

Assessment Guide

CRQAI-50

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Guiding Manual for Research Quality Assessment Criteria

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is the CRQAI-50?

CRQAI-50 is the acronym for the "**Comprehensive Research Quality Assessment Instrument.**" It is a systematic evaluation framework designed to assist researchers, peer reviewers, and editorial bodies in assessing the quality of academic manuscripts in an objective, transparent, measurable, replicable, and consistent manner.

1.2 Who is this Guide For?

- **Researchers** wishing to conduct a self-assessment prior to manuscript submission.
- **Scientific reviewers** and journal editorial boards.
- **Academic institutions** for purposes of internal review and training.
- **Students and early-career researchers.**

1.3 How Does It Work?

The framework divides research quality into 10 core criteria. Each criterion is scored out of 5 points, yielding a maximum total score of 50 points. Each criterion is further broken down into specific sub-indicators accompanied by clear scoring guidelines.

2. Shortcomings of Traditional Assessment

Traditional peer-review processes often suffer from:

- **Excessive Subjectivity:** Heavy reliance on personal judgment.
 - **Inconsistency:** Varying standards between different reviewers.
 - **Narrow Focus:** Overemphasis on methodology or results while neglecting aspects such as ethics, transparency, or clarity.
 - **Lack of Measurability:** Difficulty in transforming qualitative feedback into comparable scores.
-

3. What Distinguishes the CRQAI-50?

1. Comprehensiveness with Balance

The CRQAI-50 covers the ten fundamental dimensions of research quality, ensuring no critical aspect is overlooked – from intellectual originality to technical mastery, and from methodological rigor to ethical integrity.

2. Quantitative & Qualitative Integration

The framework combines:

- **Quantitative Assessment:** 50 points distributed across clear indicators.
- **Qualitative Assessment:** Space for comments and justifications.

3. Cross-Disciplinary Flexibility

While particularly suited to the humanities and social sciences, the framework can be adapted to other disciplines by modifying terminology without altering its core structure.

4. Transparency and Replicability

Every score is linked to explicit indicators, making the assessment process traceable, understandable, and repeatable.

4. Comparison with Existing Tools

Aspect	Traditional Tools	CRQAI-50
Scope	Often 3–4 criteria	10 comprehensive criteria
Detail	General indicators	30 specific sub-indicators
Flexibility	Rigid, uniform	Adaptable across disciplines
Transparency	Often opaque assessment	Clear justification for each point
Measurability	Mostly descriptive	Quantitative (0–50) with qualitative support

5. Potential Applications

- Self-assessment prior to submission.
 - Scientific peer review and editorial decision-making.
 - Research training and supervision of graduate students.
 - Institutional research quality audits.
 - Evaluation of funding proposals.
-

6. The Ten Criteria at a Glance

Criterion	Points	Core Focus
1. Originality & Innovation	5	Novelty of ideas, theories, or evidence
2. Significance & Impact	5	Value and potential influence
3. Methodological Rigor	5	Appropriateness and depth of methodologies
4. Strength of Analysis	5	Robustness and validity of the analysis
5. Argument Coherence	5	Logical flow and integration of literature
6. Clarity & Presentation	5	Quality of writing and visual aids
7. Academic Integrity	5	Ethics, disclosure, and transparency
8. Replicability	5	Data availability and methodological clarity

Criterion	Points	Core Focus
9. Merit of Conclusions	5	Justification of findings and clarity of contribution
10. Overall Craftsmanship	5	Completeness of the work and expected impact
	Maximum Total Score: 50	

7. Scoring System Explained

Each of the 10 criteria is scored out of 5 points, distributed across 3 sub-indicators:

- Two sub-indicators are worth **0–2 points** each.
- One sub-indicator is worth **0–1 point**.
- **Scoring options per sub-indicator:**
 - For 2-point indicators: 0, 0.5, 1, 1.5, or 2 points.
 - For 1-point indicators: 0, 0.5, or 1 point.

8. Quality Levels per Criterion

Score	Level	Description
5/5	Excellent	Outstanding across all sub-indicators, with no fundamental flaws.
4/5	Very Good	Strong in most sub-indicators, with minor shortcomings.
3/5	Acceptable	Meets the minimum threshold; balanced but not exceptional.
2/5	Weak	Fundamental flaws in one or more areas.
0–1/5	Unacceptable	Critical flaws or missing elements.

