# GRADUATE STUDENT THESIS/DISSERTATION PROPOSAL EVALUATION

The attached evaluation tool (rubric) is designed to assist program faculty in the evaluation of their degree program's ability to successfully prepare their students to propose graduate research. The rubric includes four broad evaluation criteria, and encourages the addition of criteria important to individual departments/programs. Evaluation of a thesis/dissertation proposal can be an integral part of graduate student learning outcomes assessment conducted by graduate programs. It is applicable to all programs that have a thesis or dissertation requirement.

This evaluation tool is intended to:
- provide students, prior to submitting their proposal, with a clear understanding of the aspects of their proposal deemed most important to their graduate program
- provide clear and concise feedback to students on how well their proposal does in meeting those program objectives, at a time when the feedback can be used to improve the final product
- encourage conversations among departmental colleagues about improving graduate student learning outcomes and assessment
- serve as a model for a "tool" that can be used by graduate programs both as they prepare their students to meet program learning objectives and as they report on their success in required assessment reports.

**Instructions**:
1. Major Professors <u>and students</u> should review and become familiar with the criteria in the evaluation tool, as a guide, prior to the preparation of a thesis/dissertation proposal.
2. The rubric should be scored by the Major Professor at the time the <u>first complete draft</u> of the proposal is submitted.
3. The feedback provided by the scored rubric should be discussed directly with the student.
4. This cover page (page 1) should also be completed (providing a summary of the scored ratings below for each of the criteria in the rubric) by the Major Professor.
5. This coversheet should be delivered to the program director (or department chair) and retained in a secure file in the appropriate department/program office for use as a valuable tool in graduate student learning outcomes assessment (student identifiers are optional).
6. The student should keep the rubric page(s) as feedback for thesis/dissertation proposal development.

**Student ID:**_____     **Student name:** _____

**Program:** _____

**Degree:   M.A. _____     M.S. _____     Ph.D. _____**

**Date of Proposal review**: _____

**Proposal Score Summary by Criterion**
**Assessment Criteria:**  1: _____       4: _____
                          2: _____       5: _____
                          3: _____       6: _____
                          Overall judgment: _____

**Completed by:**_____ **Date:**_____ **Student ID:** _____

## Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Rubric

**Instructions for scoring:** Use the check boxes for detailed feedback, then make global judgments for each criterion rating and overall assessment.

| Criterion | Does not meet expectations = 1 | Meets expectations = 2 | Exceeds expectations = 3 | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Mastery of theories and concepts in the field demonstrated in problem statement and literature review | ☐ Arguments are sometimes incorrect, incoherent, or flawed<br>☐ Objectives are poorly defined<br>☐ Demonstrates limited critical thinking skills<br>☐ Reflects limited understanding of subject matter and associated literature<br>☐ Demonstrates limited understanding of theoretical concepts<br>☐ Documentation is weak<br>☐ Inadequate statement of hypotheses | ☐ Arguments are coherent and reasonably clear<br>☐ Objectives are clear<br>☐ Demonstrates acceptable critical thinking skills<br>☐ Reflects understanding of subject matter and literature<br>☐ Demonstrates understanding of theoretical concepts<br>☐ Documentation is adequate<br>☐ Generates adequate hypotheses | ☐ Arguments are superior<br>☐ Objectives are well defined<br>☐ Exhibits mature, refined critical thinking skills<br>☐ Reflects mastery of subject matter and associated literature.<br>☐ Demonstrates mastery of theoretical concepts<br>☐ Documentation is excellent<br>☐ Generates well-reasoned and well-supported hypotheses | |
| 2. Mastery of methods of inquiry | ☐ Design inappropriate to questions<br>☐ Confused or ineffective plan for analysis<br>☐ Lacks anticipation of regulatory compliance requirements | ☐ Design reasonable for questions<br>☐ Plan for analysis reasonable, acknowledges some limitations<br>☐ Considers regulatory compliance | ☐ Design, analysis plan, excellent<br>☐ Plan for analysis goes beyond the obvious, acknowledges limitations and critically considers alternatives<br>☐ Demonstrates regulatory compliance | |
| 3. Quality of writing | ☐ Writing is weak<br>☐ Numerous grammatical and spelling errors apparent<br>☐ Organization is poor<br>☐ Style is not appropriate to discipline | ☐ Writing is adequate<br>☐ Some grammatical and spelling errors apparent<br>☐ Organization is logical<br>☐ Style is appropriate to discipline | ☐ Writing is publication quality<br>☐ No grammatical or spelling errors apparent<br>☐ Organization is excellent<br>☐ Style is exemplary | |
| 4. Originality and potential for contribution to discipline | ☐ Limited potential for discovery<br>☐ Limited extension of previous published work in the field<br>☐ Limited theoretical or applied significance<br>☐ Limited publication potential | ☐ Some potential for discovery<br>☐ Builds upon previous work<br>☐ Reasonable theoretical or applied significance<br>☐ Reasonable publication potential | ☐ Exceptional potential for discovery<br>☐ Greatly extends previous work<br>☐ Exceptional theoretical or applied significance<br>☐ Exceptional publication potential | |
| Additional criterion #1: | | | | |
| Additional criterion #2: | | | | |
| **Overall judgment** | **Does not meet expectations** | **Meets expectations** | **Exceeds expectations** | |

**Comments:**