

**AVID COLLEGE**  
GATEWAY TO  LIFELONG LEARNING

COLLEGE

# **DISSERTATION GUIDELINES**

Centre for Research and Innovation

Avid College

**AVID COLLEGE**  
GATEWAY TO  LIFELONG LEARNING

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# 1. Introduction

This chapter introduces you to the preliminary guidelines set out for the format requirements for the presentation and submission of the research project/dissertation/thesis. Included are the different terminology to define the level of research project, word limit, presentation, general formatting and numbering.

## 1.1 Supervision

A supervisor will be assigned to each student for support and guidance. Generally, five 5 meetings should be held with the supervisor. Additionally, consultations are up to the supervisor and the students' agreement.

The students have to submit the supervisors log to the Google classroom.

## 1.2 Terminology

In order to differentiate between the research undertaken between undergraduate and graduate levels and postgraduate levels the following will be used:

- Research project for **PhD** is to be phrased as "**Thesis**".
- Research project for **Masters** is to be phrased as "**Dissertation**".
- Research project for **Bachelors** is to be phrased as "**Project**".

## 1.3 Word limit

The word limits are different for different levels of research projects. It is also different depending on the program, whether it is a taught program or a research program.

A taught program is composed of a mixture of lectures, seminars and coursework with an independent research project. While a research program has very few if any taught classes, and the focus is on the dissertation solely based on your own independent research. **The PhD** research project will be between **60,000 to 80,000** words.

- **Masters by Research** will be limited to **40,000 to 60,000** words.
- **Taught Master's** research project will be limited to **15,000** words.
- **The Bachelor's** research project will be limited to **10,000** words.

## 1.4 Presentation

The project/dissertation should have an argument that leads to a progression of critical discussion on the results and findings. In addition it should also contribute to the knowledge gap within the field of study.

The submitted project/dissertation should be free of smudges, staples and clips. Please ensure that spelling and grammar are correct. It is advised to use APA referencing style (the latest edition).

## **1.5 Formatting and Numbering**

The research project is divided into three components. They are the preceding pages, the main text, and the references.

Follow the general guidelines for the layout:

Paper: A4 in size.

Typeface: Times New Roman

Font size: 12 for text (actual size) and  
10 for footnotes and endnotes (actual size)

Alignment: Justified

Spacing: 1.5 lines spacing with single spacing for footnotes, endnotes, appendices, long tables and quotations longer than five lines. Single spacing for bibliographical entries and double line spacing between entries. Double spacing is defined by two single spaces

Margin: 1 inch around for top, bottom and right. 1.5 inches for left margin for binding

Printing: all pages of the document must be printed single-sided.

Page numbers: center of the page 0.5 inches from the bottom of the page in font size 9.

## **2. Preliminary Pages**

These are the pages before the start of the chapters in a proposal. The following pages are numbered however they are not counted. Therefore please use roman numerals for these pages

### **2.1 Title Page**

- This page is not numbered and not counted.
- The title is to be capitalized and centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- Double space and type “Submitted By”
- Double space “student’s full name (student id. no)” in sentence case as per Identification Card.
- Double space “A Final Project/Dissertation/Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of”
- Single Space “ Program”
- Double space “© Avid College”
- Next line “Year of submission”

### **2.2 Abstract**

An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the report. It allows readers to survey the contents of the report quickly and it enables the readers interested in the document to

retrieve it from abstracting and indexing databases. A good abstract is accurate, non-evaluative, coherent and concise. An abstract of a report of an empirical study should describe:

- The problem under investigation, in one sentence if possible;
- The participants, specifying pertinent characteristics;
- The essential features of study method;
- The significant findings; and
- The conclusions and the implications or applications.

You should write the essential abstract in 250 words. You may include up to six keywords or phrases that describe the content of your dissertation.

- Type and capitalize “ABSTRACT” centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- Double space and capitalize the title.
- Double space and type the abstract.
- Single space and type “Keywords”. Keywords should be separated with semicolons

### **2.3 Approval Page**

- This page is numbered (roman numerals) and not counted.
- The title is to be capitalized and centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- Double space and include the following paragraph and signature format;  
“I certify that I have read this project/dissertation/thesis and approve the proposal/project/dissertation submitted by the candidate”
- Double space supervisor’s signature.
- Single space Name of the supervisor.

### **2.4 Declaration Page**

- This page is numbered (roman numerals) and not counted.
- The title is to be capitalized and centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- Double space and include the following paragraph and signature format;  
“I, [student name, delete square brackets], declare that the [project/dissertation/thesis] entitled [“title of project/dissertation/thesis”] is no more than [15,000] words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, references and footnotes. This [project/dissertation/thesis] contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma by any other higher education institute. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.”
- Double space student’s signature
- Single space Name

### **2.5 Acknowledgements**

This is not a requirement but students may include an acknowledgement page. Additionally, a few students include a DEDICATION page just before the acknowledgement page. However, these are optional pages.

Acknowledgement page expresses a note of gratitude for those who were significant in the research process: supervisors, those who provided statistical or computer support, etc.

- This page is numbered (roman numerals) and not counted.
- The title is to be capitalized and centered 1 inch from the top of the page.

## **2.6 Table of contents**

This a tabled list of the chapters and, if applicable, a list of diagrams and other illustrations used in the study. The table of contents can be generated automatically in MS word.

- Type and capitalize “TABLE OF CONTENTS” centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- Double space and type text.
- Chapter titles and subchapters are to be listed and worded exactly as they appear in the body of the thesis.
- Single space between chapters and subchapters and between chapters.

## **2.7 List of Tables**

The list of tables is generated automatically if you have applied “styles” when writing in MS word. This is a required section. The title of a List of tables is called a *caption*, and remembers to apply the appropriate caption style from Styles menu suitably.

- Type and capitalize “LIST OF TABLES” centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- Double space and type the list.
- Indicate corresponding page number and caption as in the Content Page

## **2.8 List of Figures**

The list of figures is generated automatically if you have applied “styles” when writing in MS word. This is a required section. The title of a list of figures is called a *caption*, and remembers to apply the appropriate caption style from Styles menu suitably.

- Type and capitalize “LIST OF FIGURES” centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- Double space and type the list.
- Indicate corresponding page number and caption as in the Content Page

## **2.9 List of Abbreviations or Acronyms**

The List of Abbreviations or Acronyms is an optional list which may be included after the List of Figures if you have used a large number of acronyms. Use of acronyms will make the text less readable so acronyms must be used sparingly and only when the acronyms are used in a number of chapters.

Use a table to list the acronyms and their long forms. Using one table row for each item will allow you to sort the table. Use the style Para\_Nospace for individual items.

Depending on the nature of the subject, students may include a Glossary of Terms. If this is included it follows the List of Acronyms. This list is optional.

- Type in and capitalize “LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS” or “LIST OF ACRONYMS” centered 1 inch from the top of the page.
- Double space and type the list. Use the captions as employed.

### **3. Proposal/Project Chapters**

The body of the project/dissertation/thesis is usually arranged into chapters, with chapter titles. The text of the project/dissertation/thesis must comply with all the requirements regarding paper, margins, font size and spacing.

- Chapter titles should be capitalized.
- Start page numbering from the first page of the Introduction.
- All pages are to be numbered accordingly.
- There are to be no blank pages in between chapters.
- Each chapter starts on a new page.

### **4. Ending Pages**

Ending pages are the final pages after the main text which normally consists of the references, appendix or appendices, tables, figures and other images. A blank page is to be inserted after the last printed page of the document.

### **5. Appendix or Appendices (if any)**

The appendix is optional as it contains supplementary materials that are too technical and will disrupt the flow of the main argument. Appendix or appendices are to meet the formatting standard. The appendix is always to precede the bibliography. The appendix is to have a cover page. Entries for Appendices

- The title of each appendix must reflect the respective title as listed separately in the Table of Contents
- Tables and figures must be captioned and numbered. The titles must reflect the respective title in the List of Tables or List of Figures.



## 6. Submission of Project/Dissertation/Thesis for Examination

The student is required to submit the following items together with project/dissertation/thesis for examination CRI.

