



# Applied Doctoral Project Handbook

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## **Applied Doctoral Project (ADP)**

### **Introduction**

The Applied Doctoral Project (ADP) involves applying theoretical knowledge and research methods to address a real-world practical problem in a specific professional context, rather than generating entirely new knowledge. In essence, The ADP integrates theory, research, and practice to solve a practical problem in a professional setting. These projects can involve creating a new curriculum, program evaluation, policy proposal, or clinical protocol, culminating in a practical deliverable and a final report that demonstrates mastery of the subject and the ability to bridge theory and practice to benefit a profession or organization. The primary goal is to address a current issue in a professional field by applying existing knowledge and research to propose a tangible solution. Students will be required to submit and defend their research projects.

The finalized ADP is a formal, comprehensive document that details the purpose, background, project approach, project implementation, and conclusions of an applied practitioner-oriented project. Although preliminary work on a student's ADP may begin while the student is still completing coursework, formal work on the ADP is undertaken only after all academic coursework is completed and the Comprehensive Examination has been passed. The ADP represents a scholarly, scientific research project emphasizing evidence-based practice, reflection, and leadership.

The ADP is intended to

- Enhance your understanding of your field of project.
- Provide experience conducting research in your field of project.
- Develop and demonstrate your ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate data and conclusions in field of project.
- Make a significant contribution to your field of project.
- Include a thorough review of associated professional literature.
- Demonstrate your ability to design and carry out an individual research project.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of advanced research principles, techniques, and ethics.
- Develop skills in project planning, time management, organization, and implementation.
- Show evidence of a high level of professional competence.

It is important to keep in mind that the ADP is not simply another doctoral assignment, but the culminating achievement of your Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Counseling degree. The ADP is

intended to help the student develop both personally and professionally. The ADP must be scholarly, succinct, and of sufficiently high quality to be published, in part, in a peer-reviewed journal. Finalized ADPs may be cataloged and available to other researchers—seasoned professionals and academics, as well as future students—all over the world.

### **Acceptable Types of Research**

An ADP will include in-depth review of the literature to support the rationale of the project, be based on valid and supported underlying assumptions, demonstrate clarity of thought and communication, and provide adequate detail for replication or implementation. The following examples are types of projects that could be carried out in alignment with ADP standards at Amberton University. This list is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive. Students are permitted to propose creative ideas for research that adhere to quality standards:

- Practitioner-based project: the development of a novel intervention, program evaluation, training program, instructional manual, or other programmatic guide that is grounded in solid research literature (i.e., utilizing Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA-P) or Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, and Analysis (SALSA), or other reputable framework), including a replicable methodology, implementation plan, and evaluation strategy.

As these examples indicate, all project topics require extensive knowledge of the literature about the subject area, a synthesis and application of this knowledge, and sophistication in how a project is developed and presented. Conducting these projects provides students with experiences that create expertise in their focused areas and prepares them to be effective practitioner-scholars.

### **ADP Committee**

The ADP committee provides the doctoral student with direction, guidance, support, and feedback needed to complete the ADP. This committee consists of three (e) qualified faculty members:

- Committee Chair, chosen by the student
- One Committee Member, chosen by the student in consultation with the Chair
- Methodological Reader, assigned by the University

The ADP chair must come from within the department. The Committee Member and the Methodological Reader may be outside of the department. All committee members should hold a doctorate and have specific expertise in an area appropriate to your applied project, i.e., content or method.

The specific roles and responsibilities for each committee member are described in the Roles and Responsibilities section of this document.

## Primary (full-time) Faculty Credentials and Biographies

### **Dr. Pamela Johnson**

Doctorate: Ed.D., Counseling & Guidance (East Texas State University)

Masters: M.S., Counseling & Guidance (East Texas State University), M.A.,

Business & Human Development (Amber University)

B.S. University of Houston

License: Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)

Certifications: National Certified Counselor, (NCC), Senior Professional Human Resources, (SPHR)

Email: [pjohnson@amberton.edu](mailto:pjohnson@amberton.edu)

- Dr. Pam Johnson is a skilled licensed professional with more than 35 years of experience as a practitioner, educator, and HR corporate consultant. As a private practitioner, Dr. Johnson has successfully facilitated individual and group counseling, executive and leadership coaching, career guidance, and corporate training and program development. She has had a private practice for over 25 years, working with individuals impacted by crisis and trauma, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, and Multicultural and identity issues. As an educator, she has over 30 years of experience as an Amberton University Professor, teaching courses in Counseling & Guidance and Human Behavior & Development. Dr. Johnson has had over 20 years of corporate experience. She has trained company owners, executives, managers, employees, and vendors. In addition, Dr. Johnson has consulted organizational leaders in Cultural Diversity, Sexual Harassment, Leadership, and Training and Development. She is also the published author of “Aids and African Americans,” (2000), and “Everyone is Multicultural: Bridging Cultural Influences with Leadership Success,” (2006). Dr. Johnson’s main research interests are Career Counseling & Development and Multicultural and Identity issues.

### **Dr. Levi Armstrong**

Doctorate: Psy.D., Clinical Psychology (University of the Rockies)

Masters: M.A., Psychology (University of the Rockies)

Bachelor's: B.S., Health (Texas A&M)

License: License Psychologist

Email: [larmstrong@amberton.edu](mailto:larmstrong@amberton.edu)

- Levi Armstrong, PsyD, MSCP, is a clinical and forensic neuropsychologist and full-time graduate professor in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Department at Amberton University. He completed post-doctoral residency training in neuropsychology consistent with Houston Conference Guidelines and holds an advanced post-doctoral master’s degree in clinical psychopharmacology. His primary research interests include ADHD and executive functioning across the lifespan; autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders; traumatic brain injury; neuropsychological assessment and performance validity; and the interface of clinical and forensic neuropsychology. He also investigates the application of artificial intelligence, digital diagnostics, and emerging technologies within counseling, psychology, and counselor education. Dr. Armstrong’s main research

interests include applied assessment science, technology-enhanced clinical practice, and research that bridges neuroscience with practical counseling outcomes.

**Dr. Chris Bedard**

Doctorate: Marriage and Family Therapy (Texas Tech University)  
Masters: M.S., Marriage and Family Studies (Abilene Christian University)  
Masters: M.S., Christian Education (Abilene Christian University)  
Bachelor's: B.S., Youth and Family Ministry (Abilene Christian University)  
License: Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)  
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- Dr. Chris Bedard has over 25 years of experience in teaching, with a focus on academic instruction since 2009. His background spans pastoral care, adolescent development, spirituality, and counseling. Dr. Bedard has many years of private practice counseling experience including working with individuals, couples, and families with various stages of relational stress. He has developed and implemented instruction for: Interpersonal Relations, Grief and Loss, Lifespan Development, Advanced Addiction studies, Family Life Ministry, and Supervision. Dr. Bedard's clinical skills include training in Marriage & Family Therapy, specialized training in CBT, EFT, Mindfulness, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, IFS, and Attachment Theory. He has training and experience using various assessment tools such as: SASSI-3, BDI, MMPI, 16PF, MSI-R and several other assessment instruments. Dr. Bedard is also certified in Prolonged Exposure Therapy. His areas of research interest are couples' experiences of infertility, young adult loneliness, and interpersonal skill development.

