MAIN QUALITY INDICATORS FOR THESES (BBA & MBA) AND DOCTORAL STUDIES (DBA)

Component	Goal	Indicators	Notes
1.Title	-first opportunity to let the reader know what thesis/dissertation is about. -to highlight the purpose of the study.	-includes main variables (for quantitative studies) -includes concepts/factors (for qualitative studies) -research problem (not necessary only if variables/concepts difficult to be provided) -includes research setting/site -includes participants -research design/methods (not necessary)	-**no more than 12 words** per APA style. -according to international research ethics the exact name of the research site (e.g. company, city etc.) **should not be revealed** but just generally described, for example "global vendor of computer software located in Spain" and this is throughout the paper.
2.Abstract (can be named Executive Summary for Business Plan)	-to provide brief but accurate information about the whole study, from research problem to main conclusions. -abstract is often the only component of the study that readers can access and review.	-one or two lines about the business problem -the purpose and the type of the study -the theoretical/conceptual framework used (if applicable) -the main data collection and analysis methods -the main results -main conclusions/strong take-home message	-**no more than one page.** -provided immediately after the title page and before the table of contents. -see the Abstract Guidelines document posted at Research Center site.
3.Background of the Business Problem	-to generate interest in the study. -to justify why this research should be conducted. -to provide a general context for understanding the entire study.	-clear identification of the need to solve an *applied business problem (your topic)* -brief & accurate description of the *applied problem* -clear justification about why the problem deserves new research (especially for DBA studies)	-about 1,5 pages in length. -an introductory paragraph can be provided before the Background of the Problem.

4.Literature review	-to gain an understanding of the existing research and debates relevant to the research problem or area under study. -to adequately present and critique the current and published knowledge on the research problem or area under study.	-clear and logical order of the existing knowledge about the topic/area of research, focusing on specific variables, concepts and factors -review moves from broader concepts to a more specific focus -discussion & critique of studies limitations, research design and methodologies used from other researchers -focus on qualitative or quantitative data depending on the topic -comparison between studies: similarities-differences-explanation of opposite results -background and rationale for your own research to lead you to a narrowed research gap & focused research questions	-it can be as exhaustive as possible especially for a DBA study. -its length depends on the study design (e.g., business plan can have more limited literature review) and type of the study (BBA vs MBA/DBA). -scholarship criteria, see item #15 below.
5.Research Problem	-to explicitly and briefly contextualize the business problem and to define what the researcher plan to investigate.	-statement of the specific business problem -statement of *who* has the specific problem, such as small business leaders, project managers, women entrepreneurs, etc.	-this can be achieved in one sentence or few lines and it can start as follows: "The business problem under study is that some (identify who has the problem)… "
6.Purpose	-to clearly describe what your research project intends to investigate and accomplish.	-identifies the research design (i.e., case study). -identifies the research method as qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods -suggested format of a purpose for **qualitative studies:** *"the aim of this [type of the study] study is to [understand/describe/explore) the [the central phenomenon/experiences/perceptions/opinions] of/for [participants] at/in [research site]"*	-no more than a paragraph of few lines. -should be completely aligned with the research problem & research questions.

		-suggested format of a purpose for **quantitative studies:** *"the aim of this [type of the study] study is to investigate the association between [independent variables] and [dependent variables] adjusted for [control variables] in [population under study/setting]"* -identifies the specific population under study -includes the research setting and sites	
7.Research Questions	-to determine exactly what you want to find out with this research project. **-without good and clear research questions it is impossible to have a feasible good study.**	-focused on a single problem per research question and not combine different research problems in the same research question -feasible to be addressed with reasonable, cost and time effective data collection and analysis -specific information such as variables, concepts, factors, participants and research settings -adequately answerable to develop responses over the space of the study -relevant to the field -for DBA, original enough to contribute something new to the literature/discipline **-DBA minimum standard for quantitative research questions:** at least one descriptive **and** one inferential research question, or at least t**wo** inferential research questions. No more than 5 research questions in total **-DBA minimum standard for qualitative research questions:** ideally 2 research questions or 1 with multiple subquestions. No more than 3 RQs.	Research Questions Examples: **Quantitative (descriptive)**: What is the prevalence of obesity in adolescents in UK? **Quantitative (inferential):** What is the association between job satisfaction and productivity, adjusted for gender and age, in teachers in US? **Qualitative:** -What are the perceptions of managers in higher education institutions regarding the doctoral curriculum in India? -What are the most effective strategies to address an economic crisis in an industry, according to CEOs' perceptions in Spain? -After testing a new device with AI features in Greek adolescents, how they received this new device and why?

| 8.Theoretical & conceptual framework (if applicable) | -explain which theoretical or conceptual framework or model is used to inform the research questions and interpret the expected results.
-it is considered a **high standard** for DBA studies. | **for quantitative studies:**
-the correct term is *theoretical framework/model* and it should be a single, established and known theory in the field of economics, management, etc.
-it should explain the potential association between independent, dependent and control variables, and therefore it should be reflected in the quantitative research questions
-it should be used to interpret the obtained results
for qualitative studies:
-the correct term is *conceptual framework* and usually it is developed by the researcher for the study's aims
-a conceptual framework may include multiple theories
-it should explain the potential interaction between the concepts, factors or other determinants that describe the qualitative phenomenon, and therefore it should be reflected in the quantitative research questions
-it should be used to interpret the obtained results | -theoretical and conceptual framework (if applicable) should be discussed in Methods section and Discussion section of the thesis/dissertation. |

9.Data collection & analysis	-to explicitly describe the procedures of data collection and analysis.	-identification and justification of the type of sampling strategy and participants' recruitment -research ethics compliance (e.g., use of consent forms) -description and validity & reliability confirmation of the data collection instrument (e.g., surveys, interview protocol) -identification and justification of the proper type of data analysis. For quantitative data, special focus on the evaluation of the statistical assumptions as appropriate to the study, such as normality tests, regression diagnostics **DBA minimum standards:** • quantitative data: at least bivariate inferential analysis (e.g., t test, ANOVA, chi-square, etc.) • qualitative data: at least content analysis • mixed methods data: at least content analysis for qual data and at least bivariate inferential analysis for quant data **DBA high standards:** • quantitative data: multivariable analysis (e.g., regression, MANOVA, etc.) • qualitative data: thematic analysis • mixed methods data: thematic analysis for qual data and multivariable analysis for quant data	The Research Director (supervisor) should be familiar with the qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques to properly guide the student. Please contact the Research Center for further guidance.

10.Presentation/Report of the results	-to accurately and scholarly present the data analysis results.	**-report statistical analysis findings, organized by research questions** -use of narrative, tables, graphs or other data depiction tools -compliant with APA 7 style, please see more info at https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/tables-figures	-report of the results should be done without interpretation/discussion
11.Discussion of the results	-to interpret and describe the significance of the key findings in light of what was already known about the research problem.	-quick summary of the key findings **-do these results address the RQs?** -interpretation of the results according to the literature, theoretical framework, and common sense -identification and critique differences and similarities with the literature by: • highlighting the new evidence according to the results • discussing the limitations of the study	-this component demonstrates students' critical thinking and ability to synthesize and interpret different sources of information.
12.Limitations of the Study	-to describe the methodological and other weaknesses of the study and corresponding mitigation measures.	-study design weaknesses including data collection and analysis issues and biases -reasonable measures to address the limitations -if no mitigation measures, provide some reasonable justifications, such as time and financial barriers	-**no research is perfect** and do not pretend that yours is 😊 By providing honestly and accurately the limitations its shows that you know what you are doing, what are the limits of your study and how researchers can improve your study in the future. -**limitations are completely different from delimitations** which are the boundaries of the study, regarding the inclusion and exclusion criteria of participants, the research sites bounds, etc.

13.Recommendations	-to make specific practical and methodological suggestions based on your findings.	**-for practice** (professional, policy-making recommendations based on your findings, ideally to be immediately implemented) **-for future research** (methodological, research design, theoretical, and/or empirical issues that can be addressed in future studies based on your experience during the research project)	-strong component of the research study to address an applied business problem. -should be realistic, feasible, cost and time effective. -should be linked with the main findings and conclusions of the study, otherwise they are considered assumptions.
14.Conclusions	- to assist the reader understand why your research should matter to them after they have finished reading the paper.	-summarize the most important key findings of the study without being repetitive -clear, simple, practical and not exaggerated conclusions claims –**be humble and accurate** -justify the value of the study **-strong take-home message in the end**	-do not introduce new information or arguments that were not previously discussed. -for quantitative studies, a non-statistically significant result is also a result and should be discussed.
15.Scholarship	-to demonstrate a high level of scholarly writing which worths to be published.	**-at least 80% of the used resources/references should be recent, ideally less than 5 years** **-at least 80% of the used resources/references should be from peer review journals** -APA reference and in-text citation style is required for all scholar documents submitted by the students, including course assignments, theses & dissertations -examples about the proper use of APA 7 format at https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples	-the students need to practice in using APA style during the coursework so they can be ready in capstone process (theses & dissertations)
16.Academic integrity	-to be committed to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.	-all theses & dissertations should be checked for plagiarism by the Research Center -all the Centers should maximize their efforts to instruct students and candidates to adequately paraphrase and synthesize previous work to obtain	-**no specific acceptable similarity score**, this should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

		the lower possible similarity score, see some guidance how you can do this at https://guides.library.jhu.edu/avoidingplagiarism/paraphrasing_summarizing	
17.Use of AI in Academic Research		**Main guidelines on the proper use of AI tools in writing:** -use of AI such as ChatGPT as a tool, not a substitute for critical thinking or original work -AI is expected to supplement students' own knowledge and ideas, not to provide complete answers to assignments **-students must clearly acknowledge the use of AI and cite it as an outside source. Please see some guidance at https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt** **-description (e.g., in an appendix) what students use the AI for, prompt(s) included.** -ensure accuracy/use of critical thinking; there is a lot of bias and inconsistency in AI developed content which should be checked by the students. Students are always responsible for any errors, omissions or outdated information -plagiarism check of AI developed content -AI use always in alignment with course objectives; students should demonstrate their understanding of course content and learning objectives and be evaluated for this	-artificial intelligence (AI), AI-generated text, and specifically ChatGPT are part of our lives and we all inevitably use them during our professional and academic life. However, **in Academia there should be rules about how students can use it so they can be compliant with Academic Integrity principles and to apply critical thinking in their research**. SSM RC assists students and faculty in this matter, by providing relevant guidance and regulations.

18.Business Plan Additional Sections	-although all the above are applicable to all BBA, MBA and DBA studies, business plan format can include the information above with a different structure but with specific indicators, see next column	-detailed company description: a. company's history-timeline of events, issues, and achievements (if applicable) b. PESTLE or/and SWOT analysis c. business level strategy: identify and analyze each company's competitive strategy, marketing strategy, costs, and general focus d. leadership and operations review: identify and analyze the structure and control systems that the company is using to implement its business strategies. Evaluate organizational change, levels of hierarchy, employee rewards, conflicts etc. -market research -offered services or products -marketing and Sales Plan Unique Selling Proposition (USP) -integrated Marketing Communication/Plan (IMC/P) -funding requests -financial projections -financial Analysis which includes investment capital, cash flow, ROI, profit Margin, etc -chances and risks -exit plan(s)	