Department of Psychology
Thesis/Dissertation Document Rubric

Purpose

The purpose of this rubric is to give thesis and dissertation students a clear understanding of the criteria that will be used to guide the assessment of the quality and progress of their scholarship and to provide faculty with guidelines for completing the final assessment.

Application

This rubric is intended to be shared with students as part of their program's introduction to the thesis/dissertation process. Students can use this rubric as a coherent set of criteria that include descriptions of expected levels of performance while developing their scholarship during their program. *A dissertation proposal is expected to be evaluated as being above the "emerging" category in all areas. A completed thesis/dissertation is expected to be above the "developing" category in all areas. However, there is no minimum passing score associated with specific criteria*. The rubric is primarily used for feedback and assessment in the thesis and dissertation proposal stages, and to guide final assessment at the dissertation defense stage.

Implementation

While this rubric should be a foundation for the thesis/dissertation process and will be provided to students at the early stages of their thesis and dissertation, it will be <u>formally implemented two times</u> during the process:

1) The first formal implementation will be to provide clear feedback by the chair of the committee to the candidate prior to the thesis/dissertation or dissertation proposal defense being scheduled. The scored result can then be used by the candidate to refine their document prior to its presentation to the whole dissertation committee.

2) Once the chair approves the candidate's final thesis/dissertation draft, this rubric will be used by the whole committee to assess the document. This rubric will be distributed when the document is sent to the committee. The rubric will be filled out by each member of the committee prior to the defense and returned to the committee chair. **The rubric is collected by the committee chair following the meeting or emailed to Nicole Dover (nicole.dover@ua.edu).** Rubric information will be summarized by the DGS and provided to the committee chair. *Other written feedback by committee members can be sent to the chair separately (e.g., in the dissertation text). The committee chair is responsible discussing feedback with the student.*

Reset Form

Name _____ Date _____ Meeting (Circle one)

Thesis   Prelim   Dissertation

Skill	Criteria Exemplary Scholarship 10 9	Criteria Developed Scholarship 8 7 6	Criteria Developing Scholarship 5 4 3	Criteria Emerging Scholarship 2 1
Development of Research Question	The question is original and significant to the field. The research has the potential to address critical issues and make a significant contribution.	The question is original and justified by the existing literature. It's potential contribution is well-documented.	The question is original, but its significance to the field is not clear. A clear justification for the research is missing.	The research question is not well developed. Not clear what makes it original, interesting or important.

Skill	Criteria Exemplary Scholarship 10 9	Criteria Developed Scholarship 8 7 6	Criteria Developing Scholarship 5 4 3	Criteria Emerging Scholarship 2 1
Thoroughness of Literature Review	Thorough review that integrates existing literature in a new and insightful way. Identifies gaps in the literature and compellingly argues how the current research will address that gap.	Thorough review that draws connections among perspectives and integrates the literature in a meaningful way. Draws a clear relationship between existing literature and the research question.	Provides a general discussion of previous findings. However, limited viewpoints are represented. Only weak connections are made to the research question.	The literature review does not include important references to the subject matter. No connections are made to the research question.

Skill	Criteria Exemplary Scholarship 10　　9	Criteria Developed Scholarship 8　　7　　6	Criteria Developing Scholarship 5　　4　　3	Criteria Emerging Scholarship 2　　1
Incorporation of Existing Theories	Considers multiple relevant theories. Uses theories to generate hypotheses and considers the implication of the results to the different theories.	Current theories provide a strong framework for the research. Gaps in research identified by the theories is discussed. Impact of research on the theories is explored.	Current theories are identified, but only provide a weak framework for the research. Little discussion about how the research may impact the theory.	Relevant theories are omitted from the discussion. Theoretical framework is unclear.

Skill	Criteria Exemplary Scholarship 10　　9	Criteria Developed Scholarship 8　　7　　6	Criteria Developing Scholarship 5　　4　　3	Criteria Emerging Scholarship 2　　1
Methodological Sophistication Sufficient to Address Questions	Creative method and design are presented with a clear explanation of methodological choices. Alternative means of analysis are considered and discussed.	Creative method and design to address limitations of existing approaches. Connection between method and analyses understood and developed. Multiple methods of analysis are considered.	Exhibits basic understanding of research method and design. Identifies limitations of approach – but not fully addressed. Connection between method and data analysis not clearly developed.	Method does not adequately address the question. Does not consider potential biases/limitations of method.

Skill	Criteria Exemplary Scholarship 10 9	Criteria Developed Scholarship 8 7 6	Criteria Developing Scholarship 5 4 3	Criteria Emerging Scholarship 2 1
Adequately Measures the Constructs of Interest	Creative psychological measurement approach with a clear explanation of measurement choices. Alternative means of measurement are considered and discussed.	Creative psychological measurement approach to address limitations of existing approaches. Connection between measurement and hypotheses understood.	Exhibits basic understanding of psychological measurement. Identifies limitations of measurement – but not fully addressed.	Measures section does not adequately address psychological measurement. Does not consider potential biases/limitations of measurement.

Skill	Criteria Exemplary Scholarship 10 9	Criteria Developed Scholarship 8 7 6	Criteria Developing Scholarship 5 4 3	Criteria Emerging Scholarship 2 1
Clarity of Writing and Scholarly Presentation of Ideas	Writing is fluid, precise and clear. Tone is professional and scholarly. Voice is authoritative and conveys clear understanding.	Writing is fluid, precise and clear. Tone is professional and scholarly.	Writing is organized and clear. May lack adequate transitions and scientific precision.	Heavy reliance on jargon. Difficult to read. Terms not sufficiently defined.
Skill *(Not Used in Prelim Meeting)*	Criteria Exemplary Scholarship 10 9	Criteria Developed Scholarship 8 7 6	Criteria Developing Scholarship 5 4 3	Criteria Emerging Scholarship 2 1
Detailed Analysis, Interpretation, and Discussion is Provided. Conclusions are Well Reasoned and Appropriate for Quality of Results.	Analysis is detailed and appropriately tailored for the results. Interpretations are well-reasoned. Validity of conclusions are rigorously discussed relative to alternative perspectives.	Analysis is thorough. Conclusions are logical and alternatives are considered.	Basic analysis is complete. Conclusions are logical but incomplete. Possible alternatives not discussed.	Analysis of results incomplete. Conclusions not supported by analyses.

Only Scored if Appropriate for Current Project

Skill	Criteria Exemplary Scholarship 10 9	Criteria Developed Scholarship 8 7 6	Criteria Developing Scholarship 5 4 3	Criteria Emerging Scholarship 2 1
Ethical Concerns Adequately Addressed	Specific ethical concerns are addressed and resolved.	General ethical issues (fairness, risks/benefits) are discussed/considered.	Limited consideration of basic ethical issues.	Ethical issues not considered.

Skill	Criteria Exemplary Scholarship 10 9	Criteria Developed Scholarship 8 7 6	Criteria Developing Scholarship 5 4 3	Criteria Emerging Scholarship 2 1
Consideration of Relevant Issues of Diversity	Provides a sophisticated and nuanced analysis of the relevance of the results to diversity issues.	Provides general analysis of diversity considerations and debates. Avoids overgeneralization.	Identifies relevant issues, but lacking in depth of treatment.	Fails to address diversity where relevant.