



UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

POSTGRADUATE ASSESSMENT GUIDE

GUIDE NUMBER	RI P1	POLICY OWNER	DVC: Research & Innovation
OVERSEEING COMMITTEE(S)	University Research Committee → Senex → Senate → Council		
APPROVAL DATE	29 May 2024	REVISION DATE	5 years or sooner

ASSESSMENT SHEET – DOCTORAL THESIS**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND****ASSESSMENT SHEET: DOCTORAL THESIS****PRELIMINARY PAGE**

*The following information should be completed by the **University** and the **Examiner**:*

Name of Candidate:	Date of first registration:
	Student number:
	Nationality:
Degree/Qualification type and specialisation:	
Title of Thesis:	
Thesis Supervisor:	
Thesis Co-supervisor(s):	
Date thesis submitted to Exam's Office:	
Examiner Name and Institution:	Date submitted to Examiner:
	Examiner Contact e-mail:

*In reference to the key below, **Examiners** are requested to use the table when assessing the manuscript overall. See attached notes for the interpretation of Pass, and Fail.*

1	Pass	Accept the thesis unconditionally
2	Provisional acceptance	<p>Provisionally accept the thesis on condition that the candidate makes corrections of a limited extent to the satisfaction of the supervisor.</p> <p>Provisionally accept the thesis but <i>pending</i> more substantial corrections, to be made to the satisfaction of: (a) the Faculty Examination Committee, OR (b) the Research-Innovation Office</p>
3	Resubmission	Not accept the thesis in its current form but rather refer it back to the candidate for comprehensive revision or expansion, as per my attached report, after which it should be resubmitted for examination.
4	Fail	That the thesis is not accepted , and the degree is not awarded .

ASSESSMENT OF THE MANUSCRIPT

Examiners are requested to attach a report to this assessment form to supplement the comments made herein.

Section A: Title and Research focus

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Is the title a succinct summary of the focus of the research? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Does the title align with the Research Problem, and central Research Question, Aim, Sub-questions / Objectives / Hypotheses? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Are the main concepts or variables clearly captured and demarcated in the title? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Does the title or topic fall within the field of study of the degree? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments on Section A:

--

Section B: Specification of the Study

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Does the background of the study provide sufficient, clear, and concise orientation of the scope and importance of the research by summarizing the current debates and issues on the topic? Are the main concepts or variables discussed? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Does the background reveal the gaps, weaknesses, deficiencies, or under researched areas in the current body of literature on the topic? Does it involve original research? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Does the background discuss the rationale for the research and offer a sound justification. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Does the Research Problem Statement flow logically from the background and explicitly reflect an unresolved issue, gap, deficiency, or conditions to improve? Is it clearly delimited, well-focused, and pave way for the central research question /hypotheses? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Is the central Research Question appropriately posed? Does the question posed allow for deep analytical, critical, and explanatory exploration of the topic, (beyond description)? Does the main research question offer an anchor for the sub-questions, the Aim of Study, and Research Objectives, or Hypotheses? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Does the thesis reveal originality in approach? Does the significance of the study convey the novelty and the contribute to theory, policy, and practice. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Are the main concepts / variables appropriately operationally defined? Does the thesis show clear evidence of an ability to apply knowledge and theory creatively? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Comments on Section B:

--

Section C: Quality of the Literature Study and its Conceptual and Theoretical focus:

