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OUTCOME ASSESSMENT BASED ON THE SEVEN KEY QUESTIONS

Note: In a thesis or paper for publications, these questions do not need to be answered in the order given, and in some cases answers will overlap. IMPORTANCE may well be linked with POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS, for example.

Rating Scale: Please circle the number you judge to be the most accurate appraisal of that particular aspect of the thesis or paper.

Not Acceptable: 0 or 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable with Revisions: 2

Exemplary: 4 or 5

I. CONTENT

1. **FOCUS and CLAIM:** What precise problem/ question / issue is the focus of the thesis?

Not Acceptable: The student never makes clear the focus of the work. If present at all, the precise focus must be extracted with difficulty by the reader.

Acceptable: The focus is identified, but not clearly or precisely. It may be buried somewhere in the abstract or introduction, but it is not crisply and clearly stated in a way that makes it easy to identify and understand.

Acceptable, but only with the following revisions:

Exemplary: In the first, second, or final sentence of the abstract, we know exactly what the writer claims as the intellectual contribution of the work. That sentence combines focus, method, and results so that readers will know why the contribution is important to the field. By the beginning of the second paragraph of the Introduction, the claim has been restated in a way that establishes the content of the paper or thesis as a whole, thereby motivating a reader's interest. Such a sentence will often begin with "This paper/work/research/thesis develops/proposes/demonstrates...."

Score:

Not acceptable: 0 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable, with revisions: 2

Exemplary: 4 5

COMMENTS:

2. **IMPORTANCE.** Does the writer make clear why the work reported in this thesis is important? Why others in the field should care about the focus and the results?

Not acceptable: The student doesn't acknowledge the importance of the work.

Acceptable: The work's importance is shown in the context of the research question or in the possible application of the results, but it may not be clearly stated.

Acceptable, but only with the following revisions:

Exemplary: The student makes clear why the work is important, though the word "important" may or may not appear.

Score:

Not acceptable: 0 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable, with revisions: 2

Exemplary: 4 5

COMMENTS:

3. **CONTEXT.** How does this work fit into the context of closely related work and into the wider field as a whole?

Not acceptable: It is never clear how this thesis work is situated either in related work or in the wider field. Other work may be mentioned in the Lit Review or the Introduction, but it is not clearly linked to the focus of this thesis.

Acceptable: The student evinces some knowledge of the literature and situates the thesis within that work, but the literature review is not compelling and scholarly.

Acceptable, but only with the following revisions:

Exemplary: The student is in knowledgeable dialogue with the work of others, distilling key contributions, identifying issues and evidence, giving evidence of evaluative skill, and showing how the thesis work links with the research of other scholars.

Score:

Not acceptable: 0 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable, with revision: 2

Exemplary: 4 5

COMMENTS:

4. **METHODS.** What method(s) does the student apply to solve the problem identified as the focus of the thesis? Why that method rather than other possible choices?

Not acceptable. The student chose an inappropriate method, applied a method incorrectly or didn't understand what to do. Perhaps the correct method was chosen, but the math is incorrect.

Acceptable. The method(s) chosen are suitable for the problem, though perhaps the choice is not clearly defended. The method produced the desired results.

Acceptable, but only with the following revisions:

Exemplary. The choice and application of the method(s) are thoughtful and appropriate, showing evidence of original thinking that goes beyond simply doing what the advisor directs. Explanations, including mathematical ones, are clear and thorough. A reader is not expected to simply "read the math."

Score:

Not acceptable: 0 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable, with revision: 2

Exemplary: 4 5

COMMENTS:

5. **RESULTS.** Are the results of the work clearly identified and evaluated? Are they backed with sufficient and convincing evidence? Are the results linked to, but clearly differentiated from, the work of others? If there is a separate Discussion section,

Not acceptable. The research results are incorrect, not backed by sufficient or convincing evidence, or not clearly differentiated from the work of others. Their value is unclear.

