Area-specific thesis proposal evaluation criteria MSC NACS

Every NACS graduate student must have their Thesis Proposal approved by their advisory committee before the end of their third semester (and a thesis proposal approval form submitted to the Graduate Secretary).

All NACS MSc students in their first year of study must take PSYC*6740 (Research Seminar in Neuroscience and Applied Cognitive Science A), and one requirement of this course is for the student to prepare a written research report detailing their research progress and plans. This report is due at the end of the winter term, and typically serves as the first draft of the student's thesis proposal.

In addition to the PSYC*6740 course work, approval of the proposal involves submitting a written proposal to the Advisory Committee for review (allow at least two weeks for the review of each draft), and once deemed suitable, presenting the proposal orally at a committee meeting.

The written component of the thesis proposal typically contains the following content:

1) Introduction

2) Method (including planned analyses)

3) Current Results

4) Proposed Results

5) Implications

All proposals will be reviewed against the following criteria.

Introduction

-Comprehensively summarizes and references the relevant literature as it pertains to the thesis topic.

-Critically points out the most relevant and important theories and empirical evidence to establish a clear purpose and contribution for the thesis.

-Demonstrates an accurate and deep understanding of the research literature (the authors/ theorists would be in full agreement with their ideas or findings being summarized in this way).

-Hypotheses are well substantiated and clearly follow from the literature review.

Method (including planned analyses)

-Research design is clearly articulated and follows logically from the literature review.

-The method allows for the optimal testing of the research hypotheses.

-All relevant measures are described in detail and appropriate based on the subject matter of the thesis.

-Proposed analyses are described in detail.

Current Results

-Any data that have already been collected and analyzed, and that the student proposes to include in the final thesis, are reported.

-Results are conveyed through main text and tables/figures, and appropriate statistical analyses are reported.

Proposed Results

-Predicted results are also presented (in tables or figures) to demonstrate a mastery of the underlying theory and proposed analyses.

-Strengths and weaknesses of the research design and measurement are clearly articulated.

Implications

-The implications, and importance, of the current or proposed findings for theory and practice are described in detail for the topic domain.

Organization, Clarity, and Format

- Proposal is structured with a clear organization.

- All aspects of the proposal are explored in a highly systematic and disciplined manner.

- Appropriate elements of style are consistently used throughout (e.g., transition sentences between paragraphs, appropriate headings).

- Sentences are clear and concise.

- There are no grammatical errors.

- There is consistent and accurate use of APA style.

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