**Dr. Don Hebbard**

Doctorate: Ed.D., Adult and Continuing Education (Texas Woman's University)  
Masters: MMFT, Marriage and Family Therapy (Abilene Christian University)  
Masters: MS, Biblical and Communication Studies (Abilene Christian University)  
Bachelor's: BS, Ministry (Abilene Christian University)  
License: Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist (LMFT)  
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- Dr. Hebbard is Professor of Counseling at Amberton University, specializing in Marriage and Family Therapy. He formerly served as Academic Vice President and Director of "My Learning Style" Amberton's Quality Enhancement Plan. He teaches courses in Marriage and Family Therapy, Couples Therapy and Sex Therapy. Dr. Hebbard was the founding Director of the Family Center of the Metroplex in Irving, Texas, the Genesis Center for Christian Counseling in Atlanta, Georgia and the Institute for Marriage and Family in Oklahoma City, where he served as Oklahoma's first State Director of Marriage Education. He is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Supervisor with four decades experience counseling, teaching and supervising. He is a Clinical Fellow in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. He has served on the faculties of Abilene Christian University, Oklahoma Christian University and Harding Graduate School of Theology. Dr. Hebbard's writings include his most recent book, *ReMatch: Love in Extended Adulthood*, which explores the challenge of finding love in the second half of life. *Healing Hurting Churches: The Economou Process* chronicles his thirty years'

consulting and preaching in wounded churches as a “church doctor.” *The Complete Handbook for Family Life Ministry in the Church* has been widely used to launch church counseling centers and family ministries. Dr. Hebbard speaks nationally to organizations, companies and churches on relationships, transition management, marriage, conflict and leadership. His main research interests are Marital & Family Therapy and Human Sexuality.

**Dr. Carla Moffit**

Doctorate: Ph.D., Clinical Mental Health Counseling (Texas A&M University Commerce)

M.S., East Texas State University, Commerce

B.S. Business Ed., West Texas State University

License: Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) Supervisor

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- Dr. Carla Moffitt serves as an Associate Professor and Director of the School Counseling Program at Amberton University. She holds a PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision, a Master of Science in Counseling, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Education. Dr. Moffitt is a Licensed Professional Counselor–Supervisor (LPC-S) and Professional School Counselor (PSC) with more than 30 years of experience in the counseling field. Her professional background includes extensive work in public school settings, private practice, and university-level counselor preparation, where she has spent the past five years training and supporting emerging counselors. Her areas of expertise include school counseling leadership, trauma-informed practice, and therapeutic interventions addressing anxiety and depression. She is recognized for her commitment to developing highly skilled counseling professionals and for her dedication to advancing ethical, evidence-based, and student-centered practice in the field. Dr. Moffitt’s research interests include the treatment of anxiety and generational synergy across counseling settings to strengthen collaboration, leadership, and professional identity among counselors.

**Dr. Ken Johnson, Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Counseling Program Coordinator**

Doctorate: Ph.D., Counseling Psychology, Union Graduate School

Masters: M.S., Counseling & Guidance, Alabama State University

Bachelor's degree: B.S., Sociology, Alabama State University

License: Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) Supervisor,

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)

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- Dr. Ken Johnson is a veteran professor of Counseling and Human Behavior at Amberton University, teaching both required courses and electives since 1989. As coordinator for the Master of Arts in Counseling Degree Program since 1991. He is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) in the state of Texas. Dr. Johnson is an approved LPC supervisor (LPC-S) and currently has several LPC interns under his supervision. Dr Johnson currently is a full-time faculty member in the Counseling and Healthcare Administration division, and serves as

Department Chair, Program Coordinator of Counseling, and Practicum Coordinator. He is a trained mediator, and has experience in conducting family mediation, custody evaluations, and adoption studies for the Dallas County Family Courts. In addition to working with the Family Courts, he has worked in the juvenile and adult courts as a probation officer, family counselor, and administrator. Dr. Johnson also has worked as a Psychologist for the Dallas Public Schools, conducting psychological evaluations, and providing individual, group, and family counseling. He has also worked as a Chemical Dependency/Substance Abuse Counselor, Clinical Director, and Staff Psychologist for a private hospital. In addition, Dr. Johnson has several years' Private Practice experience. His main research interests include Children & families, Adolescents and at-risk youth, trauma and PTSD, addiction counseling, and multicultural counseling competence.

**Dr. Stacia Alexander**

Doctorate: Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology, (Walden University)

Master of Arts in Counseling, (Amberton University)

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, (University of Texas at Arlington)

Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor (LPC, LPC-S)

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- Dr. Stacia' Alexander, PhD, LPC-S, has been licensed since 1996 and brings nearly three decades of experience as a clinician, educator, and consultant. She directs a private group counseling practice that has served more than 17,000 individuals and families across the Dallas–Fort Worth metroplex and serves as Mental Health Clinic Director at Paul Quinn College. Her areas of expertise include resilience, emotional intelligence, organizational wellness, and minority mental health access. She is the creator of The Emotionality of Success, a program integrating personal development with professional growth, and My College Mental Health, a platform featuring a book, workbook, and wellness kit for students. A frequent conference speaker and media contributor, she has consulted with city, county, state, and corporate organizations on leadership development and workplace culture. Dr. Alexander is an active member of the American Counseling Association and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She also provides strong support to the Bridging the Gap Foundation, advancing its community mental health initiatives. Deeply rooted in Dallas–Fort Worth, she is committed to preparing the next generation of professionals and expanding access to preventive mental health care.

**Dr. Iman Ross**

Doctorate: Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology, (Union Institute & University)

Master of Arts in Counseling, (Amberton University)

Bachelor of Science in Psychology, (Howard University)

Licensed (LPC, LPC-S)

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- Iman J. Ross, PhD, LPC-S, LSOTP has served the behavioral health needs of youth and families across the United States for more than 25 years. He holds several credentials from the State of Texas as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Licensed Professional Counselor – Clinical Supervisor (LPC-S), and Licensed Sex Offender

Treatment Provider – Juvenile Specialty (LSOTP). Dr. Ross has taught and guest lectured at many universities in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex, as well as presented articles and workshops at local, state, and national conferences. Dr. Ross is the Clinical Coordinator for the Youth Village campus of the Dallas County Juvenile Department. He has also served as the clinical director and administrative director of various state and private community outreach and behavioral health programs and clinics. Dr. Ross has served as a consultant for the United States Department of Defense assisting military personnel and their families transitioning to and from combat theaters. He has extensive experience treating mood, anxiety, psychotic, and addictions disorders. Dr. Ross leads a group practice in Duncanville, TX where he specializes in counseling pre-adolescent and adolescent populations with clinical issues ranging from anger management and mood disorders such as depression and anxiety to substance abuse and deviant sexual behavior problems.

### **Committee Selection**

Students will have the option to choose their Committee Chair and Committee members; however, the Methodological Reader (MR) is assigned by the university. All ADP Chair candidates and Committee Member candidates are vetted for content area and research methods expertise.

### **Chair Selection**

Chair selection takes place during the first Applied Doctoral Project (ADP) course. During this course, students will engage in a discussion forum activity to begin the chair search process. At that time, a summary of available faculty approved to serve as Chairs, their biographies, and contact information is made available to the student. Students will have the option of contacting available chairs during the selection process, and faculty have the option to accept or refuse assignments. Both the student and the potential chairs are involved in the student-chair selection process. Once the student has chosen a Chair, a Chair Request form must be completed and submitted to the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Counseling Program Coordinator for the student's chosen chair to be approved. The final Chair selection must be made prior to completing the first ADP course by completing the Chair Request Form.

### **Committee Member Assignment**

The Committee Chair and the student will collaborate to select a Committee Member. If students have a Committee Member in mind, that should be communicated to the Committee Chair and discussed. Doctoral students and Committee Chairs must agree on the individual who will act as a Committee Member. Consultation with the Committee Chair to help choose a Committee Member is important, as this individual should be acceptable both to the student and to the Committee Chair. Choose carefully and make sure to have agreement from the Committee Chair before submitting the Committee Member Request Form for acceptance.

## **Methodological Reader Assignment**

The Methodological Reader (MR) is assigned to the ADP Committee by the university prior to completion of the student's first ADP course.

## **Committee Communication**

The student and the Committee Chair should communicate regularly via email, phone calls, or text messages. All such communication between the student and the ADP Committee should be timely, respectful, and professional. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Chair of all academic concerns. Examples of academic concerns include but are not limited to, transition point deliverable content, structure, and format; results of reviews by Committee Members and Methodological Readers; or alignment of Committee Members to the ADP discipline or topic. Students are also encouraged to contact the Committee Chair if they get "stuck" or need help with parts of the project or want to understand the ADP process.

Work with the Committee Chair to develop a communication plan with each other and with the other members of your ADP Committee. Develop a plan to utilize a variety of communication tools, such as phone calls, emails, text messages, and Zoom calls. Remember to schedule periodic check-ins. Please be aware that effective communication between the student and ADP committee members is vitally important.

Students are responsible for documenting any conversations or discussions with the Committee Chair, Committee Member, or Methodological Reader. This includes discussions held via email, telephone, or interactive platforms such as Zoom calls. Doctoral students are learning how scholarly feedback is given and received and should expect that there may be differences in opinions and ideas that should be discussed using supporting evidence and logic. Committee communication and discussion of review feedback should be collaborative. Committee Chairs can help students resolve issues with feedback from different members of the committee. Collegial communication should also extend beyond the Committee to all members of the university community.

In cases where the Committee Chair cannot help the Committee to resolve differences, the Chair can reach out to the Program Coordinator, the faculty member in charge of your academic program. A change in the student's Committee personnel must be approved by the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Counseling Program Coordinator and requires a demonstration of need.

## **Committee Changes**

Given the length of time it takes to complete the ADP, students may experience changes to committee membership. If such changes do occur, the university will work to make the transition as smooth as possible for the student and work to ensure, to the extent possible, that such changes help students progress towards degree completion.

Students are encouraged to remain continuously enrolled throughout the entirety of your Applied Doctoral Project terms until the ADP is completed. If a student's active enrollment with the university ceases due to a withdrawal, drop, illness, dismissal, or any other reason, efforts will be made to keep your committee intact if, and when, the student chooses to return to school. However, if for some reason students are not in attendance for more than two consecutive semesters, they may be required to start the Committee Selection process over.

Students may request to replace any Committee Member, but to do so, they must consult with the Program Coordinator or the Academic Dean and follow a formal process. Note that the Doctoral Program Coordinator and the faculty member responsible for your program must approve any change in committee composition.

If you wish to change your Committee Chair, you will repeat the selection process by reviewing available Chair candidates and contacting them to ascertain their interest in your project and their availability to serve as your Chair. Once you have identified a new Chair, complete the Request to Change Chairperson or Committee Member form and submit it for acceptance by your new Chair.

If you wish to change a Committee Member, you should consult first with your Chair, and if your Chair concurs, you should contact an advisor and follow the formal process. You will repeat the selection process by reviewing potential Committee Member candidates with your Chair and contacting them to ascertain their interest in your project and their availability to serve as your Committee Member. You and your Chair must agree on any replacement Committee Member. Once you have identified a new Committee Member, complete the Request to Change Chairperson or Committee Member form and submit it for acceptance by your new Committee Member.

Other requests for Committee change may be initiated by a member of the committee, including changes associated with illness, resignation from the university, or other inability to serve, may be made directly to the doctoral program adviser, who will consult with the Program Coordinator for consideration and reassignment.

Occasionally, Amberton University may implement a change in Chair, Committee Member, or Methodological Reader to better support you, to balance faculty workload, or to meet university or federal requirements. In all cases, consideration for your welfare and progress will guide decisions, and communication of changes will include all affected parties.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

There are several people involved throughout the ADP process. A detailed list of the roles and responsibilities of university members who support the ADP process follows:

- You (the student)
- ADP Chair
- ADP Committee Member
- Methodological Reader (MR)

The Doctoral Student has the responsibility to

- Complete all steps in the ADP process, in order.
- Complete all ADP course milestones, in order.
- Complete and submit all properly signed required forms in a timely manner to the Program Coordinator.
- Work closely with the ADP Chair and Committee to communicate progress to your Chair and Committee members.

