

PhD Dissertation Defense

Instructions for faculty committees

The following rubrics were developed by a subcommittee of the PhD in Education & Human Development faculty, reviewed and adopted by the faculty in May 2019.

These rubrics define what the faculty expect of candidates in relation to the student learning outcomes (SLO's) associated with the Dissertation Proposal and the final Dissertation. The rubrics are a significant portion of our program assessment scheme, which is being developed in accordance with program needs, university and HLC guidelines.

The scoring guide should be completed by the candidate's faculty committee, reviewed by the committee with the candidate, and submitted to Scott Bauer directly after the proposal or final defense meeting (not after required revisions or based on final submission). This will provide us with formative data for program improvement. As guidance, please consider the following when scoring:

- Since our scores of 2 and 3 are labeled "met" and "fully met," this roughly equates to "pass" with minor revisions in terms of the Graduate School rating form. The candidate will not be asked to participate in another defense meeting with the committee.
- A rating of "1" – partially met – is roughly equivalent to "pass with conditions," generally requiring considerable revision. At the committee's discretion, the corrected proposal or dissertation may be required for review by either the primary advisor alone, or the entire committee. Also at the committee's discretion, another defense meeting maybe required, though this would be untypical.
- A rating of "0" – not met – requires major revision to the document and another defense meeting.

Each committee has the discretion to provide the summative judgment of its choice on the Graduate School rating form based on a holistic assessment of the document and meeting.

PhD Program Goal:

To prepare candidates to serve as scholars and researchers who will in turn prepare researchers and future scholars for institutions of higher education (IHEs) or organizations focused on research.

Student learning objectives: Graduates of the PhD in Education & Human Development program will be able to...

- 1 Apply theories of learning and development to understand fundamental questions involving education, communities, and/or families
- 2 Identify and analyze an issue related to equity
- 3 Apply a critical lens to interrogate existing research and theoretical perspectives
- 4 Critically apply theories, methods, and knowledge to address questions in their primary field
- 5 Demonstrate skills and knowledge at a level required for college and university teaching
- 6 Plan and conduct research of significance
- 7 Demonstrate skills in oral and written communication sufficient to publish and present work in their field or prepare grant proposals

Dissertation Defense Evaluation Rubric

Component	SLO	Fully met (3)	Met (2)	Partially Met (1)	Not met (0)
Dissertation overview Score: _____	2	Effectively develops a set of researchable, supportable and potentially impactful study questions / hypotheses. The document is well organized and maintains a tightly integrated focus throughout the manuscript.	Manuscript includes a set of researchable and supportable questions / hypotheses. The manuscript is largely organized and the focus of the manuscript is generally maintained.	Manuscript develops a set of questions / hypotheses, but lacks a clear organizational structure and cohesive focus; some sections are clearly organized and focused and others are not.	Questions / hypotheses are not researchable or justifiable. Focus of the manuscript is hard to follow; lacks organizational structure.
CF	4	Clearly identifies or develops a conceptual model	Begins to identify or develop a conceptual model	The conceptual framework is evident but needs	A conceptual framework grounded in the

Component	SLO	Fully met (3)	Met (2)	Partially Met (1)	Not met (0)
Score: _____		that defines constructs studied and their purported relationships. Framework is used to ground the study within what is already known and helps establish what the present study will contribute to the knowledge base and/or practice.	that defines constructs studied and their purported relationships. Framework could usefully ground the study within what is already known and help establish the significance of the study, but these connections require elaboration.	to be further grounded in the relevant knowledge base.	literature is undeveloped or missing
Review of relevant research Score: _____	3	Provides a substantial synthesis of literature from related fields. Places work within larger context.	Provides a meaningful summary of the literature. Shows understanding of relevant literature	Fails to cite important or relevant scholarship. Misinterprets research findings.	Provides little or no relevant scholarship.
Methodology Score: _____	6	Identifies and justifies appropriate methodologies and research techniques and describes fully how and why the method enacted differed from the method proposed. Research plan enacted was suitable to study purposes. Limitations of the method are clear.	Identifies appropriate methodologies and research techniques to answer research question(s) but arguments for justification and suitability are not adequately present. Description of how and why the method enacted was adjusted from the method proposed requires elaboration or clarification. Limitation are presented but require elaboration.	Many details of method and/or justification are missing or vague, as are descriptions of adjustments to the research plan since proposal and/or description of limitations.	The methodologies described are either not suited or poorly suited to test questions / hypotheses. The methodology is under-developed or required significant adjustments that are not presented or were not done.
Results section	6	The results clearly align with study	The results discussed are	The results section is under-	Methods are inappropriate to

