THESIS MARKING CRITERIA WITH DESCRIPTORS

1. Abstract (4 marks)

			Marks
• State aim and objectives of study • Provide essential method details • State key results for each objective • Optional - implications	Weak 0-2 marks	Shortcomings in <u>most</u> of the following: 1) aim and objectives of study 2) method 3) results for each objective Translation in English and BM.	
	Moderate 3-4 marks	Shortcomings in <u>some</u> of the following: 1) aim and objectives of study 2) method 3) results for each objective Translation in English and BM.	
	Good 5 marks	Relevant and accurate information for <u>all</u> the following: 4) aim and objectives of study 5) method 6) results for each objective • Context of study and implications of results are optional. Accurate translation in English and BM.	

CHAPTER 1

2. Introduction/Research Problem (5 marks)
- **Please mark carefully. Distinguishes good theses.**
- Students may call it by different names, e.g., Background, Problem statement, Research Problem, Introduction. What is important is that this section uses the literature to show the gap of knowledge for the study.

			Marks
• Describe importance of studying the topic • Move from broad research area to specific research area, citing past findings • Specific area can be seen in keywords in the aim and objectives of the study	Weak 0-2 marks	• Information is mostly on the broad topic, hardly any on the specific area • Uses general knowledge and reasoning to say the area is important to study	
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Lacks information/findings on the specific area • Mentions some studies to show that a similar study has not been done here • Explains why it is important to study the topic but explanation is unclear	
	Good 5 marks	1) Starts off with <u>some information on broad</u> topic 2) Cites a lot of information/findings on specific area 3) Uses <u>past findings to justify need for study</u> by explaining what they have/have not studied. 4) Able to outline findings on specific area and show what else needs to be studied to understand the area	

3. Purpose of Study (5 marks)

			Marks
• Has aim and objectives of study • Objectives can be written either in sentence or question form. Not necessary to have both sentence and	Weak 0-2 marks	Common problems: • There is only aim but no objectives • Aim and one objective may be the same • Two objectives may be the same – only words are different • Objectives are vague on data collected and analysed • Objectives in sentence and question form are different • Student may write step 1 of data analysis outcome as Objective 1 and step 2 as Objective 2. (Should delete	

question form		the intermediate steps and focus on outcome of analysis)	
	Moderate 3-4 marks	Clear aim of study but one of the above common problems may be there	
	Good 5 marks	• Aim of study covers the objectives • Objectives clearly show the <u>kinds of data that are collected or analysed</u>	

4. Operational definition of terms (5 marks)

• All keywords in aim and objectives should be defined because they are variables/ constructs studied • Give conceptual definition • And MUST also give operational definition showing how the variable/ construct is measured/ analysed in the study	Weak 0-2 marks	Common problems: • Most concepts in aim and objectives of study are not defined • Stops at conceptual definitions • May use non-authoritative sources like dictionary • May also define word by word separately, e.g. "language", "attitude"	Marks
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Some keywords are defined but some are forgotten • Some operational definitions are given but others stop at conceptual definitions	
	Good 5 marks	• None of the common problems • Student even cites the instrument used and gives some information (e.g., In this study, XX's questionnaire or scale is used to measure language attitudes involving A, B, and C).	

5. Significance of Study (5 marks)

• Explain practical importance of study • And MUST also explain theoretical significance of study to the theory/ field	Weak 0-2 marks	• General explanation of practical importance of study without citations	Marks
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Explains specifically how study is of practical importance to specific parties • State importance of study to field but explanation is unclear	
	Good 5 marks	• Clearly explains practical importance of study • Clearly explains how study adds to empirical database, and why this is important • Clearly explains how the results will contribute to better understanding of the specific area	

CHAPTER 2

6. Literature Review – Relevance (5 marks)

				Marks
• Relevant literature is reviewed to provide background information on the research problem and study.	Weak 0-2 marks	• Review is mostly on broad area (e.g., the field). • Information given is usually general and does not show findings specific to the topic • Section headings also look general		
• Should have only a little information on broad area	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Some relevant concepts are not reviewed but students write about other less relevant concepts • Student includes some of 3 types of information on the topic: (a) definitions of concepts, (b) theoretical framework, and (c) results of related studies.		
• Most information should be on specific topic. • How to know what is relevant? Look at the keywords in the aim and objectives of the study? Are all these relevant concepts reviewed?	Good 5 marks	• Review moves quickly from broad area to topic. • All concepts are reviewed – check keywords in aims and objectives of the study. • Student provides all 3 types of information relevant to the topic: (a) definitions of concepts, (b) theoretical framework, and (c) results of related studies.		

