GUIDELINES FOR DOCTORAL PROPOSALS (September 2012)

GENERAL UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES
Before starting to write your text, it will be extremely helpful to check out the requirements of Duquesne University for submitting your dissertation to the Gumberg Library when the text is approved by the review committee. If the approved text is not accepted in the library system, the PhD title will not be awarded. Even though the DHCE projects are not submitted for publication to the library, the same requirements apply. It can save a lot of time if you already use the guidelines from the moment you start to write.

- Look at: http://guides.library.duq.edu/content.php?pid=289421&sid=2756907
- Prepare your text following the Electronic and Dissertation (ETD) Guidelines; these specifically concern requirements for use of fonts (12 Times New Roman or Times) and line-spacing (double line spacing), margins, pagination, headings, tables, notes and references
- All text should follow Chicago Manual of Style format.

FRONT MATERIALS OF THE PROPOSAL.
   Ideally, this should be one page, double-spacing, without notes or references. Make these points. First, what is the thesis? (a thesis is not the title of the proposal; it formulates a specific research question or problem that is the basic starting point for your research). Explain the thesis within the literature landscape on the general topic. Second, how do you plan to develop the argument in each chapter (eg, history, theory, law, etc).
   For example: the ethical justification of indirect abortion in situations of life-threatening pulmonary hypertension (what the ethics thesis is) is explained by discussing these issues (how the thesis is developed): the science of pulmonary hypertension (Ch.1); the history of the debate on abortion (Ch.2); the relevant law in the US (Ch.3); the theory of the principle of double effect – PDE (Ch.4); the application of PDE to the case of pulmonary hypertension (Ch.5).

2. State of the Question.
   This section of the analysis looks backward: situate the ethics thesis within the main literature that shapes the debate on the topic. This section explains the relevance and originality of the dissertation. However, do not explain the literature in too much detail here – that occurs in the section on “Literature Review.” The goal here is to identify a gap in the literature that the ethics thesis addresses. The question here is why your ethics thesis is relevant and original.

3. Literature Review.
   This section of the analysis looks forward: explain the development of the ethics thesis in relation to the major literature that will be discussed in each chapter.
While there will be overlap with the “State of the Question,” the goal here is to introduce in a substantive manner the literature that each chapter will engage.

4. **Dissertation Review.**
   This length of section will vary depending on how many doctoral dissertations or master’s theses have been written on the subject (to be researched in the Gumberg Library). The librarian supporting HCE will be able to assist. The text must identify all relevant doctoral & master’s studies to identify the distinctiveness of your ethics thesis.

5. **The Habit of Writing.**
   The habit of writing can be compared to taking regular exercise: if you stop exercising for an extended time starting again is not easy. Similarly, try to develop a habit of writing as often as possible, ideally every day even for a short time. Also try to send the faculty mentor portions of text as much as possible so that you can refine the art of excellent writing.

**LAYOUT OF THE PROPOSAL.**
- Title page (the title should indicate a clear ethics thesis).
- Signature Approval page.
- Table of Contents.
- State of the Question (the relevance of and need for the thesis).
- Thesis Statement with Objectives (the argument & its justification).
- Review of the Literature (relating the thesis with scholarship).
- Dissertations Review (the originality of the thesis).
- Summary of analysis (the narrative explanation of the work in each chapter).
- Contents Outline.
- Bibliography (only works cited in the analysis).

**LENGTH OF THE PROPOSAL.**
Insofar as PhD dissertations extend to approximately 250 pages, and DHCE doctoral projects extend to approximately 100 pages, the length of the Proposal for the PhD Dissertation should be approximately 50 pages (including 25 pages of narrative with 10 pages of bibliography, plus the other components), and the length of the Proposal for the DHCE Project should be approximately 25 pages (including 10 pages of narrative with 3 pages of bibliography, plus the other components). Typically there will be 7 Chapters. Ch.1=Intro; Ch.7=Conclusion.

