

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences  
Written Dissertation Scoring Rubric

## Instructions

The purpose of the rubric is to guide students and dissertation supervisory committees as they work together to develop high quality proposals and dissertations. The use of the rubric is intended to provide on-going and flexible evaluation and re-evaluation of the proposal and dissertation drafts as they are developed.

**In the writing process**, use the rubric as a suggested outline for the dissertation, and as a basis for feedback on early drafts.

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

**About consensus**: For the final copy of the dissertation, there must be unanimous agreement by the dissertation supervisory committee before the student proceeds to the oral defense (although revisions may be required following the oral defense).

**After the dissertation defense**, and once the student has completed any requested revisions to the manuscript, the committee will review it and make any needed modifications to the ratings in the consensus rubric. The updated rubric should be resubmitted.

**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 above are considered satisfactory, while rates of 1 or 2 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 for quality indicator. 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 manuscript.

### Definitions of Ratings for 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. Comments on how to enhance quality are provided for action in the dissertation draft before the oral.
- 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.

## Dissertation Rubric

Date:   
 Student:

Evaluator:

	<i><b>Rating</b></i>
1. Abstract contains a concise description of the study, a brief statement of the problem, exposition of methods and procedures, and a summary of findings and implications. Comments:	
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. 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, and 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 related research and literature is clearly related to the problem statement as expressed in a. research questions and hypotheses, or b. study questions and study objectives Comments:	
9. The review of 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 on 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:	

<p>13. The role of the researcher in the data collection procedure is described. Comments:</p>	
<p>14. The process by which the data were generated, gathered, and recorded is clearly described. Comments:</p>	
<p>15. How and when the data were analyzed is articulated. Procedures for dealing with discrepant cases are described. If a software program is used in the analysis, it is clearly Comments:</p>	
<p>16. The systems used for keeping tract of data and emerging understandings (research logs, reflective journals, cataloging systems) are clearly described. Comments:</p>	
<p>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:</p>	
<p>18. Discrepant cases and nonconforming data are included in the findings. Comments:</p>	
<p>19. Patterns, relationships, and themes described as findings are supported by the data. All salient data are accounted for in the findings. Comments:</p>	
<p>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:</p>	
<p>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:</p>	
<p>22. The dissertation is written in scholarly language (accurate, balanced, 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:</p>	
<p>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:</p>	