

Doctor of Business Administration - Thesis Marking Descriptor

Suggested Guidelines

This DBA rubric was designed to help evaluate the College DBA students' ability to prepare their thesis and is applicable to the DBA program. The rubric includes evaluation criteria and allows for adding criteria important to individual departments/programs. The rubric below is for reference only and the College's examiners are invited to complete the "*Thesis Assessment Form*."

This DBA rubric will:

- provide DBA students with a clear understanding of the elements of their written doctoral thesis deemed most important to external and internal College managers;
- provide multiple perspectives on DBA students' ability to successfully prepare their research in respect to their chosen field of study; and,
- encourage conversations amongst the College's DBA team about improving DBA student learning outcomes and assessment.

Characteristics of the Introduction/Literature Review:

- includes a substantive literature review that places the DBA student's research within its appropriate scientific context;
- identifies the specific gaps in knowledge that the DBA student intends to address; and,
- makes an argument for the broader significance of their research when addressing these.

Characteristics of the Methodology:

- provides an overview of the methodological approach; and,
- provides sufficient details so that readers can judge the appropriateness of the quantitative/qualitative methods;

Characteristics of the Results:

- describes the experimental rationale, approach, and findings; and,

- provides details to confirm the validity and reliability of both the data and analysis conducted; and,
- interprets the results within the specific scientific context constructed in the Introduction.

Characteristics of the Discussion/Conclusion:

- briefly highlights major findings, acknowledging complexities of the data, as well as inconsistencies and limitations;
- 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; and,
- highlights how the study could lead to future research within the field.

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For each of the categories, assign a score of 1 through to 5. Enter scores in the rightmost column.
 External and internal examiners are encouraged to assign a score of one to any work that does not meet the benchmark level performance.

Attribute	Outstanding 5	Very Good 4	Acceptable 3	Marginal Pass 2	Deficient 1	Score
Introduction /Literature Review						
Evidence	Current, comprehensive, complete;; shows evaluative knowledge of the primary literature; critically evaluates opinions of experts.	Current and complete; shows knowledge of the primary literature; evaluates some opinions of experts.	Current but not comprehensive; shows some knowledge of the primary literature; accepts most opinions of experts.	Current but incomplete; shows some knowledge of some of the primary literature; accepts opinions of experts.	Hastily prepared; limited in scope; neither current nor complete; does not critically evaluate opinions of experts.	
Research question/ Theme/rationale	Research question(s)/theme is clear; develops a concrete rationale for the research question(s); guides 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 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 present but rationale is not appropriate; does not clearly direct reader to the theme/hypothesis.	No research question(s)/theme; no rationale for the study.	
Synthesis of literature	Provides a focused synthesis of the literature; shows an excellent relationship between the literature and the research question(s).	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 modest synthesis of the literature; relationship between the literature and the research question(s) is present and is partially developed.	Provides some synthesis of the literature; relationship between the literature and the research question(s) is present but not developed.	Literature is fragmented; no synthesis.	
Methodology						
Research Design	Appropriate, clear; describes procedures in	Appropriate procedures; described in detail, always	Appropriate procedures; described in detail; sometimes	Appropriate procedures; described in minimal detail;	Omits important information; insufficient	

	detail, precisely describing how data will be collected and handled; attention to relevant detail; has good controls; applies new methods or comes up with novel approach.	sufficient for replication; good controls.	sufficient for replication; adequate controls.	insufficient for replication; missing some controls but data can still stand.	detail; inappropriate design; no controls.	
Execution of procedures	Shows evidence of rigorous data collection; excellent data quality.	Shows evidence of good data collection procedures; good data quality.	Shows evidence of acceptable data collection procedures; adequate data quality.	Shows evidence of minimally acceptable data collection procedures; data quality occasionally inconsistent.	Shows evidence of sloppy data collection; much of the data is of low quality.	
Handling of Data	Shows novel insight; always accurately organizes data into patterns; always connects patterns to hypotheses.	Consistently organizes data into patterns; most of the patterns are connected to hypotheses.	Consistently organizes data; some data organized into patterns; some patterns are connected to hypotheses.	Consistently organizes data, though not necessarily in patterns; data connected to hypotheses but rarely in patterns.	Shows little insight; data not organized; misses patterns in data; no connection to hypotheses.	
Analysis of Data	Done rigorously; strong foundation for the analysis; creative analytical methods; demonstrates excellent understanding of analysis.	Accurate application based on good analytical foundation; demonstrates understanding of relevant analyses to the data set.	Accurate use of analytical techniques; acceptable understanding of qualitative or quantitative foundation.	Appropriate analytical tools used but with only limited understanding of their foundation.	No analysis or use of inappropriate analytical tools.	
Data Presentation	Unambiguous and clearly presented figures and graphs; shows creativity in presentation.	Unambiguous and clearly presented figures and graphs.	Acceptable figures and graphs; clearly presented.	Acceptable figures and graphs but not clearly presented.	Hastily prepared; poorly presented figures and graphs; ambiguous.	
Results						