7. Literature Review – Adequacy (5 marks)

				Marks
• There should be enough findings to show the latest knowledge on the topic and changes across time and contexts, if any	Weak 0-2 marks	• Most summaries have incomplete information • Less than 5 summaries of related studies • Not enough papers in the last 5 years		
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Most summaries are complete but some lack information. See (a)-(c) below • 5-9 complete summaries of related studies • Has enough papers in the last 5 years		

• Summary for each study should have enough information/ complete	Good 5 marks	• Summaries of related studies are complete with:
		(a) Aim and objectives of study
		(b) Method of study
		  (1) Participants/corpus – who/what, how many, where, when, how
		  (2) Instruments used
		(c) Results – sufficient description
		• More than 10 complete summaries
		• Enough papers in the last 5 years to show current knowledge on topic and trends over the years		

8. Literature Review – Critical Review (5 marks)

				Marks
• Synthesise the findings demonstrate their knowledge of the topic and what is read	Weak 0-2 marks	• Summaries may be cohesive in themselves but summaries and paragraphs do not seem connected to one another • Results are reported as they are. No comparison of similarities and differences of results across studies. • Many general statements that are not cited		
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Student seems to have some kind of theme/ argument that flows through the chapter • Student tries to compare results of different		

		studies but cannot properly synthesise them • Poor evaluation of strengths and weaknesses or studies, or superficial comparison of similarities and differences of results across studies. E.g., Study A uses questionnaire, but Study B uses interview.	**Distinguishes good theses.**
	Good 5 marks	• Student can connect findings and theories to show the current state of knowledge on the topic • Then student can use the literature to show a gap of knowledge, showing exactly what is there to study further about the topic • Student is also able to critically evaluate the quality of studies cited – strengths/weaknesses, similarities/differences in results or method • Statements are backed by citations	**No marks should be given if there is no critical review.** **This is NOT the place to be lenient.**

CHAPTER 3

9. Method of Study – Research Design (5 marks)

			Marks
• State the research design (e.g., experimental, correlational, descriptive, case study) • Justify why it is appropriate for the purpose of the study	Weak 0-2 marks	• Sometimes no research design is stated; at other times an inappropriate research design is stated • No justification or justifies using own reasoning or general citations	
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Student states an appropriate research design (1 mark) • Student explains why the research design is suitable for their study (1-1.5 mark) • Uses general knowledge to explain in a general way or uses inappropriate citations (1-1.5 mark)	
	Good 5 marks	• Student states an appropriate research design (1 mark) • Then student is able to justify why that research design is selected over another design (e.g., why a descriptive design over an experiment design). (2 mark) • Cites appropriate literature to support (2 mark)	

10. Method of Study – Respondents/Corpus (5 marks)

			Marks
• When the data come from people, provide adequate description of the people • When the data come from texts, also provide adequate description of the texts	Weak 0-2 marks	• General or brief description of respondents/texts • Selection criteria is not provided or too general to be of use to guide selection of respondents/texts	
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Somewhat complete description of respondents/texts but missing some information • Selection criteria – lacks some essential details	

	Good
	5 marks
		• Adequate description of respondents/texts:
		  (a) Who are they? Characteristics such as age, gender, income, etc
		  (b) How many participants? word-length of text?
		  (c) Where are they from? Location of sample
		• Clear selection criteria – characteristics that respondents/texts should have.	

11. Method of Study – Instrument (5 marks)

			Marks
• For a study that collects data from people using questionnaires, interview guides containing questions, tests or observation guides, these are the instruments to describe • For a text analysis study, the instrument is the analysis framework that contains the definitions and examples – to guide the analysis	Weak 0-2 marks	• Doubtful suitability of instrument judging from objectives of study • Minimal information on instrument, showing lack of reading • Source of instrument is unclear	
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Instrument is suitable – judging from objectives • Inadequate/general details on instrument. Analysis framework may contain only conceptual definitions but not operational definitions • Source of instrument is unclear	NOTE: "Audio recorder" is not an instrument. Same as "pen" and "paper". These are mere tools

	Good
	5 marks
		• Instrument is suitable – based on objectives
		• Instrument is based on a theory/ theoretical framework/ model (This is important for validity of instrument)
		• Adequate details on instrument, with:
		  (a) Main contents of questionnaire
		  (b) Sample questions for each section
		  (c) Number and type of items, e.g., open- or closed-ended, four or five-point Likert-scale
		  (d) Information on whether it is new (your own creation, based on a theory or framework), adapted/ modified (cite the source)	

12. Method of Study – Data Collection Procedures (5 marks)

			Marks
• The steps to COLLECT data are clear enough to guide someone else to collect the same kind of data as the student • This is important for replicability of the study (ensuring reliability or consistency)	Weak 0-2 marks	• Other method information (like participant/corpus, instrument and data analysis) are mixed up inside • General steps of data collection like in a research method book, showing lack of thinking and planning of the study. E.g., a flow-chart showing 4-5 steps without details	Marks
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• This section is focussed on data COLLECTION procedures, and does not contain a mix-up of other method information • Data collection procedures are suitable for getting the data for the study • Major steps of data collection are included but details are missing for some of them	NOTE: library search (literature review) is NOT a data collection technique
	Good 5 marks	• Data collection procedures are suitable for <u>getting</u> data to address <u>each objective</u>. • Details are adequate to guide someone else to collect the data	

13. Method of Study – Data Analysis Procedures (5 marks)

			Marks
• The steps to ANALYSE data are clear enough to guide someone else to analyse the data IN THE SAME WAY as the student • Include transcribing the interviews and recordings, keying in data from questionnaire, coding/identifying themes and sub-themes in the data • This is important for replicability of the study (ensuring reliability or consistency)	Weak 0-2 marks	• Other method information (like participant/corpus, instrument and data collection) are mixed up inside • Data analysis procedures <u>may not be suitable</u> to address each objective. • General steps of data analysis like in a research method book. Not enough understanding on what to do with own data and not much idea of what the data look like	Marks
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• This section is focussed on data ANALYSIS procedures, and does not contain a mix-up of other method information • Data analysis procedures are suitable for processing the data for the objectives • Major steps of data analysis are included but details are missing for some of them, showing lack of thinking and reading on what to do what the data	
	Good 5 marks	• Data analysis procedures are suitable for <u>processing</u> the data to address <u>each objective</u>. • Details are adequate to guide someone else to carry out the analysis.	

CHAPTER 4

14. Description of Results (5 marks)

				Marks
• Organise Chapter 4 based on objectives • Use keywords from objectives for headings. Do NOT use "descriptive results" and "inferential results" as results headings • Start and end with main patterns of results. Details in between.	Weak 0-2 marks	• Most results are <u>not relevant to objectives</u> – e.g., use "Interview results" as heading. • Can explain <u>some</u> details of results. • Most results details do <u>not match main patterns.</u>	
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Results <u>address some objectives</u> - use keywords from objectives as headings but some content do not seem relevant. • Systematic and <u>mechanical</u> <u>reporting</u> of results details but main patterns are usually not clear. • OR Does <u>not describe full results</u>; only gives examples of categories or questionnaire content like in lecture slides.	
	Good 5 marks	Relevant and accurate information for <u>all</u> the following: • Results address all objectives - use keywords from objectives as headings. • <u>Main patterns</u> of results are clear. • Detailed <u>results to support</u> main patterns.	

15. Results: Validity & Reliability (5 marks)
- **Please mark carefully. Distinguishes good theses**

				Marks
• Validity – enhanced by triangulation of different types of data or data from different sources to explain phenomenon • Reliability –watch out for inconsistencies in results	Weak 0-2 marks	• <u>Unclear basis</u> for reporting results. • Conclusion on aim of study <u>does not take into account results for different objectives</u>.	
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Evidence of <u>biasness</u> or selective reporting. • <u>General connecting</u> of results for different objectives and general conclusion on aim of study.	
	Good 5 marks	• Can see evidence that results are based on systematic data analysis and <u>do not show biasness</u>. • Ability to <u>integrate results</u> for different objectives to draw a conclusion on aim of study.	

16. Results: Illustration from data (5 marks)

				Marks
• Refer to results shown in tables, figures or excerpts • Mechanical reporting of every number in tables or every excerpt is NOT good quality writing • There should be an explanation of the results after the numbers from tables or excerpts are given	Weak 0-2 marks	• <u>Most</u> data do not have appropriate headings. • There is <u>no reference</u> to most tables, figures or excerpts (e.g., as shown below). • General description of results <u>which links poorly to data</u> in tables, figures or excerpts. • OR <u>Mechanically describing data</u> in the figures, tables or excerpts but not able to show readers main patterns of results. • <u>Simplistic</u> data.	
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• <u>Some</u> data do not have appropriate headings. • <u>Some</u> tables, figures or excerpts (e.g., Table 3) are <u>not referred to</u> in the results description. • Data in tables, figures or excerpts are <u>mechanically selected</u> to illustrate results, e.g., top 2 and bottom 2 in frequency, without looking at the frequency patterns. • Some tables, figures or excerpts are put as if they are <u>self-explanatory</u>, that is, not accompanied by description in words. • <u>Uneven quality of data</u> – some are simplistic.	