**PROCEDURAL STEPS FOR THE PROPOSAL:-**
- **Procedural Steps for PhD Dissertation.**
  - *One-page statement:* ethics thesis and chapter outline developing the thesis.
  - *Five-page outline:* main sections and literature (notes).
  - *Twenty-five page narrative:* State of the Question (2p), Thesis Statement (1p), Five chapters with sections, sub-sections, and literature identified (end-notes).
  - *Final Proposal:* 50 pages (25 pages narrative, 10 pages cited bibliography plus the other components – see layout above).
Procedural Steps for DHCE Project.

- **One-page statement**: ethics thesis and chapter outline developing the thesis.
- **Two-page outline**: main sections and literature (notes).
- **Ten page narrative**: State of the Question (2p), Thesis Statement (1p), Five chapters with sections, sub-sections, and literature identified (end-notes).
- **Final Proposal**: 25 pages (10 pages narrative, 3 pages cited bibliography plus the other components – see layout above).

SAMPLE PROPOSALS:
Several sample Proposals are available on the Gumberg Library website and can be accessed at the following:

- Go to the library website: [http://www.duq.edu/academics/gumberg-library](http://www.duq.edu/academics/gumberg-library)
- On the left hand side of the screen under "Gumberg Library" click on the "Guides to Research" link
- In the center of the screen where it says "Guides" in red, click the "All" button
- Scroll down to "Healthcare Ethics Resources" and click
- Across the top of the screen there are blue tabs. Click the one that says "Theses & Dissertations".
- To access the electronic theses and dissertations, click the ETD link.
- Go to the drop down menu next to the search bar. The default will say "Name". Switch this to "Department"
- Enter into the search bar "health care ethics" - NOTE: There MUST be a space between the words "health" and "care" for results to appear
- Students may develop different approaches.

MEETINGS WITH FACULTY DIRECTOR.
Meetings will be arranged to discuss progress and problems. These meetings are distinct from the HCE semester seminars.

TIME STATUTES. The College and HCE enforce these Time Statutes.
- Proposal Approval must be within 2 years after passing Comprehensive Exams.
- Doctoral text must be approved within 2 years after Proposal Approval.

FORMAT FOR REFERENCES IN END-NOTES & BIBLIOGRAPHY.
These are summary guidelines to assist with the use of commas, colons, periods: these differ when used in notes and in the bibliography. Only use end-notes, not foot-notes.

Citations in End-notes.
- **Articles**: Smith, Jane, “Article Title,” *Journal Title* 4 (2007): 73.
- **Books**: Smith, Jane, *Book Title* (City: Publisher, year), 45-48.
- **Book Chapters**: Smith, Jane, “Chapter Title,” in, Joseph Bloggs, *Book Title* (City: Publisher, year), 45-76.
**Citations in Bibliography.**

- Journal in italics.
- The first number (4, or 4:2 etc) is the journal year number.
- The journal year is in parentheses; (2007) or (Summer 2007).
- The page numbers are preceded with a colon.

**Books.** Smith, Jane. *Book Title*. City: Publisher, year.

**Book Chapters.** Smith, Jane. “Chapter Title.” In, Joseph Bloggs, *Book Title* (City: Publisher: year), 45-76.

**GUIDELINES FOR THE ORAL DEFENSE OF THE DOCTORAL PROPOSAL.**

2. The Oral Defense of the Doctoral Proposal lasts for approximately 1 hour.
3. The review committee will be composed of 3 Faculty (including the proposal director)
4. The student has 15 minutes to presents the proposal. The presentation should be akin to presenting a scholarly paper at an academic conference. A brief handout for the faculty committee can be helpful. PowerPoint slides are not permitted.
5. The remainder of the time is dedicated to faculty asking the student questions about the Proposal.
6. At the end of the Defense, the student leaves the room briefly while faculty review the Defense. The student is invited back after a short time to hear the faculty assessment. The outcome will be: to accept the Proposal, or to request further changes to the Proposal, or reject the Proposal. The faculty will explain any further work on the proposal that may be required.

**MOVING FROM THE PROPOSAL TO THE DOCTORAL TEXT**

See the *HCE Handbook* on the HCE website, sections B.4.d. on review of doctoral chapters and section B.4.e. on the doctoral defense.