Introduction to Applied Research
Doctoral Research

Doctoral research represents the culmination of a student’s academic study at Argosy University and reflects the highest levels of intellectual rigor and quality in higher education.
Doctoral Research

Doctoral candidates of Argosy University will produce a scholarly written record of an original doctoral research investigation submitted in support of their candidacy for the DBA or EdD degree.
Doctoral Research

Because the majority of doctoral students are learning the skills of scholarly inquiry and also are focused on practitioner careers, the students are offered the option of either applied research or traditional dissertation research as the summative product of their academic program.
How Does Applied Research Differ From Traditional Dissertation Research?
Dissertation Research

• Traditional dissertation research creates or extends a theory with the goal of testing or expanding the applications or previous conclusions of the theory.

• The major outcome of traditional research is to contribute to the field conceptually by identifying gaps in the discipline which frame the contribution of the work.

• Traditional research is written to add to the body of knowledge.
Applied Research

- Applied Research focuses on a specific problem, phenomenon, or contextual topic with the goal of action and resolution.

- The major outcome of applied research is a product or process that solves problems of practice.

- Using the scientific method, analysis consists of before and after comparisons that allow the researcher to draw conclusions and make recommendations that are useful to practitioners in the field or discipline.

- The applied solution is relevant to a specific setting and population, justifying the importance of the intervention for a particular audience.
Application and Relevance

Dissertation:

– Adds to the body of knowledge in the discipline;
– knowledge itself is the goal

Applied Research:

– Contributes to the mission and goals of organizations and/or individual careers
Audience/Placement

Dissertation:

– read and used by academia and think tanks

– generates refereed journal articles

Applied Research:

– Written for audience to employ the knowledge in action and used by practitioners and consultants;

– disseminated through professional associations by field or discipline
Literature Review

**Dissertation:**

- The Review of the Literature is a comprehensive summary of the existing research and body of knowledge on the topic
- Focuses on placing the contribution of the research to the field conceptually
- Identifies the gaps in the discipline and frames the contribution of the study

**Applied Research:**

- The Review of Information Sources is a comprehensive summary of the existing research and other relevant/appropriate information sources
  - (e.g. A study investigating a problem with a company’s employee evaluation system would examine the existing research in the literature, but would also include a review of the company’s past employee evaluation policies, similar models from like competitors, etc.)
- Focuses on similar contexts/options/practices to address their shortcomings and advantages, providing justification for the research to a particular audience.
Research Design & Methodology

**Dissertation:**
- Uses the Scientific Method to investigate a problem
- Identifies an appropriate research design to study the problem (e.g. correlational, experimental, phenomenological, etc.)
- Uses qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods to analyze data

**Applied Research:**
- Uses the Scientific Method to investigate a problem
- Identifies an appropriate research design to study the problem (e.g. action research, program evaluation, quasi-experimental, etc.)
- Uses qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods to analyze before and after data sets
Generalizability

Dissertation:
- Expected to have relevance and some level of generalizability to the larger population, regardless of research method employed

Applied Research:
- Expected to have relevance to the specific audience and some level of generalizability to the field, regardless of research method employed
Structure of Final Product

Dissertation:
– Final document is typically five chapters
– Classic components of the chapters are: (1) Introduction to the Problem, (2) Review of the Literature, (3) Methodology, (4) Results, (5) Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

Applied Research:
– The final document may take a different form (e.g. training manual, employee evaluation handbook, curriculum guide, etc.)
– May have different naming conventions and/or may not appear in chapters, but classic components still exist: (1) Introduction to the Problem, (2) Review of Information Sources, (3) Intervention Process, (4) Results, (5) Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations
APPLIED RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION
Identify the problem that needs resolution.
Describe the background of the problem and the need for an intervention/applied solution
Describe purpose of the intervention/applied solution
List Problem Statements
  Identify specific problems, in declarative statements, that require interventions/resolution

Discuss the importance of an applied solution

REVIEW OF INFORMATION SOURCES
Examine sources that provide a basis for intervention and/or problem solution

Introduce PROCEDURES involved in the Intervention
  Describe the setting
  Describe the data set as the problem exists “before” the intervention
  Describe the data set as intended “after” the intervention
  Describe methodological assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the intervention process

Apply the intervention/solution and present RESULTS

Summarize results of the intervention/applied solution
Discuss Conclusions drawn from the applied solution
Discuss Implications for application within the setting
Present Recommendations for additional interventions/applied solutions to explore

TRADITIONAL RESEARCH

Ch 1 INTRODUCTION
Identify the question or theory to be investigated
Describe the problem background of the question or theory to be investigated
Describe purpose of the study
List Research Questions &/or Hypotheses
  Identify specific research questions and/or hypotheses that will guide the investigation

Discuss the significance of the study

Ch 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
Examine prior research as a basis for addressing the RQs &/or Hypotheses

Ch 3 Introduce the METHODOLOGY & Research Design
  Describe the sample
  Describe the instrumentation used for gathering the data
  Describe the process used for the data collection and analysis
  Describe methodological assumptions, limitations & delimitations of the study’s design

Ch 4 Conduct the study and present the RESULTS

Ch 5 Summarize the findings of the investigation/study
Discuss Conclusions drawn from the study’s results
Discuss Implications for practice within the field
Present Recommendations for further research to be conducted
How do I know whether dissertation research or applied research study is best for my topic?
Evaluate your Career Goals

**Dissertation Research** - *May be the best choice for students:*

- seeking to contribute additional knowledge/understanding of the topic
- seeking a career at a major research-based institution
- with tenure-track academic goals
- having longitudinal or on-going research interests
- desiring to publish in refereed journals

**Applied Research** - *May be the best choice for students:*

- seeking practical solutions for immediate application
- seeking a position at a practitioner-based institution or as an adjunct or non-tenured faculty member at a research-based institution
- with R & D goals in industry
- wishing to serve in internal or external consulting roles
- desiring to publish in the “popular press”
Evaluate Your Topic & Research Purpose

1) Will your study address a gap that currently exists in the literature?  
2) Does your study have a theoretical framework? Will you examine a topic in a way that will test the theory, expand our understanding of the theory, or enable you to develop a new theory?  
3) Will the results of your study contribute to your field/discipline by adding to the body of knowledge that currently exists on the topic?  
4) Will the results lead to recommendations for further research or future studies that might pick up where you left off?

If the answer to the above questions are “YES” you are planning dissertation research. Follow the AU guidelines for dissertation research.
Evaluate Your Topic and Research Purpose

Y  N  1) Will your study address a problem that currently exists in your setting for the purpose of action, evaluation, or change?

Y  N  2) Does your study have a conceptual framework? Will you examine the topic with the goal of finding an intervention or resolution to a known problem?

Y  N  3) Will the results of your study contribute to the mission and goals of the organization and/or field by solving a problem of practice?

Y  N  4) Will your study result in a product or process with potential for application by practitioners in the organization or field?

If the answer to the above questions are “YES” you are planning applied research. Follow the AU framework for applied research.
Thank You!

Questions?
Contact jwynn@argosy.edu