

**Go / No Go Assessment Form for reviewers**

This version is from October 4, 2024

Dear Reviewer,

Thank you so much for helping the PhD candidate and the Graduate School of Social Sciences at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam by reviewing the candidate’s work. Below you will find some information on the procedure. You should have received:

* A mail with the names of the PhD candidate and the supervisors
* The substantial product to be reviewed. The form is chosen by the PhD candidate. This might be
  + a full research proposal (6,000 – 8,000 words) (we ask you to complete part A of this form), or
  + a short research proposal (1,500 – 2,000 words) and a substantive product in the form of a draft chapter (or paper) intended to be part of the dissertation (we ask you to complete part A and B).

Introduction

This assessment of a PhD candidate’s quality, performance and project progress takes place in the first year of the program. The candidate submits the materials for this “Go / No Go assessment” (GNG) eight months after the start of the project (when the candidate does not work full-time on the dissertation research the due date is accordingly later). A positive assessment is required to continue with the PhD program.

What you need to know when writing your review

You should keep in mind that a research proposal has sufficient quality to prepare for successful PhD research within the time limit (after the period of the first eight months, typically about 4700 hours = 2.8 FTE remain for the continuation of the research and writing the dissertation). A chapter has sufficient quality to be included in the final PhD dissertation as it is or with (minor) revisions; we do not require that a chapter is published in an edited volume or a scientific journal.

The review procedure

Usually, a review is conducted by three external reviewers and one FSS-reviewer. The Director of the Graduate School decides on the acceptability of the substantive product to be sent out for review, as well as on the extensiveness / scope of the review procedure. For example, when an elaborate external review is already available (e.g. a draft chapter of the dissertation is reviewed by a scientific journal recently) a limited review procedure might be chosen.

Other documents and data reviewed in the GNG procedure

The design of the research should fit with contemporary standards on ethics; authorship accountability, a plagiarism check, an ethical test and a data management plan are required. Please note that you do not receive documents on these aspects because they are reviewed by the GSSS. However, the candidate and the supervisors may find it desirable to include the ethical aspects of the research in the review. In that case, an additional document is enclosed.

It is in the interest of the candidate and of the project that there is an elaborated plan for the remaining trajectory, including a time schedule; budget plan; plan for doctorate training; report on the annual consultation between candidate and supervisors; statement of the supervisors that the candidate and the project are in good standing. In the interest of the candidate, the Graduate School asks explicit approval by the supervisors.

Confidentiality

The review procedure is transparent, which means that your name will be made available to the PhD candidate and the supervisors for (possible) inquiries. If you prefer to remain unknown to the candidate and the supervisory team, we will delete your name from the assessment form. Without further notice, however, your name will be revealed.  
We ask that you not share the GNG product with others.

Further information

The GNG procedure and our rules for dissertations are explained on the website:

* <https://vu.nl/en/about-vu/faculties/faculty-of-social-sciences/more-about/the-graduate-school-of-social-science> > Assessment during your PhD trajectory;
* <https://vu.nl/en/about-vu/faculties/faculty-of-social-sciences/more-about/the-graduate-school-of-social-sciences> > Rules, regulations, and policy > Rules for the PhD thesis.

Or, ask your question to the GSSS Program Manager in response to the email you received, or send your email to [graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl](mailto:graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl).

**A - Proposal (full or short) – Reviewer’s assessment**

(1) Please select a recommendation from the following options:

* Reject
* Major revision
* Minor revision
* Accept

(2) Please give the proposal an overall rating on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 100 (highest).

(3) Please rate the proposal for underneath issues on a scale of 1 to 5:

1 = low/poor quality/unacceptable

2 = problematic

3 = sufficient/acceptable

4 = good

5 = high quality/excellent

N/A = not applicable, cannot be assessed

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | N/A; 1-5 |
| Clarity research question |  |
| Originality |  |
| Embedding in scientific literature/debates |  |
| Quality of research design (fit between research question and proposed research) |  |
| Feasibility and quality of time schedule/work plan |  |
| Feasibility and quality of research methodology |  |
| Relevance of the data to the research question |  |
| Quality of writing (clarity, style) |  |
| Contribution to scientific knowledge |  |
| Contribution to application in practice (e.g. societal impact) |  |
| Feasibility, quantity and quality of proposed output |  |

(4) Please give your narrative review for the PhD candidate below. Please (a) describe what you consider to be the research’s key contribution, and (b) identify critical issues that should or could be addressed to improve the proposal.

*Comments to PhD Candidate:*

(5) Give any comments that are meant for the Director of the Graduate School only below. This information is deleted when the review is sent to the candidate.

*Comments to the Director:*

**B - Chapter (or paper) - Reviewer Instructions**

*[Please note that this section is not applicable in case the candidate has opted for an full proposal only rather than a short proposal and a draft of chapter or paper]*

(1) Please select a recommendation from the following options:

* Reject
* Major revision (revise & resubmit)
* Minor revision
* Accept

(2) Please give the draft chapter an overall rating on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 100 (highest).

(3) Please rate the draft chapter for underneath issues on a scale of 1 to 5.

1 = poor quality/unacceptable

2 = problematic

3 = sufficient/acceptable

4 = good

5 = high quality/excellent

N/A = not applicable, cannot be assessed

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | N/A; 1-5 |
| Contribution to theoretical, methodological, and/or practical knowledge |  |
| Quality of research (design and analysis) |  |
| Adequacy of the data |  |
| Interpretation of results |  |
| Quality of writing (structure, clarity, style) |  |
| Coverage of topic |  |
| Balance of arguments |  |
| Relevance/ quality of literature reviewed |  |
| Theoretical contribution, contribution to new knowledge |  |
| Utility and quality of tables and figures |  |

(4) Please give your narrative review for the PhD candidate below. Please (a) describe what you consider to be the draft chapter’s key contribution to scientific knowledge and/or to application in practice, and (b) identify critical issues that should or could be addressed to improve the draft chapter.

*Comments to PhD Candidate:*

(5) Give any comments that are meant for the Director of the Graduate School only below. This information is deleted when the review is sent to the candidate.

*Comments to the Director:*