

CSSE Honours Project Literature Review Marking Guidelines - 24 Points

In the examination of end-on Honours, Graduate Diploma, and Masters by coursework research projects, literature review examiners will take into consideration the following points:

1 Does the literature review convey a clear purpose?

The purpose might be one or more of the following

- Demonstrate the understanding of a selected body of work in the research area of interest
- Summarise and criticise the existing work to identify research gaps
- Identify the research question and justify the needs of one's own study
- Position one's own study in a relatively large body of research work

Marks: _____/20

2 Is the literature review adequate content-wise?

A literature review typically answer the following key questions

- What are key concepts for the research topic of interest?
- How are these concepts defined? What are are their origin?
- What ideas, algorithms, methodologies or technical solutions are available or have been tried out to date?
- What are the main problems or research questions still challenging the researchers in the area?

Marks: _____/20

3 Are the references adequate?

There are no definitive answers as to how many references are adequate. Most of the time, this depends on the level of study and the specific discipline. A general guide for the honours level at this stage would be 10-20 references. At the end of the honours year, the final dissertation should have 20+ references.

Marks: _____/20

4 Is the referencing style appropriate?

An appropriate referencing style should at least serve the purpose of clearly crediting the original work. In particular, the boundaries between the student's own words and quoted/copied words must be clearly indicated using quotes, indentation, and/or font style. Otherwise, please issue warnings about plagiarism and report it to the 4th year coordinator.

The library website has a list of different referencing styles:
<http://www.is.uwa.edu.au/information-resources/guides>

Marks: _____/20

5 Is the literature review clearly structured?

Some possible way of structuring a literature review:¹

- **Chronological organisation:** The discussion of the research /articles is ordered according to an historical or developmental context.
- **The 'Classic' studies organisation:** A discussion or outline of the major writings regarded as significant in your area of study. (Remember that in nearly all research there are 'benchmark' studies or articles that should be acknowledged).
- **Topical or thematic organisation:** The research is divided into sections representing the categories or conceptual subjects for your topic. The discussion is organised into these categories or subjects.
- **Inverted pyramid organisation:** The literature review begins with a discussion of the related literature from a broad perspective. It then deals with more and more specific or localised studies which focus increasingly on the specific question at hand.

Marks: _____/20

¹Courtesy of The Learning Centre, The University of New South Wales, source:
<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/litrev2.html>