- Submit softcopy of the project/dissertation/thesis in PDF format in the designated Google Classroom.
- Two (2) soft bounded copies of the research project/dissertation/thesis in comb binding with a transparent plastic cover.
- Hardcopies should have the supervisor and students' signatures.

## 7. Appendices

**Type or paste the title here [Cntrl+Enter for next line; this style is called *Title\_case*]**

By [style: title-page-author]

[Firstname Lastname]

[student ID no]

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements of the degree of [Style: award-style]

*[program]*

© Avid College  
[ YEAR]



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## ABSTRACT

An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the report. It allows readers to survey the contents of the report quickly and it enables the readers interested in the document to retrieve it from abstracting and indexing databases. A good abstract is accurate, non-evaluative, coherent and concise. An abstract of a report of an empirical study should describe:

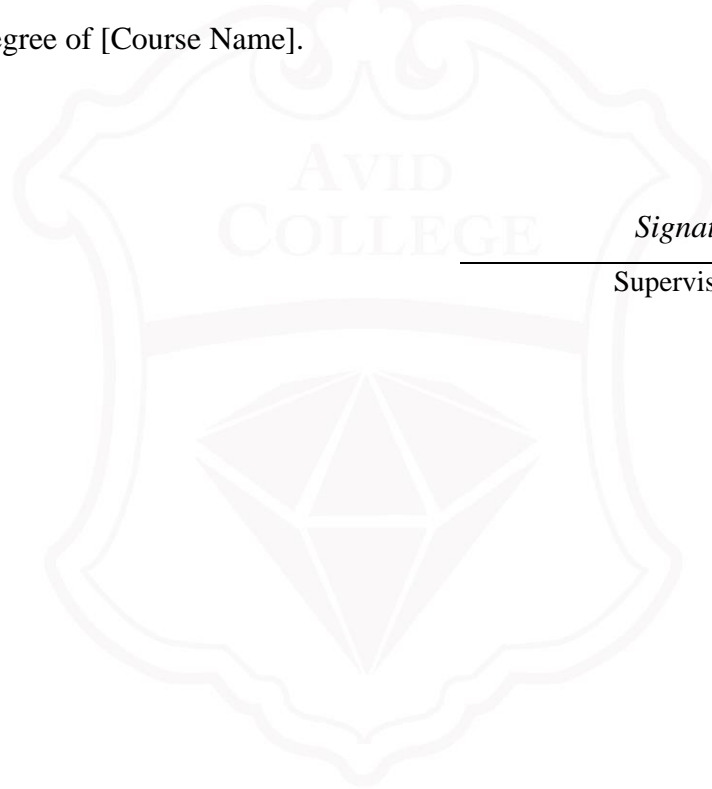
- The problem under investigation, in one sentence if possible;
- The participants, specifying pertinent characteristics;
- The essential features of study method;
- The significant findings; and
- The conclusions and the implications or applications.

You should write the essential abstract in 250 words. You may include up to six keywords or phrases that describe the content of your dissertation. Keywords should be separated with semicolons.

**Keywords:** Dissertation Guidelines; Microsoft Word; keywords; Referencing Guide

# APPROVAL

I certify that I have read this thesis and that, in my opinion, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of [Course Name].



*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor: Name



## DECLARATION

I, Mariyam Shareefa [student name, delete square brackets], declare that the dissertation entitled [“title of thesis”] is no more than 15,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, references and footnotes. This dissertation contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

*Signature*

*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
[student name]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This is not a requirement but students may include an acknowledgement page. Additionally, a few students include a DEDICATION page just before the acknowledgement page.

Acknowledgement page expresses a note of gratitude for those who were significant in the research process: supervisors, those who provided statistical or computer support, etc.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

### **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

wwwwwwwww

wwwwwwwww

wwwwwwwww

### **REFERENCES**

APPENDICES.....







## LIST OF TABLES

[The List of Tables is generated automatically if you have applied “styles” when writing the thesis. This is a required section of the thesis. The title of a Table or Figure is called a *caption*, and remember to apply the appropriate caption style from Styles menu suitably.

