Educational Leadership

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION/QUALIFYING EXAMINATION FORM

(PH.D. & ED.D.)

GUIDELINES & FORMS
Congratulations upon reaching the final stage prior to beginning the dissertation process! The Warner School is committed to supporting your efforts to complete your comprehensive exam/qualifying examination.

The procedure described below and on the following pages is required for all doctoral students. Specific information on the nature, format, and content of the comprehensive exam/qualifying exam can be obtained from your academic advisor or program chair, not from the Office of Student Services.

Please note guidelines for specific areas within Educational Leadership are appended to these general instructions and forms:

- Ph.D. (Educational Policy and Theory, Higher Education) page 5
- Ed.D. P-12 Leadership (Traditional and Accelerated Dissertations) page 8
- Ed.D. Higher Education (Traditional and Accelerated Dissertations) page 11

Upon successful completion of the exam, it is your responsibility to complete the top of page 5, obtain faculty signatures for page 5, and then submit page 5 to Brenda Grosswirth, Administrator, Office of Student Services, LeChase 248. OR you can ask each of your committee members to send an e-mail approval to Brenda at bgrosswirth@warner.rochester.edu.

A. STUDENT INFORMATION

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Degree

- ☐ EdD
- ☐ EdD (Acc)
- ☐ PhD

Program Area

- ☐ P-12 Admin
- ☐ Higher Ed
- ☐ Thought & Policy
B. PROCEDURE FOR DESIGNING THE EXAM

You should meet with the faculty committee (see next page) to discuss the design of the examination, i.e., nature of the exam, fields to be examined, and manner of examination (20-25 page paper, written questions, oral examination, etc.). Warner School faculty have stipulated that at least one part of the examination must be in written form. After consulting with your committee, please describe the examination below.

Three papers are required. Please complete blanks in right-hand column for each of the three papers.

1. **Major Focus Paper**: On a topic that is the student’s central focus of study: i.e., a topic related to the dissertation the student expects to write.

2. **Methodology Paper**: On the exploration of a methodological issue that may or may not be related to the dissertation.

3. **Issue Paper**: On an issue, question, or topic not related to the dissertation.
C. FORMING THE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

The examination committee is composed of three faculty members.

For Ph.D. committees, at least two of the three committee members must be full-time, tenured or tenure-track Warner School faculty members. One of those faculty members must be from the student’s program area, and the other must be from outside the program area. The third committee member may be a faculty member from the Warner School, but also may be a faculty member from another school/college in the University. (See paragraph below for further criteria for the third committee member).

For Ed.D. committees, at least two of the three committee members must be a Warner School faculty member who either is on a tenure-track with a rank of at least assistant professor, or is part of the Warner School clinical faculty. The third committee member may be a faculty member from the Warner School, but also may be a faculty member from another school/college in the University. (See paragraph below for further criteria for the third committee member).

The third committee member of the comprehensive examination/qualifying examination committee for both Ph.D. and Ed.D committees may come from a college/university other than the University of Rochester. In this case, the student must obtain a curriculum vita from the third proposed member and submit it to the Associate Dean of the Warner School for his approval. The proposed committee member must have an earned doctorate, must be tenured or tenure-track faculty, must have a rank of at least assistant professor, and must be actively engaged in research.

Names (Please print or type.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
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* Or please ask your committee members to send an “agreement to be a committee member” email to Brenda Grosswirth at bgrosswirth@warner.rochester.edu

D. FILING THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION/QUALIFYING EXAMINATION FORM

The Comprehensive Examination/Qualifying Examination must be completed within six months of the filing of this form with Brenda Grosswirth in the Office of Student Services. If the examination is not completed within this time period, a new examination must be designed.

The signatures below indicate that the design of the exam has been approved. The student must enter the date of filing, add his/her signature, and obtain the signature (or email approval) of his/her advisor. Brenda Grosswirth will obtain signatures of both the Program Chair and the Associate Dean.

Date of Filing: ______

Signatures:

Student

Advisor

Program Chair*

Associate Dean*

* Brenda Grosswirth will obtain these signatures for student.
**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION/QUALIFYING EXAMINATION**

**FACULTY SIGN-OFF**

I attest that the following student has successfully completed the comprehensive examination/qualifying examination. (In lieu of signatures each committee member may e-mail approval to Brenda Grosswirth at bgrosswirth@warner.rochester.edu):

<table>
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<th>Student’s Name (printed/typed)</th>
<th>Date Exam Completed</th>
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1. Faculty Member Signature

2. Faculty Member Signature

3. Faculty Member Signature

4. Faculty Member Signature (IF NECESSARY)

5. Faculty Member Signature (IF NECESSARY)

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**IT IS THE STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPLETE THE TOP OF THIS PAGE, OBTAIN REQUIRED FACULTY SIGNATURES, AND THEN RETURN THIS PAGE TO BRENDA GROSSWIRTH, ADMINISTRATOR IN THE OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES, LECHASE 248. OR you can ask each of your committee members to send an e-mail approval to Brenda at bgrosswirth@warner.rochester.edu.**

****************************************************************************************************
Comprehensive Exam Information:
Ph.D. (Educational Policy and Theory, Higher Education)

I. The comprehensive exam serves the following purposes:
   A. It provides evidence that the student has the prerequisites necessary to undertake successfully the independent work required for the dissertation. (See criteria for evaluating the comprehensive examination.) Successful completion of the comprehensive examination is a necessary requirement for advancement to the writing of the dissertation.
   B. The comprehensive exam also serves as a transitional step toward the dissertation.

II. Prerequisites to the Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination may only be undertaken after the student has completed the Portfolio Evaluation and most course work (Course work officially listed as part of the dissertation in the individual student's program of study need not be completed prior to undertaking the comprehensive examination).

III. Components of the Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination consists of three papers that meet the following general requirements:
   A. Each paper shall be a maximum of 25 pages (exclusive of bibliography and notes). Only with the express permission of the student's comprehensive examination committee may a paper exceed 25 pages. The paper will follow an appropriate style manual, e.g. APA, MLA, or Chicago Style.
   B. One paper will address the field in which the candidate will be writing the dissertation. The paper may take either of the following forms:
      1. It may be a synthetic, analytical and critical literature review of a topic within the student's primary field of interest; or
      2. It may be an expository or argumentative essay that deals with a problem within the student's field.
   C. One paper will focus on the methodological approach the student anticipates he/she will use in the dissertation. The paper will include a discussion of the appropriate use of the relevant methodology and the limitations of the methodology and will specifically comment upon, analyze and critique specific uses of the methodology found in other relevant research.
   D. A third paper will demonstrate the student's familiarity and expertise in a second field, i.e. a field other than the field addressed by the papers noted in B and C.
      1. This paper may take the form of a synthetic, analytical and critical literature review of a topic within this second field;
      2. The paper may be an expository or argumentative essay that deals with a problem within this field; or
      3. The student may meet this requirement by developing an annotated syllabus for a three-credit course with approximately 38 hours of class time spread over fourteen weeks.
   E. As discussed more fully below, students must complete each question within two months (for a total of 6 months of writing time).
IV. Planning Process

A. It is the student’s responsibility to form his or her comprehensive exam committee in consultation with his or her advisor and the chair of the comprehensive exam committee, if the chair is not the advisor.

B. The examination committee is composed of three faculty members. At least two of the three committee members must be tenure-track or clinical Warner School faculty members. One of those faculty members must be from the student’s program area, and the other must be from outside the program area. The third committee member may be a faculty member from the Warner School, but also may be a faculty member from another school/college in the University.

C. The student and the committee must reach an agreement, within the parameters listed above, regarding the topic/question of each of the three papers. It is the student’s responsibility to take the initiative in proposing to the committee the topic/question of the three papers. A student may consult with the chair of the committee in formulating this proposal, but the chair is to serve only as advisor and consultant, with the responsibility remaining the student’s to develop the specifications for the three papers. The student may only proceed with work on the papers after all three members of the committee have agreed to the papers.

D. The student and committee will agree on the style, e.g. APA, to be followed in writing the papers.

E. The student must complete and submit the Warner School Comprehensive Examination Form with all required signatures. The form is best submitted to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies only after the student and committee have agreed upon the questions upon which the student will be examined.

F. The committee and student will agree upon the sequence in which the papers will be written.

G. The committee and student will agree upon which faculty member shall be the initial reader of a given paper.

H. From the time of submittal of the required form the student has one year to complete the comprehensive examination. Thus within that year-long period a doctoral student must select, with the committee’s approval, the three two-month terms in which s/he will write (see III.E.) s/he will write the three papers. For example, March-April may be used for one question; July-August may be used for another question; and October-November for a third question. Consequently, a student and committee following this hypothetical schedule will agree that the first paper is due at the end of April, the second at the end of August, and the third at the end of November. This decision will be made at the time of the finalization of the entire plan and prior to the filing of the Warner School Comprehensive Examination Form. Adjustments in this schedule may only be made with the consent of the comprehensive exam committee.

Only because of the most unusual and compelling exigencies, e.g. health problems certified to by a physician, may a student be granted, with permission of the committee, an extension regarding either the overall limitation of one year to complete the entire exam or an extension regarding any of the one/two month terms allotted to write a particular question.
V. Writing the Papers

While the comprehensive exam plan is being formulated, committee members may assist the student by providing suggestions regarding the writing of the paper, such as literature to review, etc. But the faculty will not consult or advise the student during the writing of the papers. The comprehensive examination is intended to be a demonstration of the student’s capacity to undertake the independent work needed to successfully complete a dissertation. Note: the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies makes the final determination regarding extension of the one year time limit for completing the entire comprehensive exam.

VI. The Grading Process

A. The assigned reader of a paper will make the initial determination of whether the paper is a “pass” or “fail.” If the paper is deemed a failure, it will be read by the other two members of the comprehensive examination committee. In the circumstance that the whole committee reads a given paper, the majority vote of the committee will determine if the paper is to be given a grade of “pass” or “fail.” The reading of the papers will commence as the papers are completed and turned in to the relevant faculty reader.

B. If the paper is given a “pass,” the faculty may still wish to provide the student with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the paper.

C. If the paper is given a failing grade, the faculty will provide the student with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. A student may rewrite a failed paper once. Again the student must designate with the consent of the committee the two-month term to be devoted to the writing of the paper. Failure of a paper does not extend the over-all one-year limitation for completion of the comprehensive examination.

D. In evaluating the papers the faculty will take into consideration the following factors:
   1. The significance of the topic/field/question addressed.
   2. The quality of the writing (grammar, syntax, etc.)
   3. The correct use of the relevant style manual.
   4. Clarity and precision of expression.
   5. The organization of the paper.
   6. The validity and soundness of an argument.
   7. The student’s ability to marshal, analyze, and interpret relevant evidence.
   8. The range and appropriate selection of references.
   9. The originality of insights and analysis.
   10. In the case of a literature review:
       a. Comprehension of the review.
       b. Whether the review is synthetic, analytical and critical.
       c. Whether the studies are appropriately grouped and related to each other.

VII. Successful Completion of the Comprehensive Examination

To successfully complete the comprehensive examination the student must pass all three questions within the one-year time limit noted earlier.
Qualifying Case Analysis Guidelines:

*Ed.D. P-12 Leadership*  
*(Traditional and Accelerated Dissertations)*

I. The Qualifying Case Analysis Serves the Following Purposes:

A. It provides evidence that the candidate has mastered the knowledge they he or she needs to be an educational leader.

B. It allows students to apply the concepts, theories and frameworks that they have learned in their coursework to realistic scenarios.

C. Successful completion of the Qualifying Case Analysis is required before students can advance to the proposal writing stage of a field-based dissertation (i.e., Program Evaluation or Decision Analysis).

II. Prerequisites to the Qualifying Case Analysis

A. Candidates may take the Qualifying Case Analysis only after they have passed the Portfolio Evaluation and completed most of their coursework.

B. Coursework officially listed as part of the dissertation process in the student’s Program of Study need not be completed prior to undertaking the Qualifying Case Analysis (i.e, ED 593, ED 540, ED 541, ED 542, ED 543, ED 544, or ED 546.)

III. Qualifying Case Analysis Registration Process

A. Candidates must register for EDE 550 – Qualifying Case Analysis (0 credits) for the Summer A session. Exception to this requirement can only be made with the approval of the Educational Leadership Department Chair and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

Note: some candidates’ Programs of Study (POS) may still list ED 550 – Qualifying Case Analysis for three (3) credits. If this is the case with your POS, understand that you are not required to take an additional course. Instead, we now award an additional three (3) credits for completing the dissertation proposal (six [6] vs. three [3] credits).

B. Candidates should register for the Qualifying Case Analysis and Dissertation Proposal Seminar as follows:

1. EDE 550 – Qualifying Case Analysis (0 credits) – Summer A +  
   —AND—
2. ED 540 – Program Evaluation Proposal Seminar (3 credits) – Summer A  
   —OR—
   ED 546 – Decision Making Proposal Seminar (3 credits) – Summer A.
3. ED 593 – Ed.D. Research (3 credits) – Summer B.

IV. Components of the Qualifying Examination

A. The qualifying examination culminates in a 60-minute oral exam during which we ask candidates to address issues related to one or more cases.
B. During the oral exam, we ask candidates to discuss the issues presented in the case(s) using multiple leadership or policy lenses/perspectives.

C. We will present the cases to the candidates about three weeks prior to the oral exam.

D. The oral examination is conducted by a panel of Educational Leadership faculty members (i.e., examiners) who have been involved in teaching the courses that form the basis of the exam. Candidates do not select the examiners.

V. Candidate Planning Process

A. The oral portion of the qualifying exam will take place annually, during the third or fourth week of May. The cases will be provided to candidates during the last week of April. Without exception, students will be afforded no less than four (4) weekends to review the cases prior to the oral examination. 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).

B. It is the responsibility of the candidates to notify their program advisors that they are eligible for and wish to sit for the qualifying exam.

C. During the oral defense, students are expected to apply the concepts, theories, and perspectives that they have learned in their coursework to the cases. Specifically, candidates will choose three perspectives from a prescribed list that accompanies each case, and candidates might choose to address in the oral exam:
   1. Legal and ethical,
   2. Budgeting/fiscal,
   3. Political and policy-development/analysis,
   4. Leadership and management,
   5. Curriculum and instruction, and
   6. Program evaluation/decision analysis

B. No less than two weeks before the oral exam, candidates must notify the department chair which three (3) questions they will answer.

C. Candidates will begin the oral exam by presenting briefly (no more than ten [10] minutes) their responses to the three (3) questions that they have selected.

D. Candidates must understand that although they will prepare answers to a set of questions that accompany the case, the oral exam is not simply a presentation of their prepared responses. Instead, the examiners will ask questions dynamically, focusing on, but not limited to, the issues that candidates have prepared themselves to address. We intend the oral exam to test the bounds of a candidate’s knowledge.

E. Each examiner will be provided with the candidate’s Program of Study and will frame their questions in reference to the courses that that candidate has taken. The examiners will not hold candidates accountable for information presented in courses they have not taken.

F. Candidates may bring notes to the oral exam. However, candidates should refer to their notes sparingly, so as not to disrupt the flow of conversation.
G. Before the cases are distributed, program advisors may assist the candidate by providing general suggestions regarding how to approach the oral exam, such as preparing notes and talking points. But the faculty will not consult or advise the candidate on how to address issues specific to the case(s). Similarly candidates should not discuss the case(s) with each other. The qualifying examination is intended to be a demonstration of the candidate’s ability to address issues that s/he is likely to confront in his/her leadership capacity.

V. The Grading Process

A. The examiners will make the determination of whether the candidate has earned a “pass” or “fail” on the qualifying examination. In the circumstance that the examiners are not unanimous regarding the candidate’s performance, a majority vote of the examiners will determine the final grade of “pass” or “fail.”

B. If the candidate is awarded a “pass,” the examiners may still wish to provide him/her with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of his/her performance.

C. If the candidate is awarded a failing grade, the examiners will provide him/her with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of his/her performance.

VI. Evaluation

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

A. The clarity of the candidate’s responses.

B. The soundness of the candidate’s responses.

C. The originality of the candidate’s insights and analysis.

VII. Successful Completion of the Comprehensive Examination

When the candidate has earned a “pass,” the examiners must complete and submit the Comprehensive Examination/Qualifying Examination Faculty Sign-Off form, with all required signatures, to Brenda Grosswirth in Warner’s Student Services Office.
Comprehensive Exam Information:  
*Ed.D. Higher Education*  
*(Traditional and Accelerated Dissertations)*

I. The Comprehensive Examination Serves the Following Purposes

A. Enables candidates to apply the concepts, theories, and frameworks that they have learned in their coursework.

B. Provides evidence that the candidate has mastered the knowledge that they need to be a leader in higher education.

C. 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

A. Candidates may take the Comprehensive Examination only after they have passed the Portfolio Evaluation and completed most of their coursework.

B. Coursework officially listed as part of the dissertation process in the student’s Program of Study need not be completed prior to undertaking the Comprehensive Examination (i.e, ED 593, ED 540, ED 541, ED 542, ED 543, ED 544, or ED 546.)

III. Comprehensive Examination Process

A. Advisor Notification:

   It is the candidate’s responsibility to notify his/her program advisor that s/he is eligible and would like to sit for the Comprehensive Exam in the next scheduled exam period.

B. Examination Scheduling:

   The Higher Education faculty will determine the examination periods for the year and publicize them to eligible students. Examinations for that year will be administered during that period and students should plan their schedules accordingly.

C. Registration:

   1. *Traditional Dissertation:* Candidates who intend to complete a traditional dissertation must register for EDE 551 – Comprehensive Exam Research: Higher Education EdD (0 credits) the semester they are completing or immediately following the completion of their coursework.

   2. *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 EDE 551 – Comprehensive Exam Research: Higher Education EdD (0 credits) the semester immediately preceding entrance into a dissertation cohort.
IV. Components of the Comprehensive Examination

A. Papers/Essays:
   It is the candidate’s responsibility to notify his/her program advisor that s/he is eligible and would like to sit for the Comprehensive Exam in the next scheduled exam period.

1. The comprehensive examination requires that candidates provide written responses to two qualifying examination questions.

2. Each written response should be no more than 12-15 pages (double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 pt font), excluding the cover page and references. Proper APA style is required.

3. Examiners may assist the candidate by providing general suggestions regarding how to approach the exam, 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.

B. Allotted Time:

1. Examiners will allot candidates ten days to respond to each question (Friday to Monday).

2. Candidates must complete both questions in the scheduled examination period detailed in Section III:B above.

3. Candidates who wish to join a dissertation cohort must submit their response to the second prior to the first meeting of the dissertation proposal seminar.

4. 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

A. Examiners:

1. Two “examiners” will administer the comprehensive examination—the (1) Lead Examiner and (2) Second Examiner.

2. The candidate’s advisor will serve as the Lead Examiner. The Lead Examiner will identify and solicit the Second Examiner. Candidates do not select the examiners.

3. Each examiner will serve as the primary reader for one of the questions.

B. Evaluation:

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

1. The clarity of the candidate’s responses.

2. The breadth and depth of the candidate’s responses.

3. The understanding of key theories, concepts, practices, etc.

4. The originality of the candidate’s insights and analysis.
C. Ratings Options for Examiners:

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:

1. Pass Rating:

   If examiners award a submission a “Pass,” the candidate will have successfully completed the expectations for that question.

   *Candidates must successfully pass each question to complete the exam.*

2. Revise and Resubmit Rating:

   a. If the examiner awards a submission a “Revise and Resubmit” rating, s/he will provide the candidate an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of their performance.

   b. Candidates will have one week 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 (see section V:C:3 for submission determined to have failed).

   f. If both examiners award a “Fail” rating, then Section V:C:3 below applies.

3. Fail Rating:

   a. If the examiner awards a submission a “Fail” rating they 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.

   c. Consequences of a Fail Rating:

      i. A candidate receiving a “Fail” rating for either question in the Comprehensive Examination will be withdrawn from the doctoral program.

      ii. Depending on the circumstances, the faculty will determine if the candidate has qualified for awarding of a Master’s Degree in Higher Education.

VI. Successful Completion of the Comprehensive Examination

When the candidate has earned a “Pass” rating for both examination questions, the Lead Examiner will complete and submit the Educational Leadership Comprehensive Examination/Qualifying Examination Faculty Sign-Off form, with all required signatures, to the Higher Education faculty member of record for EDE 551. The faculty member of record will submit the passing grade and forward the completed form to Brenda Grosswirth in Warner’s Student Services Office.
Report of the Comprehensive Examination
Educational Leadership Program
Doctor of Education in Higher Education (ED.D.)

We agree that ____________________________ has successfully completed the Comprehensive Examination in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.).

Date of Examination: ____________________________

Signatures & Names of Examiners:

1  
Signature of Lead Examiner ____________________________  Name (please print) ____________________________

2  
Signature of Second Examiner ____________________________  Name (please print) ____________________________

3  
Signature of Other Examiner, if necessary ____________________________  Name (please print) ____________________________

Examiner’s Report: