Dissertation Tracking Software

**Core Features & Functionality (in bold)**

* **User Authentication**
* **Project Setup:** Create a dissertation project with a title, expected defense/end date, and field of study/topic.
  + Set potential due dates and priorities for tasks.
* **Milestone/Task Management:**

**Example - ERP for PhD\* students - numbered tasks** (See below for 5-chapter dissertation tasks – numbered items represent the checklist) {\*Maybe keep ERP hidden unless student checks a box that says they are a PhD student}

1. Write a one-pager to get your initial idea approved that provides some background and a brief introduction to your selected methodology and data sources. Also include your target implementation timeline.

* **Guidance link function for each task** (each numbered item will have instructions – each numbered item will have a pop up function for tips, with an additional link for further exploration)

1. Write a research proposal that includes an Introduction, 2,000 word minimum Literature Review, and Theory and Methodology design, including the theoretical foundation, an explanation of the research site and participants, selected methodology, data collection instruments, data analysis plan, and limitations.
2. Obtain IRB approval
3. Arrange meeting for approval - coordinator
4. Participate in an ERP proposal oral presentation (15 minute presentation in an hour long session)
5. Conduct the Research Study and analyze the data
6. Write up the results
7. Present your findings in a 15-minute oral presentation (in an hour long session)

* **Progress Tracking:**
  + Simple checkboxes to mark tasks as complete, that move you to the next task?
  + A central dashboard showing overall completion percentage (e.g., "You are 45% complete!").
* **Visual Progress Indicators:** A simple progress bar for the entire project and/or individual chapters.

**Ideal Version –**

* **Analytics & Reporting:**
  + **Writing Streak:** Track consecutive days of writing activity.
  + **Word Count Tracker:** Log daily word counts with graphs to visualize productivity trends over time.
* **Advisor Notification/Admin**
  + Students indicate specific chapters or milestones for feedback. Advisors notified by email
  + Student tracking with name, title, progress (export feature)
* **Document Management:**
  + Word Document upload and feedback option from advisor?
* **Notification & Reminder System:**
  + Email or push notifications for upcoming deadlines.
  + Nudges after periods of inactivity.
* **Motivational Features:**
  + Achievement badges ("5k Words Written!", "10-Day Streak!").
  + Motivational quotes or insights tailored to dissertation writers.
* **Data Import/Export:** Export all your data for backup or backup reminder
* **Community Features? (if CG Scholar goes bye bye?**)

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(Numbered Tasks Below)

**Five Chapter Dissertation Scaffolding** (Alternative Dissertation structures available)

**Getting Started – Topic Approval**

1. Topic
2. A Tentative research question or questions not answerable with a simple yes/no.
3. A tentative outline
4. Significance and your connection to the topic
5. Present in Dissertation Session for Permission/Advice

**Starting Reference Database**

1. Choose an organization strategy – Mendeley, Zotero, Endnote, etc.
2. Create a dedicated folder for pdfs
3. Manage citation data

**Begin your Chapter 2 General Field Literature Review**

1. Start examining the literature (scholarly sources) around your topic from thesis, dissertations, other lit reviews, trade magazines, research articles, etc.
2. Download Graduate College Dissertation Template, explore formatting
3. Write Lit Review Introduction – Roadmap/foreshadowing
4. Start your General Field writing - Summarize and synthesize the field to show wide reading and deep understanding. Speak from the literature. Make a case with a scholarly argument. Allow the outline to evolve based on the literature.
5. Definitions (helps to distinguish key topic vocabulary)
6. Theoretical Framework of topic
7. Thematically organize your writing, Key concepts, debates, challenges, trends, etc.
8. Provide Gaps in Literature
9. Conclusion
10. Goal – 5000-6000 words
11. References
12. Submit for peer review
13. Revise as needed
14. Submit for Coordinator review
15. Revise as needed
16. Submit for Advisor review
17. Revise as needed
18. After permission, submit exam application
19. General Exam – Passed!

