

Critical Analysis Framework – One Page Checklist

1. DIMER Method

D – Describe: scope, aims, claims.

I – Interpret: who/what it applies to, exclusions, 'so what?'.

M – Methodology: design, hierarchy of evidence, strengths/weaknesses.

E – Evaluate: compare/contrast with other studies; contribution & novelty.

R – (Autho)R: stance, assumptions, biases, funding/institution.

Decision rule: end each section with a **Limit** → **Implication** statement.

2. Why DIMER over Alternatives

- CASP – strong for single-study appraisal, but descriptive.
 - CRAAP – checks credibility, weak on synthesis.
 - Toulmin – maps arguments, ignores evidence hierarchy.
 - **DIMER** – integrates all, adds author stance & context.
- However: CASP better for deep single-study evaluation.

3. Worked Example (Condensed)

Study: Small RCT (n=62) on leadership training.

- Describe – claims adaptive leadership improves decision-making.
- Interpret – applies to cadets, not officers; 'so what?' = limited transferability.
- Methodology – RCT strong, but 4 weeks, small sample.
- Evaluate – diverges from NATO case studies; suggests limited external effect.
- Author – defence ministry funding = possible bias.

Limit → **Implication:** short/weak generalisation → pilot evidence only.

4. Self/Peer Checklist

Element	Key Question	Evidence Required
Description	Are scope/claims clear?	Concise outline
Interpretation	Who/what excluded? 'So what?'	Context analysis
Methodology	Robustness, bias?	Design & evidence rank
Evaluation	Compared with others?	Convergence/divergence
Author stance	Biases, assumptions?	Funding, discipline
Implication	What follows?	Limit → Consequent

5. Language of Criticality

- Analytical verbs: argues, substantiates, overstates, underdetermines.
- Contrasting connectors: however, by contrast, conversely.
- Hedging: suggests, appears, plausibly, conditionally.