The ADP Chair has the responsibility to

- Guide the doctoral student in
  - Preparing for ADP research.
  - Developing a timeline to complete the ADP.
  - Developing and submitting the ADP proposal.
  - Conducting the project and analyzing data.
  - Finalizing the ADP.

The ADP Chair in conjunction with the Committee Member

- Reviews and approves the students'
  - ADP Proposal Submission.
  - Finalized ADP.
  - Participates in the final oral defense of the ADP.

ADP Committee Member has the responsibility to

- Guide the student in
  - Developing the ADP Proposal and Report.
  - Conducting research and analyzing data.
- Review and approve the students'
  - ADP proposal.
  - Finalized ADP.
  - ADP Oral Defense.

Methodological Reader has the responsibility to

- Ensure academic rigor, quality, and appropriateness of a proposed and finalized ADP.
- Evaluate the alignment of the project justification and research questions with the research methodology and design.
- Review the ADP at various stages of its development to provide approval and feedback on research methodology issues.
- Review and approve the ADP proposal and final project in conjunction with the Doctoral Committee.
- Participate in the Oral Defense.

### **Applied Doctoral Project Proposal Process**

- The ADP proposal is submitted in the first ADP course.
- The ADP proposal will be presented using the provided template for the ADP1 course.
- The research topic must be approved by the Chair and the Methodological Reader.
- If the ADP proposal is not approved, feedback will be provided to the student, and resubmittal will be required.
- The Chair and Methodological Reader have seven days to approve or disapprove the ADP proposal.
- If a revised ADP proposal is necessary, it should be re-submitted to the ADP Chair and Methodological Reader for final approval.

The Committee review will focus on

- Internal consistency,
- Appropriateness of project design,
- Review of related research and literature, and
- Compliance with research standards.

The ADP proposal must be approved and signed off on by the ADP Chair, Committee Member, and Methodological Reader within seven (7) days of submission.

In the ADP Proposal, you will *propose* the project you would like to conduct. Therefore, it is important for the proposal to clearly present a) what the topic is, b) why it is important to project, and c) how it should be studied. An applied doctoral project proposal is typically three (3) chapters: The Introduction, the Literature Review, and the Methodology.

Proposal Structure:

- Chapter 1: Introduction/Problem of Practice/Project Justification: This chapter introduces the research topic, provides the background, and outlines the problem statement, purpose, and research questions. It also provides an overview of the entire document and the significance of the research.
- Chapter 2: Literature Review: This chapter reviews and synthesizes relevant existing research and scholarship related to the topic.

- Chapter 3: Methodology: This chapter details the research design, including the methods for data collection and analysis that will be used to answer the research questions.

As you write, keep in mind that your work will be judged not only by the quality and rigor of your project, but also according to your writing style. Regardless of the merit of the project and conclusions, readers tend to have a favorable impression of a professional, well-written report and an unfavorable impression of a “sloppy” or casually written report.

