

Northcentral University 2020

Dissertation Quality of Learning Assessment (DQLA)

Collaborations

One hundred people total participated in this project, with 75 aiding in the four phases of build for the DQLA rubric.

Those from Northcentral University (NCU) included:

- 23 DQLA workgroup members
- NCU schools
- Office of the Registrar
- Director of Accreditation
- Library
- Academic Success Center
- 28-30 NCU faculty raters
- Office of Institutional Assessment
- Office of Strategic Research

Those external to NCU included:

- 25 external raters
- Dr. Kate McConnell, AAC&U AVP for Research and Assessment & Director of VALUE Institute

100 Dissertations from 2019

A total of 100 dissertations were rated in this study: 50 from NCU and 50 from external peers.

The NCU schools and programs in this study included:

- Business: DBA, PhD BA, & PhD OL
- Education: EdD & PhD ED
- Social & Behavioral Sciences: PhD MFT & PhD PSY

The external peers for this study included:

- Alliant International University
- The Chicago School of Professional Psychology
- The University of California System
- Walden University
- Capella University
- Grand Canyon University

DQLA Rubric Build & Collaboration

- Phase 1: DQLA workgroup, school exemplars, testing
- Phase 2: Condense, align, and apply the VALUE approach
- Phase 3: Testing, rater homework, and training
- Phase 4: Scoring with revised rubric, cover page, and guidelines

DQLA Rubric Criteria (broken into 15 subcategories)

- Problem Statement
- Literature & Previous Work
- Research & Design
- Results & Findings
- Conclusion & Impact of Research
- Broader Implications
- Quality of Written Communication
- Critical Thinking

Rubric scale ranged from: 4 = Exemplary, 3 = Accomplished, 2 = Developing, 1 = Beginning, and 0 = Behavior Not Present.

For each score, raters responded to prompts asking them to explain their score and offer teaching/opportunities.

Results

Question 1: Scores on the DQLA rubric criteria

- NCU dissertations received higher scores on all DQLA rubric criteria except for:
 - Broader Implications
 - Use of Disciplinary Conventions (subcategory of written communication)

Question 2: Feedback on scores

- Compared 1,800+ open-ended rater responses for each score given:
 - Parallel feedback regardless of dissertation (int./ext.) or rater (int./ext.)
 - Shared perceptions of exemplary (4) vs. non-exemplary (0-3) performance on DQLA rubric criteria

Question 3: Opportunities to improve learning

- Strengths: Literature and previous work
- Opportunities: Critical thinking

Question 4: Comparing rater scores

- NCU raters tended to score more harshly than external raters.