Component	SLO	Fully met (3)	Met (2)	Partially Met (1)	Not met (0)
Score: _____		questions and the research conducted. Evidence provided fully addresses the research question(s), is well integrated and discussed. Results are discussed thoroughly and accurately.	consistent with questions and the data analytic plan. Evidence is presented but relationships between evidence and questions is sometimes unclear or evidence is insufficient to address all research question(s).	developed or incomplete. Results are not always described accurately or certain analyses that were expected were not done or presented.	test research question(s) or results are discussed incorrectly or inappropriately.
Discussion section Score: _____	4	Provides an integration of the findings within the extant literature. Clarifies how the findings and research questions / hypotheses advance the field. Accurately addresses strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of the current study and implications for future research	Adequately integrates the findings within the extant literature. Addresses how the findings and research questions / hypotheses advance the field. Attends to issues of strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of the current study.	The integration of the findings within the extant literature is superficial or incomplete. Poorly justifies the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of the current study.	No integration of the findings within the extant literature. Fails to attend to design strengths and weaknesses.
Clarity, organization, grammar and references Score: _____	7	The manuscript is well structured with clear transitions and flow of thought. Sentences and paragraphs are grammatically correct. Uses subheadings appropriately. Manuscript complies with formatting requirements of the Graduate School and properly cites references.	The manuscript is well structured but requires revision to provide clearer transitions and flow of thought. The writing is grammatically correct with only occasional errors, but some sections lack clarity. Manuscript complies with formatting requirements of the Graduate School and properly cites references.	The manuscript requires substantial revision to provide effective structure, transitions and flow of thought. The manuscript contains frequent grammatical errors and/or many sections lack clarity. Manuscript needs some updating to comply with formatting requirements of the Graduate School. Citations	The manuscript is poorly written and confusing. Ideas are not communicated effectively. Formatting and/or references need considerable revision.

Component	SLO	Fully met (3)	Met (2)	Partially Met (1)	Not met (0)
		Reference list matches citations	Reference list matches citations with few omissions.	and/or reference list need editing.	
<p>Oral presentation and response to questions</p> <p>Score: _____</p>	7	Presentation provides a thorough and clear overview of the proposed study. Candidate listens carefully, is open to critique, seeks to understand queries and responds fully to questions.	Presentation describes the study but clarifying questions are necessary to fully understand the study. Candidate is responsive to questions, but is at times closed to critique or fails to seek understanding.	Presentation provides an overview of the proposed study but lacks detail on important aspects. Candidate is unresponsive to some questions or fails to seek understanding on suggestions for improvement.	Presentation provides only a cursory overview of the proposed study or lacks significant details. Candidate is unresponsive to question and closed to critique or suggestions.

General comments, recommendations:

PhD Dissertation Defense Scoring Report

Candidate name: _____ Date of defense: _____

Primary advisor : _____ Meeting chair: _____

Rating scale: **Fully met (3) Met (2) Partially Met (1) Not met (0)**

Component		Notes
Dissertation overview Score: _____		
CF Score: _____		
Review of relevant research Score: _____		
Methodology Score: _____		
Results section Score: _____		
Discussion section Score: _____		

Component		Notes
<p style="text-align: center;">Clarity, organization, grammar and references</p> <p>Score: _____</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Oral presentation and response to questions</p> <p>Score: _____</p>		

Revision requirements:

Additional comments: