

SAMPLE SCHOLARLY ADVISORY BRIEF

Literature Review Strategy and Gap Analysis

ILLUSTRATIVE EXCERPT · NOT A CLIENT DELIVERABLE · DOCTORAL ADVISORY

What this sample demonstrates

[A useful literature review does more than collect relevant studies. It makes the intellectual terrain visible: what is known, how it has been studied, where findings converge or diverge, and what focused knowledge need remains. This sample illustrates developmental feedback on three connected tasks: building search logic from the research problem and questions, organizing evidence for synthesis rather than summary, and articulating a bounded, supportable gap.]

[The process identifies scholar-owned decisions, tests reasoning, and offers tools to document a transparent path from search concepts to thematic claims. That structure can support more productive conversations with an advisor, chair, methodologist, or committee.]

Illustrative scholarly situation

[Consider a fictional doctoral researcher studying first-generation community-college students' use of virtual academic advising as they transition to four-year institutions. The researcher has a preliminary problem statement, two research questions, an outline, and 38 sources from informal searches and citation chasing. The outline is arranged by author and publication year. Some sources address online advising broadly; few address transfer transitions or first-generation learners.]

[The researcher believes there is a gap because few studies focus on this population. Yet the materials do not establish whether the scarcity reflects an incomplete search, inconsistent terminology, an overly narrow intersection of concepts, or a genuinely underexamined relationship. The task is to investigate and justify a narrower claim.]

Diagnostic observations

Observation 1: Concept boundaries are unstable.

The source set alternates among virtual advising, online counseling, e-advising, student support, transfer advising, and persistence interventions. Overlapping terms are not interchangeable. Unstable concepts produce searches that are difficult to reproduce and themes that blur distinct practices. A concept map should distinguish service, delivery mode, population, transition context, and outcomes.

Observation 2: Search coverage is undocumented.

The preliminary list records neither databases nor search strings, date limits, source types, or retention reasons. A gap claim needs an evidentiary trail. A proportionate search log can capture term families, source-selection considerations, and a stopping rationale.

Observation 3: The outline promotes source-by-source reporting.

An author-led sequence can describe articles while concealing patterns across design, setting, participant group, construct, and finding. The methodological consequence is weak synthesis: a reader cannot see convergence, conflict, or thin evidence. A thematic architecture should arrange cross-study comparisons around conditions relevant to the questions.

Observation 4: The proposed gap is an absence claim.

Saying that few studies exist does not specify what prior work has examined, what it leaves unresolved, or why that matters. A defensible articulation tests whether the literature underexamines a population in a defined transition setting, a relationship between advising features and student experience, or a condition limiting transferability of findings.

DISSERIQ / SCHOLAR-OWNED REVISION PATH

A disciplined next step, not a substitute for scholarship.

Revision pathway

Scholar-owned next step

1. **Define the decision frame.** The scholar maps the problem, purpose, and research questions to provisional concepts, synonyms, related terms, and exclusions. They decide which distinctions are essential and which make the search unhelpfully broad.

Scholar-owned next step

2. **Build and document a targeted search approach.** The scholar selects databases or source types, records search iterations, applies inclusion and exclusion considerations, and examines coverage across population, setting, concepts, and outcomes.

Scholar-owned next step

3. **Construct the synthesis and test the gap.** The scholar develops themes that compare studies across meaningful dimensions, identifies patterns and tensions, and develops a bounded gap articulation supported by that comparison. They identify claims requiring further evidence or institutional guidance.

Questions for the scholar

- 01 Which terms identify the same phenomenon, and which mark substantively different services or experiences?
- 02 What combination of population, setting, relationship, or condition does the literature support as genuinely underexamined?
- 03 How will each planned theme help a reader understand the knowledge need behind the research questions?

Academic-integrity boundary

This is developmental scholarly consultation. The scholar remains the author and decision-maker for every research choice, source selection, claim, revision, and submission. DisserIQ provides planning tools, methodological reasoning, and feedback supporting independent scholarly work.

Engagement snapshot

Illustrative offer: Literature Review Strategy and Gap Analysis, \$ 495, delivered in **5 business days** after required materials are received. Example deliverables are: a 60-minute Literature Review Strategy Consultation; a Written Literature Review Strategy and Gap Analysis Memo; a Search Logic Blueprint with provisional concept and term families; and a Synthesis and Gap Articulation Planning Matrix for cross-study comparison and scholar-owned development.

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