

# University of Central Punjab

## Guidelines for MS Thesis Review

*You may find the following guidelines to be helpful while reviewing the thesis:*

### **1. CONTENTS AND FORMATTING**

- The thesis should follow the structure and format as specified in the attached document: "Contents and Formatting" (a revision from "Handbook F06")

### **2. PLAGIARISM**

- Plagiarism is a serious offense and should not be tolerated at all. As far as possible, it should be ensured that the work presented in the thesis is the student's own work, except where it is marked (and properly referred) to the contrary. For details of plagiarism, visit:  
[http://www.hec.gov.pk/new/QualityAssurance/download/Little Book of Plagiarism.doc](http://www.hec.gov.pk/new/QualityAssurance/download/Little%20Book%20of%20Plagiarism.doc)

### **3. PRESENTATION AND CLARITY**

- The reader should be able to read the text without difficulty.
- The style should be economic without unnecessary duplication or repetition.
- The bibliography and/or reference list should be complete and accurate.
- It should be possible to gain easy access to tables and figures relating to particular passages in the text, and to examine both data and commentary without effort.

### **4. INTEGRATION AND COHERENCE**

- There should be logical and rational links between the component parts of the thesis. In some cases, coherence will be achieved by a series of empirical studies or analyses which build one upon the other. In other words, there will be an intellectual wholeness to the submission.

### **5. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

- The student should demonstrate having detailed knowledge of original sources, a thorough knowledge of the field, and understanding of the main theoretical and methodological issues. There should not be undue dependence on secondary sources.
- The literature review should be more than a catalogue of the literature. It should contain a critical, analytic approach, with an understanding of sources of error and differences of opinion. The literature review should not be over-inclusive. It should not cover non-essential literature nor contain irrelevant digressions. A good literature review will be succinct, penetrating and challenging to read.

## **6. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

- The literature review should have revealed some questions or issues which call for further investigation. Ideally, the problem to be tackled in the research should emerge naturally and inexorably from the literature review.
- The research problem may arise as a result of past work which needs to be improved upon. It may be that there is a crucial test which will help to decide between competing theories. The student may:
  - be proposing a novel theoretical or methodological slant on a topic;
  - have created an interesting intellectual friction by bringing together hitherto unrelated fields or topics;
  - or have developed a new area of application for a method or theory.
- There should be some sense that the problem which has been identified is worthwhile.

## **7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

- A project may have a mixture of methodologies, suited to the changing needs of the project as it develops. There may, for instance, be initial semi-structured interviews yielding qualitative data, which can be analyzed in a sensitive fashion to yield the building blocks for a more quantitative approach. Or, alternatively, the student may start out with an established quantitative methodology, decide it is inappropriate, and then move to qualitative methods to elicit new questions or issues. There are many variants. Potential alternative methods should be rejected on the basis of a reasoned case.
- The student should be able to demonstrate that the methods used have been chosen through a conscious process of deliberation; and that the criteria for, and advantages and disadvantages of, particular choices of method are well specified.

## **8. ANALYSIS OF DATA (If Applicable)**

- The analytic methods used need to be justified and need to be shown to be sufficient for the task.
- Any problems arising in the analysis should be recognized and tackled appropriately.
- The student should show sensitivity to problems of reliability, measurement error and sources of bias.
- The student should understand the assumptions behind the test or tests used.
- Where appropriate, the student should demonstrate imagination and creativity in identifying and analyzing emergent properties of the data which may not have been foreseen.
- The analyses should be clearly linked to the explicit hypotheses, predictions, or questions which formed part of the stated research problem.
- The data should be presented in a well-structured way, so that a clear presentational sequence unfolds.

- In sum, the student should be able to demonstrate WHY each particular analysis was conducted, HOW the analysis was done, and WHAT the analysis tells us about the data.

## **9. DISCUSSION OF OUTCOMES**

- The discussion should summarize, without undue repetition, what has been achieved in the research project.
- It should evaluate the project's contribution to the research area.
- Links should be drawn between the student's own work and the work reviewed in the literature review.
- The main findings should be interpreted and related to theory (and practice where appropriate).
- There should be reflection on the research process as a whole. This reveals what the student has learned during the course of the work.
- In many cases it will be appropriate to include a section in which the student discusses the limitations of the research design and methodology in the light of knowledge acquired whilst undertaking the research, and outlines alternative or additional approaches which might be pursued.
- There should be some pointers to future work, either by the student or by others.
- An attempt should be made to identify issues that require further clarification.

## **10. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

- Although publication is not a requirement for submission of the thesis, the work presented in the thesis should be substantial enough to be published in a good peer-reviewed international conference or journal.

## **11. ORIGINALITY AND CREATIVITY**

- The research and the written submission should be the student's own work. However, the degree of independence shown may vary according to the research topic, since in some instances students will be working as part of a larger team, while in other instances they will be completely on their own. The student should show an appropriate level of independent working.