

Generic Sample Dissertation Review Rubric

Proposal and Dissertation Quality Indicators

Assign ratings using the shaded fields in this section for each relevant quality indicator for the proposal or dissertation. Complete either the qualitative or quantitative sections for Chapters 3 or 4, depending on which is most appropriate. For proposal rubrics, complete Chapters 1, 2, and 3. For dissertation rubrics, complete all chapters.

Definitions of Ratings for Proposal/Dissertation Quality Indicators

5 = Approved with commendation. The level of scholarship is exceptional in this section of the quality indicators.

4 = Acceptable as written; All crucial elements are included and adequately described.

3 = Approved, although revisions are strongly suggested in one or more important component(s) that are of markedly lesser quality than the rest of the quality indicators in this section.

2 = Must be revised and resubmitted because one or more essential component(s) are not satisfactorily described.

1 = Must be revised and resubmitted because one or more required element(s) are missing or previous requests for revision were ignored.

NA = Not Applicable. This quality indicator does not apply to the document.

<p style="text-align: center;">Chapter 1 (FOR PROPOSAL & DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Rating</i> (Click here ↓)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Page #</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>1. Abstract includes all of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Describes the overall research problem being addressed in the first couple of sentences and indicate why it is important (e.g. who would care if the problem is solved). b. Identifies the purpose and theoretical foundations, if appropriate. c. Summarizes the key research question(s). d. Describes, briefly, the overall research design, methods and data analysis procedures. e. (For the final dissertation): Identifies the key results, one or two conclusions, and recommendations that capture the heart of the research. f. Concludes with a statement on the implications for positive social change. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>2. The Introduction section has a clear statement 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 (by indicating a knowledge gap), with references to more detailed discussions in Chapter 2.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>3. In quantitative studies the Problem Statement concisely states what will be studied by describing at least two variables and a conjectured relationship between them. In qualitative studies the Problem Statement describes the need for increased understanding about the issue to be studied.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>4. The Nature of the Study, Specific Research Questions, Hypotheses, or Research Objectives (as appropriate for the study) are briefly and clearly described. Reference is made to more detailed discussions in Chapter 3.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

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<p>5. The Purpose of the study is described in a logical, explicit manner.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>6. In quantitative studies the theoretical base or in qualitative studies the conceptual framework shows which ideas from the literature ground the research being conducted.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>7. Operational Definitions of technical terms, jargon, or special word uses are provided.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>8. Assumptions, Limitations, Scope and Delimitations provide descriptions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. facts assumed to be true but not actually verified, b. potential weaknesses of the study, c. the bounds of the study. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>9. The Significance of the Study is described in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. how this study will fill a gap in the literature b. professional application, and c. positive social change (improvement of human or social conditions by promoting the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, or societies). <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>10. Chapter 1 ends with a Transition Statement that contains a summary of key points of the study and an overview of the content of the remaining chapters in the study.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p style="text-align: center;">Chapter 2 (FOR PROPOSAL & DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Rating</i> (Click here ↓)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Page #</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>1. There is an Introduction that describes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the content of the review, b. the organization of the review, and c. the strategy used for searching the literature. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>2. The review of related research and literature is clearly related to the problem statement as expressed in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. research questions and hypotheses, or b. study questions and study objectives. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>3. The review of related research and literature includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. comparisons/contrasts of different points of view or different research outcomes, and b. the relationship of the study to previous research. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>4. The review contains concise summaries of literatures that help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. define the most important aspects of the theory that will be examined or tested (for quantitative studies), or b. substantiate the rationale or conceptual framework for the study (for qualitative studies). <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>5. There is literature-based description of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the research variables (quantitative studies), or b. potential themes and perceptions to be explored (qualitative studies). <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>6. The content of the review is drawn from acceptable peer-reviewed journals or sound academic journals or there is a justification for using other sources.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>7. Literature related to the method(s) is reviewed.</p>			

