

## Carlson Honors Thesis Evaluation Rubric

*September 2009*

Criteria	Superior	Solid	Struggling
Research Question/Topic	Effectively makes the case for conducting the research; relates importance of proposed question to key stake-holders (e.g., business, policymakers, employees). Considers sub-questions that delve deeper into topic. Topic shows innovation and creative application of student's skill set; project is a culmination of undergraduate experience.	Research question (or statement) is clearly articulated to reader and sufficient background is provided for reader to understand the importance of the topic. Chosen topic applies student's skill set; project is a culmination of undergraduate experience.	Thesis lacks a focused research question. Topic lacks a clear connection to student's skill set. Possible shortcomings of project include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research question or statement cannot be located</li> <li>• Topic unrelated to business/management</li> </ul>
Understanding of Literature	Literature Review synthesizes existing peer-reviewed academic research on the topic to facilitate clear understanding of contribution of the thesis. Literature Review has a coherent structure, e.g., organized by methodology, chronologically, or relevancy to topic. Orients the reader to the gap in the literature the thesis intends to address.	Comprehensive review of peer-reviewed academic literature related to student's topic; research question has solid foundation in existing academic literature; student identifies limitations of the existing literature.	Student does not connect research question to existing peer-reviewed scholarship. Possible shortcomings of project include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sources not comprehensive</li> <li>• Reliance on trade/industry publications vs. academic scholarship</li> <li>• Fails to provide analytical perspective to existing work (i.e. pure description)</li> </ul>
Methodology/ Research Quality	Student demonstrates clear understanding of methodology and appropriateness for the project by highlighting the strengths as well as caveats of the methodology; student shows innovation in addressing	Student justifies appropriateness of methodology for addressing proposed question. Demonstrates his/her understanding of the key methodological steps or	Methodology is not appropriate for question being asked. Possible shortcomings of project include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not practical</li> <li>• Unable to make contribution to the</li> </ul>

	limitations of methodology.	assumptions.	proposed question. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flawed implementation of methodology</li> </ul>
Analysis/Presentation of Results	Student interprets results in light of proposed research question and existing literature. Sensitivity of results to different assumptions is examined and alternative explanations are discussed. Student considers implications of results for key stakeholders. Includes professional-quality tables & graphs.	Student presents results in tabular and/or graphical form to facilitate reader's understanding (professional-quality tables & graphs). Student clearly summarizes results; discussion of results is focused and tied to proposed research question; describes implications for future research.	Presentation of results lacks focus; implications of results are not (or cannot be) discussed. Possible shortcomings of project include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results tangential to proposed research</li> <li>Results produce no insights into proposed question</li> <li>Tables unorganized</li> </ul>
Quality of Writing/Organization	Demonstrates high-quality writing skills; makes nuanced connections between sections. Meets requirements of Style Guide. Clear that thesis has been thoroughly proofread (i.e. virtually free of spelling and grammatical errors).	Cohesive and coherent paper. Meets the Style Guide requirements; contains limited number spelling or grammatical errors.	Thesis lacks cohesiveness. Thesis does not follow Style Guide for organization and structure; includes spelling and grammatical errors.

### Requirements for Awards of Latin Honors\*

**Summa cum laude:** This level is granted to theses meeting the **Superior** rating in at least 4 categories

**Magna cum laude:** This level is granted to theses meeting the **Superior** rating in at least 2 categories.

**Cum laude:** This level is granted to theses meeting the **Solid** rating in all categories

Note: Papers with any **Struggling** ratings will not qualify as a Carlson honors thesis.

\* Faculty supervisors should use this rubric to evaluate a student's thesis. These ratings only apply to the thesis quality; students must also meet the other requirements for Latin Honors (e.g., GPA, course requirements, presentation requirement)