Table 1.1 Demographic details .....	3
Table 1.2 Number of employees.....	4



# LIST OF FIGURES

[After the Table of Contents and the List of Tables, the next list in the front matter of the thesis is the List of Figures. This order must be maintained. All graphs, pictures, charts, etc. (other than tables) are called figures. The List of Figures is produced similarly as the List of Tables; it is generated automatically if you have used caption style from the Style Menu. This is a required section of the thesis.

Figure 1 Participants.....	3
Figure 2 Salaries.....	6



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

[The List of Abbreviations or Acronyms is an optional list which may be included after the List of Figures if you have used a large number of acronyms in the thesis. Use of acronyms will make the text less readable so acronyms must be used sparingly and only when the acronyms are used in a number of chapters. Use a table to list the acronyms and their long forms. Using one table row for each item will allow you to sort the table. Use the style Para\_Nospace for individual items.

Depending on the nature of the subject, students may include a Glossary of Terms. If this is included it follows the List of Acronyms. This list is optional.]

UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

# CHAPTER 1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction sets the context for your proposed research and must capture the reader's interest. Explain the contextual background and state your problem by stating a condition of incomplete knowledge or understanding, the consequences of that condition or, a more significant gap in understanding. In addition, clearly state your response to the problem.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

This is the focal point of your research. The problem statement should describe the educational issue that exists, the evidence, or justification for the issue, the deficiencies in the evidence and the audience that will benefit from the research. It should generate a question that your research aims to provide an answer.

### 1.2 Research Objectives

Research objectives are the results sought by the researcher that will be achieved at the end of the research study. The objectives of a research project summarize what is to be achieved by the research and should be closely related to the statement of the problem. Research objectives should be specific, measurable and should be written in bullet points. The number of research objectives may vary, but mostly ranges from 1-7.

### 1.3 Research Questions

Research question guides and centers your research. It should be clear, focused and reflect the research objectives of the study. In *quantitative* research, both research questions and hypotheses should be included.

### 1.4 Significance of the Research

Justify why you are undertaking this research and briefly explain the value of your research findings. State the beneficiaries, explain how the new knowledge helps to improve the current condition/situation and its contributions to the theoretical literature.

## 1.5 Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are the challenges (drawbacks/ difficulties/ problem) faced in carrying out the research. Briefly explain the challenges faced in various phases of the research process (e.g. data collection, data analysis...etc.) Delimitations are the boundaries set to make the research doable. Clearly state the boundaries you have set for your research.

## 1.6 Definition of Terms

Include the definitions of the key terms relevant to your research study.

**Note:**

The length of Chapter 1 varies but mostly ranges from **5-10 pages**.



## CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Literature review is your research on what has been published on the topic by accredited scholars and researchers. The aim of the literature review will be to convey to your reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on the topic of interest, including what their strengths and weaknesses are. A good literature review has the following characteristics:

- **Focused** - The topic should be narrow. You should only present ideas and only report on studies that are closely related to the topic.
- **Concise** - Ideas should be presented economically. Don't take any more space than you need to present your ideas.
- **Logical** - The flow within and among paragraphs should be a smooth, logical progression from one idea to the next
- **Developed** - Don't leave the story half told.
- **Integrative** - Your paper should stress how the ideas in the studies are related. Focus on the big picture. What commonality do all the studies share? How are some studies different from others? Your paper should stress how all the studies reviewed contribute to your topic.
- **Current** - Your review should focus on work being done on the cutting edge of your topic.

At the beginning of the chapter, you may write an opening paragraph to give a quick idea of the topic of the literature review, such as the central theme or organizational pattern, and then follow the structure that you have chosen for your study.

A general organization of the literature review looks like a funnel shape. In other words, start from broader topics followed by sub topics or themes and then studies like yours. It could also be organized as: *Chronological* (by publication date/by trend), *thematic* (a structure which considers different themes) and *methodological* (focusses on the methods of the researcher e.g qualitative or quantitative). You should choose a structure that is most appropriate for your research.

To conclude this Chapter, write a brief summary and draw a theoretical and conceptual framework that shows major theories, variables and how they are connected with each other.