9. Detailed Assessment Guide for the Ten Criteria

Criterion 1: Originality & Innovation (5 points)

1.1 Degree of Theoretical Development (0–2 points)

- **0:** Does not challenge or expand existing theories.
- **1:** Attempts theoretical expansion with a limited contribution.
- **1.5:** Clearly expands theory with new elements.
- **2:** Fundamentally challenges or reframes existing theory.

1.2 Introduction of New Ideas/Perspectives (0–2 points)

- **0:** Repeats existing ideas without addition.
- **1:** Presents minor modifications to previous ideas.
- **1.5:** Introduces a clear but incomplete new idea.
- **2:** Presents a comprehensive, unprecedented idea.

1.3 Discovery of New Evidence/Phenomena (0–1 point)

- **0:** Presents no new evidence.
 - **0.5:** Presents new but inconclusive or limited evidence.
 - **1:** Discovers clear, new evidence or phenomena.
-

Criterion 2: Significance & Impact (5 points)

2.1 Significance of the Research Problem (0–2 points)

- **0:** Marginal or unclear significance.
- **1:** Moderate importance but not fundamental.
- **1.5:** Clearly important and worthy of study.
- **2:** Of seminal and critical importance to the field.

2.2 Impact within the Discipline (0–2 points)

- **0:** Limited or unclear impact.
- **1:** Impact on a narrow aspect of the discipline.
- **1.5:** Broad impact on multiple aspects.
- **2:** Transformative impact on the entire discipline.

2.3 Applicability to Adjacent Disciplines (0–1 point)

- **0:** Not applicable outside the home discipline.
 - **0.5:** Applicable but with limitations.
 - **1:** Directly applicable to adjacent disciplines.
-

Criterion 3: Methodological Rigor (5 points)

3.1 Clarity & Appropriateness of Methodology (0–2 points)

- **0:** Methodology is unclear or inappropriate.
- **1:** Methodology is clear but may not be optimal.
- **1.5:** Well-designed and appropriate methodology.
- **2:** Optimal, meticulously designed methodology for the hypothesis.

3.2 Sufficiency of Methodological Description (0–2 points)

- **0:** Description is insufficient for evaluation.
- **1:** Basic description but insufficient for replication.
- **1.5:** Good description allowing evaluation and replication.
- **2:** Detailed description ensuring precise replication.

3.3 Use of Advanced Analytical Tools (0–1 point)

- **0:** Traditional or insufficient analytical tools.
 - **0.5:** Use of some advanced tools.
 - **1:** Tools appropriate for the research's complexity.
-

Criterion 4: Strength of Analysis & Robustness of Evidence (5 points)

4.1 Sufficiency & Representativeness of Data/Samples (0–2 points)

- **0:** Insufficient or unrepresentative data/samples.
- **1:** Sufficient data/samples but with representativeness limitations.
- **1.5:** Well-represented and sufficient data/samples.
- **2:** Excellent representativeness and sufficiency of data/samples.

4.2 Correct & Accurate Application of Analyses (0–2 points)

- **0:** Incorrect analysis or contains errors.
- **1:** Correct analysis but limited in scope or depth.
- **1.5:** Sound and accurate analysis.
- **2:** Masterful analysis, free of errors.

4.3 Clear Separation between Results and Interpretation (0–1 point)

- **0:** Results and interpretation are conflated.
 - **0.5:** Partial or unclear separation.
 - **1:** Clear and precise separation.
-

Criterion 5: Argument Coherence & Knowledge Integration (5 points)

5.1 Logical Flow & Coherence of Argument (0–2 points)

- **0:** Argument is disorganized or illogical.
- **1:** Argument is logical but has gaps.
- **1.5:** Argument is cohesive and well-sequenced.
- **2:** Argument is perfectly sequential and coherent.

5.2 Effective Integration of Prior Literature (0–2 points)

- **0:** No integration or acknowledgment of literature.
- **1:** Limited or superficial integration.
- **1.5:** Good and balanced integration.
- **2:** Comprehensive and critical engagement with literature.

5.3 Balanced Treatment of Supporting and Contrary Evidence (0–1 point)

- **0:** Ignores contrary evidence.
 - **0.5:** Partial or unbalanced treatment.
 - **1:** Balanced and comprehensive treatment.
-

Criterion 6: Clarity & Quality of Presentation (5 points)

6.1 Clarity of Language & Accuracy of Terminology (0–2 points)

- **0:** Unclear language or inaccurate terminology.
- **1:** Clear language but with some ambiguity.
- **1.5:** Clear language and accurate terminology.
- **2:** Excellent language clarity and precision.

6.2 Effectiveness of Visual Aids (Tables, Figures, Maps) (0–2 points)

- **0:** Ineffective or absent visual aids.
- **1:** Useful visual aids but not optimal.
- **1.5:** Good visual aids that facilitate understanding.
- **2:** Excellent, informative visual aids.

6.3 Freedom from Formal/Linguistic Errors (0–1 point)

- **0:** Numerous errors impede understanding.
 - **0.5:** Few errors that do not significantly impede understanding.
 - **1:** Nearly error-free.
-

Criterion 7: Academic Integrity & Ethics (5 points)

7.1 Full Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest & Funding (0–2 points)

- **0:** Non-disclosure despite potential conflict.
- **1:** Incomplete disclosure.
- **1.5:** Good and complete disclosure.
- **2:** Full and transparent disclosure.

7.2 Adherence to Research Ethics (Data Collection, Participant Acknowledgment) (0–2 points)

- **0:** Non-adherence to research ethics.
- **1:** Partial or unclear adherence.
- **1.5:** Good adherence to research ethics.
- **2:** Exemplary adherence to research ethics.

7.3 Explicit Acknowledgment of Study Limitations (0–1 point)

- **0:** Limitations not mentioned.
 - **0.5:** Incomplete mention of limitations.
 - **1:** Accurate and comprehensive acknowledgment of limitations.
-

Criterion 8: Replicability & Transparency (5 points)

8.1 Sufficient Availability of Raw Data/Code/Materials (0–2 points)

- **0:** No data/code/materials available.
- **1:** Partial or conditional availability.
- **1.5:** Good availability of data/code/materials.
- **2:** Full and easily accessible availability.

8.2 Methodological Description Allowing Replication (0–2 points)

- **0:** Description does not allow replication.
- **1:** Description allows partial replication.
- **1.5:** Description allows full replication.
- **2:** Description is exemplary for precise replication.

8.3 Generalizability of Findings or Methodological Framework (0–1 point)

- **0:** Findings are not generalizable.
 - **0.5:** Generalizable but with limitations.
 - **1:** Generalizable to similar contexts.
-

Criterion 9: Merit of Conclusions & Contribution (5 points)

9.1 Conclusions Logically Derived from Presented Evidence (0–2 points)

- **0:** Conclusions are not evidence-based.
- **1:** Conclusions are partially evidence-based.
- **1.5:** Conclusions are well-supported by evidence.
- **2:** Conclusions are directly and logically derived from the evidence.

9.2 Clear Identification of Contribution Type (Theoretical, Methodological, etc.) (0–2 points)

- **0:** Type of contribution not identified.
- **1:** Type of contribution is unclear.
- **1.5:** Type of contribution is well-defined.
- **2:** Type of contribution is clearly and precisely defined.

9.3 Provision of Specific Recommendations for Future Research (0–1 point)

- **0:** No recommendations provided.
 - **0.5:** General or non-specific recommendations.
 - **1:** Specific and actionable recommendations.
-

Criterion 10: Overall Craftsmanship & Expected Impact (5 points)

10.1 Overall Impression of Completeness & Polish (0–2 points)

- **0:** Work appears incomplete or rushed.
- **1:** Work is complete but has flaws.
- **1.5:** Work is well-integrated and polished.
- **2:** Work is executed meticulously, with care, and is entirely complete.

10.2 Potential to Stimulate Scientific Discourse or Guide Policy (0–2 points)

- **0:** Unlikely to stimulate scientific discourse.
- **1:** May stimulate limited discourse.
- **1.5:** Capable of stimulating significant discourse.
- **2:** Capable of stimulating broad discourse and guiding new research policies.

