

Procedural Guidelines for Examining PhD Theses

GUIDELINES

The primary purpose of a PhD programme is to help candidates create new knowledge by conducting original research. To do this, candidates are expected to produce a thesis which demonstrates:

- a) Acquisition and interrogation of theoretical knowledge of their field of study.
- b) Development of a deep, critical understanding of methodological theory.
- c) Application of a) and b) in developing and conducting original research.
- d) Understanding of the theoretical and practical significance of the research findings.

Descriptors for rubric

Attempted but Unacceptable:	Thesis includes this element, but it is not presented at the level expected at the doctoral level
Weak:	Quality of presentation barely meets standard of doctoral level work
Acceptable:	Quality of presentation meets minimum standard of doctoral level work
Good-Very Good:	Quality of presentation is quite high and above minimum standard of doctoral work
Excellent:	Quality of presentation is exemplary
NA (Not Applicable):	Please tick this column for indicators that are not evaluated in your discipline <i>If an indicator is deemed NA (Not Applicable) please pro rate the score awarded</i>

LEVEL OF COMPETENCE								
Depth and breadth of knowledge of field of study/ area of professional practice								
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	NA	Score	Comments
Research problem is clearly articulated, justified, and relevant	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
Theories, concepts, models are used appropriately to ground the work	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
SUBTOTAL							/20	
Literature Review								
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	NA	Score	Comments
Shows deep understanding of a body of relevant knowledge	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
Demonstrates the competence to interrogate and critically appraise the literature and to identify relevant gaps	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
Identifies and explains a clear theoretical positioning for the research	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
SUBTOTAL							/30	

Competence for Research and scholarship - conceptualisation, design, implementation, and analysis of the research								
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	NA	Score	Comments
<i>Selection of Research approach, methodology, instrumentation, sampling procedures and protocols, data collection, data analysis are aligned and appropriate to produce answers to research questions</i>	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
<i>Justification of Research approach and design demonstrates deep engagement with appropriate methodological theory</i>	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
<i>Conduct of Research (instrumentation, sampling, procedures and protocols, data collection, data analysis) was conducted appropriately in keeping with principles and guidelines consistent with selected research approach, methodology</i>	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
<i>Ethical Practices Issues relating to issues of ethics and rigor have been considered, adhered to and addressed</i>	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
SUBTOTAL							/40	

Application of knowledge								
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	NA	Score	Comments
<i>Outlines, explains, and discusses</i> new knowledge/theory/model developed, as contribution to field of specialisation	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
<i>Demonstrates understanding</i> of how new knowledge/theory/model developed, contributes to field of specialisation	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
SUBTOTAL							/30	
Awareness of limits of knowledge								
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	NA	Score	Comments
<i>Recognition and discussion</i> of limitations of research results in relation to methodology/literature/current field of specialisation	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
SUBTOTAL							/10	

Communication Skills								
	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	NA	Score	Comments
Clear, effective, cogent <i>communication</i> of complex and/or ambiguous issues and ideas	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
Proper use of required stylistic conventions	Attempted but Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Good-Very Good	Excellent			
SUBTOTAL							/20	
TOTAL							/150	

Please use the following questions as a guide for writing your report:

What are the strengths of the thesis?

What areas of the thesis need to be developed more?

If any areas are unacceptable, please explain your reasons for this assessment. What can be done to improve this section?

To what extent does this thesis make an original contribution to the candidate's field of specialisation?

How do you evaluate this thesis as an indication of competence for future scholarship?

A written mark of ≥80% may be considered eligible for high commendation pending deliberation at the Examiner's meeting following the oral examination.

Adapted from:

Edd Doctoral Study Procedures and Documents. Centre for Research Quality. Walden University.
<https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/research-center/program-documents/edd>

Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents' Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Level Expectations Appendix One. <https://oucqa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/APPENDIX-1.pdf>

UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards
The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (October 2014).
<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>