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<p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>8. Literature related to the use of differing methodologies to investigate the outcomes of interest is reviewed.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>9. The review is an integrated, critical essay on the most relevant and current published knowledge on the topic. The review is organized around major ideas or themes.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p style="text-align: center;">Chapter 3 – Qualitative Studies (FOR PROPOSAL & DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Rating</i> (Click here ↓)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Page #</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>1. Introduction describes how the research design derives logically from the problem or issue statement.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>2. Design describes which qualitative tradition or paradigm will be used. The choice of paradigm is justified, with explanations why other likely choices would be less effective.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>3. The Role of the Researcher in the data collection procedure is described.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

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<p>4. Where appropriate, questions and sub questions make sense, are answerable, are few in number, are clearly stated, and are open-ended. When it is proposed that questions will emerge from the study, initial objectives are sufficiently focused.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>5. The context for the study is described and justified. Procedures for gaining access to participants are described. Methods of establishing a researcher-participant working relationship are appropriate.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>6. Measures for ethical protection of participants are adequate.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>7. Criteria for selecting participants are specified and are appropriate to the study. There is a justification for the number of participants, which is balanced with depth of inquiry - the fewer the participants the deeper the inquiry per individual.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>8. Choices about which data to collect are justified. Data collected are appropriate to answer the questions posed in relation to the qualitative paradigm chosen. How and when the data are to be or were collected and recorded is described.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>9. How and when the data will be or were analyzed is articulated. Procedures for dealing with discrepant cases are described. If a software program is used in the analysis, it is clearly described. The coding procedure for reducing information into categories and themes is described.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p align="center">Chapter 3 – Qualitative Studies (FOR PROPOSAL & DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p align="center"><i>Rating</i> (Click here ↓)</p>	<p align="center"><i>Page #</i></p>	<p align="center">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>10. If an exploratory study will be (or was) conducted, its relation to the larger study is explained.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p align="center">Chapter 3 – Quantitative Studies (FOR PROPOSAL & DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p align="center"><i>Rating</i> (Click here ↓)</p>	<p align="center"><i>Page #</i></p>	<p align="center">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>1. Introduction includes a clear outline of the major areas of the chapter.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>2. Research Design and approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. includes a description of the research design and approach, b. provides justification for using the design and approach, and c. derives logically from the problem or issue statement. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>3. Setting and Sample</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. describes the population from which the sample will be or was drawn, b. describes and defends the sampling method including the sampling frame used, c. describes and defends the sample size, d. describes the eligibility criteria for study participants, and e. describes the characteristics of the selected sample. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>4. If a treatment is used, it is described clearly and in detail.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p align="center">Chapter 3 – Quantitative Studies (FOR PROPOSAL & DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p align="center">Rating (Click here ↓)</p>	<p align="center">Page #</p>	<p align="center">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>5. Instrumentation and Materials</p> <p>a. presents descriptions of instrumentation or data collection tools to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -name of instrument, -type of instrument, -concepts measured by instrument, -how scores are calculated and their meaning, -processes for assessment of reliability and validity of the instrument(s), -processes needed to complete instruments by participants, -where raw data are or will be available (appendices, tables, or by request from the researcher), and <p>b. includes a detailed description of data that comprise each variable in the study.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>6. Data Collection and Analysis includes</p> <p>a. an explanation of descriptive and/or inferential analyses used in the study, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -nature of the scale for each variable, -statements of hypotheses related to each research question, -description of parametric, nonparametric, or descriptive analytical tools used, and -description of data collection processes, and <p>b. description of any pilot study results, if applicable.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>7. Measures taken for protection of participants' rights are summarized.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p align="center">Chapter 4 – Qualitative Studies (FOR DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p align="center">Rating (Click here ↓)</p>	<p align="center">Page #</p>	<p align="center">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>

