

Candidacy Assessment: Written Paper Rubric

Criteria	Insufficient	Developing	Proficient	Exceptional
Quality of Research <i>Use of primary and secondary sources, depth, and breadth</i>	Research sources are inconsistent or not well-selected, showing limited understanding of key studies.	Research relies mostly on secondary sources, with few primary studies. The focus is narrow, and identifying key research is challenging.	A balanced use of primary and secondary sources is evident. Some key research is included, though mostly within a limited field.	Primary research is emphasized, with secondary sources supporting the argument where appropriate. Key research across fields is included and well-integrated.
Use and Synthesis of Literature <i>Ability to engage critically with existing research</i>	Limited synthesis of literature, making it difficult to see connections. Critical appraisal is missing or unclear.	Literature is synthesized unevenly, with key areas lacking depth. Critical appraisal is present but needs more clarity.	Literature is synthesized well, with clear insights and an emerging critical appraisal that suggests directions for further research.	Literature is synthesized effectively, leading to a well-structured critical analysis. Future research paths are logically and clearly articulated.
Objectives and Argument Development <i>Clarity of objectives and argument focus</i>	Review objectives are unclear, missing, or not well-connected to the paper. The argument lacks direction.	Review objectives are implied but not stated clearly. The argument consists mostly of summaries with limited analysis.	Review objectives are clearly stated, and the paper develops a well-structured argument based on evidence.	Review objectives are original and well-articulated, leading to a compelling, evidence-based argument with a strong scholarly foundation.
Clarity of Writing <i>Flow, coherence, grammar, and referencing</i>	The paper lacks organization, making ideas difficult to follow. Frequent spelling and grammatical errors interfere with readability. Referencing is inconsistent.	Some lapses in coherence and organization. Spelling and grammar mistakes are present but do not significantly affect understanding. Referencing inconsistencies are noticeable.	Writing is clear and well-organized, with only minor grammatical errors. Referencing is accurate and follows a consistent style.	Writing is polished and engaging, demonstrating strong clarity and coherence. No grammatical errors. Referencing is flawless and enhances the work's credibility.

Candidacy Assessment: Written Paper Rubric

Outcome	Insufficient	Developing	Proficient	Exceptional
	Must select this outcome if TWO or more assessed criteria are in this column.	Outcome is typically selected if the majority of the criteria assessed are in this column.	Outcome is typically selected if the majority of criteria assessed are in this column.	Outcome is typically selected if the majority of the criteria assessed are in this column.
<i>Note. Final assessment decisions may weigh more heavily on specific criteria based on committee discussions.</i>				
Key Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lacks a clear argument. ▪ Does not contribute to existing literature. ▪ Misinterprets or misunderstands key evidence. ▪ Writing is unclear and ineffective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summarizes existing literature but shows little critical thinking. ▪ Repeats common themes without depth. ▪ Writing is understandable but difficult to follow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extends existing literature with some original insights. ▪ Develops a structured, evidence-based argument expected of a PhD candidate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposes an original approach in the field. ▪ Engages critically with existing research in a unique way. ▪ Identifies a research gap or proposes a new paradigm or theory.
Final Assessment	FAIL	CONDITIONAL PASS	PASS	PASS