



THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS DIFFERENCE

Benchmarks

WHY BENCHMARKS?

Classroom grades are not the only gauge of progress in a doctorate degree. As you begin writing your literature review and follow with the main components of your research and dissertation, it is crucial to know current and future targets points in order to achieve success. Benchmarks ensure an aligned trajectory for students as they scaffold from semester to semester.

KNOW WHERE YOU STAND.

Using a common rubric, a team of faculty work collaboratively with students throughout the semester to reach these target points. Benchmark assessment data is aggregated, analyzed and stored as a formative assessment. The benchmark assessments lend a balanced view of the student's advancement of his/her research agenda.

| Semester | Benchmark | Criterion | Meets Standard | Approaching Standard | Below Standard |
|--------------------------|--|---|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| LITERATURE REVIEW | | | | | |
| Summer Year 1 | Chapter 1: Problem Statement | Definition of the Problem | | | |
| Summer Year 1 | Chapter 1: Background of the Problem | Development and Support of the Problem | | | |
| Fall Year 1 | Chapter 1: Purpose | Rationale for Study, Integration of Program Theme, Social Justice | | | |
| Fall Year 1 | Chapter 1: Nature of the Study | Selection of and Access to Setting | | | |
| Fall & Spring Year 1 | Chapter 2: Literature Review | Selection and synthesis of sources/ Integration of Data/Quality of Argument/Organizational Structure of Paper | | | |
| Spring Year 1 | Chapter 1: Development of Research Questions | Formulation of Research Questions | | | |
| Spring Year 1 | Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework | Coherence of Conceptual Framework | | | |
| PROPOSAL | | | | | |
| Summer Year 2 | Chapter 1: Problem Statement | Refinement of the Problem | | | |
| Summer Year 2 | Chapter 1: Nature of the Study | Overview of the Research Design | | | |
| Summer Year 2 | Chapter 1: Significance | Argument for the Value of the Study | | | |
| Summer Year 2 | Chapter 1: Research Questions | Refinement of Research Questions | | | |
| Summer Year 2 | Chapter 1: Definitions | Definitions of Key Terminology | | | |

Continued



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|-----------------------------|---|---|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| PROPOSAL (continued) | | | | | |
| Fall Year 2 | Chapter 3: Research Design | Effectiveness of and Rationale for Research Design/Sample | | | |
| Fall Year 2 | Chapter 3: Research Design | Description of Setting/Instrumentation/Data Collection Procedures | | | |
| Spring Year 2 | Chapter 3: Research Design | Method(s) of Data Analysis/Limitations | | | |
| Spring Year 2 | Proposal Defense | Proposal Document/Proposal Presentation | | | |
| Spring Year 2 | University and Setting Permissions Sought | Submission of Human Subjects Application/Submission of District Research - Setting Application | | | |
| Spring Year 2 | University and Setting Permissions Obtained | Human Subjects Committee Approval/District Research -Setting Approval | | | |
| DISSERTATION | | | | | |
| Summer Year 3 | Data Collection | Data Collection | | | |
| Summer Year 3 | Chapter 4: Results | Data Analysis/Presentation of Results | | | |
| Fall Year 3 | Chapter 5: Discussion | Interpretation of findings/Implications for practice/Recommendations for further study/Conclusions | | | |
| Spring Year 3 | Dissertation Defense | Final Revision of Chapters 1 - 3/APA Style and Format; Dissertation Defense; Presentation Preparation | | | |

Notes:
