

The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2010)
Abstract Guidelines

The Rossier School of Education has adopted APA 6th style as the sole criteria for formatting doctoral dissertations. According to APA 6th, dissertation abstracts should follow certain criteria pertaining to CONTENT and FORMAT. See 2.04 of the Manual for specific details on different types of studies, and follow those guidelines accordingly.

Content:

- 1) State the **theoretical framework**
- 2) State the **purpose** of the study and relevant **research questions**
- 3) Describe the **methods** employed in the study by including:
 - a) Participants
 - b) Research design
 - c) Data collection
 - d) Data analysis
- 4) Describe the study's general **findings**
- 5) Describe **implications** and conclusions

Format:

- 1) Begin a **new page**
- 2) Include the **page header**
- 3) On the first line of the abstract page, **center** the word "Abstract" (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks)
- 4) **Single paragraph not indented**
- 5) **Double-spaced**
- 6) Between **150 and 250** words

Following is a sample abstract from Dr. Katie Moulton's dissertation. Color coding is intended to show the various components described above.

Abstract

This study applies the expectancy value theory (EVT) from the academic motivation literature to understand the impact of social and individual factors on the process of high school dropout and eventual completion of school. The purpose of this study was to determine if EVT differed among groups of graduates, dropouts, and students who eventually returned to school. Also, this study sought to determine which EVT variables were most predictive of graduating or dropping out. Using secondary data from a national study of over 12,000 participants, the EVT model was tested on samples of graduates, returners and dropouts using structural equation modeling (SEM). Further exploratory analyses were conducted using classification and regression tree analysis (CART). Findings from this study indicate that the EVT model fits for groups of graduates, dropouts and returners. Graduates and returners show remarkably strong similarities, while dropouts are found to be more externally driven by influences from parents and peers. Exploratory analyses reveal that the expectancies variable is most predictive in classifying students into the three different outcome groups. This study begins to bridge a gap between the two substantial bodies of dropout and motivation research, and contributes to a new line of work examining just what happens to dropouts after they leave school.