

PhD Thesis – Guidelines for Referees

Thank you for agreeing to review the PhD thesis. Your help is much appreciated.

Criteria

In their doctoral dissertations, the doctoral students should demonstrate their ability and readiness for an independent creative activity in research and development. The significance, the originality of ideas, and the doctoral student's original creative contribution belong to one of the most important criteria for the quality of a doctoral dissertation.

Structure of the report

- **Start with an Overall Impression:** Before delving into specific comments, give a brief summary of your overall impression of the thesis. Is it largely well-done and impressive, or does it have significant gaps or issues?
- **Categorize Recommendations:** Recommendations can be categorized as:
 - *Essential:* Critical changes that must be addressed for the thesis to be accepted.
 - *Strongly Advised:* Important changes that should likely be made but are not deal-breakers.
 - *Optional:* Suggestions that might improve the thesis but are left to the discretion of the author.
- **Address Major Elements:**
 - **Originality:** Does the thesis make an original contribution to the field?
 - **Rigor:** Is the methodology sound and adequately explained?
 - **Scope:** Is the research question or problem clearly stated and significant? Are related works adequately covered?
 - **Structure:** Is the thesis well-organized, and does it have a logical flow?

- **Clarity:** Is the writing clear, free from jargon, and well-proofread?
- **Consider Different Thesis Sections:** Comment on the introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussions, and conclusions separately. This will ensure you've given attention to the entire document.
- **Offer Resources or Examples:** If possible, recommend articles, books, or other resources that might help the candidate address certain issues
- **End with an Explicit Recommendation:**
 - *For the small defense:* Please include one of the following:
 - I recommend the thesis for the final defense as it is.
 - I recommend the thesis for the final defense after minor revision.
 - I do not recommend the thesis for the final defense. The thesis requires a major revision.
 - *For the final defense:* Please include one of the following:
 - I recommend the thesis to the relevant commission for the defence of the dissertation..
 - I do not recommend the thesis to the relevant commission for the defence of the dissertation..

Style

- **Be Specific and Constructive:** Rather than saying, "Chapter 3 is confusing," it's much more helpful to state, "The argument in Chapter 3 about X would benefit from further clarification and examples."
- **Be Balanced:** Ensure you provide positive feedback along with your criticisms. Recognize the strengths and unique contributions of the work.
- **Keep the Tone Professional:** Remember that the goal is to provide a fair assessment, not to criticize the author personally. Always be respectful and avoid overly harsh or negative language.