

MSPH RESEARCH THESIS RUBRIC

Suggested Guidelines (For Reference Only)

This rubric is designed to assist in the evaluation of research postgraduate students' ability to successfully prepare their thesis and is applicable to all programmes that have a thesis requirement. The rubric includes evaluation criteria, and allows for the addition of criteria important to individual departments/programmes.

This rubric should:

1. provide research postgraduate students with a clear understanding of the elements of their written MSPH thesis deemed most important to the defense committee;
2. provide multiple perspectives on students' ability to successfully prepare their research in respect to their chosen field of study;
3. encourage conversations among departmental colleagues about improving graduate student learning outcomes and assessment;
4. serve as a potential source of programme-level data on the attainment of the programme's learning outcome, for submission as part of their assessment report.

Characteristics of the Introduction/Literature Review:

1. Includes a substantive literature review that places the student's research within its appropriate scientific context;
2. Identifies the specific gaps in knowledge that the student intends to address;
3. Makes an argument for the broader significance of his/her research when addressing these.

Characteristics of the Methodology:

1. Provides an overview of the methodological approach;
2. Provides sufficient details so that readers can judge the appropriateness of the quantitative/qualitative methods;

Characteristics of the Results:

1. Describes the experimental rationale, approach and findings;
2. Interprets the results within the specific scientific context constructed in the Introduction ;

Characteristics of the Discussion/Conclusion:

1. Briefly highlights major findings, acknowledging complexities of the data, as well as inconsistencies and limitations;
2. Explicitly relates the implications of their research findings (results) within the scientific context constructed in the introduction. The narrative should draw connections between the student's research findings and other published work;
3. Highlights how the study could lead to future research within the field;

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Student Name:		Registration No:	
Thesis Title:			
Supervisor			
Date			

For each of the categories, assign a score of Unsatisfactory through Excellent. Enter scores in the rightmost column. Evaluators are encouraged to assign 'Unsatisfactory' to any work sample that does not meet the benchmark level performance.

	Unsatisfactory (40-45%)	Fair (50%-59%)	Satisfactory (60%-69%)	Good (70%-79%)	Excellent (80% and above)
Introduction/Literature Review					
Evidence	Hastily prepared; limited in scope; neither current nor complete; does not critically evaluate opinions of experts.	Current but incomplete; shows some knowledge of some of the primary literature; accepts opinions of experts.	Current but not comprehensive; shows some knowledge of the primary literature; accepts most opinions of experts.	Current and complete; shows knowledge of the primary literature; evaluates some opinions of experts.	Current, comprehensive, complete;; shows evaluative knowledge of the primary literature; critically evaluates opinions of experts.
Research question/ Theme/rationale	No research question(s)/theme; no rationale for the study.	Research question(s)/theme is present but rationale is not appropriate; does not clearly direct reader to the theme/hypothesis.	Research question(s)/theme is present; rationale for the research question(s) available but difficult to follow; does not guide the reader directly to the theme/hypothesis.	Research question(s)/theme is clear; develops a reasonable rationale for the research question(s); reader can discern theme/hypothesis.	Research question(s)/theme is clear; develops a concrete rationale for the research question(s); guides the reader directly to the theme/hypothesis.
Synthesis of literature	Literature is fragmented; no synthesis.	Provides some synthesis of the literature; relationship between the literature and the research question(s) is present but not developed.	Provides a modest synthesis of the literature; relationship between the literature and the research question(s) is present and is partially developed.	Provides a mostly focused synthesis of the literature but some fragmentation; shows a good relationship between the literature and the research question(s).	Provides a focused synthesis of the literature; shows an excellent relationship between the literature and the research question(s).
Methodology					
Research Design	Omits important information; insufficient detail;	Appropriate procedures; described in minimal detail; insufficient for	Appropriate procedures; described in detail; sometimes sufficient for	Appropriate procedures; described in detail, always sufficient for replication;	Appropriate, clear; describes procedures in detail, precisely

	inappropriate design; no controls.	replication; missing some controls but data can still stand.	replication; adequate controls.	good controls.	describing how data will be collected and handled; attention to relevant detail; has good controls; applies new methods or comes up with novel approach.
Execution of procedures	Shows evidence of sloppy data collection; much of the data is of low quality.	Shows evidence of minimally acceptable data collection procedures; data quality occasionally inconsistent.	Shows evidence of acceptable data collection procedures; adequate data quality.	Shows evidence of good data collection procedures; good data quality.	Shows evidence of rigorous data collection; excellent data quality.
Handling of Data	Shows little insight; data not organized; misses patterns in data; no connection to hypotheses.	Consistently organizes data, though not necessarily in patterns; data connected to hypotheses but rarely in patterns.	Consistently organizes data; some data organized into patterns; some patterns are connected to hypotheses.	Consistently organizes data into patterns; most of the patterns are connected to hypotheses.	Shows novel insight; always accurately organizes data into patterns; always connects patterns to hypotheses.
Analysis of Data	No analysis or use of inappropriate statistical tools.	Statistical tools used but with only limited understanding of statistical foundation.	Accurate use of statistics; acceptable understanding of statistical foundation.	Accurate statistical application based on good statistical foundation; demonstrates understanding of statistical analysis.	Done rigorously; strong statistical foundation for the analysis; creative analytical methods; demonstrates excellent understanding of statistical analysis.
Data Presentation	Hastily prepared; poorly presented figures and graphs; ambiguous.	Acceptable figures and graphs but not clearly presented.	Acceptable figures and graphs; clearly presented.	Unambiguous and clearly presented figures and graphs.	Unambiguous and clearly presented figures and graphs; shows creativity in presentation.
Results					
Communication of Results	Does not present results of the data collection.	Results are simply stated in an objective manner.	Results are adequately stated in an objective manner.	Results of the data collection are described limitedly to reveal meaningful relationships that exist in the data.	Results of the data collection use techniques that describe the data and reveal meaningful relationships that exist in the data.