10.3 Overall Value Added to the Field (0–1 point)

- **0:** No value added.
- **0.5:** Limited value added.
- **1:** Significant and clear value added.

10. Summary of the Ten Criteria

Use this checklist to ensure you have considered all dimensions:

- **Originality** – Is the work novel and innovative?
 - **Significance** – Does it address an important problem?
 - **Methodology** – Is the methodology sound and appropriate?
 - **Analysis** – Are the data and analyses robust?
 - **Argument** – Is the narrative logical and coherent?
 - **Clarity** – Is the presentation clear and error-free?
 - **Ethics** – Has integrity and transparency been maintained?
 - **Replicability** – Can others verify or build upon this work?
 - **Conclusions** – Are the claims justified and contributions clear?
 - **Craftsmanship** – Does the work appear complete and impactful?
-

11. The Five-Step Assessment Process

Step One: Initial Reading

Read the manuscript in its entirety to understand the core hypothesis, methodology, key findings, and argument flow. Avoid scoring during this first read.

Step Two: Criterion-by-Criterion Assessment

Using the guide on pages 5–8:

1. Select a criterion (e.g., Criterion 1: Originality).
2. Read its three sub-indicators and their scoring descriptions.
3. Assign points to each sub-indicator (0, 0.5, 1, 1.5, or 2).
4. Sum the points for that criterion (max 5 points).
5. Repeat this process for all ten criteria.

Step Three: Quantitative Aggregation

After assessing all criteria, sum the ten scores to obtain the **Total Score (0–50)**.

Step Four: Qualitative Interpretation & Classification

Compare the Total Score to the quality level and suggested publication tier:

Total Score	Classification	Quality Level	Suggested Publication Tier
45 – 50	Transformative	Exceptional	Premier/Top-tier journals (Nature, Science, or field equivalents)
40 – 44	Pioneering	Excellent	Leading Q1 journals
35 – 39	Strong	Very Good	Reputable Q1/Q2 journals
30 – 34	Adequate	Acceptable	Q2/Q3 journals; requires major revisions
25 – 29	Preliminary	Weak	Needs substantial reworking; not yet ready
< 25	Unacceptable	Insufficient	Foundational flaws in hypothesis, methodology, or integrity

Step Five: Documentation & Feedback

Record the score for each criterion and write brief justifications. Use the form on Sections 13.

12. Tips for Consistent Evaluation

- **Be Consistent:** Apply the same standards to all manuscripts you assess.
 - **Be Objective:** Separate your personal research preferences from objective criteria.
 - **Justify Your Decisions:** Attach a brief textual comment to each score.
 - **Focus on Substance:** Quality is not dependent on paper length, number of authors, or author names.
-

13. CRQAI-50 Assessment Form

(Fillable Template)

Manuscript ID: _____

Authors: _____

Assessor: _____

Date of Assessment: _____

Score Sheet:

Criterion	Score (0-5)	Brief Justification (Key Strengths/Weaknesses)
1. Originality & Innovation	___ /5	
2. Significance & Impact	___ /5	
3. Methodological Rigor	___ /5	
4. Strength of Analysis	___ /5	
5. Argument Coherence	___ /5	
6. Clarity & Presentation	___ /5	
7. Academic Integrity	___ /5	
8. Replicability	___ /5	
9. Merit of Conclusions	___ /5	
10. Overall Craftsmanship	___ /5	
TOTAL SCORE	___ /50	

Qualitative Feedback Summary

Key Strengths (2-3 points):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Critical Weaknesses (2-3 points needing revision):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Overall Classification (Check one):

- **Transformative (45–50)** – For publication in premier/top-tier journals.
- **Pioneering (40–44)** – Suitable for leading Q1 journals.
- **Strong (35–39)** – Suitable for reputable Q1/Q2 journals.
- **Adequate (30–34)** – Requires major revision; may be considered for Q2/Q3.
- **Preliminary (25–29)** – Requires substantial reworking.
- **Unacceptable (<25)** – Foundational flaws; reject.

Recommendation to the Recipient of this Assessment:

- Accept as is
- Accept with minor revisions
- Revise and resubmit (major revisions required)
- Reject

Assessor's Signature: _____

14. Licensing and Terms of Use

Part One: Base License

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Examples of Permitted Use:

- A researcher using the guide for self-assessment of their paper.
- A university professor including it in a graduate student training curriculum.
- A journal adopting it as an internal review tool, publishing any modifications under the same license.

