
RUBRIC FOR CRITICAL REVIEW PAPER

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN EXAMINATION IN THE FAMILY SOCIAL SCIENCE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Overview

The Critical Review Paper is the Preliminary Written Examination for the Family Social Science Ph.D. Students will write the Critical Review Paper during their second year of study. The purpose of the paper is for students to demonstrate evidence of the breadth and depth of their knowledge and understanding in a particular content area of family social science. Reviewers will look for evidence of search skills, breadth of knowledge, ability to synthesize across a body of research, depth of conceptual and methodological understanding, critical thinking, ability to analyze and critique, and writing quality in accordance with discipline standards, i.e., the current version of the American Psychological Association guidelines

Students will choose the content area and complete an extensive review and critique of a systematically identified body of literature for a specified time span, including theory, research, and application. Students will report in a succinct and synthesized fashion the results and conclusions of these publications. They will critique the theoretical and methodological approaches, including the implicit values and assumptions, and identify gaps in the body of knowledge. They will also synthesize and critique the application of theories and methods in areas related to education, policy, and/or intervention. Finally, students will outline implications for research, education, policy, therapy and/or other applications in a manner that demonstrates breadth and depth. Although it is recommended that the paper serve as a foundation for a student's dissertation research, it is not required that it be directly related.

Students will receive an evaluation of Pass, Revise and Resubmit, or Fail from each of their three reviewers (internal committee members). To receive a "Pass", the student must receive *at least* an evaluation of "Meets Expectations" on all six criteria from two out of the three reviewers. Students will receive a "Fail" if their paper is evaluated as "Below Expectations" on all six criteria from at least two reviewers. Students will receive a "Revise and Resubmit" if their paper receives mostly "Meets Expectations" or "Exceeds Expectations" but also receives one or more "Below Expectations" from more than one reviewer. Reviewers will provide written feedback to explain their scores.

| Assessment | Score | # of Criteria | Number of reviewers |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Pass | Meets/Exceeds Expectations | All six | 2 of 3 reviewers |
| Revise and Resubmit | Below Expectations | Between 1 and 5 | 2 of 3 reviewers |
| Fail | Below Expectations | All six | 2 of 3 reviewers |

If the student receives a Revise and Resubmit, the revised paper will pass if 2 out of 3 reviewers determine that it adequately addresses the committee's feedback.

Rubric

| Evaluation Criterion | Below Expectations (1) | Meets Expectations (2) | Exceeds Expectations (3) | Score and Comments |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| 1. Significance and Search Process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unclear question ● Weak rationale for significance for this area of study ● Search criteria for articles needs more clarity and/or focus ● Minimal or confusing description of the search process ● Does not follow PRISMA guidelines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear and focused guiding question ● Rationale and significance are addressed ● Appropriate search criteria are used that fit question and body of literature, e.g., magnitude of work available, history of scholarship area ● Search process is clear with minimal need for more clarity and/or focus ● Follows PRISMA guidelines and includes flow chart | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compelling rationale; significance is more than apparent ● Search criteria and process are very clear with no need for additional clarity and/or focus | <p>Score =</p> <p>Comments:</p> |
| 2. Content Area Knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lacks depth and/or breadth in content area knowledge ● Presents some key findings but more on an individual study basis; lacks integration and cohesion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrates depth and breadth in content area knowledge ● Clearly identifies key findings supported by the preponderance of evidence across studies ● Clearly articulates gaps in knowledge base ● Findings are described and summarized in an integrated and cohesive manner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrates significant level of depth and breadth in content area knowledge, including a clear understanding of key nuances, as appropriate ● Demonstrates adjacent content area knowledge and acknowledges the broader field(s) that inform specific content area ● Identifies gaps in the knowledge base, including those that may reflect implicit bias and/or values | <p>Score =</p> <p>Comments:</p> |

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| <p>3. Conceptual/Theoretical Knowledge</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No summary of theories or poorly organized ● Articles are examined individually rather than synthesized across the body of literature ● No or very minimal discussion about consistent or inconsistent definitions or use of concepts/constructs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Theories clearly identified, cited, and concisely summarized ● Discussion about consistent or inconsistent definitions and use of concepts/constructs across studies ● Identifies theoretical strengths and weaknesses in this body of research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifies implicit biases and values in theoretical approaches in this body of research ● Suggests and justifies additional theories or concepts that would contribute to this area of study | <p>Score = Comments:</p> |
| <p>4. Methodological Knowledge (Approach/design, sample, data collection, measurement, data analysis, etc.)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No or minimal discussion about study design and approach for each study reviewed ● No integration of patterns across studies ● Paper describes methods used in individual studies ● Some errors in methods descriptions and/or critique, suggesting gap in methodological knowledge ● No or minimal evidence of how approach and design align with the extant body of knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear demonstration of methodological knowledge with a summary and synthesis of major methodological components and a critique of their use in this body of research ● Comprehensive discussion and critique of study designs and approaches, highlighting the patterns and gaps across the larger body of knowledge for future research ● Identifies methodological strengths and weaknesses in this body of research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifies implicit biases and values in sample, design, analysis, and interpretation of the reviewed research studies ● Suggests and justifies new methodological approaches that would contribute to this area of study | <p>Score = Comments:</p> |

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| 5. Application and Implications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No or minimal discussion of applications and implications of research in articles under review Lacks synthesis and provides minimal critique | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies strengths and weaknesses of applications presented in this body of research Critiques appropriateness of application and implications based on research design, sample characteristics, and analyses Appropriately suggests ideas for future research, clinical practice, education, and/or policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides implications beyond what reviewed articles stated Suggests future directions and implications that are connected to the broader field(s) and/or considers interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approaches | Score = Comments: |
| 6. Writing a. Integration and Coherence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each study is analyzed individually; paper lacks summary and synthesis that would contribute to the body of knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sections are summarized and synthesized across reviewed articles to provide a coherent picture of this body of research There is a logic and flow to the paper's organization Points of critique -- both strengths and weaknesses -- are backed by coherent rationales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper contains no lapses in coherence, organization, or synthesis quality | Overall Writing Score = Comments: |
| b. Clarity and Conciseness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writing is not clear. The argument repeats itself or meanders often, leaving the reader wondering what the writer is trying to say | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing is clear and concise There are few grammatical errors Sentences reflect a predominantly active voice with appropriate use of a passive voice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing is succinct There is a clear line of thought and argument that weave throughout the paper | Comments |

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| c. Adherence to APA-Version 7 Guidelines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper has multiple formatting issues (headings, spacing, in-text referencing, etc.) and multiple citation (reference section) errors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper is free of formatting issues and citation errors, with rare exceptions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper meticulously follows APA-7 guidelines with no errors | Comments: |
| Final Evaluation | # Below ____ | # Meets ____ | # Exceeds ____ | Pass _____ Revise & Resubmit _____ Fail _____ |

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