a new perspective on previous research regarding the topic.</li> <li>Topic, question, or hypotheses well developed and clearly presented.</li> <li>A credible argument that the study will uniquely and significantly contribute to knowledge in Integral Health.</li> </ul>	



<p><b>Chapter 2/ Comprehensive literature review</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not discuss status or gaps in current research literature focusing on holistic issues related to Integral Health.</li> <li>• Literature review does not establish a theoretical framework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited discussion of status and gaps in current research literature on the topic especially related to Integral Health.</li> <li>• Limited establishment of theoretical framework for current research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review presents status of current research literature on the topic under study.</li> <li>• Begins to describe a research topic, question, or hypothesis that has the potential to contribute to knowledge in the field/profession with a holistic focus.</li> <li>• Begins to establish a theoretical framework for the current research questions and gaps in literature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review presents in an accurate and comprehensive manner the status of current research literature on the topic under study.</li> <li>• Literature review is synthesized into a research topic or question that has the potential to contribute to knowledge in the field/profession and particularly to a holistic focus.</li> <li>• Identifies gaps where further research is needed.</li> <li>• Establishes a theoretical framework for investigating those gaps and questions.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Chapter 3/ Methodology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not discuss a methodology for collection of data or the use of equipment or theoretical construct.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited discussion of suitability of methodology for collection of data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents a methodology suitable and systematic for the topic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An understanding of the methodology's suitability to the dissertation as contribution to knowledge is demonstrated.</li> <li>• Presents and assesses the suitability of the methodology to the topic.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Chapter 4/ Communication of results</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not or poorly present results of the data collection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are simply stated in an objective manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are presented in an objective manner.</li> <li>• Results of the data collection are described limitedly to reveal meaningful relationships that exist in the data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results of the data collection are presented in an objective manner.</li> <li>• Results of the data collection use techniques that describe the data and reveal meaningful relationships that exist in the data.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Chapter 5/ Discussion of results/ Implications for future research</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An analysis of the results is not present.</li> <li>• Conclusions do not clearly follow from the results and little is offered from a holistic perspective.</li> <li>• Does not discuss either the clinical, professional, or academic implications. Shows no awareness of place of current study in the body of knowledge on the topic.</li> <li>• Does not discuss either the limitations of research methodology, findings, or implications of these limitations with regard to the study's efficacy and value.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conclusions follow from the results and are explained in terms of the analysis of the data.</li> <li>• Addresses only one of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clinical, professional, holistic or academic implications.</li> <li>○ Shows limited awareness of the study's applicability to the topic.</li> <li>○ Shows a lack of awareness of at least one major area of limitation in the research methodology and/or findings.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cannot or does not recognize how the current study may be improved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results are analyzed in an objective manner, employing</li> <li>• several different perspectives on the same data.</li> <li>• Conclusions follow from results and are explained in terms of the analysis of the data, which shows methodological and conceptual rigor.</li> <li>• Addresses at least two of the following areas: Clinical, professional, holistic or academic implications.</li> <li>• Can describe the significance of the study within the contextual history of research on the topic.</li> <li>• Discusses possible limitations in research methodology. Connects these limitations to results and possible implications of results.</li> <li>• Makes only a limited attempt to describe changes which would strengthen the study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete discussion of analysis of results from many different perspectives in a scholarly and objective manner.</li> <li>• Conclusions clearly follow from results, are accurately described in detail in terms of data analysis and show methodological and conceptual rigor.</li> <li>• Makes a significant contribution to holistic psychology.</li> <li>• Fully accounts for the study's clinical, professional, and academic implications. Understand the place of the study in history and meanings associated with research on topic. Is capable of using the current study as a platform for discussion of the topic globally and historically.</li> <li>• Fully describes possible limitations to research methodology,</li> <li>• alternatives for operational definitions of constructs, and possible researcher influences.</li> <li>• Connects these limitations clearly to outcomes and results. Designs changes to study that would account for the above-mentioned limitations.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>TOTAL POINTS</b></p>					



## **DOCTORAL DISSERTATION – CANDIDACY EXAM POLICY**

### **William Howe, Ph.D., Dean of Academic Affairs**

The “Candidacy Exam” section of the document *Doctoral Dissertation at CIHS* discusses the importance of candidacy for dissertation-level work. Candidacy is a requirement that CIHS takes seriously as an important step toward the doctoral degree and as an expectation of accrediting bodies.

In Fall 2020, CIHS created and approved a new Candidacy Exam policy. That policy is treated in detail in the “Candidacy Exam” section noted above. That policy holds for all students who completed doctoral course work in the Fall Quarter 2020 and will hold for all students who complete doctoral course work subsequent to that Quarter. Briefly, it requires a student to complete a two-part exam – one part involving the submission and acceptance of 3 papers written in the doctoral program and the other part involving an oral exam. Both parts must be completed successfully for the student to advance to candidacy.

Students who completed course work at CIHS prior to the implementation of the new "Candidacy Exam" (that is, prior to the beginning of Fall Quarter 2020) have the choice of completing candidacy requirements through either the old system – the submission of 2 candidacy papers that are deemed acceptable -- or the new system.



## Quality Improvement Plan QIP

**Name of the QIP:**

1. Updated Doctoral Dissertation at CIHS Document (includes Candidacy Exam Policy)
2. Candidacy Exam Policy

**Owner of the QIP:**

**Signature of QIP Owner:** Bill Howe/Joel Pilco **Date:** 02/11/2021

**Date presented to Institutional Effectiveness Committee:**

**IEC Chair Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other QIP Approvers (as needed) Signatures:**

**William Howe, Ph.D., Dean of Academic Affairs**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sharon Mijares, Ph.D., Psychology Program Director**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sean Esbjon-Hargens, Ph.D., Integral Health and Comparative Religion & Philosophy Program Director**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Timeline for Implementing the Improvements:** Immediate

**Signature of QIP Owner or designee verifying implementation:**

**Joel Pilco, Ed.D., Dean of Admissions & Enrollment Planning**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary of the QIP:**

This is an updated Doctoral Dissertation at CIHS Document including the Candidacy Exam Policy and procedures on page 13. The Candidacy Exam Policy is also attached.