**Dissertation Proposal Review Rubric**

Illinois State University Mennonite College of Nursing

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| --- |
| Student |
| Committee Member |
| Date |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Abstract | Rating |
| Abstract contains a concise description of the study, a brief statement of the problem, and exposition of methods and procedures. |  |

Comments:

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Rating |
| Introduction | Demonstrates that the focus of the study is on an important clinical problem that is worthy of study. |  |
| Describes the purpose of the study in a logical, explicit manner. |  |
| The nature of the study, specific research question, hypotheses, or research objectives are briefly and clearly described. |  |
| The significance of the study is described in terms of knowledge generation and professional application. |  |

Comments:

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Rating |
| Literature Review | The review of related research and literature is clearly related to the problem statement as expressed in:  a. Research questions and hypothesis, or  b. Study questions and objectives |  |
| The review of related research and literature includes: Comparisons/contrasts of different points of view or different research outcomes and the relationship of the study to previous research |  |
| The content of the review is drawn from acceptable peer‐reviewed journals or sound academic journals or there is justification for using other sources. |  |
| The review is an integrated, critical essay on the most relevant and current  published knowledge on the topic. Historically important sources are included if relevant. The review is organized around major ideas or themes. |  |
| The theory and/or theoretical framework is appropriate; The relationship between the framework and problem is well established by literature support; Concepts from the framework guide the development of the study. |  |

Comments:

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|  | | Rating |
| Methods | The introduction describes how the research design derives logically from the research problem, hypotheses and/or questions and theoretical framework (if appropriate). |  |
| The process by which the data will be generated, gathered, recorded and managed is clearly described |  |
| How and when the data will be analyzed is articulated |  |

Comments:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Rating |
| Writing | Follows a standard form and has a professional scholarly appearance |  |
| Is written with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling, using active voice |  |
| Citations are presented consistently and professionally throughout the text and in the reference list. |  |
| Writing is clear, precise, concise and accurate, avoiding jargon |  |
| Logically organized |  |

Comments:

Adapted from Texas Tech Health Sciences Center rubric Moore \dissertation rubric 10‐1‐08 and the Duke Thesis Assessment Protocol, Duke University 2007

Description of the Rating Scale

**Outstanding**

* Is original and significant, ambitious, brilliant, clear, clever, coherent, compelling, concise, creative, elegant, engaging, exciting, interesting, insightful, persuasive, sophisticated, surprising, and thoughtful
* Is very well written and organized
* Is synthetic and interdisciplinary
* Connects components in a seamless way
* Exhibits mature, independent thinking
* Has a point of view and a strong, confident, independent, and authoritative voice
* Asks new questions or addresses an important question or problem
* Clearly states the problem and why it is important
* Displays a deep understanding of a massive amount of complicated literature
* Exhibits command and authority over the material
* Argument is focused, logical, rigorous, and sustained
* Is theoretically sophisticated and shows a deep understanding of theory
* Has a brilliant research design
* Uses or develops new tools, methods, approaches, or types of analyses
* Is thoroughly researched
* Has rich data from multiple sources
* Analysis is comprehensive, complete, sophisticated, and convincing
* Results are significant
* Conclusion ties the whole thing together
* Is publishable in top-tier journals
* Is of interest to a larger community and changes the way people think
* Pushes the discipline’s boundaries and opens new areas for research

**Very Good**

* Is solid
* Is well written and organized
* Has some original ideas, insights, and observations, but is less original, significant, ambitious, interesting, and exciting than the outstanding category
* Has a good question or problem that tends to be small and traditional
* Is the next step in a research program
* Shows understanding and mastery of the subject matter
* Has a strong, comprehensive, and coherent argument
* Includes well-executed research
* Demonstrates technical competence
* Uses appropriate (standard) theory, methods, and techniques
* Obtains solid, expected results or answers
* Misses opportunities to completely explore interesting issues and connections
* Makes a modest contribution to the field but does not open it up

**Acceptable**

* Is workmanlike
* Demonstrates technical competence
* Shows the ability to do research
* Is not very original or significant
* Is not interesting, exciting, or surprising
* Displays little creativity, imagination, or insight
* Writing is pedestrian and plodding
* Has a weak structure and organization
* Has a question or problem that is not exciting—is often highly derivative or an extension of the adviser’s work
* Displays a narrow understanding of the field
* Reviews the literature adequately—knows the literature but is not critical of it or does not discuss what is important
* Can sustain an argument, but the argument is not imaginative, complex, or convincing
* Demonstrates understanding of theory at a simple level, and theory is minimally to competently applied to the problem
* Uses standard methods
* Has an unsophisticated analysis—does not explore all possibilities and misses connections
* Has predictable results that are not exciting
* Makes a small contribution

**Unacceptable**

* Is poorly written
* Has spelling and grammatical errors
* Has a sloppy presentation
* Contains errors or mistakes
* Plagiarizes or deliberately misreads or misuses sources
* Does not understand basic concepts, processes, or conventions of the discipline
* Lacks careful thought
* Looks at a question or problem that is trivial, weak, unoriginal, or already solved
* Does not understand or misses relevant literature
* Has a weak, inconsistent, self-contradictory, unconvincing, or invalid argument
* Does not handle theory well, or theory is missing or wrong
* Relies on inappropriate or incorrect methods
* Has data that are flawed, wrong, false, fudged, or misinterpreted
* Has wrong, inappropriate, incoherent, or confused analysis
* Includes results that are obvious, already known, unexplained, or misinterpreted
* Has unsupported or exaggerated interpretation
* Does not make a contribution

From “How to Grade a Dissertation” Barbara E. Lovitts Academe Nov-Dec 2005