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- Licenses for independent modification and development.
- Comprehensive institutional use licenses.
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- Other custom permissions.

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Through these multiple licensing tiers, the aim is to provide the same full-quality, open-source content to all, while simultaneously offering distinct pathways for works within different contexts.

15. Contact & Download Information

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 - **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/karam-besharah/>
 - **Official Publication Repositories:**
 - **For this project:** <https://github.com/karam-besharah/CRQAI-50>
 - **For all my research projects:**
https://zenodo.org/communities/karam_besharah/
 - **For all my research projects:** <https://github.com/karam-besharah>
 - **ORCID Profile (all projects):** <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3476-5676>
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16. Future Development & Enhancement Plan

As the CRQAI-50 is a living project, our plan includes:

- **Release of a "Comprehensive Guide":** An expanded version containing detailed applied examples and case studies from real research.
 - **Development of Digital Auxiliary Tools:** Such as savable Google Forms or Excel sheets for automatic score calculation.
 - **Release of Additional Translations:** To increase the tool's accessibility for broader research communities.
 - **Discipline-Specific Adaptations:** Releasing modified versions tailored to specific fields such as literary studies, history, or sociology.
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17. How You Can Contribute & Participate

We welcome all forms of constructive participation from the scientific community:

1. **Testing and Feedback:** Use the tool in your assessments and send us your practical observations.
 2. **Dissemination and Recommendation:** Help spread the tool by sharing it with colleagues in academic institutions.
 3. **Translation:** If you are proficient in another language, you can assist in creating a translated version while maintaining scientific accuracy.
 4. **Institutional Licensing:** If you belong to an institution that could benefit from an institutional license, please do not hesitate to contact us to explore collaboration.
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18. How to Cite This Guide

- "CRQAI-50: The Comprehensive Research Quality Assessment Instrument – Guiding Manual (Version 1.0), by Karam Morice Besharah, Zenodo.[DOI]"
- "CRQAI-50: Guiding Manual for Research Quality Assessment Criteria (V1.0), by Karam Besharah, Zenodo.[DOI]"

(Please refer to the assigned DOI after this guide is published and include it in the citation).

19. Acknowledgement & Closing Statement

Intellectual Foundation and Frame of Reference:

This framework is grounded in the core concepts and criteria prevalent in academic research assessment, as found in established literature and scholarly review methodologies. It aims to consolidate and organise these common principles into a unified and transparent structure, without claiming to invent novel evaluation concepts separate from the shared intellectual heritage of the scientific community.

Development and Contribution:

The comprehensive formulation, structure, and development of this framework were carried out independently. It represents an effort to transform referenced practices into a practical, applicable, and measurable tool, offered as an open-source contribution to serve researchers and promote transparency and consistency in evaluation processes. The expert

scientific judgement of the reviewer or researcher remains the ultimate arbiter in assessing the quality and significance of any research work.

20. Version Information

This file presents Version 1.0 of the "**CRQAI-50**" research assessment framework. Please ensure you have the latest version of this framework or its guide, as I am working on updates to enhance its accuracy, standardization, and validity. You can verify the availability of a newer version and obtain it by searching for guides, research papers, frameworks, or research bearing the name "**CRQAI-50**" with a higher version number, or by visiting one of the publication repositories indicated in **Section 15**.

Tracking Updates:

The current release is **V1.0** of the User Guide. The guide will be developed and updated versions released periodically to keep pace with developments in standards and practices. For easy tracking of the nature of updates, the version number follows a three-part system: **Vxx.yy.zz**

- **xx (Major Number):** Indicates fundamental changes or major additions to the structure or criteria (e.g., moving from V1.0 to V2.0 signifies a foundational change).
- **yy (Minor Number):** Reflects minor updates or improvements to existing content without fundamental change (e.g., V1.0 to V1.1).
- **zz (Revision Number):** Pertains to improvements in linguistic phrasing, textual clarifications, or translation accuracy, without modifying the scientific content (e.g., V1.0.0 to V1.0.1).

Announcements of new versions will be made through the same channels indicated previously.

— End of Guide —