

Managing the Dissertation Process

Erin Henry

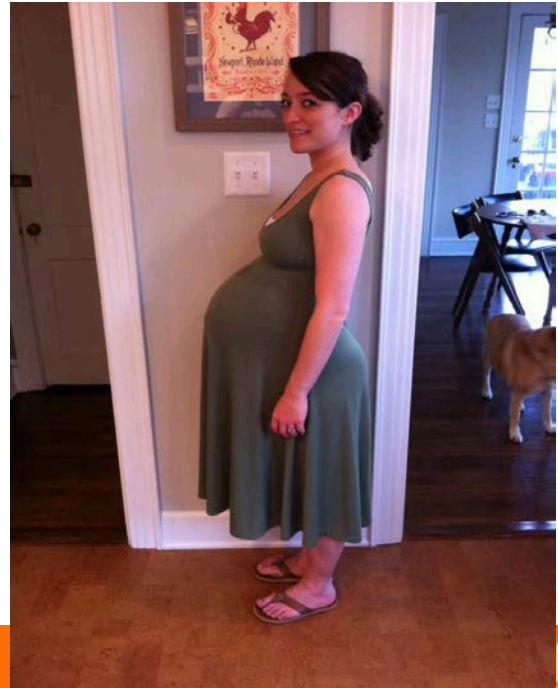




TRUE DISSERTATION STORY

Erin Henry: A Cautionary Tale

- Before the dissertation:
- After the dissertation:



Fairytale ending?

“The Information Content of Tax Expense: A Firm and Market Level Return Decomposition”

*Winner of the 2015
ATA/PricewaterhouseCoopers Outstanding
Dissertation Award*

It's not over!

“The Information Content of Tax Expense: A Discount Rate Explanation”

- *Revising for 2nd round at CAR*

“Aggregate Tax Expense Surprises and Market Returns”

- *Co-authored with Kewei Hou*
- *Rejected in 2nd round at JAR*
- *Revising to submit to TAR*

Steps in the Dissertation Process

- **STEP 1:** Accept responsibility.
- **STEP 2:** Define the project.
- **STEP 3:** Assemble your team.
- **STEP 4:** Break the project into smaller parts.
- **STEP 5:** Accomplish the parts.
- **STEP 6:** Treat yo self.

Step 1: Accept Responsibility

- Put your destiny in your own hands!
- Admit that **you** have a ~~problem~~ project.
 - *“Do or do not. There is no try.”* - Yoda
- You will reap what you sow.

Step 2: Define the Project

- What is a “dissertation?”
 - A solo-authored research paper.
 - Requirement to receive a Ph.D.
 - Working paper/potential future publication on your vita.
 - Job market paper.

Step 2: Define the Project

- What is a “dissertation?”
 - Your grand entrance into the world of accounting research!
 - A chance to become an expert in a topic you truly find interesting.
 - A chance to contribute to *accounting knowledge*.

Step 3: Assemble Your Team

- Identify a dissertation chair as early as you possibly can.
- Identify committee members.
- Make them invested and interested in you before you even ask!!
- Communicate with them often.

Dissertation Chair: A Cautionary Tale



Step 4: Manageable Parts

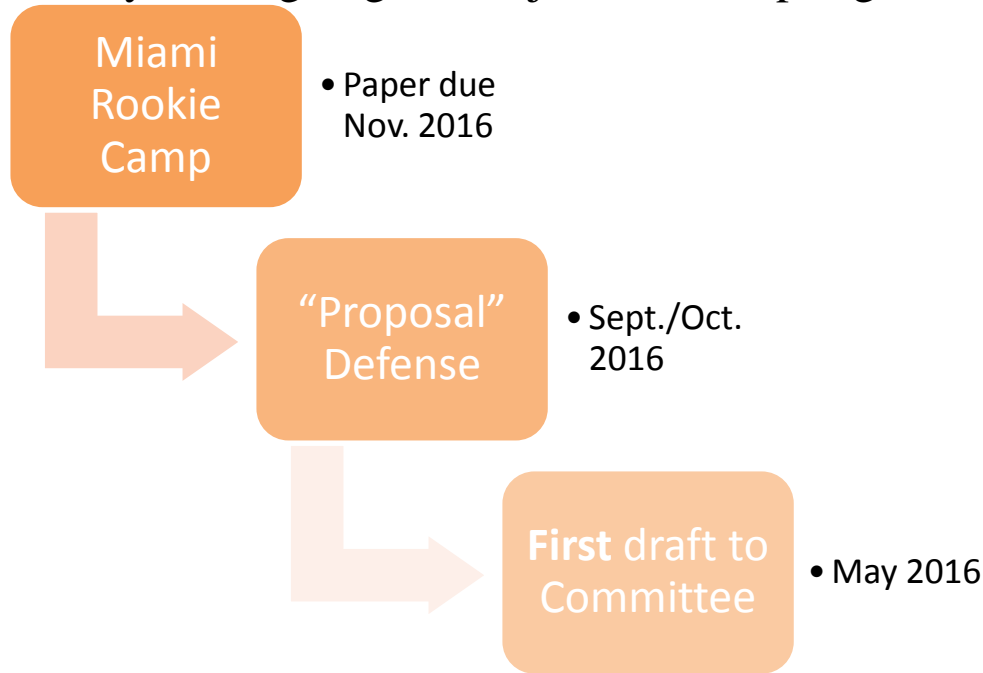
- Come up with a basic idea and write it up.
- Generate a well-developed research proposal.
- Data analysis.
- Full first draft.
-879th draft.