**Here are a few ideas to keep in mind throughout the writing process:**

- Use Microsoft Word tools to organize and format the ADP Proposal and Report.
- Save the documents in at least two places (e.g., thumb/flash drive, hard drive, or paper copy). This will prevent data loss in the event of technical difficulties. Consider saving the documents in the Cloud, an internet-accessible site, as well.
- Stay organized; have all materials and references in an easily accessible location. Keep track of your work through a user-friendly filing system, such as separating reference materials by subtopic or the chapter in which they are used.
- Choose a logical file naming and folder system. Create a system that allows you to keep old versions of files but minimizes version control problems.
  - Read and follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.).
- Prepare an outline; it is easier to construct sentences and paragraphs when following a detailed outline.
  - Aim for a concise and continuous flow of ideas. Use headings to organize and clarify the structure of the document.
  - Update the References list as you write, instead of completing the entire list at one time.
- Read everything you write and revise more than once before sending it to anyone to review. Your reviewers should be making constructive comments, not commenting on careless mistakes.
- Expect to write several drafts. Most students revise the Full ADP several times before it is approved by the ADP Chair and ready to submit to the Committee Members for review.
- Ask a qualified outside person to read the document and make editing suggestions regarding grammar, spelling, and syntax. It is acceptable to use a professional editing service for this purpose, but you are responsible for all related fees.
  - Give the ADP Chair a draft of each chapter as it is completed. This helps the Chair review the work efficiently and allows you to receive faster feedback.
- You should have the final draft of the Full ADP reviewed, edited, and certified by a person acting as the APA Style Editor before its submission. If you choose a professional editor, you are responsible for all related fees.

**NOTE:** It is your responsibility to obtain letters of permission from copyright holders to reproduce copyrighted material (e.g., published tables, graphs, or measurements).

## **IRB Review Process Description**

As part of the ADP1 course and the development of the ADP proposal, it is necessary to obtain IRB approval for permission to conduct the study. The purpose of the IRB is to ensure ethical research practices are utilized with students and faculty. Students who are pursuing the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Counseling program must receive approval from the IRB before commencing the ADP. Following are the IRB Review steps.

- You must submit the following:
  - Request for IRB Review
  - Research Summary
- The IRB reviews the submission and either approves it, approves it with specific conditions, or rejects the application with suggestions for major changes required for protection of human participants.
- Once IRB approval is obtained, you will be given an IRB Letter of Approval and may begin to conduct the ADP and collect data.
- If you revise the research design or make changes to your Committee, the IRB Report of Change form may need to be submitted.

## **Final ADP Review and Completion Process**

During the ADP2 course, students will implement their approved applied project. Students will collect and analyze data and present the results in Chapter 4, developing conclusions, implications, and recommendations in Chapter 5.

### **Chapter 4 – Results / Findings / Outcomes**

- Presents your analyzed data and key findings, organized by research question, objective, or project outcome.
- Includes tables/figures as needed, links results back to methods and context, and may provide limited interpretation when integrated “results and discussion” are used.

### **Chapter 5 – Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

- Interprets the findings in relation to the literature, framework, and problem of practice, drawing out meaning, implications, and contributions to practice.
- Summarizes the study, states conclusions, outlines implications for practice/policy, offers recommendations (including for the sponsoring organization), and suggests areas for future research.

Upon completion of the entire Applied Doctoral Project, the full committee reviews the ADP to assess consistency and accuracy of research questions, methods, analyses, reported results, and compliance with research standards. Students may receive additional preliminary feedback on ADP and possible areas of improvement. Full committee approval of the final ADP is required within seven days of submission. Once the Committee approves the final ADP, it is ready for the Oral Defense.

## **Final Oral Defense Process**

- After preliminary approval of the Final ADP by the Committee, an oral presentation to the ADP Committee is required to ensure that you have conducted an academically acceptable ADP.
- The Oral Defense must be approved by the Chair, Committee Member, and Methodological Reader if participating in the Oral Defense.
- It is the Chair's responsibility to achieve consensus from the committee, and this may require the student to make changes to the ADP.
- The Chair has seven (7) days to approve the Oral Defense.

After successful completion of the Oral Defense and approval of the Committee, the student will send their completed ADP to an APA editor for review to ensure that it meets the university requirements.

The last step in the process is to submit a petition to graduate. Students must submit a form signed by the Committee Chair that is required to trigger graduation audit and preparation for graduation. Students must then apply for graduation. To participate in the next commencement ceremony, students must have successfully completed the Oral Defense two weeks before the date of the commencement ceremony.

**Following is a list of important forms in the process. All required forms are available on Amberton University's website.**

Chair Request Form

Committee Member Request Form

IRB Review Form

IRB Report of Change Form

Petition to Graduate