Program Assessment Rubric  
Final M.S. Thesis Defense and Exam  
and Final Ph.D. Dissertation Defense

Degree Objective: M.S. _____  Ph.D. _____  
Date of the Defense/Exam:  Semester: ______________  Year: ____________

This form is to be used as part of our graduate assessment plan and is not intended to be a part of the student’s file. Names are not needed. The results will be tallied for graduating students and will not include student or faculty names. The tallies will be reviewed annually by the Graduate Affairs Committee to note trends so we can better address program improvements. This is to be used to identify areas within the program where we need to do a better job in preparing students in the future. Advisory committee members should keep this in mind in completing the assessment.

Directions: Evaluate the effort related to this M.S. thesis and defense or Ph.D. dissertation and defense so we can determine if there are things we should address to improve the program. For each score below 3, comment on what should be targeted to avoid this problem for future students. The committee chair will complete the rubric in collaboration with the entire committee before leaving the defense. The committee chair will turn in the completed form to Karen Simmons as part of our graduate assessment plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For development of future students, could we do anything to improve …</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (Marginally acceptable) - Program needs to address this inadequacy for future students. Cite examples in the comments section.</th>
<th>Could Use Some Improvement</th>
<th>Meets Standard – Typical of what is expected for the degree</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| … writing skills of our students? | Writing quality of the initial draft of the thesis/dissertation was poor  
- Writing courses should be strongly recommended a | Writing quality of the initial draft of the thesis/dissertation was good  
- Writing courses might help | Writing quality of the initial draft of the thesis/dissertation was sound, good quality | |
| … the critical analysis of research literature by our students? | Critical analysis of the literature in the initial draft of the thesis/dissertation was poor; Numerous problems  
- Review of literature should be emphasized, e.g., journal clubs, lab group journal reviews | Overall quality of the critical analysis of the literature was good  
- Greater emphasis of literature critique would be useful | An example of sound, good quality critical analysis | |

(Over)
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **… students’ ability to design research projects?** | Throughout the study there was little student contribution to the project design  
• Training in critical thinking and organizational skills are needed<sup>b</sup> | Student was hesitant to be involved in the project design; showed some lack of interest in designing the project  
• Training in critical thinking and organizational skills are needed | An example of the level of involvement in the project design that is expected | |
| **… students’ ability to analyze data adequately?** | Data analysis was poorly understood throughout the preparation of the thesis/dissertation  
• Additional or different statistical coursework is needed<sup>c</sup> | Some understanding of the analysis of the data was exhibited  
• Additional or different statistical coursework could be of assistance | An example of good understanding of data analysis | |
| **… students’ ability to draw interpretations and conclusions from their research?** | Interpretations and conclusions drawn in the initial draft of the thesis/dissertation was poor  
• Training in critical thinking skills are needed<sup>c</sup> | Interpretations and conclusions drawn in the initial draft of the thesis/dissertation was good  
• Training in critical thinking skills would be useful | An example of sound, good quality interpretations and conclusions | |

<sup>a</sup> Possible suggested courses: UNIV 1117 Basic Composition for Multilingual Writers, UNIV 2202, Academic Writing for Multilingual Students or UNIV 2203, Improving Academic Writing

<sup>b</sup> Possible suggested courses: GRSC 8010, 8020

<sup>c</sup> Note what statistic courses were taken.

Comments:

(Over)