## Review of the Literature

In this section the learner provides a broad, balanced overview of the existing literature related to the research topic. The Review of the Literature includes themes, trends, and conflicts in research methodology, design, and findings. The learner provides a synthesis of the existing literature, examines the contributions of the literature related to the topic, and discusses the methodological approaches used for the research based on related empirical studies. Through this synthesis, the learner applies this information to define the problem space and what still needs to be studied, as well as to the creation of the plan and approach for their study.

The learner must provide scholarly citations for all ideas, concepts, and perspectives. The learner’s personal opinions or perspectives are not included, and the research of others must be properly attributed, cited, and referenced. **The Review of the Literature section should be approximately 30 pages. (30 pages reflects a typical dissertation literature review in length and is a recommendation, not a rule).** It is important not to get caught up in the number of pages but rather focus the breadth, depth and quality of the literature review is support of the study. A well-written, comprehensive literature review will likely exceed 30 pages.

The literature review must be continuously updated throughout the dissertation research and writing process. In order to ensure a current, relevant literature review, the majority of references in Chapter 2 (approximately 75%) should be within the past five years. This is a recommendation, not a hard, fast rule as the learner, chair and content expert should evaluate the overall quality, and relevancy of scholarly sources presented in this chapter. Other requirements for the literature review include:

* The learner will describe each research variable in the study discussing the prior empirical research that has been done on the variable(s) and the relationship between variables.
* The learner will discuss the various methodologies and designs that have been used to research topics related to the study. The learner uses this information as a part of the arguments to justify the design in Chapter 3.
* The learner will discuss and synthesize existing instrumentation to measure variables to later argue, in Chapter 3, for selected instrument for the study. This section must argue the appropriateness of the dissertation’s instruments, measures, and/or approaches used to collect data. Empirical research must be used to justify the selection of instrument(s).
* The learner will discuss the instruments, measures, and/or approaches used to collect data in existing literature. The learner then uses this information to argue for the appropriateness of the dissertation’s instruments, measures, and/or approaches used to collect data in Chapter 3.
* The learner will discuss and synthesize studies related to the dissertation topic. This may include (1) studies describing and/or relating the variables, (2) studies on related research such as factors associated with the themes, (3) studies on the instruments used to collect data, (4) studies on the broad population for the study, (5) studies defining the need from a community, professional, or organizational perspective, and/or (6) studies similar to the topic. The themes presented, and research studies discussed and synthesized in the Review of Literature demonstrates a deep understanding of all aspects of the research topic. The set of topics discussed in the Review of Literature must demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the broad area in which the research topic exists.
* For each major section in Review of the Literature, the learner will include an introductory paragraph that explains why the particular topic was explored relative to the dissertation topic.
* For each major section in Review of the Literature, the learner will include a summary paragraph(s) that (1) compares and contrasts alternative perspectives on the topic, (2) provides a synthesis of the themes relative to the research topic discussed that emerged from the literature, (3) discusses data from the various studies, and (4) identifies how themes are relevant to the dissertation topic.
* The types of references that may be used in the literature review include empirical articles, peer-reviewed or scholarly journal articles, scholarly studies from foundations and governmental organizations, a limited number of dissertations (no more than 5 recommended), and books (no more than 5-10 recommended) that present cutting-edge views on a topic, are research based, or are seminal works.
* The learner will expand on and provide additional arguments for what still needs to be understood (the need for the study) that was defined in the Background of the Problem section.

The learner may organize the body of a literature review in a variety of ways depending on the nature of the research. However, the approach taken to the organization and flow of the topics for the Review of Literature section must be explained clearly and included in an introductory section of Review of the Literature. Learners will work with the committee, particularly the chair and content expert to determine the best way to organize this section of Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 can be particularly challenging regarding APA format for citations and quotations. The learner should refer to the APA manual frequently to make sure citations are formatted properly. It is critical that each in-text citation is appropriately listed in the References section. Incorrectly citing and referencing sources is a serious scholarly and ethical violation, particularly when writing a dissertation. As an emerging scholar, learners must demonstrate the capability and responsibility to properly cite and reference every single source referenced in the literature review and throughout the dissertation. Note that all in-text citations within parentheses must be listed in alphabetical order with semicolons between each citation (e.g., Barzun & Graff, 1992; Calabrese, 2006; Hacker, Somers, Jehn, & Rosenzweig, 2008; Mason, 2010; Nock, 1943; Squires & Kranyik, 1995; Strunk & White, 1979).

In general, “brief quotes,” or quotes of less than about 40 words should be avoided. The learner should paraphrase in almost all situations except where the actual words in the quote have significance. For example, we would not paraphrase, “Four score and seven years ago…” If such a quote is used, incorporate it into the narrative and enclose it with double quotation marks. The in-text citation is included after the final punctuation mark [6.03], and the final punctuation mark in quoted text should be placed inside the quotation mark.

For a quote within a quote, use a set of single quotation marks. Here is an example of a direct quote within a quote integrated into the narrative. In the classic introspective autobiography, *The Memoirs of a Superfluous Man,* one reads that, “one never knows when or where the spirit’s breathe will rest, or what will come of its touch. ‘The spirit breathes where it will,’ said the *Santissimo Salvatore*, ‘and thou hearest the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.’” (Nock, 1943, p.187) [4.08].

As a rule, if a quote comprises 40 or more words, display this material as a freestanding block quote. Start formal block quotes on a new line. They are indented 0.5 inches in from the left margin. The entire block quote is double-spaced. Quotation marks are *not* used with formal block quotes. The in-text citation is included after the final punctuation mark. [6.03]. Below is an example of a block quote: In an important biography, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*, historian H. W. Brands wrote:

In February 1731, Franklin became a Freemason. Shortly thereafter, he volunteered to draft the bylaws for the embryonic local chapter, named for St. John the Baptist; upon acceptance of the bylaws, he was elected Warden and subsequently Master of the Lodge. Within three years, he became Grandmaster of all of Pennsylvania's Masons. Not unforeseeable he—indeed, this was much of the purpose of membership for everyone involved—his fellow Masons sent business Franklin’s way. In 1734 he printed *The* *Constitutions*, the first formerly sponsored Masonic book in America; he derived additional [printing] work from his brethren on an unsponsored basis. (Brands, 2000, p. 113)

| **Criterion****\*(Score = 0, 1, 2, or 3)** | **Learner Score**  | **Chair Score**  | **Methodologist Score** | **Content Expert Score** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Review of the Literature(Approximately 30 pages) |
| The learner assures that this section of Chapter 2 should be approximately 30 pages. (Thirty pages reflects a typical literature review length and is *a recommendation, not a rule).* The purpose of the minimum number of pages is to ensure that the overall literature review reflects a foundational understanding of the theory or theories, literature and research studies related to the topic. A well-written comprehensive literature review that reflects the current state of research and literature on the topic is expected and will likely exceed 30 pages. Literature reviews are updated continuously. This is an ongoing process to dissertation completion. |  |  | **X** |  |
| The learner describes each research variable in the study discussing the prior empirical research that has been done on the variables and the relationship between the variables. |  |  | **X** |  |
| **Themes or Topics.** The learner discusses and synthesizes studies related to the dissertation topic. May include (1) studies focused on the problem from a societal perspective, (2) studies describing and/or relating the variables, (3) studies on related research such as factors associated with the themes, (4) studies on the methodological approach and instruments used to collect data, (5) studies on the broad population for the study, and/or (6) studies similar to the study. The themes presented, and research studies discussed and synthesized in the Review of the Literature demonstrates understanding of all aspects of the research topic, the research methodology, and instrumentation. |  |  | **X** |  |
| The learner structures the literature review in a logical order, including actual data and accurate synthesis of results from reviewed studies as related to the learner’s own topic. The learner provides synthesis of the information, not just a summary of the findings or annotation of articles. |  |  | **X** |  |
| The learner includes in each major section (theme or topic) within the Review of the Literature an introductory paragraph that explains why the particular topic or theme was explored relative to the overall dissertation topic. |  |  | **X** |  |
| The learner includes in each section within the Review of the Literature a summary paragraph(s) that (1) compares and contrasts alternative perspectives on the topic and (2) provides a synthesis of the themes relative to the research topic discussed that emerged from the literature, and (3) identifies how themes are relevant to the dissertation topic, research methodology and selected instrumentation. |  |  | **X** |  |
| The learner provides additional arguments for the need for the study that was defined in the Background of the Study section in Chapter 1.  |  |  | **X** |  |
| The learner ensures that for every in-text citation a reference entry exists. Conversely, for every reference list entry there is a corresponding in-text citation. **Note:** The accuracy of citations and quality of sources is verified by learner, chair, and content expert. |  |  | **X** |  |
| The learner uses a range of references including founding theorists, peer-reviewed empirical research studies from scholarly journals, and governmental/foundation research reports.  |  |  | **X** |  |
| The learner verifies that all references are scholarly sources. **NOTE:** Websites, dictionaries, publications without dates (n.d.), are not considered scholarly sources and are not to be cited or present in the reference list.  |  |  | **X** |  |
| The learner avoids overuse of books and dissertations.**Books:** Recommendation: No more than 10 scholarly books that present cutting edge views on a topic, are research based, or are seminal works.**Dissertations:** Recommendation: No more than five published dissertations should be cited as sources in the manuscript. (This is *a recommendation, not a rule*).  |  |  | **X** |  |
| The learner writes this section in a way that is well structured, has a logical flow, uses correct paragraph structure, sentence structure, punctuation, and APA format. |  |  | **X** |  |
| **\*Score each requirement listed in the criteria table using the following scale:**0 = Item Not Present or Unacceptable. Substantial Revisions are Required.1 = Item is Present. Does Not Meet Expectations. Revisions are Required.2 = Item is Acceptable. Meets Expectations. Some Revisions May be Suggested or Required.3 = Item Exceeds Expectations. No Revisions are Required. |
| **Reviewer Comments:** |