| | Good 5 marks | • Data have <u>appropriate headings</u>. E.g., heading above the table and figure. Excerpts are numbered.
• There is <u>correct reference</u> to table, figure or excerpt number in the results description.
• <u>Appropriate illustrations</u> from data (figures, tables or excerpts) <u>to support main patterns</u>.
• Ability to <u>refer to</u> <u>specific data</u> to support results (can anchor results in data).
• Data show <u>complexity</u>. | |
| • Higher level skill – able to see grouping and/or connection among the results (e.g., questionnaire items, interview questions) | | | |

17. Discussion of Results (5 marks)
- **Please mark carefully. Distinguishes good theses**

Three important aspects:	Weak 0-2 marks	• <u>Lacks ability</u> to explain broader meaning of results in the context of the study. • <u>Stated</u> that results fill in gap of knowledge without explaining how. • Stated that results are <u>similar or different</u> to past studies without touching on why. Usually <u>no details</u> of past studies. • <u>No</u> discussion of results using <u>theory</u>	Marks
• Discuss how the different sets of results in own study explain the phenomenon			
• Compare own results with past findings. It is NOT enough to say whether the findings are similar or different. There should be an attempt to understand why the results are similar or different by referring to the method details	Moderate 3-4 marks	Shows <u>some</u> of the following: • <u>Some generalisations</u> of results for research phenomenon studied. • <u>General explanation</u> on how results fill in gap of knowledge identified in Chapter 1 Introduction. • Stated that results are <u>similar or different</u> to past studies without touching on why. <u>Some details</u> of studies like aim, participant characteristics and method are mentioned but not picked up in comparison. • <u>Mention theories</u> without using them to explain results	
• Discuss how the results fill in the gap of knowledge. Do the results confirm, refute or modify the theory used in the study?	Good 5 marks	Shows <u>all</u> the following: • Ability to explain <u>broader meaning of results</u> in the context of the study. • Ability to explain how results fill in gap of knowledge identified in Chapter 1 Introduction. • Discussion of main results by referring to <u>past studies</u> – with attention to aim of study, participant characteristics and method. • Uses <u>theories</u> to explain results. May suggest reasonable modification of theory.	

CHAPTER 5

18. Summary (5 marks)

Chapter 5 is the most-read chapter in a thesis. For ease of citations, include: • Aim and objectives of study • Theory used, if relevant • Essential method details • Key results for each objective • Overall conclusion (refer to aim of study)	Weak 0-2 marks	• different aim and objectives (compared to Chapter 1) • method – sketchy or unimportant details • results for each objective - too general • overall conclusion on aim of study – too far from results	Marks
	Moderate 3-4 marks	Shortcomings in some: • aim and objectives of study (as in Chapter 1). • method. • results for each objective –e.g., dispersed details. • overall conclusion on aim of study.	
	Good 5 marks	Includes <u>all</u> the following: • aim and objectives of study (as in Chapter 1). • method. • results for each objective. • overall conclusion on aim of study.	

19. Implications of Findings (5 marks)

• Theoretical implications for the body of knowledge (refer to gap of knowledge). More specific than Theoretical Significance (Chapter 1) • Practical applications of findings – must mention the specific benefits and who benefits from them. More specific than Practical Significance of Study (Chapter 1)	Weak 0-2 marks	• Explains how results can be used to solve practical problems in a general way. • States the contribution of study to the field but does not elaborate. •	Marks
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• Explains specific ways how results can be used to solve practical problems by certain parties. • States the contribution of study but does not explain exactly what/how results fill in the gap in knowledge identified in Chapter 1.	
	Good 5 marks	• Explains specific ways how results can be used to solve practical problems by certain parties. • Explains how results can fill in the gap in knowledge identified in Chapter 1 and lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon.	

20. Directions for Further Research (5 marks)

• Suggest areas related to own study, which if studied will result in a better understanding of the phenomenon • Use weaknesses of own study to suggest pointers for future researchers	Weak 0-2 marks	• Suggests areas for further research which are <u>far from scope</u> of the study	Marks
	Moderate 3-4 marks	• <u>General suggestions</u> such as increasing sample size. • The suggestions can be made without even conducting the study	
	Good 5 marks	• Suggests 1-2 areas for other researchers to study. • These <u>suggestions arise from limitations</u> of study.	