ED.S. IN EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION
THE SCHOLARLY PAPER

Overview

The scholarly paper brings together your professional experiences and scholarly activities in one document. As such, you have a lot of flexibility to make this a project that fits your interests and experiences. There is no one right way to complete a scholarly paper for this program. The paper could be an original research project, a policy paper, a curriculum audit, action research or some other work. In this document, the requirements and steps for completing the scholarly paper are outlined.

Getting Started

To begin working on the scholarly paper, the Ed.S. candidate should meet with his or her district supervisor who will be overseeing the field experience. Together, identify an issue of importance to the school district and of interest to the candidate. Next, discuss this topic with your UMSL advisor. Once the three individuals are on the same page, you should submit a one pager proposal to your advisor. Upon confirmation of the topic from your advisor, you can begin working on the project.

Forms

Once you have determined your topic with your UMSL advisor and your site supervisor, you need to establish your Scholarly Paper Committee. To do so, complete Part A of the M2 form. The committee must consist of three members of the UMSL graduate faculty. Once you have submitted the final draft of your paper and it has been approved by your committee, you will need to submit Part B of the M2 form.

    M2: https://www.umsl.edu/gradschool/files/pdfs/M2.pdf

Timeline

We encourage students in the Education Specialists program to begin thinking about this process immediately upon entering the program. Since the program is a one-year degree program, the Scholarly Paper Committee should be established by the end of your first semester. The first draft should be completed by the end of your second semester and a final draft should be submitted no later than two months before you intend to graduate.

Formatting

There is no specific length requirement for the scholarly paper; however, most papers should be a minimum of 20 and no more than 50 pages in length. This includes your cover page and reference sections. The paper, including all citations, should follow the American Psychological Association's (APA) style guide. For helpful tips on APA formatting, we encourage you to visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab.

Structure

A typical research paper has five chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusion. If you are conducting a unique research project, you will likely want to use this structure to your paper. Keep in mind; you can have numerous subheadings in each of

these chapters. By original research project, we mean a project in which you are collecting and analyzing data. This could be qualitative or quantitative in nature.

> *Introduction*: In this section, you are to introduce the topic to the reader and discuss why it is important. You should also discuss the context in which your paper is situated. The introduction should clearly explain the research questions being explored in the paper and give an overview of the rest of the paper.

> *Literature Review*: In the literature review, you should review all relevant research to the research questions you outlined in the introduction. Students are encouraged to read, "Doing a Literature Review," by Jeffrey W. Knopf before beginning this process.

> *Methods*: When you are conducting original research, it is important to describe clearly how you are conducting your study. Here you would describe how you selected participants or how you collected your data. You would also discuss any qualitative or quantitative methods or analytical strategies that you will employ.

> *Results*: The results section should be a straightforward discussion of your results. You should not try to editorialize or draw conclusions in this section.

> *Discussion and Conclusion*: In the final section of the research paper is where you get to make sense of your findings. What conclusions can you draw from your analyses? What does this mean for policy? These are the types of questions you can attempt to answer in this section.

Many UMSL Ed.S. students do not complete an original research project where they are collecting and analyzing data. In this case, you may use a different format in your paper. For a policy paper, for example, you may want to use the following structure: Introduction, Literature Review, Current Policy/Implementation, Policy Suggestions, Conclusions. In a policy paper, the goal is to discuss a specific policy or intervention and offer suggestions to your target audience (possibly a superintendent or a school board). Other students may wish to engage in action research.

Ultimately, your UMSL advisor should be able to provide you with further guidance on the structure of your paper. It is imperative that you consult with your UMSL advisor and a university supervisor before engaging in any research project. Oftentimes, students may need to gain permission before collecting data or using existing data for research purposes.

IRB
Please note if you are conducting original research where you collect data from human subjects, you will need approval from the UMSL Institutional Review Board (IRB). Even if you work in a position where you would normally have access to the data, such as a principal's position, you must get IRB approval before using the data for research purposes. More information about the IRB process can be found on the UMSL website.