

**MA Research Project/Thesis Rubric Spring 2008**

Element	Excellent	Acceptable	Unacceptable
<p><b>Introduction &amp; Context</b> (Description of problem/topic, context, type of study, theoretical framework, literature review; and relationship to researcher's personal experience and knowledge)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and detailed description of research topic and context (e.g., students, classroom, school, curriculum, programs, policies, etc.)</li> <li>• Clear and detailed explanation of relationship between inquiry context and researcher's beliefs, experiences, and knowledge as appropriate for the type of research*</li> <li>• Very effective discussion of theoretical framework</li> <li>• Extensive literature review (e.g., # references <math>\geq 30</math>) that represents well the state of knowledge in the field</li> <li>• Very clear connections between literature review and inquiry topic/question(s)</li> <li>• Varied sources (peer-reviewed research studies, research reports, literature reviews, current research and landmark/seminal works, related topics and disciplines, dissertations, conference presentations, and electronic sources)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research topic and context described</li> <li>• Explanation of relationship between inquiry context and researcher's beliefs, experiences, and knowledge as appropriate for the type of research present but not well developed*</li> <li>• Theoretical framework present but not well developed</li> <li>• Substantial literature review (e.g., <math>20 \leq \# \text{ references} \leq 29</math>)</li> <li>• Connections between literature review and research topic/question(s) present but not well developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research topic described, perhaps minimally, but context is insufficient</li> <li>• Theoretical framework implied or non-existent</li> <li>• Insufficient and/or superficial literature review (e.g., # references <math>&lt; 20</math>)</li> <li>• Over-reliance on inappropriate sources (e.g., non-refereed materials, including Web sites)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Research Design</b> (Approach, question(s), sampling, data collection and analysis, ethics, and the addressing of subjectivity)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question(s), approach, sampling, methods of data collection and analysis, ethical issues, and the addressing of subjectivity appropriately described and justified with references to research texts and related studies*</li> <li>• Search criteria for literature review and data collection and analysis processes and procedures explained clearly and with sufficient detail such that a reader could fully understand the processes and procedures and the justification for using them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanation of research questions, approach, data collection and analysis processes and procedures, and issues of ethics and subjectivity present but not well developed*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of study not specified</li> <li>• Research questions may not be appropriate for study type</li> <li>• Data collection and/or analysis processes not addressed</li> <li>• Data collection processes and/or instruments not provided</li> <li>• Issues of ethics and subjectivity not considered*</li> </ul>
<p><b>Findings and Implications</b> (Key findings; credibility/validity and limitations; and implications for practice, policy, and research)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key findings presented thoroughly (e.g., "thick" description)</li> <li>• Key findings presented coherently</li> <li>• Findings clearly connected to data, research question(s), and related literature</li> <li>• Limitations (e.g. credibility/validity threats and/or other limitations) addressed thoroughly and appropriately*</li> <li>• Implications for practice, policy, research, and/or other areas thoroughly considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key findings described and linked to data</li> <li>• Connection of findings to data, research question(s), and related literature present but not well developed</li> <li>• Limitations addressed*</li> <li>• Some implications considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some findings mentioned, but there are no connections to data, research question(s), or existing research</li> <li>• Limitations and implications considered minimally or not at all*</li> </ul>
<p><b>Structure and Conventions</b> (Organization, structure, cohesion, surface-level features, and references)</p>	<p>Note: Excellent and acceptable criteria have been combined below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very coherent and well organized</li> <li>• Introductions and summaries included for all major sections</li> <li>• Section headings used appropriately</li> <li>• Transitions and other linking devices used effectively throughout</li> <li>• No problems with surface-level features (e.g., spelling and punctuation)</li> <li>• Citations and references follow an accepted style (e.g., APA)</li> <li>• All in-text citations included in reference list and vice versa</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacks organization and/or coherence</li> <li>• Notable problems with surface-level features (e.g., grammar and spelling)</li> <li>• Citations and references incomplete and/or significant mismatch between citations and reference list</li> <li>• Reference style unclear or inconsistent</li> </ul>

\*Whether and where to address these issues depends on the type of research (e.g., qualitative or quantitative) and the researcher's stylistic preferences.