Step 5: Accomplish the Parts

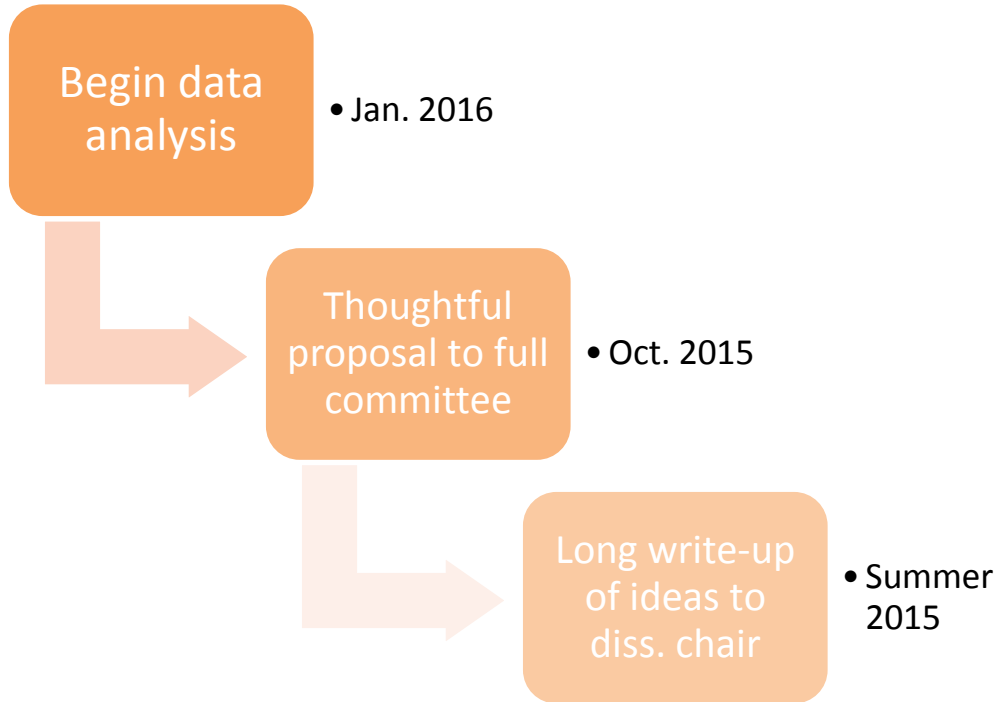
- Set deadlines for each part and hold yourself accountable for them.
 - Regular meetings with committee members.
- Procrastination will ruin your chance at greatness.

The Timeline: It's Kind of Scary

Let's assume you are going on the job market Spring 2017:



The Timeline: It's Kind of Scary



Step 5: Accomplish the Parts

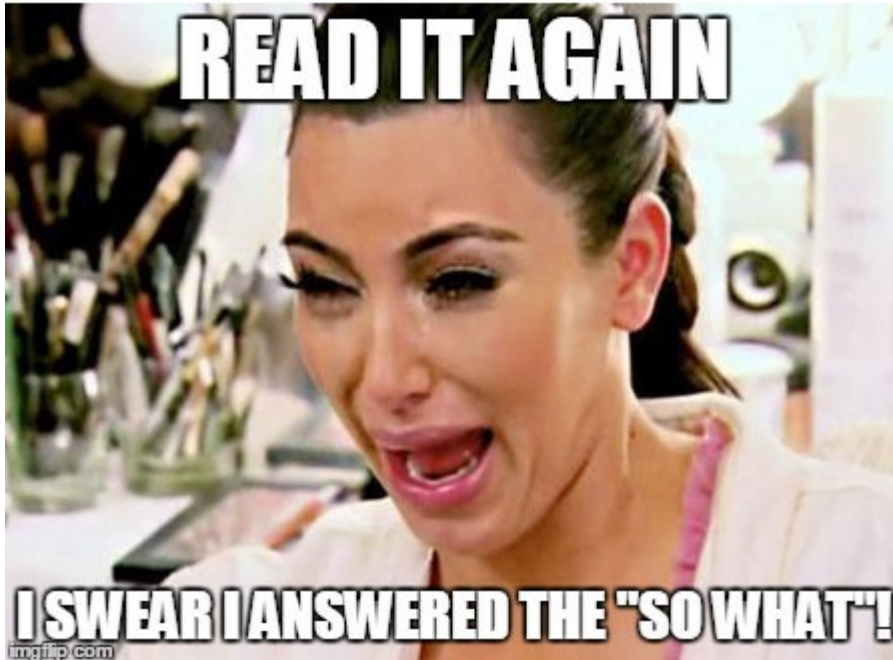
- Come up with an idea.



Step 5: Accomplish the Parts

- Generate a well-developed research proposal.
 - Research question
 - Motivation

You don't want to be a cautionary tale...



Step 5: Accomplish the Parts

- Generate a well-developed research proposal.
 - Research question
 - Motivation
 - Prior literature
 - Hypothesis development
 - Methods

This will be your life...



**And occasionally, you'll have to
interact with the outside world...**



Step 5: Accomplish the Parts

- Data Analysis
 - Visualize primary tables
 - Replicate the sample, descriptives, and main results of related papers
 - Slowly turn the dial until you get to your unique specification
 - Some robustness, but it's OK to leave some for future (10th, 11th, etc.) draft

Step 5: Accomplish the Parts

- Turn your first draft in to your committee!
- From here, I went through several rounds of review with my committee before it was “proposal defense ready.”

Step 6: Treat Yo Self



My dissertation was fueled by:



Major Pitfalls to Avoid

- Having no faculty that are invested in you by the time you reach the dissertation.
- Not aiming high enough.
- Not taking it seriously enough.
- Not giving yourself enough time.
- Not structuring your time.
- Starting with the back end instead of the front end.



**KEEP
CALM
AND
GOOD
LUCK**