

Accelerated Ed.D. Comprehensive Exam

The purpose of the written comprehensive examination is to evaluate students' understanding and synthesis of subject matter and experience presented in the initial two years of the Accelerated EdD Program and to assess their capacity to apply this knowledge to problems in their field of practice. The examination comprises two papers that will include a brief articulation of the student's planned dissertation project in a concluding section. It is an open book exam completed during the spring semester of the second year after the student and committee agree on the question(s). They must be completed by May 1st.

The topics of the two examination papers are as follows:

1. **Educational problem:** Identification of the problem proposed for study. The comp paper consists of a literature review that analyzes other research that has investigated this problem, identifies the relevant gap in this literature, and articulates how previous work relates to and motivates a study of the problem in your particular research/work site.
2. **Theoretical framework and research methodology:** The comp paper consists of a description of an action research project to be undertaken to address the educational problem, a critical analysis of how and why this constitutes action research and why action research is an appropriate methodology to address this problem, and an identification and discussion of the theoretical framework that informs this study.

The comps will be in written form. Each paper should be no more than 25 double-spaced pages excluding references, and following APA Publication Manual guidelines.

Students will be eligible to complete the comprehensive examination following completion of 12 courses (36 credit hours). The exam is offered in May of the second year of the program. Questions based on a problem of practice will be agreed upon by the end of January of year two. If they do not pass the comprehensive exams on the first attempt, students will have one opportunity to retake the exam at the beginning of summer session A. Students must pass the exam within these boundaries to be retained in the Accelerated EdD program.

Criteria for Evaluation of T&C Comprehensive Exams

Student's ability to write in a coherent, clear and scholarly way:

- Ideas are well conceived; writing flows well; transitions are used appropriately.
- Arguments are logical and well constructed, with appropriate evidence provided in support of claims.
- The reader can understand the points the student is trying to convey.
- The material is well organized.
- The document is free of grammatical and mechanical errors.
- The quality and style of writing are appropriate for a scholarly paper.

- References follow one of the established formats

Student's ability to clearly articulate a research question of interest to him/her and to argue convincingly about its interest and significance for the field of education:

- A research question is clearly stated.
- The major implications of the question are articulated.
- Its relationship with other relevant problems/topics is made explicit.
- The theoretical/conceptual framework informing that question is made explicit.
- Why the question is worth studying is made explicit, and justifications are provided in support of the claims.
- The question is appropriate given the field(s) to be investigated.

Student's ability to write a literature review within his/her area of specialization, which is informed by a specific question and a theoretical position, and reflects knowledge of important theories within that area of specialization

- The literature review is not simply a list summarizing research studies on a given topic, but rather clearly addresses a specific question.
- The literature review addresses significant prior research addressing the chosen question (and/or closely related problems).
- Research relevant to the chosen question has been examined (i.e., the literature review is sufficiently thorough and deep).
- The literature review provides a frame with which to make sense of the chosen question.
- The contributions of specific studies to making sense of the chosen question are made explicit.
- Claims are appropriately supported and contextualized with respect to the theoretical framework used in the specific study.
- An understanding of key relevant theories in the field of specialization is demonstrated through the review of specific studies.
- Conclusions are drawn about the state of the art related to the chosen question.
- Implications are drawn about areas where further research seems needed.

Student's knowledge of action research methods appropriate to his/her area of specialization

- Appropriate method(s) to approach a chosen research question have been appropriately identified and described
- The appropriateness of these methods to the question has been explicitly discussed and justification provided.
- (Possible) data collection and analysis procedures have been identified and justified (addressing issues relevant to action research).
- Potential limitations of the study are identified and discussed.