Acceptable. Results are clearly identified and with sufficient evidence to be convincing.

Acceptable, but only with the following revisions:

Exemplary. Results are presented, discussed, and defended in a compelling manner. We know precisely what incremental knowledge they add to the field and why we should care about that addition.

Score:

Not acceptable: 0 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable, with revision: 2

Exemplary: 4 5

COMMENTS:

6. **UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION.** What, precisely, is the intellectual contribution of this thesis?

Not acceptable. The student's incremental contribution is not clearly identified or is not differentiated from the work of others.

Acceptable. It is clear what this work has contributed to the field.

Acceptable, but only with the following revisions:

Exemplary. The contribution of the thesis is clearly identified, clearly placed in the context of previous work, and clearly differentiated from the work of others. The contribution is an original and substantial one, convincingly and persuasively presented.

Score:

Not acceptable: 0 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable, with revision: 2

Exemplary: 4 5

COMMENTS:

7. **POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS.** What are the possible applications of this work, either theoretical or practical?

Not acceptable. The student has little grasp of the significance of the work and how it might be applied.

Acceptable. Possible applications are suggested and are reasonable choices. Future work may be included.

Acceptable, but only with the following revisions:

Exemplary. The student has a fine and convincing grasp of where the present work could lead, what the next steps could be. Certainly, the final chapter suggests future research possibilities that would grow out of the present thesis.

Score:

Not acceptable: 0 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable, with revision: 2

Exemplary: 4 5

COMMENTS:

II. PRESENTATION

8. ORGANIZATION

Not acceptable. The thesis is so poorly organized that it interferes with understanding. There is little logical flow, portions are missing, or there is a large amount of unnecessary repetition.

Acceptable. The thesis is reasonably well organized so that it flows logically from one section and chapter to the next.

Acceptable, but only with the following revisions:

Exemplary: The logic of organization is everywhere present so that its presence is not noticeable. There is sufficient forecasting of ideas so that a reader is never confused by the progression. Each sentence, paragraph, section, and chapter flows logically from the preceding one. Sub-headings do a fine job of giving organizational information.

Score:

Not acceptable: 0 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable, with revision: 2

Exemplary: 4 5

COMMENTS:

9. VISUALS

Not acceptable. The graphics do not support the ideas presented in the text, contain errors, or are so poorly designed that they obstruct meaning.

Acceptable. In general, the graphics enhance and clarify the points made in the text. They are accurate, clearly labeled, and generally easy to understand. A few may include information not easily understood if printed in gray scale.

Acceptable, but only with the following revisions:

Exemplary. It's easy to see why every visual is included because they all illustrate key points. They are well designed, easy to interpret, visually pleasing, and informative even in gray scale.

Score:

Not acceptable: 0 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable, with revision: 2

Exemplary: 4 5

COMMENTS:

10. GRAMMATICAL CORRECTNESS and STYLE

Not acceptable. Many sentences are difficult or even impossible to understand because of poor structure, imprecise word choice, and serious grammatical errors. The work has not been proofread for spelling errors, missing words, or garbled coherence.

Acceptable. There are only a few grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, or confusing sentence structures. Generally the meaning is clear and the flow is coherent. It sounds professional and yet as if an enthusiastic human had written it. Some minor errors may occur because the writer is not a native writer or speaker of English.

Acceptable, but only with the following revisions:

Exemplary. The writing is strong, direct, and persuasive, with a clear trajectory from the first page to the last. We are convinced of the writer's knowledge, analytical prowess, professionalism, and enthusiasm. This is a work that persuades us of its importance and validity.

Score:

Not acceptable: 0 1

Acceptable: 3

Acceptable, with revisions: 2

Exemplary : 4 5

COMMENTS:

TOTAL SCORE: _____

0 – 10 Not acceptable

11-20 Acceptable, but only with revisions

21- 39 Acceptable

40-50 Exemplary