

**MASTERS DISSERTATIONS and DOCTORAL THESES**

**Assessment Instrument for Preliminary Research Proposals**

Name of student: .....

Degree: .....

Title of dissertation / thesis (10 – 15 words):

.....

.....

.....

	YES	NO
<p><b>1. BACKGROUND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does this section put the reader in the picture as to the origin of the chosen title?</li> <li>• Is the context of the problem described?</li> <li>• Is the reason indicated for identifying it as a problem?</li> <li>• Has reference been made to some literature sources to back up statements?</li> <li>• Does this section flow logically into the problem statement in the next section?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the education sub-field indicated that will be the point of departure from which to investigate the problem, clearly indicated (e.g. educational management, curriculum studies, educational psychology, etc)?</li> <li>• Is the problem stated clearly and unambiguously?</li> <li>• Is it researchable?</li> <li>• Is the research problem demarcated/delimited/focussed?</li> <li>• Is it focussed too strongly (trivial/too small)?</li> <li>• Is the significance of the problem clearly indicated (i.e. worthwhile researching; the outcome of the research could be deemed important)?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>3. RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the research question flow logically from the research problem?</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the research sub-questions break the research question up into smaller parts (answers to all the sub-questions will provide the answer to the main question)?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>4. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the overall aim (purpose) of the research stated in terms of a reformulation of the research question into a statement?</li> <li>Are the objectives of the research stated? (These are not additional aims or purposes, but rather the sub-sections of the aim or the steps to be taken to reach the aim).</li> </ul>		
<p><b>5. LITERATURE REVIEW</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the author refer to at least 7 – 10 different, relevant literature sources?</li> <li>Are the sources referred to not older than 7 years (except if they are salient works in the area)?</li> <li>If the latter applies, was the use of the older sources justified?</li> <li>Was the chosen reference technique used consistently?</li> <li>Does this section identify what research has been done already in this area?</li> <li>Does this section identify what research is still needed (gaps in the existing body of knowledge)?</li> <li>Can it be expected that the envisaged research will close one of these gaps?</li> <li>Are the basic concepts that will be used in the research clarified?</li> <li>Does the literature referred to justify and motivate the envisaged research?</li> <li>Is the presentation of the argument orderly, flowing naturally from one idea to the next, without disjoint or out-of-context statements?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>6. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the proposal indicate whether qualitative or quantitative research (or another relevant categorisation) will be used?</li> <li><b>For quantitative research,</b> are the following indicated appropriately:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a set of hypotheses?</li> <li>the type of research (e.g. survey, correlation, causal-comparative, experimental, etc)?</li> <li>the population (universe)?</li> <li>sample?</li> <li>method of sample selection?</li> <li>data collection instrument(s) and procedures?</li> <li>data analysis strategies?</li> <li>motivation for choosing each of these?</li> <li>limitations of the design?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• measures of validity and reliability?</li> <li>• <b>For qualitative research</b>, are the following indicated appropriately:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a postulate (if relevant)?</li> <li>• site or social network?</li> <li>• researcher role?</li> <li>• sampling strategies?</li> <li>• data collection strategies?</li> <li>• data analysis strategies?</li> <li>• motivation for choosing each of these?</li> <li>• limitations of the design?</li> <li>• measures of trustworthiness, credibility?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Were a minimum of 4 – 5 different sources on research methodology referred to in this section?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>7. REFERENCE LIST</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were at least 12 – 15 different, relevant sources referred to?</li> <li>• Were all sources referred to in the text included in the reference list?</li> <li>• Were all sources listed in the reference list referred to in the text?</li> <li>• Are the relevant referencing style (Harvard or APA) correctly applied?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>8. GENERAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the language, grammar and syntax reflect an academic communication style?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>9. RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the quality of this proposal such that the student can be accepted for registration?</li> <li>• Any other remarks?</li> </ul>		

Assessor name: .....

Assessor signature: .....

Date: .....