

Category	Criterion	Score for criterion				Category score
		Distinction (8.0 - 10.0)	Merit (7.0 - 8.0)	Pass (6.0 - 7.0)	Fail (< 5.0)	
General requirements	Length	Between 3,500 and 5,000 words (excluding footnotes/endnotes, title page and references): i.e. at most 3 pages review, 2 pages discussion of a				
	Time frame	Kept to deadlines / Finished final version within formal or agreed time frame for a 6 EC assignment.				
	Layout	Clear layout. Citations are in a correct and the same style throughout the review.				
	Own work	All sources are named. The research proposal is written in own words and free from plagiarism.				
Feedback:						
1. Significance and originality	Significance and originality	The proposed research details about a new question in the field.	The proposed research details about a traditional question in the field in an original way.	The proposed research details about a traditional question in the field.	The proposed research is nearly a copy existing research.	
Feedback:						
2. Summary	Content and structure of text summary	The summary covers all important points of the proposal, entices the reader to read it and the internal logic is sound. The summary is as concise as possible.	The summary covers almost all important points of the proposal, entices the reader to read it and internal logic of the summary is sound.	The summary covers most important points of the proposal, tries to entice the reader to read it and succeeds partly. The internal logic of the summary could at places have been better.	The summary covers mostly unimportant points. The summary does not try to entice the reader to read the proposal. The internal logic is missing.	
	Quality of graphical abstract	The graphical abstract is clear and supports the proposal in a major way. The biological problem underlying the proposed research is described well.	The graphical abstract is clear and supports the proposal in a major way. The biological problem underlying the proposed research is described reasonably well, but a few aspects are missing.	The graphical abstract is relatively clear and supports the proposal. The biological problem underlying the proposed research is described reasonably, but some aspects are missing.	The graphical abstract is only partly understandable and does not support the proposal. The abstract does not explain the biological problem underlying the proposal.	
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3. Introduction & Objective	Theoretical framework	The background information is completely on topic and all essential information is given.	The background information is mostly on topic and all essential information is given. Only small amounts of off-topic information are given.	The background information is mostly on topic, but some essential information is missing and some information is off-topic.	Background information is mostly off-topic and essential background information is missing.	
	Discussion of the research article	The discussion of the research article is excellent and it evaluates relevant methods and results. No irrelevant information is discussed.	The discussion of the research article is good, evaluates the methods and results critically in most places.	The discussion of the research article is acceptable, but there is no clear difference between relevant and irrelevant sections. Methods and results are not critically evaluated in most places.	The discussion of the research article is trivial and sections of the article that are irrelevant to the proposed research dominate, while essential parts of the article are left undiscussed.	
Feedback:						
4. Objective of the research	Objective of the research	The main question is clear, researchable and arises from the background information in a completely logical way. The delineation is completely clear. The sub-questions/ hypotheses are clear and have a clear role in answering the main question. They also take into account other possible routes to answer the main question.	The main question is clear and researchable, and arises from the background information in a mostly logical way, though other main questions might also have been formulated. The delineation is clear. The sub-questions/hypotheses are clear and have a clear role in answering the main question.	The main question is mostly clear, but could have been defined more clearly at some points. The main question arises mostly from the background information. The delineation is mostly clear. Most of the sub-questions/hypotheses are clear and help to answer the main question, though not completely.	The main question is unclear, not researchable and does not arise logically from the background information. Delineation of the subject is weak. Most of the sub-questions/hypotheses are unclear and will play almost no role in answering the main question.	
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5. Approach of the research	Link between objectives and proposed methods	The proposed methods help to answer all objectives in the best way possible.	The proposed methods help to answer all the objectives, some better experiments could have been proposed.	The proposed methods help to answer most of the objectives, however often better experiments could have been proposed.	The proposed methods only help to answer small parts of the objectives.	
	Description and feasibility of the proposed methods	The proposed methods and model systems are feasible and a logical unit. The limitations are discussed thoroughly and possible solutions to these limitations are given. Experimental parameters are good. Expected results are described in depth and connected to the research questions.	The proposed methods are feasible and limitations are discussed thoroughly. Model systems are discussed, some are sub-optimal. A few other experimental parameters might be improved, but overall the methods are useful. Expected results are described.	The proposed methods are feasible and limitations are discussed trivially. Model systems are discussed, but the chosen systems are sub-optimal. Other experimental parameters might be off as well. Expected results are only briefly alluded to.	Most parts of the methods are not described properly or not feasible. Model systems are not mentioned. No information about expected results is given.	
