LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS: DEPARTMENT OF METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE FEEDBACK FORM FOR MY410 RESEARCH PROPOSALS

# CANDIDATE NUMBER:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **LITERATURE REVIEW** 
   1. The literature review sets the relevant context and motivates the research question.

Unsatisfactory □ Fair □ Good □ Excellent □

* **Does it set the scene, does it tell us why this topic is important, and does it show us that the RQ builds on existing research?**
* Here, we are looking back to week 4 of the course
* A good literature review should:
  + Set out what is already known in the field
  + Identify a puzzle or gap, where this new study can contribute new knowledge.
    - Helps to establish novelty - helping to make the case for how this piece of research adds something to our body of knowledge
    - Helps to establish consequentiality – showing that it tells us something important.
  + A good literature review evaluates every element in relation to a developing argument: it needs a “so what?” – what does this say in relation to the issues raised at the beginning, or to your research questions? Different from your Annotated Bibliography – not discussing papers one by one, but weaving them together in a way that relates to your argument.

1. **RESEARCH QUESTION:**
2. The research question is sufficiently focused and tractable for a feasible MSc Dissertation.

Unsatisfactory □ Fair □ Good □ Excellent □

* **We are looking for clearly stated, meaningful, interesting and answerable research questions**
* **The research questions should be motivated by the review of relevant literature.**
* Here you can look right back to lectures 1 and 2
* The RQ is the hinge for your whole study
  + What makes a compelling project is one where the question is driving you forward. THEN you identify the appropriate methods to help you answer that.
* As we’ve emphasised throughout this course, different methods are more or less appropriate for different types of questions, drawing on different types of theory
* What’s key is that there is a good fit between theory, question and method.
* Is it a good question? Is it answerable with evidence? Is it researchable within the constraints of a Masters dissertation?

1. **EVIDENCE:** 
   1. The proposal describes the type(s) of evidence which will be marshalled to address the research question.

Unsatisfactory □ Fair □ Good □ Excellent □

* **Is it clear what types of evidence will be used, and how these will be selected?**
* Here we are getting more method specific, in terms of what you’d include (you can see this in the examples on Moodle – they’re all very different in what they include)
* **No right or wrong types of evidence! What is key is that it is appropriate for answering the research question**
* Data can be primary or secondary and qualitative or quantitative - so, this could include literature, interviews, surveys, secondary data, social media data, really any of the types of data we’ve discussed in this course (and beyond!). **You’ll be looking back to weeks 5-10 (and perhaps to your other courses and wider reading) to think about the best method and how to apply it.**
* Things to think about here:
  + What is the data you are going to draw upon? Are you using existing data or gathering this yourself?
  + **If you’re using existing data** – what data is available? Where is this coming from? Are you using one or multiple sources of data?
  + If it’s a systematic literature review or a discourse analysis – how are you going to select your documents, or your images, or your social media posts, or whatever it is you going to analyse?
  + **If you’re gathering your own** – what methods are you using, what are you actually going to do - what’s your sampling strategy?
* **What you discuss here will really depend on the approach you are taking**.
  1. The proposal shows that the proposed evidence can feasibly be collected in the timeframe available.

Unsatisfactory □ Fair □ Good □ Excellent □

* Is it realistic?

1. **ANALYSIS:**
   1. The proposal outlines the method(s) that will be used to analyse the evidence.

Unsatisfactory □ Fair □ Good □ Excellent □

* There are a lot of different analysis strategies you could take. Comparative case studies, quantitative or qualitative causal analysis (e.g. difference-in-difference estimation), discourse analysis, thematic analysis, etc.
* Your methods of analysis need to be appropriate, and to be clearly explained.
* We want to know how you are planning to get from your data to an answer to your research question.
* Here we are looking back either to week 7 on quantitative research or to this last week on analysing qualitative data.
  + **If discourse analysis:** what particular analytical strategy will be guiding it? Is it CDA, Foucauldian discourse analysis, feminist critical discourse analysis?
  + **If thematic analysis:** how will you apply this systematically? Are you drawing on a particular approach to thematic analysis?
  1. The proposed method(s) are feasible within the timeframe available.

Unsatisfactory □ Fair □ Good □ Excellent □

Is this realistic?

1. **RESEARCH DESIGN TRADE-OFFS:**
   1. The proposal discusses the predicted relative strengths and limitations of the combination of evidence and analytical method chosen for the dissertation.

Unsatisfactory □ Fair □ Good □ Excellent □

* **Coming back to some of the key things we have discussed within MY410 - is it clear what you can - and CANNOT claim** with this type of research design? Are the strengths and trade-offs clear?
* **Many of the trade-offs will be specific to your project and research design, as we will see in the examples.**

1. **PRESENTATION:**
   1. The proposal is written with a clear, coherent structure and appropriate referencing.

Unsatisfactory □ Fair □ Good □ Excellent □

* Be kind to your markers! Write clearly, with a structure that is easy to follow.
* In text referencing, consistently used.

**Marker’s Additional Comments on the Proposal:**

**Proposed Mark:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**