Communication of Results	Results of the data collection use techniques that describe the data and reveal meaningful relationships that exist in the data.	Results of the data collection are described limitedly to reveal meaningful relationships that exist in the data.	Results are adequately stated objectively.	Results are simply stated objectively	Does not present results of the data collection.	
Discussion and Conclusions						
Discussion	Provides a compelling discussion of the implications of the findings (positive and negative), placing their importance within the context of current knowledge.	Make a good attempt to discuss the implications of the findings.	Makes an adequate attempt to discuss the implications of the findings.	Makes a partial attempt to discuss the implications of the findings.	Makes no attempt to discuss the implications of the findings.	
Conclusions	<p>Conclusion is extremely clear, succinct, and complete.</p> <p>Conclusion clearly follows from results, is accurately described in detail in terms of data analysis, showing excellent methodological and conceptual rigor.</p>	<p>Conclusion is clear, succinct, and complete.</p> <p>Conclusion clearly follows from results and is explained in terms of the analysis of the data, showing good methodological and conceptual rigor.</p>	<p>Conclusion is mostly clear, succinct, and complete.</p> <p>Conclusion adequately follows from results and is explained in terms of the analysis of the data, showing adequate methodological and conceptual rigor.</p>	<p>Conclusion is often unclear; not succinct.</p> <p>Conclusion partially follows from results and is explained in terms of the analysis of the data, showing partial methodological and conceptual rigor.</p>	<p>Conclusion is not clear; not succinct; not complete.</p> <p>Conclusion does not clearly follow from the results.</p>	

Interpretation	Can back up all interpretation with valid results; 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 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; but some interpretation is speculative.	Can not back up all interpretation with valid results; claims findings that are not evident from the data.	
Synthesis /Understanding	Synthesises and integrates all data; clear understanding of data and their implications.	Synthesizes and integrates most data; clear understanding of most of the data and their implications.	Synthesizes and integrates some of the data; understanding of most of the data but not all their implications.	Some understanding of the data but not all their implications; synthesizes information to a small degree.	Does not understand the data or their implications.	
Integration with current knowledge	Excellent use of citations and thorough integration of findings with the current literature.	Good use of citations and integration of findings with the current literature.	Adequate use of citations and adequate integration of findings with some of the current literature.	Partial use of citations but minimal integration of findings with the current literature.	Improper use of citations and fails to integrate findings with the current literature.	
Extrapolation and global significance	Shows insight into the 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.	Shows insight into the question and extrapolates to future questions; shows evidence of significance beyond the specific research field.	Shows insight into the question and extrapolates to future questions; shows some evidence of significance beyond the specific research field.	Shows some insight into the question and extrapolates to future questions; shows little evidence of significance beyond the specific research field.	Shows no insight into 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.	
Limitations	Discusses the limitations of the study and how these limitations moderate conclusions; offers appropriate solutions.	Discusses the limitations of the study and how these limitations moderate conclusions; offers reasonable solutions.	Modest discussion of the limitations of the study and how these limitations moderate conclusions; does not offer solutions.	A minimal discussion of the limitations of the study and does not offer solutions.	No discussion of the limitations of the study.	

Recommendations	Proposes and discusses recommendations based on the findings of the study, that are practical and reasoned both from an academic and a practitioners' point of view, with detailed explanations	Proposes and discusses recommendations based on the findings of the study, that are reasonable both from an academic and a practitioners' point of view, with good explanation.	Proposes and discusses recommendations based on the findings of the study, that are acceptable both from an academic and a practitioners' point of view, with some explanation.	A minimal discussion of the recommendations of the study, not necessarily based on the study, and/or does not offer a clear and/or detailed explanation.	No discussion of the recommendations of the study.	
Communication Skills						
Level of communications skills reflected in dissertation	Reflects outstanding ability to express oneself clearly, accurately and professionally in written form	Reflects above average ability to express oneself clearly, accurately and professionally in written form.	Reflects acceptable ability to express oneself clearly, accurately and professionally in written form	Reflects some ability to express oneself clearly, accurately and professionally in written form	Reflects unacceptably low ability to express oneself clearly, accurately and professionally in written form	
Level of skill reflected in oral defence of their DBA thesis	Reflects outstanding ability to express oneself clearly, accurately and professionally in spoken form	Reflects above average ability to express oneself clearly, accurately and professionally in spoken form	Reflects acceptable ability to express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally in spoken form	Reflects some ability to express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally in spoken form	Reflects unacceptably low ability to orally express oneself clearly, accurately, and professionally	
Original Contribution						
Extent of original contribution reflected in the DBA thesis	Reflects outstanding original contribution	Reflects above average original contribution	Reflects acceptable extent of original contribution	Reflects some, but small, original contribution	Reflects unacceptably limited original contribution	

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