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. Does the candidate critically deliberated on related and relevant and recent research empirical literature aligned to the topic, research questions or objectives or hypotheses? Are the key concepts , constructs or variables critiqued and discussed? | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">1</td> <td style="width: 20%;">2</td> <td style="width: 20%;">3</td> <td style="width: 20%;">4</td> <td style="width: 20%;">5</td> </tr> </table> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 13. Does the review assess strengths and weaknesses of previous work? Does the candidate demonstrate expertise and specialist knowledge in the discipline, or body of knowledge in the thesis? | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">1</td> <td style="width: 20%;">2</td> <td style="width: 20%;">3</td> <td style="width: 20%;">4</td> <td style="width: 20%;">5</td> </tr> </table> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 14. Does the candidate further demonstrate in the thesis that the research is anchored on empirical and theoretical literature at the forefront of the discipline, field, or professional practice in order to contribute to new knowledge in the field / discipline? | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">1</td> <td style="width: 20%;">2</td> <td style="width: 20%;">3</td> <td style="width: 20%;">4</td> <td style="width: 20%;">5</td> </tr> </table> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 15. Does the candidate illustrate an ability to contribute, through the thesis, to scholarly debates at the cutting edge of an area of specialisation nationally and internationally? | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">1</td> <td style="width: 20%;">2</td> <td style="width: 20%;">3</td> <td style="width: 20%;">4</td> <td style="width: 20%;">5</td> </tr> </table> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 16. Does the literature study of the thesis reveal substantial, independent study and advanced scholarship resulting in the (re)interpretation expansion of knowledge which is judged publishable by peers? | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">1</td> <td style="width: 20%;">2</td> <td style="width: 20%;">3</td> <td style="width: 20%;">4</td> <td style="width: 20%;">5</td> </tr> </table> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 17. Does the literature study provide evidence that justifies the research problem, or convince readers that there is actually a gap in the body of knowledge on the topic? Does the argument in the literature review flow and read as a coherent whole? | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">1</td> <td style="width: 20%;">2</td> <td style="width: 20%;">3</td> <td style="width: 20%;">4</td> <td style="width: 20%;">5</td> </tr> </table> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 18. Is there a clear and coherently developed Theoretical Framework and/or Conceptual Framework that appropriately anchors the study and able to facilitate interpretation of the findings, support the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations? | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">1</td> <td style="width: 20%;">2</td> <td style="width: 20%;">3</td> <td style="width: 20%;">4</td> <td style="width: 20%;">5</td> </tr> </table> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 19. Are the major concepts of the theoretical / conceptual framework discussed? Have these concepts been linked to the problem of the study. | <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">1</td> <td style="width: 20%;">2</td> <td style="width: 20%;">3</td> <td style="width: 20%;">4</td> <td style="width: 20%;">5</td> </tr> </table> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |

Comments on Section C:

--

Section D: Research Methodology

20. Have the epistemological and ontological foundations of the study been discussed and justified? Are the design, approach, and methods consistent with the epistemological and ontological orientation of the study? Are the target population, sampling, case selection specified and justified?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
21. Have the data collection instruments, techniques and procedures been clearly formulated and motivated? Have the appropriate data analysis procedures been applied? Are the instruments appropriate for the research questions/ objectives / hypotheses? Have copies of the instruments been provided in the Appendices as samples?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
22. Does the candidate demonstrate, where relevant, the ability to select, apply and manage appropriate statistical software, instruments, and techniques in the analyses of data or research samples?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
23. Has the research quality in terms of reliability and validity (or trustworthiness) been discussed and justified? Are the ethical considerations discussed and measures to achievement explained?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
24. Does the candidate link the methodology with the theoretical or conceptual framework, as appropriate? Does the candidate illustrate and apply a understanding of the most advanced research methodology, methods, techniques, and technologies in the research field?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
25. Does the candidate illustrate an ability to identify, conceptualise, design and implement research that addresses complex problems at the cutting edge of a discipline / field?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
26. Does the thesis indicate that the candidate has mastered the methodological challenges sufficiently?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
27. Does the thesis show clear evidence of an ability to apply knowledge, theory, and research methods creatively to complex practical, theoretical, and epistemological problems?
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Comments on Section D:

--

Section E: Data Presentation and Interpretation

28. Does the thesis reveal the identification, critical analysis, synthesis, and independent evaluation of the data?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
29. Is the data appropriately analysed and interpreted? Have the correct analyses been conducted?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
30. Does the analysis / finding answer the research Questions, or link to the research objectives /hypotheses? Is the analysis appropriately presented (statistics or/and text /verbatim)?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
31. Does the thesis show that the candidate has shown an ability to engage critically with current research and scholarly or professional literature in the discipline or field of research through the discussion of the findings?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Comments on Section E:**Section F: Discussion and Synthesis of Findings**