**Note:** The length of Chapter 2 varies but mostly ranges from **10-15 pages**.

## **CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This section is about how you would define your research methods. How you intend to collect data and how you will be correlating those data to format and strengthen your defined research.

In a general term, methodology here is referring to, not just simple methods you intend to use to collect data. It is also necessary to include a consideration and justifications of the concepts and theories that underlie the methods.

A general organization of the Methodology Chapter is as follows:

You may begin the chapter by writing an opening paragraph to give a quick idea of the topics covered in this chapter.

### **3.2 Research Method**

You should clearly describe the chosen research method (qualitative/quantitative/mixed methods) and explain its philosophical underpinning and provide justifications for why you have chosen those methods.

### **3.3 Research Design**

Restate the research question(s) and describe the research design employed in your research. The design must align with the chosen research method(s) and provide clear justification why you have chosen a particular design.

### **3.4 Population and Sample**

You should identify your target population, accessible population and the sample size. Explicitly state and justify the sampling strategy (for e.g. random sampling, purposive sampling...etc) that you have employed to select the sample for your study, and the sample size.

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

Describe how you have developed the instruments/tools for data collection and the techniques employed to establish its validity and reliability. Questionnaires and other supplementary supporting documents are expected to be attached in the Appendix Section (Students are expected

to submit hard copies of all the questionnaire forms and those who do online should submit the soft copy of the same questionnaires).

### **3.6 Data Collection**

Explain the data collection procedures in detail. Justify the types of data, methods of data collection and the instruments/tools used. Make sure that the types of data and the methods of data collection should be matched with the research design and the research method chosen.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

You should provide a detailed explanation of the data analysis techniques employed and specify the statistical tests (if any) used to test the hypotheses. In addition, briefly describe how the data will be presented.

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration**

Explain the procedures followed to seek ethics approval and how you sought consent from the participants. Explain the measures taken to ensure that the research adheres all the ethical principles in conducting a research. Ethics approval form and a sample consent form should be attached in the Appendix Section.

**Note:** The length of Chapter 3 varies but mostly range from **8-10 pages**.



## CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

The results chapter consists of the data that has been collected as a part of the research and the researcher's analysis of the data. Precisely describe what the research results show. Presenting the data collected and its analysis in a comprehensive and easy to understand manner is the key to have a good analysis chapter. Figures and tables that are not directly related to the analyses in this section can be placed in appendices.

Like the other chapters, you may start the chapter with an opening paragraph to give a quick idea of the topics covered in this chapter. You may then organize this chapter thematically for qualitative research, where you present overarching themes emerged from your qualitative data analysis. For quantitative research, you may want to present answers to the research questions and hypotheses under different headings with relevant figures, charts, tables, statistical tests etc.

**Note: The length of Chapter 4 varies but mostly ranges from 8-10 pages.**

# CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSIONS CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

Most discussion sections begin with an integrative summary of the results. Describe your results clearly and precisely. Which then should follow the interpretation. In simple terms, what do those results mean? What do your results tell you about the issue you investigated? Place your findings in context: as you summarize your results, consider how they do and do not fit with your literature review. To do this, think about how your study compares with earlier research in terms of population characteristics, measurement tools, variables, research design and procedures. Then think about whether your results converge or contradict past findings. If your results converge, then point it out and indicate how your study extends earlier findings. Explain contradictory findings by examining the distinctions in parameters, measurement domains and variables.

Provide a brief summary of your key findings in relations to the research questions; the conclusions which you have drawn from the research; and how your findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field. In addition, explain the importance of your findings to the researchers and practitioners and provide recommendations for future research.

The organization of this chapter should be the same as that of Chapter 4.

**Note:** The length of Chapter 5 varies but mostly ranges from 10-18 pages.



## REFERENCE LIST

Include a reference list that comply with APA Referencing Style.

**NOTE:**

Note that the level of headings, tables, figures, and In-text Citations should comply with the APA Referencing Guidelines. Please, visit the following link for further information:

<https://www.scribbr.com/category/apa-style/>

**Levels of headings (taken from APA Manual. 7<sup>th</sup> edition)**

**Format for Five Levels of Heading in APA Journals**

Level of heading	Format
1	Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading <sup>a</sup>
2	Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading
3	Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. <sup>b</sup>
4	Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.
5	Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.