<p align="center">Chapter 4 – Qualitative Studies (FOR DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p align="center">Rating (Click here ↓)</p>	<p align="center">Page #</p>	<p align="center">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>1. The process by which the data were generated, gathered, and recorded is clearly described.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>2. The systems used for keeping track of data and emerging understandings (research logs, reflective journals, cataloging systems) are clearly described.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>3. The findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. build logically from the problem and the research design, and b. are presented in a manner that addresses the research questions. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>4. Discrepant cases and nonconfirming data are included in the findings.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>5. Patterns, relationships, and themes described as findings are supported by the data. All salient data are accounted for in the findings.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>6. A discussion on Evidence of Quality shows how this study followed procedures to assure accuracy of the data (e.g., trustworthiness, member checks, triangulation, etc.). Appropriate evidence occurs in the appendixes (sample transcripts, researcher logs, field notes, etc.). (May appear in chapter 5.)</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p align="center">Chapter 4 – Quantitative Studies (FOR DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p align="center">Rating <i>(Click here</i> ↓)</p>	<p align="center">Page #</p>	<p align="center">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>1. Chapter 4 is structured around the research questions and/or hypotheses addressed in the study, reporting findings related to each.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>2. Research tools:</p> <p>a. Data collection instruments have been used correctly.</p> <p>b. Measures obtained are reported clearly, following standard procedures.</p> <p>c. Adjustments or revisions to the use of standardized research instruments have been justified, and any effects on the interpretation of findings are clearly described.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>3. Overall, data analysis (presentation, interpretation, explanation) is consistent with the research questions or hypotheses and underlying theoretical/conceptual framework of the study.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>4. Data analyses</p> <p>a. logically and sequentially address all research questions or hypotheses, and</p> <p>b. where appropriate, outcomes of hypothesis-testing procedures are clearly reported (e.g., findings support or fail to support....), and</p> <p>c. do not contain any evident statistical errors.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>5. Tables and Figures</p> <p>a. are as self-descriptive as possible, informative, and conform to standard dissertation format,</p> <p>b. are directly related to and referred to within the narrative text included in the chapter,</p> <p>c. have immediately adjacent comments,</p> <p>d. are properly identified (titled or captioned), and</p> <p>e. show copyright permission (if not in the public domain).</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p align="center">Chapter 4 – Quantitative Studies (FOR DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p align="center">Rating (Click here ↓)</p>	<p align="center">Page #</p>	<p align="center">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>6. The comments on findings address observed consistencies and inconsistencies and discuss possible alternate interpretations.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>7. In a concluding section of Chapter 4, outcomes are logically and systematically summarized and interpreted in relation to their importance to the research questions and hypotheses.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p align="center">Chapter 5 (FOR DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p align="center">Rating (Click here ↓)</p>	<p align="center">Page #</p>	<p align="center">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>1. The chapter begins with a brief Overview of why and how the study was done, reviewing the questions or issues being addressed and a brief summary of the findings.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>2. The Interpretation of Findings</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. includes conclusions that address all of the research questions, b. contains references to outcomes in Chapter 4, c. covers all the data, d. is bounded by the evidence collected, and e. relates the findings to a larger body of literature on the topic, including the conceptual/theoretical framework. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p style="text-align: center;">Chapter 5 (FOR DISSERTATION DOCUMENTS) Quality Indicators</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Rating</i> (Click here ↓)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Page #</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p>3. The Implications for Social Change are clearly grounded in the significance section of Chapter 1 and outcomes presented in Chapter 4. The implications are expressed in terms of tangible improvements to individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, or societies.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>4. Recommendations for Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. should flow logically from the conclusions and contain steps to useful action, b. state who needs to pay attention to the results, and c. indicate how the results might be disseminated. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>5. Recommendations for Further Study point to topics that need closer examination and may generate a new round of questions.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>6. For qualitative studies, includes a reflection on the researcher's experience with the research process in which the researcher discusses possible personal biases or preconceived ideas and values, the possible effects of the researcher on the participants or the situation, and her/his changes in thinking as a result of the study.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p>7. The work closes with a strong concluding statement making the "take-home message" clear to the reader.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			

<p align="center">General Comments</p> <p align="center">Comments on the following indicators of quality apply to the manuscript as a whole.</p>	<p align="center">Rating (Click here ↓)</p>	<p align="center">Page #</p>	<p align="center">Committee chair should describe how and where (page #) this concern has been addressed.</p>
<p align="center"><u>Writing Style and Composition</u></p> <p>The dissertation is written in scholarly language (accurate, balanced, objective, tentative). 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.</p> <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			
<p align="center"><u>Organization and Form</u></p> <p>The proposal/dissertation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. is logically and comprehensively organized, using subheadings where appropriate, b. 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, and d. in-text citations are found in the reference list. <p>Comments: (click here→)</p>			