

School of Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences

Written Dissertation Scoring Rubric

Policy & Instructions

The PhD dissertation is the ultimate educational product and reflects the training of its author and the technical, analytical, and writing skills developed in the doctoral program. The purpose of the rubric is to guide students and dissertation advisory committees as they work together to develop high quality proposals and dissertations. Ultimately, the rubric will be used by the advisory committee to determine if the dissertation has met acceptable standards. In addition, the rubric results will be analyzed to help advisers and departments identify strengths and weaknesses in many different areas. This information can then be used to build on the strengths of graduate programs and modify their weaknesses.

Prior to the writing process, the committee chair should provide a copy of the rubric and discuss the level of quality expected from the student.

Before the dissertation defense, each member of the committee should complete the rubric and submit to the committee chairperson. If there are significant differences of opinion within the committee, the chair can schedule a meeting to reach consensus.

After the dissertation defense and once the student has completed revisions to the dissertation requested by the advisory committee, submitted the final draft to the SGSHS for review of formatting and final revisions made, the committee will sign the Dissertation Signature Form. Submit the individual rubric score sheets to the SGSHS office.

Using the rating scale: A five level rating scale is used for scoring each of the quality indicators in the rubric. In general, ratings of 3 or below are considered acceptable, while ratings of 4 or 5 do not achieve minimal standards for passing. An "NA" (not applicable) category is also used when an indicator on the rubric is not relevant to the manuscript.

A space for comments is provided. This space can be used to provide specific guidance for revision, and it should also be used to praise strong work or noteworthy improvements. More extensive notes can be submitted as a separate attachment or as a marked-up copy of the dissertation.

Definitions of Ratings for Dissertation Rubric

Acceptable:

- 1 - Approved with commendation, the level of scholarship in this dissertation is exceptional.
- 2 - Acceptable as written, all crucial elements are included and adequately described.
- 3 - Approved, although revisions are strongly suggested in one or more important components that are of markedly lesser quality than the other sections. Comments on how to enhance quality are provided by the mentor.

Unacceptable:

- 4- Must be revised and resubmitted because one or more essential components are not satisfactorily described.
- 5- Must be revised and resubmitted because one or more required elements are missing or previous requests for revision were ignored.

Written Dissertation Rubric

Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

Student: _____

Rate 1-5

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1. Abstract contains a concise description of the study, a brief statement of the problem, exposition of methods and procedures, and a summary of finding and implications.

Comments:

2. The introduction section has a clear statement of demonstrating that the focus of the study is on a significant problem that is worthy of study. There is a brief, well-articulated summary of research literature that substantiates the study.

Comments:

3. The Nature of the Study, Specific Research Question, Hypotheses, or Research Objectives are briefly and clearly described.

Comments:

4. The Purpose of the study is described in a logical, explicit manner.

Comments:

5. Operational Definitions of technical terms, jargon, or special work uses are provided.

Comments:

6. The Significance of the study is described in terms of:

- a. knowledge generation,
- b. professional application
- c. positive social change

Comments:

7. There is an introduction that describes

- a. the content of the review
- b. the organization of the review, and
- c. the strategy used for searching the literature

Comments:

8. The review of the related research and literature is clearly related to the problem statement as expresses in:

- a. research questions and hypotheses, or
- b. study questions and study objectives

Comments:

9. The review related research and literature includes

- a. comparisons/contrasts of different points of view or different research outcomes.
- b. the relationship of the study to previous research

Comments:

10. The content of the review is drawn from acceptable peer-reviewed journals or sound academic journals or there is justification for using other sources.

Comments:

11. The review is an integrated, critical essay on the most relevant and current published knowledge of the topic. The review is organized around major ideas or themes.

Comments:

12. The introduction describes how the research design derives logically from the problem or issue statement.

Comments:

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13. The role of the researcher in the data collection procedure is described.
Comments:
-
14. The process by which the data was generated, gathered, and recorded is clearly described.
Comments:
-
15. How and when the data was analyzed is articulated. Procedures for dealing with discrepant cases are described. If a software program is used in the analysis, it is clearly described.
Comments:
-
16. The systems used for keeping track of data and emerging understandings (research logs, reflective journals, cataloging systems) are clearly described.
Comments:
-
17. The findings
a. build logically from the problem and the research design, and
b. are presented in a manner that addresses the research questions.
Comments:
-
18. Discrepant cases and nonconforming data are included in the findings.
Comments:
-
19. Patterns, relationships, and themes described as findings are supported by the data. All salient data are accounted for in the findings.
Comments:
-
20. A discussion on Evidence of Quality shows how this study followed procedures to assure accuracy of the data (e.g. trustworthiness, member checks, etc.). Appropriate evidence occurs in the appendixes (sample transcripts, researcher logs, notes, etc.).
Comments:
-
21. The dissertation
a. follows a standard form and has a professional scholarly appearance
b. is written with correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
c. includes citations for the following: direct quotations, paraphrasing, facts, and references to research studies
d. does not have over-reliance on limited sources, and
e. in-text citations are found in the reference list
Comments:
-
22. The dissertation is written in scholarly language (accurate, balance, objective). The writing is clear, precise, and avoids redundancy. Statements are specific and topical sentences are established for paragraphs. The flow of words is smooth and comprehensible. Bridges are established between ideas.
Comments:
-
23. The dissertation is logically and comprehensively organized. The chapters add up to an integrated "whole". Subheadings are used to identify the logic and movement of the dissertation, and transitions between chapters are smooth and coherent.
Comments:
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24. Additional Comments:
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