

Appendix (B) Dissertation Evaluation Rubric

Graduate Learner Outcomes Evaluating the Dissertation
Dissertation Rubric Fall 2016

School: School of the Arts	Department: Theatre
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Components of a **Dissertation** and their Characteristics at Different Quality Levels

	Excellent (4)	Very Good (3)	Good (2)	Unacceptable (1)
Introduction	focuses the study sharply with a problem, question, thesis, or a purpose that is central to the scholarship in a field, positions the dissertation as intellectually adventurous; i.e., as an attempt to lead (rather than simply participate in) a particular scholarly conversation, written in a style that is comparable to the best writing in the field and with a regard for interdisciplinarity	offers a focusing statement that clearly sets forth an important purpose, problem, question, or thesis, positions the dissertation as a distinct contribution to an ongoing scholarly conversation, sets a high standard for the writing style for the rest of the dissertation,	focuses the study clearly by means of a question, problem, thesis, or purpose that pertains demonstrably to a field, positions the dissertation as a contribution to an ongoing scholarly conversation, exhibits writing that is correct, clear, and direct	does not focus the study specifically enough, unintelligible to its intended audience, errors in spelling, grammar, and syntax
Grounding in Pertinent Research	demonstrates a thorough and sophisticated understanding of conclusions, methodologies and arguments from scholarship and other resources important to the dissertation, achieves a sophisticated and original grouping of previous scholarship according to similarities and dissimilarities among methodologies,	demonstrates an advanced understanding and appreciation of the conclusions, methodologies and arguments typically used in scholarship and resources important to the dissertation, skillfully groups previous scholarship according to similarities and dissimilarities	demonstrates a normative understanding of conclusions, methodologies and arguments in scholarship and other resources important to the dissertation	lacks a useful understanding of prior studies or other useful resources,

	sources, evidence, and/or argumentative strategies	among methodologies, sources, evidence, argumentative strategies		
Evidence and Methodology	develops a new methodology or significantly modifies an existing methodology,	makes skillful use of previously developed methodologies	uses a methodology that is customary for the type of study being undertaken,	unclear methodology,
Evidence and Methodology (continued)	clearly explains those assumptions that determine (1) what shall be regarded as evidence, (2) how it shall be gathered, (3) the norms for interpreting it and (4) the norms for deciding how evidence shall be distributed within central arguments,	clearly explains those assumptions that determine (1) what shall be regarded as evidence, (2) how it shall be gathered, (3) the norms for interpreting it and (4) the norms for deciding how evidence shall be used to make persuasive arguments,	clearly states the assumptions that determine (1) what shall be regarded as evidence, (2) how it shall be gathered, (3) the norms for interpreting it and (4) the norms for deciding how evidence shall be used to make persuasive arguments,	with questionable pertinence to the study,
	discovers new evidence or makes innovative use of evidence already familiar to the field,	succeeds in gathering evidence, the sufficiency of which exceeds models found in discipline-specific published research,	offers evidence of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the professional norms of the discipline,	reveals inadequate evidence and/or a poor understanding of the evidence,
	offers a clear and original analysis of evidentiary sources	offers a clear analysis of evidentiary sources	offers a clear analysis of evidentiary sources	does not develop a clear and effective methodology
Results and Discussion	solves the problem, answers the question, demonstrates the hypothesis, or achieves the purpose set forward in the introduction,	solves the problem, answers the question, demonstrates the hypothesis, or achieves the purpose set forward in the	coherent and clearly written, accomplishes most of what is promised in the introduction	confusing to a reader in the field, inconsistent with the evidence and the methodology

	sets forth new discoveries or new interpretations of former discoveries that change the direction of research and/or the assumptions on which it is based	introduction, expands or develops but does not significantly change a field or discipline		
Conclusion	explains changes to the field explicit and implicit in the results	reassesses the field of research or the discipline in light of the expansions and amendments offered in the introduction.	consistent with the results and the methodology	insufficiently significant, strained or unclear relationship to the introduction
Overall	Alters the field in a significant way, provides awareness or perspective that can alter the way readers live their lives, earns a “honors” from the dissertation committee	offers a definite contribution to an important scholarly “conversation,” earns a “satisfactory” from the dissertation committee	shows an advanced understanding of how scholarship is conducted in a specific field earns a “satisfactory” from the dissertation committee	falls below the standards set forward in the first three columns, receives a “fail” from the dissertation committee

*Adapted from Barbara Lovitts’ Making the Implicit Explicit: Creating Performance Expectations for the Dissertation, 2007.