

Dissertation Defense Rubric

	0 Unacceptable	1 Acceptable
Overall Conceptualization	The investigation lacks originality and critical thinking. The purpose and significance are unclear. Academic merit of the research is not well developed. Parts do not fit together logically.	The investigation demonstrates originality and critical thinking. The design and conceptualization of the study evidence a creative, unique approach to the topic. The purpose and significance are reasonable. Academic merit of the research is provided. Parts fit together in a coherent whole.
Abstract	Abstract does not provide the necessary description to understand the goals, scope, and implications of the study.	Abstract provides a concise description of the study, including statement of the problem, methodology, and summary of findings and implications.
Introduction	The study rationale is not fully developed. The introduction does not provide sufficient evidence to support and justify the need for the study, or does not sufficiently introduce the study's components.	The chapter makes a case for the significance of the problem, contextualizes the study, and provides an introduction to its basic components.
Literature Review	The literature review is incomplete and provides partial coverage with limited empirical studies. The review lacks synthesis of the literature, logical organization, or rationale for study addressing gap in literature.	The chapter situates the study in the context of previous research, presents a critical synthesis of empirical literature according to relevant themes, or variables, justifies how the study addresses a gap or problem in the literature, and outlines the theoretical or conceptual framework of the study where appropriate.
Methodology	The chapter lacks rationale for methodological approach. Descriptions of sample and setting are insufficient, and plans for research methods are inappropriate or unclear.	The chapter situates the study in a particular methodological tradition, provides a rationale for that approach, clearly describes the research setting and sample, and clearly describes data collection and analysis methods, including validity and ethics issues. Statistical analyses are appropriate and accurate.
Results/Findings	The results/findings of the study are not clearly or sufficiently discussed with appropriate data. Findings are poorly organized and statistical analyses (if used) are not appropriate or accurate.	The chapter organizes and reports the study's main results/findings, including the clear presentation of relevant quantitative (statistical) and /or qualitative (narrative) data.
Discussion/Conclusions	The discussion, conclusions and recommendations are not clearly explained or substantiated by the results/findings. The connections to the purpose of the study and relevance to the existing body of knowledge are not clear.	The chapter clearly interprets and discusses the results in light of the study's research questions, literature review, and conceptual framework, concluding with recommendations for policy and practice that are grounded in the results/findings.
Style and Format	The dissertation does not follow APA style or CSUN Graduate Studies format requirements.	The style and format of the dissertation proposal conform to APA style and CSUN Graduate Studies format requirements.
Writing	The writing does not follow academic conventions and is not well organized. The transitions and logical flow are poorly developed and prevent the reader from following the argument.	The writing follows conventions for academic written English and communicates essential information with clarity, precision, and coherence. Writing is well-organized with appropriate transitions and logical flow for a coherent argument.

Scoring Levels

Dissertations that do not meet standards as outlined in scoring level 1, "Acceptable," in each area are considered deficient, will not be accepted, and will receive a grade of "No Credit."