

Ed.D. Comprehensive Examination Guidelines

K-12 Educational Leadership

(Ed.D. Accelerated and Traditional Dissertations)

I. The Comprehensive Examination serves the following purposes:

1. Enables candidates to apply the concepts, theories, and frameworks that they have learned in their coursework.
2. Provides evidence that the candidate has mastered the knowledge that they need to be an educational leader.
3. Successful completion is required before students can advance to the proposal writing stage of a field-based dissertation (i.e., Program Evaluation or Decision Analysis) or traditional dissertation.

II. Prerequisites to the Comprehensive Examination:

1. Candidates may take the Comprehensive Examination only after they have passed the Portfolio Evaluation and completed most of their coursework.
2. Coursework officially listed as part of the dissertation process in the candidate's program of study need not be completed prior to undertaking the Comprehensive Examination (i.e., ED540, ED541, ED542, ED543, ED544, ED546 or ED593).

III. Comprehensive Examination Process:

1. Advisor Notification:

- a. It is candidates' responsibility to notify their program advisor that they are eligible and would like to sit for the comprehensive exam in the next scheduled exam period.

2. Examination Scheduling:

- a. The Educational Leadership faculty will determine the examination periods for the year and publicize them to eligible students. Examinations for that semester will be administered during that period and students should plan their schedules accordingly.

3. Registration:

- a. **Traditional Dissertation:** Candidates who intend to complete a traditional dissertation must register for EDE550, Comp Exam Research: K-12 Educational Leadership (0 credits) the semester they are completing or immediately following the completion of their coursework.
- b. **Accelerated Program Evaluation or Decision Analysis Dissertation:** Candidates who will have met all the academic requirements (completed required coursework, finished incomplete classes, etc.) and intend to enroll in a dissertation cohort and complete a Program Evaluation or Decision Analysis dissertation must register for EDE550, Comp Exam Research: K-12 Educational Leadership (0 credits) the spring semester immediately preceding entrance into a dissertation cohort.

IV. Components of the Qualifying Examination

1. Papers/Essays:

- a. The comprehensive examination requires that candidates provide written responses to two qualifying examination questions.
- b. Each written response should be no more than 12-15 pages (double spaced, 1 inch margins, Times New Roman 12 pt. font), excluding the cover page and references. Proper APA style is required.
- c. Examiners may provide clarity regarding the question asked of the candidate, but will not advise the candidate on how to respond to the specific questions, nor meet with the candidate while the candidate is writing the exam. Similarly, candidate should not discuss his/her question with other candidates. Students may seek outside support strictly related to editing of their exams. Editing assistance includes help related to spelling, grammar, and APA formatting and must be completed within the 10 day timeframe of the exam. No extension for editorial assistance will be granted. Any and all other types of support are prohibited given the independent nature of the exam process.

2. Allotted Time:

- a. Examiners will allot candidates ten (10) days to respond to each question (Friday to Monday).
- b. Candidates must complete the papers during the two selected, scheduled examination periods.
- c. Candidates who wish to join a dissertation cohort must submit their response to the second exam prior to the first meeting of the dissertation proposal seminar.
- d. Individual adjustments to this schedule may only be made with the consent of the Department Chair and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, and will be granted only because of the most unusual and compelling exigencies (e.g., health problems certified by a physician).

V. The Grading Process

1. Examiners:

- a. Two “examiners” will administer the comprehensive examination – the (1) Lead Examiner and (2) Second Examiner.
- b. The candidate’s program advisor will serve as the Lead Examiner. The Lead Examiner will identify and solicit the Second Examiner. Candidates do not select the examiners.
- c. Each examiner will serve as the primary reader for one of the questions.

2. Evaluation:

In evaluating the candidate’s responses during the written exam the examiners will take into consideration the following factors:

- a. The clarity of the candidate’s responses.
- b. The breadth and depth of the candidate’s responses.

- c. The understanding of key theories, concepts, practices, etc.
 - d. The originality of the candidate's insights and analysis.
 - e. The proper use of references and APA formatting.
- 3. Ratings Options for Examiners:**
- a. Each examiner will make the determination of whether the candidate has earned a Pass, Revise and Resubmit, or Fail rating on the question under his/her supervision.
 - b. Candidates must successfully pass each question to complete the exam.
- 4. Pass Rating:** If examiners award a submission a Pass rating the candidate will have successfully completed the expectations for that question.
- 5. Revise and Resubmit Rating:**
- a. If the examiner awards a submission a Revise and Resubmit rating, s/he will provide the candidate with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the performance.
 - b. The candidate will have one (1) week from the date of receiving the feedback to revise and resubmit that submission.
 - c. If the examiner determines the revised submission meets expectations the candidate will have successfully completed the expectations for that question.
 - d. If the examiner determines that the resubmission does not meet expectations, the other examiner will review and assign a rating for the question.
 - e. The examiners will meet to determine a final pass or fail rating.
 - f. If both examiners award a "fail" rating, then Section V. 7 below applies.
- 6. Fail Rating:**
- a. If the examiner awards a submission a Failing rating s/he will ask the second reader to review the submission for a second rating. They will determine a consensus rating (Pass, Revise and Resubmit, or Fail) and proceed accordingly.
 - b. If both examiners determine that the original or a revised submission does not meet expectations for the comprehensive examination, the submission will be awarded a Fail rating.
- 7. Consequences of a Fail Rating:**
- a. If a candidate receives a Fail rating for either question in the comprehensive examination, the candidate will be withdrawn from the doctoral program.
 - b. Depending on the circumstances, the faculty will determine if the candidate has qualified for awarding of a Master's Degree.

VI. Successful Completion of the Comprehensive Examination

Upon completion of the comp exam process and once faculty are able to submit course grades, the Department Chair will submit the grade for EDE550 Comp Exam Research.