The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Biomedical Informatics
PhD Qualifying Exam Research Proposal Evaluation Rubric

Student name: _____   **Date of Presentation**: _____   **Chair**: _____
Evaluator: _____

The domains below will be evaluated for the written abstract dissertation research proposal and the proposal presentation. Please circle the items that most closely describe the skills demonstrated by the student. Circle the highest level of item and choose and an Overall Score for each category. If there is an even split for a given category, please select the most conservative Overall Score, i.e., if two are selected in 3 and two are selected in 4, choose an Overall Score of 3.

	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Outstanding (4)	Overall Score
Knowledge	• Limited breadth and depth of understanding of the area of study • Information used from only 2-3 sources and not integrated • Does not evaluate background literature • Does not understand implications of existing research	• Sufficient breadth or depth (but not both) of the subject • Information used from 5-10 sources and not integrated • With some help, could synthesize and evaluate background literature • Limited understanding of implications of existing research	• Sufficient breadth and depth of understanding • Information from multiple (more than 10) sources used, but not integrated • Could identify and discuss key background for the study • Some attempts at discussing implications of most important research findings	• Solid breadth and depth of knowledge • Able to integrate information from multiple sources • Able to describe, discuss, critically evaluate relevant background information • Could draw clear conclusions from and discuss implications of most important research findings	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4
Research questions	• Research questions are unfocused • No hypothesis is provided • No rationale is provided	• Able to formulate purposeful research questions, but has difficulty explaining rationale • Hypotheses are imprecise/poorly stated • Significance of hypotheses is unclear	• Research questions are well-stated with adequate rationale • Hypotheses are well-stated with adequate rationale • Significance of hypotheses and research questions is clear and well stated	• Very significant and novel hypotheses • Very significant and novel research questions • Strong, clear rationale/ justification for hypotheses/research questions	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

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	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Outstanding (4)	Overall Score
Research Design and Data Analysis Plan	• Does not describe research design to test the hypotheses • Does not identify appropriate data analysis plan • Does not identify limitations and assumptions in the research design • Unaware of alternative approaches	• Research design is explained, but lacks theoretical support • Rationale for selected data analysis is not well established • Awareness of some weaknesses in research design • Some awareness of alternative approaches	• Research design is supported with theory and is adequate to address the hypothesis • Planned data analysis methods are generally sufficient to address the hypotheses but need some modification • Could identify strengths and weaknesses of research design and planned data analysis • Demonstrates understanding of alternative approaches	• Able to identify and logically discuss strengths and weaknesses of research design • Planned data analysis is well-described and highly sufficient to address the hypotheses • Understands the theory and practice of planned data analysis • Appropriately compared and discussed alternative research approaches	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4
Communication	• Abstract did not follow standard format • Grammatical errors and misspellings • Arguments are incomplete or poorly organized • Did not understand/ address the questions asked • Poor oral communication skills	• Sub-standard writing resulting in lack of clarity • No grammatical errors or misspellings • Some portion of the arguments are logical and organized • Understood most of the questions but provided only partial answers • Oral presentation was clear, but student had to read the slides most of the time	• Abstract was largely well written • Some discontinuities during the oral presentation • Arguments are logical and organized • Understood questions and provided adequate answers; • Could be readily understood	• Abstract was clearly written in the appropriate format • Poised and polished in the oral presentation • Arguments are articulated and well organized • Understood the questions and provided clear, thorough answers • Engaged the committee and other audience in a collegial discussion	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Additional comments: _____

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