32. Does the candidate show ability to foreground and synthesize the findings into the body of exiting literature?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
33. Does the candidate discuss the findings and lean on the **theoretical and conceptual framework** and/or previous literature for support to theorise and draw out **insights** in the discussion?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
34. Does the candidate show ability to use insights from the study to construct new knowledge or make significant contribution to the discipline / field?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
35. Does the thesis demonstrate an ability to present and communicate academic/professional work effectively and appropriate to the context and level of the study?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Comments on Section F:

Section G: Conclusion, Recommendations, Implications, and Limitations

36. Are the conclusions drawn from the discussion of the results or findings as foregrounded in the literature?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
37. Are the conclusions linked to the central research question and sub-questions; or research aim and objectives /hypotheses? Are there new knowledge/insights that emerged?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
38. Does the candidate show an ability to identify, analyse and deal with complex and/or real-world problems and issues using evidence-based solutions and theory-driven arguments?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
39. Are the recommendations and implications based on the conclusions drawn? Are the recommendations feasible?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
40. Does the thesis demonstrate the ability to effectively present and communicate the results of research and opinion to specialist audiences nationally and internationally using the full resources of an academic/professional discourse and come to a cohesive conclusion?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Comments on Section G:**Section H: Technical and ethical requirements**

41. Does the thesis comply with the technical, language and scholarly writing requirements / standards, e.g. referencing techniques as would normally be associated with this level of research and professionalism?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
42. Does the thesis demonstrate ethical sensitivity as well as evidence of how the research has been conducted in this context?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
43. Do the chapters form a meaningful and integrated unit?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Section I: Concluding remarks:

Section J: Recommendations

Please select one of the following options:

Pass	1	Accept the thesis unconditionally	
Provisional approval	2	Provisionally accept the thesis on condition that the candidate makes corrections of a limited extent to the satisfaction of the supervisor.	
	3	Provisionally accept the thesis but <i>pending</i> more substantial corrections, to be made to the satisfaction of:	
		(a) the Faculty Examination Committee	
		(b) the Research-Innovation Office	
Resubmission	4	Not accept the thesis in its current form but rather refer it back to the candidate for comprehensive revision or expansion, as per my attached report, after which it should be resubmitted for examination.	
Fail	5	That the thesis is not accepted , and the degree is not awarded .	

Section J: Consent and declaration

Do you agree to your name being divulged to a successful candidate?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you agree to a successful candidate being shown your examiner's report?

Yes ☐ No ☐

I confirm the content of the above assessment and that, in conducting the assessment, I was not at any stage placed in a conflict of interest situation.

Signature	Date

Appendix:**Interpretation of Pass, Borderline, and Fail**

Pass	1	The work has met all of the intended NQF exit level learning outcomes at Level 10.
Provisional approval	2	The work has <i>met</i> most of the intended NQF exit level learning outcomes at Level 10, but sections of it have conceptual misunderstandings, analytical, and technical errors that should be corrected.
	3	The work has <i>met</i> a fair number of the intended NQF exit level learning outcomes at Level 10, but it has major flaws in several sections and chapters that require corrections. The flaws are fundamental – i.e., conceptual, theoretical, methodological, analytical, and/or technical.
Resubmission	4	The work has <i>not met</i> several of the intended NQF exit level learning outcomes at Level 10. The work has potential, but it contains numerous fundamental flaws that must be corrected.
Fail	5	The work has failed to achieve most /all of the intended exit level learning outcomes in critical respects. It contains numerous fundamental flaws that are detrimental to its quality. The work also fails in case(s) of academic misconduct – as evidenced through plagiarism, contract cheating, fabrication (i.e., invention of data), collusion, or any other form of deception.

Key: **Plagiarism:** A student presented for assessment a thesis /dissertation that contains the unacknowledged work of some other person(s) above the plagiarism threshold specified in the University policy. **Contract Cheating:** A student employed a third party to create the whole or part of the thesis/dissertation and submitted it for assessment as their own piece of work. **Fabrication of data:** A student effectively misrepresented data by fabricating or inventing, or falsifying it to make it appears that the data has been derived by appropriate measurement(s) in the field, in the laboratory or other settings. **Collusion and impersonation:** Where two or more students working together deliberately submitted the same thesis /dissertation in full or parts for assessment, or where a student submitted, by substitution, the work of another person as their own.