

## Professional Doctorate Taught Element Assessment Criteria

| Generic Criteria   | Grade A   | Grade B   | Grade C  | Grade D  | Grade E  | Grade F  |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Knowledge and Understanding</b></p> <p><i>Knowledge and Understanding of their professional context, their field of study, applicable methodologies and theories in relation to the assessment tasks set.</i></p> <p><i>Demonstrates awareness of how the topic relates to the wider field. Has made an effort to locate recent, less easily available sources. Ideas and data are discussed in depth, imaginatively and perceptively.</i></p> | <p>Outstanding and comprehensive understanding of the issues, selecting appropriate theories and relevant knowledge at the forefront of their discipline to generate insight.</p> | <p>Very good understanding of the issues, selecting appropriate theories and relevant knowledge at the forefront of their discipline to generate insight.</p> | <p>Good understanding of the issues, selecting appropriate theories and relevant knowledge at the forefront of their discipline to generate insight.</p> | <p>Satisfactory understanding of the issues, selecting appropriate theories and relevant knowledge at the forefront of their discipline to generate insight.</p> | <p>Identifies issues, but shows a limited grasp of relevant theories and knowledge, with integration into their thinking.</p>      | <p>Poor, inadequate or incomplete identification of relevant knowledge. Over reliance on a restricted range of sources. Not related directly to the research question, theme or topic. An extremely limited originality in the application of knowledge with poor conceptual understanding that enables rare critical evaluation and autonomy.</p> |
|  | <p>Selects and evaluates appropriate literature, integrates this into their thinking fully and positions their own work within it articulately.</p>                               | <p>Selects and evaluates appropriate literature including very good synthesis and critical review of it.</p>  | <p>Selects and evaluates appropriate literature including good synthesis and critical review of it.</p>  | <p>Selects and evaluates appropriate literature, including some synthesis and critical review of it.</p>   | <p>Uses appropriate literature, but with limited evaluation. Not consistently clearly related to the question, theme or topic.</p> | <p>Over reliance on a restricted range of sources. Not related directly to the research question, theme or topic.</p>  |

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|  | Advanced and original application of knowledge, showing clear conceptual understanding, critical evaluation and autonomy of thought. Of publishable quality in at least a national peer-reviewed journal. | Strong and original application of knowledge, with a conceptual understanding that enables critical evaluation with a degree of autonomy of thought. | Clear originality in the application of knowledge with a conceptual understanding that enables critical evaluation and a degree of autonomy. | Some originality in the application of knowledge with a conceptual understanding that enables critical evaluation and a degree of autonomy.                         | Limited originality in the application of knowledge with some conceptual understanding that enables only occasional critical evaluation and autonomy. | An extremely limited originality in the application of knowledge with poor conceptual understanding that enables rare critical evaluation and autonomy.                    |
|  | Clear evidence of an in-depth and sophisticated understanding of the contested nature of the ideas explored and how their own work contributes to it.   | Clear evidence of a strong understanding of the contested nature of the ideas explored with some understanding of how their work contributes to it.  | Clear evidence of an understanding of the contested nature of the ideas explored.  | Evidence of an understanding of the contested nature of the ideas explored  | Lacks evidence of an understanding of the contested nature of the ideas they are exploring.   | No evidence of an understanding of the contested nature of the ideas they are exploring  |
| <b>Conceptualization and Critical Thinking</b><br><i>Structural development from objectives to analysis and synthesis, conclusions and recommendations. Demonstrates a high level of conceptualization and</i> | Explicit, convincing demonstration and structured development of an argument with clear conceptualization and clear originality.  | Highly cogent structure and conceptualization of the ideas. Shows good evidence of developing new approaches and perspectives                        | Cogent structure and conceptualization of the ideas. Shows evidence of developing new approaches and perspectives                            | An explicit structure and conceptualization, critically defended but with more limited integration of the various themes or sections of the work, where applicable. | Some structure to the argument, critically defended but with weaknesses in the integration of the various themes or sections.                         | Poor, inadequate or incomplete structure and argument. Very limited use of information gathered to sustain the argument serious weaknesses in the integration of evidence. |

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| <i>criticality and is able to marshal these and relevant evidence into a cogent and original argument.</i> | Strong internal consistency, making the link between practice, theory and evidence/reflection strongly, adding originally to the field.  | Strong evidence of internal consistency with very good use of information gathered to support the argument.   | Evidence of internal consistency with good use of information gathered to support the argument.   | Adequate evidence of internal consistency with good use of information gathered to support the argument.   | Limited evidence of an awareness of strengths and weaknesses of the case being put.          | The writing is simplistic and one-dimensional, tending to be assertive rather than interrogative |
|  | Evidence of a creative and original approach with a critical awareness of its strengths and limitations.   | Very good awareness of strengths and limitations  | Good awareness of strengths and limitations.  | Clear awareness of strengths and weaknesses  | Limited awareness of strengths and weaknesses  | Very poor awareness of strengths and weaknesses  |
|  | Cogent and substantial evidence of critical reflection which is of a strikingly innovative kind. Includes the exploration of different perspectives on the area under investigation. | Substantial and convincing evidence of critical reflection. Adopts an interpretive and highly analytical approach which articulates a wide range of perspectives on the area under investigation. | Convincing evidence of critical reflection. Adopts an interpretive and analytical approach which articulates a range of perspectives on the area under investigation. | Adequate evidence of critical reflection. Adopts an interpretive and analytical approach which supports a range of perspectives on the area under investigation. | Limited evidence of critical reflection which makes a positive contribution to the argument. | Little evidence of critical reflection.  |