**Special Field Literature Review**

1. Utilize Gaps to determine Special Field Literature Review direction
2. Form new tentative question/s and create tentative outline
3. Make appointment with Advisor to discuss Special Field
4. Start examining the literature (scholarly sources) around your topic from thesis, dissertations, other lit reviews, trade magazines, research articles, etc.
5. Write Special Lit Review Introduction – Roadmap/foreshadowing
6. Start your Special Field writing - Make a case with a scholarly argument. Allow the outline to evolve based on the literature. New Definitions only if needed
7. Thematically organize your writing, Key concepts, debates, challenges, trends, etc.
8. Include studiesthat directly support the evolving topic or are parallel to direction
9. Provide Gaps in Literature
10. Conclusion
11. Goal – 4000-5000 words
12. References
13. Submit for peer review
14. Revise as needed
15. Submit for Coordinator review
16. Revise as needed
17. Submit for Advisor review
18. Revise as needed
19. After permission, submit exam application
20. Special Exam – Passed!

**Chapter 3 – Methodology** (Future tense)

1. Review and Choose potential methodology type
2. Create Logic Model
3. Present in Monday Dissertation Session for ideas/approval, meet with advisor if needed
4. Begin writing Chapter 3 Methodology – Following outline is for guidance, structure and headers can change according to needs.
5. Introduction
6. Key Research Question/s
7. Theoretical Applications/Framework
8. Theoretical Model (if needed)
9. Methodology Selection & Defense
10. Methodological Framework – If combined methodologies - how and why
11. Methods Strengths and Weaknesses
12. Study Overview - details, context, participants
13. Logic Model
14. Researcher Role
15. Data Sources
16. Recruitment
17. Data collection procedures
18. Ethical considerations (including data storage & disposal)
19. Validity (Triangulation if needed)
20. Implementation plan
21. Data analysis - how and what software if any
22. Methods conclusion
23. Create Instruments like correspondence, consent forms, surveys, procedures,
24. IRB completion & Submission
25. IRB approval
26. Appendix -Compile & Organize – Includes Instruments and IRB permission
27. Submit for Peer Review
28. Revise if needed
29. Submit for Coordinator Review
30. Revise if needed
31. Submit for Advisor Review
32. Revise if needed
33. Preliminary Exam Prep - Chapter 1 Introduction
34. Preliminary Exam Prep - Chapter 1 Background- Research type
35. Preliminary Exam Prep - Chapter 1 Problem Statement
36. Preliminary Exam Prep - Chapter 1 Research Questions
37. Preliminary Exam Prep – Chapter 1 Potential Contribution
38. Preliminary Exam Prep - Chapter 2 Combine General & Special, 1 introduction, 1 Gaps – cull literature review based on Chapter 3 research direction
39. Combine References
40. Copy Editor if needed
41. Preliminary Exam – Slide Deck
42. Submit Manuscript and Slide Deck to Coordinator
43. Preliminary Exam Scheduling
44. Preliminary Exam Passed!
45. Revise if needed

**Chapter 4 – Results**

1. Conduct Research according to Chapter 3 Plan
2. Data Collection
3. Assess effectiveness of plan and update strategy if needed
4. Review manuscript, determine results direction against Research Questions, Logic Model, and relevant Literature Review
5. Write Brief recap of study’s methodology
6. Write implementation and research site context
7. Present Actual participants: a table overview may be useful
8. Present Research Results: typically grouped by category/theme and triangulated, including connection to the existing literature.
9. Utilize visual Representations - Results and findings should be presented in a combination of narrative and graphics
10. Submit Manuscript to coordinator
11. Revise if needed
12. Submit Manuscript to Advisor
13. Revise if needed

**Chapter 5 - Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusion**

1. Write Brief recap of the study’s findings
2. Write Implications of findings
3. Write Recommendations, supported by your findings
4. Write Study limitations
5. Write Suggestions for future research
6. Write Conclusions
7. Re-read manuscript and check for flow
8. Check References, format and alphabetical order
9. Copy edit!
10. Submit to Coordinator for final run-through
11. Revise if needed
12. Submit to Advisor
13. Revise if needed until – “You may proceed to deposit!”
14. Contact Coordinator for Final Steps!