

Teaching and Curriculum
MASTER'S ESSAY RUBRICS

1. Library Research

Candidates will identify a significant issue or problem in contemporary U.S. education, do a review of the relevant literature, locate the research in a theoretical framework, state their position, and support it with conceptual arguments or empirical evidence in current educational theory and research. Candidates should also locate this position in the literature. The implications for education, educational theory, and future research must be clearly stated.

NOTE: Consistent with the Comprehensive Master's Portfolio rubric, the emergent (2) rating has been eliminated from this rubric. Given the Master's Essay occurs at the end of the candidate's program, we expect at least adequate proficiency. Emergent proficiency is no longer acceptable.

CRITERIA	(1) Weak/Unacceptable	(3) Adequate	(4) Outstanding	Score
Statement of Research Problem	The problem or issue being addressed is not articulated in a clear, convincing way, nor is its significance established.	The problem or issue is addressed with some degree of clarity, but without a fully compelling, convincing argument about <i>why</i> this research is worthy, timely, and significant.	The problem or issue is addressed with both clarity and conviction. A convincing argument is made about why the research is worthy, timely, and significant.	
Review of Relevant Literatures	The review of relevant theory and research literatures is weak and unconvincing. There is insufficient evidence of a knowledge base informed by contemporary literatures in the candidate's domain of study. Bibliographic references may be missing, outdated, or only weakly connected to the research issue addressed. The candidate's command and synthesis of theory may be unconvincing or even confusing. There is little evidence of an original, critical <i>synthesis</i> of research literatures nor is there an under girding framework informed by theory.	The review of relevant theory and research literatures is only moderately convincing. There is moderate evidence of a knowledge base informed by contemporary literatures in the candidate's chosen domain of study. Bibliographic references are in most cases appropriately provided and connected to the research issue(s) addressed. The candidate attempts a synthesis of relevant theoretical literatures, but with mixed or moderate success. There is an attempt made to articulate a theoretical framework, but the achievement of this synthesis is partial.	The review of relevant theory and research literatures is clear, critical, and convincing. The candidate's command of contemporary literatures in his/her chosen domain of study is obvious. Bibliographic references are appropriately provided; their links to the research issue(s) address are always clear. The paper evidences a creative, original synthesis of theoretical material and research literatures that leads to the articulation of a clear, under girding framework informed by theory.	
Methodology and Data Analysis	The connections between the problem and analyses of the literature and arguments made are weakly articulated – if at all. There is little or no articulation of the rationale for the candidate's argument and forms of data analysis. Arguments may be presented without adequate framing information or explanation in terms of the wider goals of the paper.	The connections between the problem and analyses of the literature and the arguments made are articulated with moderate success. A rationale for the candidate's argument and forms of analysis may be provided, but the links between this rationale and the ensuing arguments made may be less than fully	The connections between the problem and analyses of the literature, and the arguments made are clear and convincing. A rationale for the candidate's argument and forms of analysis is provided; this rationale has clear links to the candidate's synthesis of theory and research literatures and to the	

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		clear or convincing. Arguments are presented with some framing information and some description or explanation of their meaning.	ensuing argument(s) made across the paper. Arguments are presented with appropriate framing information and description or explanation of their meaning in terms of the wider goals of the paper.	
Grounding of Evidence/ Significance of Results	The conclusions drawn are weakly or inadequately supported by the evidence presented. There is little in the way of summation that includes discussion of the wider implications (for research, practice, policy, theory) of the work. The conclusion does not show evidence of a perspective that takes into account potential critiques and a potentially wide, diverse readership.	The conclusions drawn are supported moderately well by the evidence presented, though with partial rather than full success. There is a summation of the central points made and some discussion of the wider implications of the work. The conclusion provides some evidence of a perspective that at least considers potential critiques and attempts to reach beyond a narrowly construed readership.	The conclusions drawn are fully, richly supported by the evidence presented. There is a clear and convincing summation of the central arguments made as well as discussion of the wider implications of the work (for research, practice, policy, and/or theory). The concluding arguments show evidence of a critical perspective that takes into account potential critiques and that addresses a wide, diverse readership	
Clarity and Style	The writing reveals a lack of awareness of intended audience in terms of word choice and style, and a lack of command over the genre that is most suited to the wider goals as these are articulated in the candidate’s paper. The sequencing of sections may be confusing and/or the transitions between them weakly achieved. The introductory and concluding sections of the paper may be weak or barely discernable to the reader.	The writing reveals some awareness of intended audience and some effort to match genre to both audience and the wider goals of the work. However, the writing may at times be unclear or inconsistent: the sequencing of sections may be confusing in some places, transitions may at times be weak, or word choice may be awkward or ill-matched to the genre most suited to the candidate’s larger purposes for the work. The introductory and concluding sections of the paper provide only moderate support and clarification for the reader.	The writing reveals a thoughtful, discerning awareness of audience, style, and genre. The genre and stylistic choices made by the candidate are appropriate to the wider goals of the candidate, and they are consistent in terms of their use throughout the paper. The sequencing of sections and transitions are smoothly achieved; the argument built up across the paper is clear and accessible for the reader. The introductory and concluding sections of the paper provide ample support and further clarity vis-à-vis the paper’s argument and its overall structure.	

Candidates must receive either a 3 or 4 in all categories in order to pass the Master’s Essay requirement. A 1 in any category constitutes a “no pass”. A candidate may receive a 1 based on any of the criteria listed within the “unacceptable/insufficient” description and it will still constitute a “no-pass”. Candidates may submit one revision after an initial “no pass” assessment.