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|  | Employs implicit as well as explicit reflection in the narrative and consistently adopts an interrogative and problematizing approach  | Provides good evidence of implicit and explicit reflection in the narrative and adopts an interrogative and problematizing approach                            | Provides evidence of implicit and explicit reflection in the narrative and is inclined to adopt an interrogative and problematizing approach                       | Provides some evidence of implicit and explicit reflection in the narrative and is inclined to adopt an interrogative approach.                               | Some evidence of differing perspectives on the area under investigation. The reflection tends to be explicit and is only occasionally interrogative                | Poor evidence of differing perspectives on the area under investigation. The reflection tends to be explicit and is only occasionally interrogative          |
| <b>Analysis and Evaluation</b><br><br><i>Demonstrates a high level of analytical skill in in which different perspectives and interpretations of data are acknowledged and appropriately balanced and problematized.</i> | A sophisticated analysis and evaluation of personal and professional practice, grounded in evidence and advancing the argument.  | Very good analysis and evaluation of personal and professional practice grounded in evidence and advancing the argument  | Good analysis and evaluation of personal and professional practice grounded in evidence and advancing the argument   | Adequate analysis and evaluation of personal and professional practice grounded in evidence and advancing the argument  | Evidence of some analysis and evaluation, grounded in evidence and contributing positively to an argument  | Little or poorly focused analysis.   |
|  | A coherent integration of the value and belief system of the writer is integral to the argument. A creative and highly original approach to a range of reflective writing styles is adopted. | Clear evidence of the integration of the value and belief system of the writer into the argument. Appropriate styles and registers are evident in the writing. | Some clear evidence of the integration of the value and belief system of the writer into the argument. Appropriate styles and registers are evident in the writing | Some evidence of the integration of the value and belief system of the writer into the argument. Appropriate styles and registers are evident in the writing. | Little evidence of the integration of the value and belief system of the writer into the argument. A limited amount of evidence of a reflective style or register. | No evidence of the integration of the value and belief system of the writer into the argument. The writing is one dimensional, and lacking in any reflective |

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| <b>Research and Enquiry</b><br><br><i>Demonstrates the ability to conceptualize research which responds to real questions in the work context and which has the potential to make an original contribution to the field. Acknowledges the limitations of proposals and takes full cognisance of constraints.</i> | A comprehensive understanding of doctoral-level research with a high sensitivity to qualitatively different kinds of evidence and argument together with a nuanced approach as to what might constitute data. | A very good understanding of techniques applicable to research. Sensitive and systematic collection, analysis and presentation of data.                         | A good understanding of techniques applicable to research. Sensitive and systematic collection, analysis and presentation of data.                         | An adequate understanding of techniques applicable to research with a systematic collection, analysis and presentation of data.                               | A limited understanding of techniques applicable to research. An appropriate collection, interpretation and presentation of data, which is articulated and evaluated, but to a limited degree. | A poor understanding of techniques applicable to research. Poor, inadequate or incomplete information collection and interpretation.  |
|  | Very clear in-depth appreciation of relevant methodological issues and an excellent rationale for the approach adopted and the data collection methods utilised.  | Very good appreciation of relevant methodological issues and a very clear rationale for the research approach adopted and the data collection methods utilised. | Good appreciation of relevant methodological issues and a very clear rationale for the research approach adopted and the data collection methods utilised. | Appreciation of relevant methodological issues and a clearly presented rationale for the research approach adopted, and the data collection methods utilised. | Some familiarity with key methodological issues and a competent rationale for the research approach adopted and the data collection methods utilised.  | Little awareness of methodological issues and inappropriate or non-existent rationale presented for the research approach adopted and the data collection methods utilised. |
|  | Permeation of ethical thought is evident throughout.  | Very good integration of ethical issues into the argument.  | Good integration of ethical issues into the argument.  | Integration of ethical issues into the argument   | Ethical issues tend to be 'bolted on'.   | No substantive evidence of ethical issues in discussion.  |
| <b>Generic Criteria</b><br><br><i>Referencing – The Worcester Harvard System (author/date)</i>   | Extensive, appropriate and wide-ranging sources of ideas and information are acknowledged with  | A comprehensive range of sources of ideas and information are acknowledged with meticulous  | A wide range of sources of ideas and information are acknowledged with accuracy using an appropriate system  | Sources of ideas and information are invariably acknowledged with accuracy using an appropriate system  | Referenced, though there may be some errors and/or inconsistencies. Uses an appropriate system   | Poorly referenced and with some clear gaps. Does not use an appropriate referencing   |

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| <i>(Spelling and grammar should be accurate throughout regardless; writing should always be clear and literate)</i> | meticulous accuracy using an appropriate system of referencing. | accuracy using an appropriate system of referencing. | of referencing. | of referencing. | of referencing. | system. |

### Related Policies, Documents or Webpages

[Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#) [accessed on 07/10/2021].

[Generic Grade Descriptors Levels 4-7](#) [accessed on 12/10/2021].

| Item   | Notes  |
|--|--|
| Version Number                                       | 2.0  |
| Date of Approval                                     | 28/09/16                                       |
| Approved by  | ASQEC  |
| Effective from                                       | 28/09/16                                       |
| Policy Officer                                       | Research School Manager                        |
| Department   | Research School                                |
| Review date  | July 2023                                      |
| Last reviewed  | July 2020, no significant changes made         |
| Policy/procedure/guidance superseded by this version | Grade Descriptors – Level 8 (PGR) v1, Jan 2014 |
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