



PhD Student Literature Review Paper Guidelines (for PhD Students starting September 2013 and on)

The purpose of the literature review paper is to:

1. promote advanced knowledge of the literature related to the chosen thesis topic
2. promote early engagement in thesis proposal development
3. provide the foundations to focus thinking about potential research questions
4. engage the student, supervisor and doctoral committee members in the process of dissertation development.

The literature review paper will be approximately 5000 words in length. The topic and review format will be negotiated between the student and supervisory committee, but should have clear relevance to the anticipated substantive topic of the student's doctoral research. Students may do a scoping review, a narrative review, a systematic review, a qualitative metasynthesis or other literature review format. The overall presentation of the literature review paper will be similar to a manuscript prepared for publication. This will facilitate student publication of the literature review papers in the future. Students are not required to identify a specific journal for publication consideration. An abstract for the paper is not required.

The doctoral supervisor and at least one other member of the doctoral committee will appraise the completed literature review. Written and discussed results of the appraisal will normally be provided to the student within three weeks after submission of the literature review paper.

Guidelines for appraisal of the literature review

Overall, to determine whether a literature review paper merits a 'pass' grade, the appraisers will examine the literature review paper for: coherence with the stated purpose and goals, evidence of critical analysis and synthesis, and clarity of communication. Specific expected components are outlined below for the introduction, methods, results and discussion/conclusion sections of the literature review paper.

1. Introduction that includes

- clear explanation of the problem or topic of interest
- description of the relevance/importance of the topic
- clear statement of the purpose and objectives of the literature review paper.

2. Methods section that includes

- discussion, including justification, of the method used for the review
- succinct description of search strategies used and initial results obtained (e.g., inclusion and exclusion criteria, dates, etc.)
- description of, including justification for, methods of appraisal for the review.

3. **Results** section that includes

- synthesis of the state of the knowledge (including quality and scope) based on the review of the literature. This includes a discussion of the major findings of the literature review and synthesis as well as a discussion of the major strengths and limitations of the current literature on the topic.

4. **Discussion/ Conclusions** section that includes

- comprehensive discussion of implications for the student's own doctoral research (e.g., purpose, research questions, preliminary methodological ideas, etc.)
- discussion of implications of results for research, theory, policy and practice, as appropriate.



**Record of PhD Student Literature Review Paper Topic and Format Approval
(PhD Students starting September 2013 and on)**

The supervisor is asked to send this signed form to the Registrar upon completion by **April 30 in Year 1**. The student, supervisor and committee members should each keep a copy for their records.

Student Name and Number: _____

Date: _____

To: Registrar's Office, Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing; Fax: (416) 978-8222

The topic and review format have been negotiated between the student and supervisory committee. The following topic and format/type of literature review have been approved by the supervisor.

Topic:

Format:

Signature:

(Student) Date: _____

(Supervisor) Date: _____