Residential Dissertation Option
DSc Health Science
Guidelines & Description
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Purpose

The Residential Dissertation Option (RDO) offers an opportunity for students interested in being mentored by the residential faculty to reside on campus during the dissertation phase of their doctorate program. The option consists of three semesters (12 credits) during which time the students will have the opportunity to assist with on-going research led by residential faculty. The student’s dissertation emerges from a larger faculty research project, thus fostering research that would be a catalyst for developing a line of inquiry extending beyond the completion of the dissertation. The RDO will serve to enhance dissemination of research from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions.

Specific Aims:

1. Develop scholars with the ability to generate long-term research agendas.
2. Provide an avenue for doctoral candidates to receive residential opportunities for face-to-face research mentoring with RMUoHP residential faculty.
3. Develop mutually beneficial longitudinal research agendas for both faculty and doctoral candidates.
4. Enhance the scholarship reputation of RMUoHP in the state of Utah, nationally and internationally.

Application and Selection

All doctoral students are introduced to the RDO/Residential Research Assistantship (RRA) via DSc orientation while onsite the first term of the program.

Application:

Students can apply for the RDO during their 6th and 7th terms of the program via completion of a RDP application found on the RMUoHP DSc website. Students will be notified of their acceptance by the end of the 8th term of the program. The student will begin the 10th semester of the program (dissertation phase) after the student has successfully completed and passed qualifying exams.

**Students applying to the RDO/RRA must identify a residential faculty member to serve as their dissertation committee Chair no later than term 7 of the DSc Health Science program. The Office of Research & Sponsored Projects (OSRP) and the DSc Program Director will help students in identifying a potential Chair suitable to the dissertation project.

Selection Criteria:

Student will be considered for selection based upon a weighted inclusion criteria by the OSRP selection committee.
Criteria include:

1. **Strength of application:**
   a. demonstrated scholarship/thesis/creative output
   b. DSc core courses GPA
   c. previous laboratory experience
   d. 2 letters of recommendation from faculty

2. **Fit with existing Faculty Principal Investigator (FPI) research:**
   a. Dissertation research method compatibility
   b. Dissertation research topic compatibility

3. **Strength of interview:**
   a. commitment to timeline and relocating for residential status
   b. commitment to RMUoHP mission and core values

* Students may receive provisional acceptance with final acceptance pending successful completion of comprehensive exams and advancement to candidacy.

**Residential Research Assistant’s Roles and Responsibilities**

1. The RRA will have a driver’s license and vehicle as some travel may be required.
2. Assist with day-to-day operations within the ORSP to include but not limited to:
   - equipment maintenance and calibration, assist with data collection within the laboratory and/or remote locations, data entry, data analysis, and laboratory support.
3. Assist their assigned FPI and other residential faculty with ongoing research project(s).
4. Assist with teaching in laboratories, proctoring examinations, and grading of assignment as negotiated between the ORSP, FPI, and appropriate Department Chairs.

**Residential Research Assistant Compensation**

Students who are selected to serve as a RRA will receive the following compensation for a 12 month period (June 1-May 31st). Students are expected to work 20 hours per week outside of working on their dissertation (i.e., supporting other RMU research, teaching assistant, laboratory work)

1. **Tuition waiver:**
   a. 12 dissertation credit hours
2. **Fee waiver**
   a. Dissertation committee fee
3. **Stipend (20hrs per week)**
   a. Stipend for (20 hrs/wk) 3 continuous semesters = $23,844.

*RRAs are encouraged to seek additional funding for dissertation through grant funding agencies

*RRAs do not receive funding for living expenses, meals or travel.
Residential Research Assistant Timeline and Completion Requirements

*RRAs completes the dissertation process outlined in the DSc Dissertation Manual (must follow manuscript format for final dissertation submission)

a. Residential Research Assistants (RRA) selected into program begin their Residency Orientation on June 1st of their 10th term. Enrolled in HS 833B.
b. RRA submits or has submitted the dissertation prospectus for approval by DSc program director and concentration track director.
c. RRA defends dissertation proposal no later than end of 10th term.
d. RRA submits IRB application to IRB shortly after successful proposal defense.
e. RRA collects data during 11th term. Enrolled in HS 877A
f. RRA analyzes data and writes results during 12th term. Enrolled in HS 877B
g. RRA defends dissertation (manuscripts) towards end of 12th term.
h. RRA with support from committee finalizes manuscripts for publication shortly after successful dissertation defense.

*If a RRA does not finish dissertation during the 12 month assistantship, he/she will be personally responsible for tuition and fees as necessary to complete dissertation and degree program.

Office of Research & Sponsored Projects Roles and Responsibilities

The Office of Research and Sponsored Projects and the University will:
1. Coordinate matching faculty and doctoral candidates and facilitate candidate selection.
2. Provide hands on training in research design and data analysis.
3. Provide Residential Research Assistant office (Building 561).
4. Maintain the Research Laboratory and Equipment.
5. Coordinate stipends and tuition waivers for dissertation credits while in residence.
6. Coordinate potential teaching, laboratory assistantships.
   a. ORSP & FPI meets with RRA weekly for progress reports, assists data collection and analysis and supports writing of findings/discussion.
   b. ORSP, FPI and dissertation committee members support submission of dissertation manuscripts for publication.
   c. Seek external funding to sustain the program.

Securing Residential Faculty as FPIs and Dissertation Committee Members:
1. The Office of Research and Sponsored Projects will:
   a. in conjunction with the DSc Program Director match potential applicants to FPIs no later than term 7 of the DSc program.
   b. work with Chairs and the Office of Academic Affairs to negotiate the specific responsibilities of the position.
   c. in collaboration with FPI seek extramural funding.
Dissertation Committee Structure

The dissertation committee structure will follow the same process for dissertation committee development per the DSc Health Science dissertation manual. The RDO has the following added stipulations:

- Chair of dissertation must be an RMU residential faculty member and one of the other two members must be an RMU residential faculty member. The third committee member can be either an RMU residential faculty member or a non-residential RMU faculty member or non-RMU faculty member.
- A faculty member from the ORSP must serve as a committee member or Chair for all RRAs.

Faculty Principal Investigator Expectations

Faculty Principal Investigator (FPI) who agree to serve as advisor to the candidate will:

- Serve as Chair for the RRA dissertation and support student’s dissertation research from term six or seven (6-7) of the program.
- Meet with RRA on a weekly basis to ensure dissertation progress including: proposal development/defense, IRB submission, data collection, data analysis, and final dissertation defense.
- Support writing style specifics to discipline and research being conducted.
- Provide hands on training in research design, analysis, and laboratory methods.
- Provide mentoring for assisting in the teaching of classes and/or laboratory experiences.
APPENDIX

A. The quantitative Dissertation Rubric describing the criteria of the successful written and oral dissertation experience*. These criteria ensure that Ph.D. students display a high level of expertise, originality and critical analysis while advancing the frontiers of knowledge with their research (Standards 2.C.12 and 2.C.15).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section/Topic</th>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Achieved (pg./slide #)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title &amp; Abstract</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Identify the study design in the title</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Provide a structured summary of: hypotheses, methods, results and conclusions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Explain the scientific background and rationale of the problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background &amp; Objectives</td>
<td>2b</td>
<td>State specific aims and hypotheses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Describe appropriate experimental design to test hypotheses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Detail the intervention(s) with sufficient details for replication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protocol</td>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Define the locations and periods of data collection(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Detail the eligibility requirements (Inclusion criteria) for group(s)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Describe the recruitment protocol(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Describe the type of sample and how the size was determined</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Randomization</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Define the method used to generate random allocation sequence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blinding/Bias</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Describe efforts to address potential bias and who was blinded after assignment to interventions (subjects, researchers, care providers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome measures</td>
<td>9a</td>
<td>Define the primary and secondary outcome measures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9b</td>
<td>Detail the measurement of the outcome measures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9c</td>
<td>Describe possible confounding variables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistical Analysis</td>
<td>10a</td>
<td>Describe appropriate statistical test of the hypotheses while controlling for confounding variables</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10b</td>
<td>Describe appropriate Post hoc statistical tests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>11a</td>
<td>Include a table of demographic and clinical disposition of group(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11b</td>
<td>Include a flow diagram of each stage of study, account for missing data and subject attrition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Describe estimates of the primary and secondary outcomes (Tables and Figures), precision (95% confidence intervals), and category boundaries (if needed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Hoc analysis</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Describe estimates of the post-hoc outcomes of subgroups if needed (Tables and Figures)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Summarize key results w.r.t. specific aims or hypotheses</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Results</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Describe the external validity of findings w.r.t. prior findings from similar samples</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generalizability</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Provide overall interpretation of results considering existing theory and evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Discuss potential bias, error of measure, multiplicity of analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Describe the research questions requiring future study</td>
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<td>Future directions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Provide a summary of the key results and their clinical significance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Information</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Give source of funding</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from the CONSORT 2010: [www.consort-statement.org](http://www.consort-statement.org); and the STROBE checklist: [http://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.0040296](http://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.0040296)