HONORS REVIEWERS’ COMMENTS

Constructive Criticism

Grammar and Typing Errors

“The prospectus has numerous errors of grammar, typing, and vocabulary. These include, but
are not limited to...”

“The huge number of grammatical errors and typing mistakes seriously impedes the flow of the
argument; they are far too numerous to detail here but include...”

“Grammatical mistakes that occur with frequency inhibit the reader’s understanding of the
discussion but also lead her or him to question whether the writer is as likely to pay as little attention to
his data collection and analysis as he has paid to the production of his research prospectus.”

“Also, errors of grammar, vocabulary, and typing remain, as in the cases of ... As most of those
grammatical mistakes were noted in earlier evaluations of the thesis, it is difficult to understand why the
author has failed to correct them.”

Insufficient Literature Review

“In its present form, the literature review is simply a list of publications. The function of such a
review, in a scholarly thesis, is to set the scene for the reader so, in the final manuscript, this chapter of
the work should contain a survey of previous studies.”

“A much wider survey is needed so that the reader can place Mr. XYZ’s proposed project in the
context of earlier investigations. The results of relevant studies should be reported, as should
differences of scholarly opinion. Prevailing theories should be identified and, if necessary, publications
relating to the research methodology should be reviewed.”

“Ms. XYZ has improved the quality of her thesis by adding content and restructuring study.
Weaknesses remain. In particular, the literature review is very brief, the descriptions of the selected
resources are extremely short, and there is a lack of critical analysis throughout the study (there is no
attempt to identify any weaknesses in any of the resources, for example). “

Inadequate Methodology

“The research design and methodology are poorly described. Why select 100 participants rather
than 20, or 50, or everybody who responds to the questionnaire? If more than 100 students respond,
how will the sample students be selected? Will the questionnaire be piloted? If so, how?”

“The methodology section requires greater detail. How were the “selected resources” selected?
How were they “examined?” Was any form of content analysis used, quantitatively or qualitatively? The
reader requires assurances that Ms. XYZ didn’t simply pick texts randomly from a library shelf and summarize the contents.”

“More detail is needed on the research techniques to be employed. What form of random sampling will be used? What action will be taken if few complete the questionnaire? What is Survey Monkey? How will the data be analysed?”

“The methodology is described only in limited detail so the reader cannot know whether the investigation was carried out thoroughly and future researchers will be unable to replicate the study. How was the questionnaire developed? Was it piloted? On what grounds were 20 respondents considered adequate? What statistical tests were used?”

**Weak Presentation**

“There are several weaknesses in presentation. The pagination in the Table of Contents does not accord with that in the text. Authors’ names are misspelled. Also, a work attributed to “Hill” is missing from the list of references.”

“There are several presentational errors. The type font changes from Calibri to Times halfway through the Abstract. A reference is made in the text to Appendix A but no such appendix appears at the end of the work. It is not clear why, in the text, some citations are given as “Smith (2010)” while others omit the year, as in the case of “(Jones).”

“It is unfortunate, however, that such an incisive thesis should be marred by details of presentation that, with more attention to detail, could have been eliminated. The signatures page does not conform to Honors College requirements. The bibliography is incomplete (for example, the work by Walker is omitted, as is that by Black and Brown) and, on occasion, authors’ names are incorrectly cited (Ann Marie Trumps should be AnnMarie Trumps, for instance).”
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Positive Feedback

“Ms. XYZ has designed her project thoughtfully and writes clearly.”

“Ms. XYZ has a fluent writing style that will undoubtedly be of benefit when she embarks on her teaching career.”

“The project is well-designed, the research techniques are appropriate, and the results of the investigation are well-documented.”

“Ms. XYZ’s study is of considerable contemporary importance. It is well-structured, makes good use of previously published works, and appears to employ appropriate research techniques.”

“Ms. XYZ’s study was small in scale but well-designed. Its strengths lie in the detailed description of behaviors, the effort to compare results with those of earlier studies (and thus place the project in the context of the wider body of knowledge about the effectiveness of intervention techniques), and the outline of the clinical implications of the findings.”

“Mr. XYZ presents a perceptive, thoughtful study. The research project is carefully designed, the statistical tests are appropriate, the results are clearly presented, and the text (though repetitive at times) is well written... This is an impressive thesis that considerably exceeds the minimum standard expected by the Honors College and which deserves a high grade.”

“This is an impressive study. Ms. XYZ takes issue with many established historians but she sets the scene well, structures her discussion logically, and makes good use of evidence in support of her case so her argument is convincing.”