	Timetable	The timetable is workable and the order of the experiments fits the central question and the sub-questions perfectly.	The timetable is workable, but the order of the experiments is not completely logical based on the central question and the sub-questions.	The timetable has a few problematic aspects, but could easily be made workable. The timetable shows the student is reasonably able to plan experiments.	The timetable is not compatible with the research proposal and student is not able to adjust planned experiments.	
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6. Innovation & impact	Innovation of the research	The proposed research will make a considerable novel contribution by addressing a relevant question that extends beyond the field.	The proposed research will make a reasonable contribution by addressing a relevant question in the field. The subject is original.	The proposed research will make a modest contribution by addressing a relevant but small and traditional question in the field.	The proposed research will make almost no contribution to the field.	
	Impact of the research	Several stakeholders with clear interests in the research are identified and how they will benefit is described clearly. The impact of the research has been described to its full extent.	Several stakeholders with clear interests in the research are identified and how they will benefit is described clearly.	Several stakeholders with clear interests in the research are identified, but how the stakeholders will benefit is not described clearly.	Stakeholders are identified, but what their interest in the results of the proposed research would be is not described clearly.	
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7. Writing skills	Structure of the proposal	Higher and lower level hierarchy is logical. Ordering of the sections is logical. All information occurs at the right place. Level of detail is appropriate at all places.	Main structure is correct and the lower level hierarchy is logical in most places. Ordering of the different sections is mostly logical. In most places level of detail is appropriate.	Main structure is correct, but lower level hierarchy of sections is illogical in places. Some sections have overlapping functions leading to ambiguity in the proposal. Level of detail inappropriate at places.	The main structure is incorrect in some places. Placement of material in different chapters is illogical in many sections. Level of detail varies widely.	
	Clarity of the arguments	The textual quality of the proposal is such that it could be acceptable in a peer-proposal journal.	Formulations in the proposal are clear and exact, as well as concise.	Formulations in the proposal are predominantly clear and exact. The proposal could have been written more concisely.	Ambiguity and/or inexactness in wording occur regularly and it affects the interpretation of the proposal.	
	Readability	There are no obvious spelling and grammar mistakes. All sentences have a clear function. The writing style is scientific and coherent.	There are no obvious spelling and grammar mistakes. Almost all sentences have a clear function. The writing style is scientific and coherent.	There are quite a few sentences with spelling and grammar mistakes, though they do not impair reading. There are quite some sentences without a clear function. The writing style varies between sections.	The sentences are full of spelling and grammar mistakes. Most sentences do not have a clear function.	
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8. Independence	Interaction with supervisor	The student plans and performs writing independently. The meetings with the supervisor are very well-prepared. The student understands what questions are relevant for their supervisor and asks only these.	The student plans and performs most tasks independently and asks for help from the supervisor when needed. The meetings with the supervisor were well-prepared.	The supervisor is mainly responsible for setting out the tasks, but the student is able to perform them independently. The meetings with the supervisor were reasonably prepared.	The student needs frequent instructions and well-defined tasks from the supervisor. The supervisor needs careful checks to see if all tasks have been performed. The meetings with the supervisor were insufficiently prepared.	
		Feedback:				
9. Defense (one-on-one conversation/ rebuttal or presentation)	Quality of defense	The student is able to freely discuss the contents of the proposal and to place the proposal in the context of current trends in the scientific or practical context. The student is able to answer the questions from the audience with ease.	The student is able to defend their proposal, including indications of where things could have been proposed better. The student is able to place the proposal in the scientific or practical context. The student is able to answer all basic questions, and more advanced questions reasonably well.	The student is able to defend their proposal. They mostly masters the contents of what was written, but, for a limited number of items, they are not able to explain why it is proposed. The student answers most basic questions.	The student is not able to defend most of the proposal. They do not master the contents of what was written and are not adequately able to explain why it is proposed. The student cannot answer basic questions.	
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10. Optional extra category	As discussed with student beforehand	

Feedback:						
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FINAL GRADE:						
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Feedback:						
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To allow for differences between scientific fields/disciplines, the relative weights of the categories are not specified. A supervisor has to decide and communicate to the student why and how sub-grades for the different categories will add up to the final grade.