

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION OF DOCTORAL THESIS PROPOSAL (DTP)**

### **1. Preliminary Remarks**

A Doctoral Thesis Proposal (DTP) must demonstrate the candidate's ability to conduct an original research project in order to test hypotheses, either his/her own or those formulated by others, as well mastery of the fields of knowledge in his/her Area of Research. Nevertheless, the research process requires the candidate to demonstrate mastery of the most appropriate methodological tools and techniques and their successful application, which are factors necessary for completing the project. By definition, a DTP must also further the construction of the field of knowledge, reflecting the ability of the candidate to discover new facts or deploy critical powers. It is thus necessary for the candidate to prove his/her ability to organize and present the subject, clearly not only in terms of form and content, but also demonstrating mastery of educated Portuguese.

### **2. Content of the DTP**

It is most desirable that the DTP follows, in general lines, what is understood as a standard doctoral thesis structure, although noting that some topics will naturally be incomplete, as they will be expanded only during the course of the research project. The main elements of this structure are presented below.

#### **Introduction**

The introduction must capture the attention of the reader, underscoring the importance of the theme and its value, in order to justify the award of a Doctorate in Business Administration. The Introduction must encompass a broad-ranging, general overview of the problem being studied and its roots through convincing arguments demonstrating the relevance of the matter and an outline of the main objectives, issues or questions to be addressed in the research activities.

## **Literature Review**

The basic purpose of the review of the literature is to provide the grounds and development of the conceptual model that encompasses the variables of the research purpose. This model should be prepared and presented in a narrative and graphic form, through a framework. Consequently, the review of the literature is of the utmost importance at this stage, necessarily being broad-ranging and exhaustive. The references must be taken from front-line academic periodicals and journals, rather than textbooks or articles in the lay press. This must also include relevant theoretical and empirical topics, always quoted in full, compliant with the thesis presentation rules established by COPPEAD. A good starting point to identify relevant academic periodicals is to consult the publications listed in the Lattes CV(s) of faculty members already working along the line of research selected by the candidate.

It should also be noted that the candidate may not merely replicate, compile, copy or simply "bombard" ideas from the literature like bullet points in a PowerPoint presentation. To the contrary, the candidate must assess them and comment critically and constructively on them, avoiding the use of literal transcriptions of textual quotes.

As the review of the literature will not be complete when presenting the DTP, the candidates must prove that they know how to search, draw up a bibliographic review framework containing the research topics; the main publications to be used; the knowledge objectives to be met and an original essay by topic, looking ahead to the future work.

## **Research Issues or Questions**

They must be directly related to the conceptual model framework drawn up for the review of the literature, in order to maintain the objective nature of the study, while also avoiding any loss of focus during the research process. They must be few, clear, and easily put into operation with appropriate methodological tools and instruments. It is also vital that they are clearly demarcated in order to underpin the logical development of theoretical conjectures, hypothesis or empirical generalizations. As the conceptual model will not yet be fully mature and developed during the preparation of the DTP, the following possibilities are open to candidates: (1) present an initial or partial model and / or (2) opt for broader issues that may be reviewed or fine-tuned in future, after the separation of the definitive conceptual model.

## **Methodology**

The issue of methodology is complex, with a variety of perspectives. During the DTP preparation phase, it is typical to define what tools or approach will be used to steer the strategy and ensure the consistency of the research. This Chapter must include a complete description of the process used to obtain primary and secondary evidence, whether quantitative or qualitative. All methods to obtain and analyze data must be defined, as well as the limitation of the chosen approach.

## **Obtaining and Analyzing Data**

This item may not be included in the DTP, but should rather be developed in the course of the research project, for additions to the thesis. This is one of the most challenging aspects of the research. Sampling tools and procedures must be carefully described. When case studies are used, a definition must be provided of why specific organizations were selected. The analysis techniques must be underpinned by validating their assumptions, with their findings being presented clearly in far-reaching ways, with tables and graphs. Generalizations must be justified in detail, with theoretical deviations being underscored and commented on.

## **Discussion of Findings**

Similar to the previous item, this is not part of the DTP. The topic includes a discussion of the research findings in general, focusing on an interpretation of specific findings, consistent with the previous analysis. A clear logic path must run through the entire original conceptual model — evidence — analysis — findings. The findings must consist of an addition to the set of knowledge in this area, in addition to offering possibilities for practical applications. Validity, bias and generality must also be discussed in the interpretation. At times, the findings may not support the original conceptual model. This does not mean failure. Disproving a theory or a hypothesis may be just as valid as confirming it, and may pave the way for the development of a new theory.

## **Conclusions**

They are also not part of the DTP, but rather present the consolidation of the entire research project, highlighting the main findings. The implications of the research for the business administration field must also be included.

## **Limitations of the Research and Recommendations for Future Studies**

Also not part of the DTP, this is an opportunity to reflect on the research activities and discuss their strong and weak points. A self-assessment of the work performed and the findings underpin recommendations for future projects that allow a review of expansion of the research activities.

## **References**

There are some rules for the presentation of the bibliographical references that must be followed: the names of the authors must be listed in alphabetical order, in upper case; the publication (book, journal, article, paper) must be stated in italics; the second line of each reference must be inset from the margin for easier identification.

### **3. Closing Remarks**

Should the candidate require additional information on research methods / structures, the following reading list / bibliography is suggested:

DAY, R.A. (1996). *How to Write and Publish Scientific Papers*.

GALLIERS, R. (1992). *Information Systems Research Issues, Methods and Practical Guidelines*. Alfred Waller Information Systems Series, Henley-on-Thames.

HUBERMAN, A.M. & MILES, M.B. (1994). *Data analysis and analysis methods*, in N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (eds). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

PATTON, M. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA.

REMENYI, D. et al (1998). *Doing Research in Business and Management – An Introduction to process and Method*. Sage Publication, Thousand Oaks, CA.

REMENYI, D. (1995). *So you want to be on academic research in business and management studies! Where do you start and what are the key philosophical issues to think about?* Working Paper Series, Henley Management Coilege, Henley-on-Thames.

REY, L. (1989). *Planejar e Redigir Trabalhos Científicos*. Editora Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, RJ.

YIN, R.K. (1989). *Case Study Research - Design and Methods*. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA.

#### **4. Message to Candidates of the Business Administration Doctoral Program Candidates**

The success of a doctorate basically depends on the clarity of the objectives and the thesis research strategies, in addition to a harmonious relationship with a professor well able to advise and direct the efforts required.

Consequently, seamless alignment between the DTP and the line of research of the possible future thesis director or advisor is crucial.

The DTP listed as one of the requirements for assessing candidates applying to the Business Administration Doctoral Program at COPPEAD/UFRJ is thus intended to evaluate the possibility of success of future doctoral students, measuring their maturity for conducting research in terms of the advisory abilities of the faculty.

It is understood that the presented DTP is preliminary, although it must be sufficiently developed and mature enough to allow subsequent expansion through elaboration in greater depth rather than by revising and / or changing the theme.

It should be presented in A4 format; TNR 12 font; 1.5 line spacing; upper and left margins of 3 cm and lower and right margins of 2 cm; numbered pages; some 20 to 30 pages long, compliant with the following structure:

Chapter	Nº pages (Min/Max)
1. Introduction	4 – 6
2. Bibliographic Review	8 – 12
3. Research Questions or Issues	3 – 5
4. Methodology	5 – 7
5. Expected Findings / General Remarks on the DTP	1 – 2

The DTP will be analyzed by the Doctoral Program Coordinator and by another professor on the permanent staff of COPPEAD linked to the line of research to be pursued by the candidate, in terms of compliance with the standards set forth above, during the interview phase of the Selection Process.