<sup>a</sup>This type of capitalization is also referred to as *title case*.

<sup>b</sup>In a *lowercase paragraph heading*, the first letter of the first word is uppercase and the remaining words are lowercase.

**A Sample Figure from APA Manual (6<sup>th</sup> edition)**

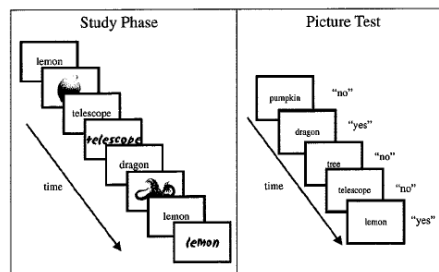


Figure X. Schematic of the criterial recollection task. At study, each black word was followed by the same word in red letters (depicted in italics) or by a colored picture. Black words were used at test as retrieval cues, under various retrieval instructions (picture test shown, with correct responses in quotes). Adapted from "Retrieval Monitoring and Anosognosia in Alzheimer's Disease," by D. A. Gallo, J. M. Chen, A. L. Wiseman, D. L. Schacter, and A. E. Budson, 2007, *Neuropsychology*, 21, p. 580. Copyright 2007 by the American Psychological Association.

**A Sample Table from APA Manual (7<sup>th</sup> edition)**

■ **Table 5.8. Sample Table Including Confidence Intervals With Brackets**

Table X

*Weight Status, Body Dissatisfaction, and Weight Control Behaviors at Time 1 and Suicidal Ideation at Time 2*

Variable	Unadjusted <sup>a</sup>		Adjusted for demographic variables <sup>b</sup>	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
<b>Weight status</b>				
Young men	0.97	[0.78, 1.21]	0.94	[0.75, 1.19]
Young women	1.06	[0.88, 1.26]	1.02	[0.85, 1.23]
<b>Body dissatisfaction</b>				
Young men	0.88	[0.50, 1.54]	0.99	[0.56, 1.75]
Young women	1.06	[0.77, 1.46]	1.02	[0.74, 1.42]
<b>UWCB</b>				
Young men	0.81	[0.54, 1.24]	0.77	[0.50, 1.19]
Young women	0.89	[0.65, 1.21]	0.93	[0.68, 1.27]
<b>EWCB</b>				
Young men	1.36	[0.55, 3.36]	1.73	[0.69, 4.37]
Young women	1.98	[1.34, 2.93]	2.00	[1.34, 2.99]

*Note.* OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval; UWCB = unhealthy weight control behaviors; EWCB = extreme weight control behaviors. Adapted from "Are Body Dissatisfaction, Eating Disturbance, and Body Mass Index Predictors of Suicidal Behavior in Adolescents? A Longitudinal Study," by S. Crow, M. E. Eisenberg, M. Story, and D. Neumark-Sztainer, 2008, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 76, p. 890. Copyright 2008 by the American Psychological Association.

<sup>a</sup>Four weight-related variables entered simultaneously. <sup>b</sup>Adjusted for race, socioeconomic status, and age group.

*Note that the table captions are at the top and the figure captions are at the bottom. For further details, refer to the APA Manual shared in Google Classroom.*



## APPENDICES

Appendices are used for material which you may have used but which is too long to quote in the main text. They are also used to record aggregated raw data from surveys or the workings of any statistical procedures. All appendices must be numbered and given a title. When referring to material contained in an appendix you should direct the reader to where it can be found. Examples of materials you may want to include as appendices are:

- Ethics approval form.
- Information sheets for participants.
- Transcripts of interviews (attach at least one copy of the interview transcripts).
- Copies of blank questionnaires, interview protocols, observation protocols etc.
- Tabulated raw data from fieldwork.

**RECOMMENDED NO. OF PAGES:** Dissertation: 50– 60 pages (10,000-15,000 words double spaced **excluding** tables, figures, references and appendices)