**Information for dissertation/thesis students seeking statistical consulting help**  
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Students in our program are approached from time to time to offer statistical consultation to other students who are completing their dissertation or thesis. The following questions and answers are intended to help students make good decisions about how to engage in this kind of consultation.

1. **What kinds of things can a statistics consultant help me with on my dissertation?**  
   You should share two goals when consulting with a methodology expert on your dissertation. Your first goal should be to include accurate and valid statistical analyses in your dissertation. The second should be to learn more about statistical analyses to help you in your future professional and research-related endeavors. A statistical consultant will seek to support both of these goals, providing guidance when needed but helping you to be as autonomous as possible.

   You should come to your consultation meeting with well-defined research questions and know at least roughly what kind of analyses you want to run (Correlations? Descriptives? Group comparisons?) Although the consultant may help you refine your methods (e.g., suggesting assumptions tests, power analyses, or appropriate follow-up tests), **YOU**, in consultation with your advisor, should develop the final list of analyses to run, conduct these as independently as possible, and understand what each analysis in the output means (with the support of readings and instruction that others may supply).

2. **How should I prepare for a meeting with a statistics consultant?**  
   Before you meet with your consultant, send him or her information regarding the design of your study. This should include information from chapter 3 of a standard dissertation (study background, research questions, data collection process, and analysis plan). The most critical element is your list of research questions; these are your goals in statistical analysis and will help your consultant understand what approach you want to use with your data.

3. **Why should I have to pay for consultation?**  
   Some of our TAs are willing to provide basic information on your analyses if you were a student in ERMA Design I or II with them. They may offer a basic consultation (30-60 minutes) free of charge. However, knowledge of statistical analyses is a valuable skill these individuals have spent time and effort developing, so you should expect to pay for additional consultation, if needed. Note that even if you pay for consultation, the consultant must still adhere to ethical guidelines on how much they can or should assist a dissertation researcher with their analyses.
4. **Why can’t I pay to have someone do all my analyses and write up the results for my dissertation?**

   A Ph.D. is a research degree. An individual holding a Ph.D. is expected to be able to conduct research in their area independently. Although you may regularly work with a methodology expert in your profession, an independent researcher is able to (1) craft appropriate and important research questions in their field of expertise, (2) plan high quality research designs that address their research questions, (3) identify appropriate analyses given their design, and (4) interpret and write up results accurately. For a consultant to do any of this work for you in the dissertation is diminishing the value of your degree. Your advisor or a consultant may give you feedback or support in accomplishing these steps, but these tasks should be primarily your responsibility and you should be able to answer technical questions related to any aspect of your dissertation.

5. **Should my consultant have authorship credit?**

   Although dissertations/theses are solo-authored works, publications and conference presentations that derive from these projects should include other researchers who contributed substantially to the project being presented. In many cases this will include your chair, but it may also include others, such as the statistical consultant, if he or she played a critical role. One rule of thumb is that authorship is warranted if a person has met two or more of these criteria:
   a. Critical to the conceptualization and design of the experiment
   b. Ran the experiments/analysis or had a substantial role in coding the data
   c. Helped in the writing process

   Statistical consultants sometimes meet these criteria for publication products beyond the dissertation and should be offered authorship credit, as appropriate (authorship order to be discussed by those involved). When in doubt, discuss such issues with your advisor.

   APA also provides guidance on authorship issues. See the APA style manual and this publication: [http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-paper.pdf](http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-paper.pdf)