FAQ for New Dissertation Evaluation Tools

How long can the committee continue to use the previous versions of the rubric?

If the student is in the middle of a review of a proposal or dissertation by the committee, the student and committee can still use the previous rubric. However, it is expected that everyone else will transition immediately to the new evaluation tools. This means that students whose proposal or dissertation that has not been reviewed using the old rubric should submit to their chair a proposal/dissertation with a completed checklist appropriate to the study methodology; in this case, the Committee members should complete the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric. If the committee is in the middle of review of a proposal, the review can continue under the previous rubric; however, students must then transition to the new tools for the dissertation.

How should students use the Dissertation Checklist?

Students will use the appropriate Dissertation Checklist (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) to guide completion of the dissertation. Students are required to complete the checklist by annotating the page number where the particular checklist item is located. If a particular indicator in the proposal or dissertation is not included, the student should use the comments block to explain why that element is not applicable.

How should the committee members use the Dissertation Checklist and Minimum Standards Rubric?

All committee members should review the dissertation using the Dissertation Checklist as a guide. Committee members can include comments in the checklist, if desired, to help provide specific direction to improve the document.

Initially, the committee chair should use the Dissertation Checklist to help provide specific direction to improve early drafts of the proposal, or first drafts of chapters 4 and 5 of the final dissertation. When the committee chair is satisfied that the proposal/dissertation is ready for review by the committee member, s/he should complete the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric to verify that the overall quality standards have been met. The committee chair would then send the proposal/dissertation and the completed checklist to the committee member for review.

If the committee member feels that any quality standard within the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric are not yet met, that member can again use the Dissertation Checklist to help provide specific direction to improve the document. The proposal/dissertation would advance to the Committee URR for review once the committee member verifies all the quality standards within the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric are met.

Besides the Dissertation Checklist, can we still use track changes and cover letters to provide feedback to the student?

Yes.

What materials should the committee URR now get?

When the Committee Chair and Committee Member feel the proposal is ready for committee URR review, the Committee Chair should forward the following materials to the Committee URR: 1) a clean copy of the Proposal or Dissertation; 2) Turnitin Report; 3) the completed Dissertation Checklist completed by the student and with any comments by the committee; and 4) the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubrics completed by each member indicating that all standards have been met.

How should the Committee University Research Reviewer (URR) use the Dissertation Checklist and Minimum Standards Rubric?

When the Committee Chair and the Committee Member both agree that the proposal/dissertation is ready for review based on their application of the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric, the Committee Chair forwards the checklist, the proposal/dissertation, rubrics and Turnitin report to the Committee URR while also copying the research office.
If the committee URR feels that any quality standard within the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric are not yet met, the URR can also use the Dissertation Checklist to help provide specific direction to improve the document. The proposal/dissertation would advance to the next stage in the process once the committee URR verifies all the quality standards within the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric are met.

The committee chair has forwarded the committee URR the old rubrics that were completed by the committee. What documents should be completed?

During the transition, some committees will be actively engaged in proposal/dissertation review. If you get the old rubrics, that is okay; you can either complete the old rubric or complete the new Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric. If you decide to use the new Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric in a case where the committee used the old rubric, be prepared to illustrate how any unmet criteria in the new rubric coincide with the expectations found in the old rubric. It is best if all member of the committee agree to employ the same document. However, very quickly, all students, Committee Chairs, Committee Members, and Committee URR should be transitioning to the new documents. As per the communications, the choice for how the transition occurs falls to the student and his or her Committee Chairperson.

When do faculty members of the committee complete the Dissertation Quality Rubric?

The Dissertation Quality Rubric, which is an internal review that is not related to student completion, is completed only at the very end of the Dissertation evaluation process. The committee members must submit their completed Dissertation Quality Rubric to the URR who will submit them, along with all other completed documents, to the Office of Student Research Administration (research@waldenu.edu) when the dissertation is advanced for the final CAO review.

When should a consensus rubric be submitted?

Only those who are submitting the previous rubric as part of the transition should still complete a consensus rubric. There are no consensus rubrics under the new system; instead, Committee Chairs, Committee Members, and Committee URR independently complete submit the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric and the Dissertation Quality Rubric.

The process is new, so it’s a bit confusing right now. Can you explain clearly what forms are required when?

The stages and timing of the University Research Review process have not fundamentally changed; only the documents have changed. However, the following outline may help clarify.

### Proposal Writing Stage

**Student**: Complete the proposal and the Dissertation Checklist by identifying the page number where items are located in the proposal. The student should use the comment blocks to provide any clarifying information for the reviewers.

**Student**: Submits the proposal and Dissertation Checklist to the committee chair.

**Committee Chair**: Reviews the proposal and the Dissertation Checklist and evaluates the proposal.

- If the proposal is viewed as not ready for committee review based on the criteria in the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric, the Committee Chair provides feedback to the student using the Checklist and/or the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric (depending on the nature of the feedback).

- If the proposal is viewed as ready for further review, the Committee Chair forwards the proposal, the Dissertation Checklist, and his/her completed Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric to the Committee Member (s) for review.

- Once the Committee Chair and Committee Member agree that the proposal has met all the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric criteria (items 1-7 of the 9 criteria), the proposal is ready for Committee URR review. The Committee Chair then forwards to the Committee URR: 1) Proposal or Dissertation; 2) Turnitin Report; 3) the
completed Dissertation Checklist completed by the student and with any comments by the committee Chair and/or Members; and 4) the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubrics completed by each member indicating that the applicable standards have been met (it is best to keep the history of comments to the student for Committee URR to review as well).

Dissertation Writing Stage

**Student:** Complete the dissertation and extend the Dissertation Checklist by identifying the page number where items are located in the dissertation for chapters 4 and 5 of the dissertation. Students can add to the checklist that they used for the Proposal if they completed one at that time. The student should use the comment blocks to provide any clarifying information for the reviewers.

**Student:** Submits the proposal and Dissertation Checklist to the Committee Chair.

**Committee Chair:** Reviews the proposal and the Dissertation Checklist and evaluates the proposal.

- If the proposal is viewed as not ready for committee review based on the criteria in the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric, the Committee Chair provides feedback to the student using the Checklist and/or the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric (depending on the nature of the feedback).
- If the proposal is viewed as ready for further review, the Committee Chair forwards the proposal, the Dissertation Checklist, and a completed Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric to the Committee Member(s) for review.
- Once the Chair and Committee Member agree that the Dissertation proposal has met all the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubric criteria (all of the 9 criteria), the Dissertation is ready for Committee URR review. The Committee Chair then forwards to the URR: 1) Dissertation; 2) Turnitin Report; 3) the completed Dissertation Checklist completed by the student and with any comments by the committee Chair and/or Members; and 4) the Dissertation Minimum Standards Rubrics completed by each member indicating that all standards have been met (it is best to keep the history of comments to the student for Committee URR to review as well).

Post-Dissertation Review

**Committee Chair and Committee Member:**

- Complete the Dissertation Quality Rubric and submit it to the committee URR who will collect them and submit to research@waldenu.edu.

**Committee URR:**

- When the dissertation is advanced for the final CAO abstract review, the committee URR completes the final review and the Dissertation Quality Rubric and submits, along with the Dissertation Quality Rubrics of the other committee members to research@waldenu.edu.