Criteria to Distinguish Between High Quality and Marginal Quality Theses

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General Criteria	Specific Criteria	
	High quality theses	**Marginal quality theses**
Thesis scope / topic	The significance and challenge of the topic was evident	The aim of the study was not clear or differed throughout the thesis
Significance and contribution of the thesis	The thesis represents a scholarly contribution, a significant advance to knowledge in the field	Nothing new has been added to the topic, 'lack of originality'
	(For professional disciplines, the thesis adds substantively to debates about practical issues)	
Thesis approach	Fusion of originality of the approach with realisation of a significant contribution to the field	Questionable integrity of the approach of the thesis
	Methodologically sound / expert and comprehensive	Over-interpretation of the data
Subject matter and findings	Clear connections are made throughout the thesis	Lack of synthesis and integration
	Reporting that was careful, accurate, honest or even challenging or courageous	Lack of critical analysis
		Broad generalisations were not supported, although they could have been
Literature review: use and application	Expert use of the literature in design of the study and discussions of the findings	Inadequate coverage or focus of the literature in relation to the study
	Thorough, clear and incisive reporting of the literature, comprehensive and definitive	Inaccuracies and omissions in referencing
		Discussion that was 'devoid of the reference to the literature'
Existing publications	(Particularly in science and technology disciplines) Assurance of quality has been established by blind review	
Publications arising	Recognised need for early publication of study outputs	
Communicative competence: substantive	Cogent and straightforward writing, eloquence was a bonus	Lacking polish, and therefore difficult to read and/or comprehend
	Logical sequencing of presentation argument	
Communicative competence: editorial		Manifest editorial inadequacies