Discussion & Conclusion					
Discussion	Makes no attempt to discuss the implications of the findings.	Makes a partial attempt to discuss the implications of the findings.	Makes an adequate attempt to discuss the implications of the findings.	Makes a good attempt to discuss the implications of the findings.	Provides a compelling discussion of the implications of the findings (positive and negative), placing their importance within the context of current knowledge.
Conclusions	Conclusion is not clear; not succinct; not complete. Conclusion does not clearly follow from the results.	Conclusion is often unclear; not succinct. Conclusion partially follows from results and is explained in terms of the analysis of the data, showing partial methodological and conceptual rigor.	Conclusion is mostly clear, succinct, and complete. Conclusion adequately follows from results and is explained in terms of the analysis of the data, showing adequate methodological and conceptual rigor.	Conclusion is clear, succinct, and complete. Conclusion clearly follows from results and is explained in terms of the analysis of the data, showing good methodological and conceptual rigor.	Conclusion is extremely clear, succinct, and complete. Conclusion clearly follows from results, is accurately described in detail in terms of data analysis, showing excellent methodological and conceptual rigor.
Interpretation	Cannot back up all interpretation with valid results; claims findings that are not evident from the data.	Can back up most interpretation with valid results; but some interpretation is speculative.	Can back up most interpretation with valid results but some interpretations speculative; does not claim findings that are not evident from the data.	Can back up most interpretation with valid results; does not claim findings that are not evident from the data.	Can back up all interpretation with valid results; does not claim findings that are not evident from the data.
Synthesis /Understanding	Does not understand the data or their implications.	Some understanding of the data but not all their implications; synthesizes information to a small degree.	Synthesizes and integrates some of the data; understanding of most of the data but not all their implications.	Synthesizes and integrates most data; clear understanding of most of the data and their implications.	Synthesizes and integrates all data; clear understanding of data and their implications.
Integration with current knowledge	Improper use of citations and fails to integrate findings with the current literature.	Partial use of citations but minimal integration of findings with the current literature.	Adequate use of citations and adequate integration of findings with some of the current literature.	Good use of citations and integration of findings with the current literature.	Excellent use of citations and thorough integration of findings with the current literature.
Extrapolation and	Shows no insight into	Shows some insight into	Shows insight into the	Shows insight into the	Shows insight into the

global significance	the question; shows no evidence of significance beyond the specific research field; did does not discuss the broader impact or the societal importance of what it means to the world at large.	the question and extrapolates to future questions; shows little evidence of significance beyond the specific research field.	question and extrapolates to future questions; shows some evidence of significance beyond the specific research field.	question and extrapolates to future questions; shows evidence of significance beyond the specific research field.	question and extrapolates to future questions; shows evidence of significance beyond the specific research field; discusses broader impact; says something about the societal importance of what it means to the world at large.
Limitations	No discussion of the limitations of the study.	Minimal discussion of the limitations of the study and does not offer solutions.	Modest discussion of the limitations of the study and how these limitations moderate conclusions; does not offer solutions.	Discusses the limitations of the study and how these limitations moderate conclusions; offers reasonable solutions.	Discusses the limitations of the study and how these limitations moderate conclusions; offers appropriate solutions.
References					
References & Citations	Very few or no peer-reviewed references are used. No reference list is included. References are not cited appropriately throughout the document. Few appropriate citations are used. Citations and references are not presented in proper format and need significant revision.	Less than half of the references are peer-reviewed. References are listed on the reference list but rarely cited in the text. A moderate number of appropriate citations are used, but more may be needed. Citations and references are not presented in proper format, and are in need of moderate revision.	At least half of the references are peer-reviewed. The majority of the references are appropriately cited using a reference manager. A high number of appropriate citations are used, Few, if any, additional sources may be needed. The Majority of citations and references are presented in proper format, and are in need of minor revision.	All or the majority (2 or less are not peer-reviewed) of the references are peer-reviewed. All references are appropriately cited using a reference manager. Grey literature also explored and cited. All citations are appropriate. Additional sources are not needed. All citations and references are presented in proper format and do not need revision.	All of the references are from peer-reviewed publications. All references are appropriately cited using a reference manager. Grey literature explored comprehensively and cited. All citations are appropriate. Additional sources are not needed. All citations and references are presented in proper format and do not need revision.

Summary of Comments on Thesis Chapters

Chapter	Comments

Overall Marks of written work _____

(Tick appropriate box)

Thesis is recommended without any change.

Thesis is recommended with minor changes verified by Supervisor

Thesis is recommended with Major changes verified by Supervisor/ Examiner

I am not convinced and do not recommend the Thesis

Completed by: _____ Date: _____