

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION POLICY FOR THE PH.D. IN EDUCATION

During Doctoral training, through coursework and professional experiences, students develop specific areas of expertise and knowledge claims. The purpose of the Comprehensive Examinations for the Ph.D. in Education is to assess these areas and claims prior to moving forward with a doctoral dissertation. The following procedures will take place to assess doctoral students' areas of expertise and claims of knowledge.

*Negotiating Claims of Knowledge/Areas of Expertise.* During either the initial or a second Program of Studies (POS) meeting, when they have had sufficient time to identify their desired claims/areas, students will present to their committee members the areas in which they wish to claim expertise. Through discussion, the student and the committee will negotiate which of these claims will be tested on the comprehensive examination.

- Areas of expertise/claims of knowledge must be substantiated by students' coursework and experiences; the majority of faculty members on the committee must agree that the areas/claims are legitimate claims for the student to make.
- All POS faculty members must be in attendance for the meeting in which the claims of knowledge/areas of expertise are presented and negotiated. A form is included for students to make explicit their claims to be tested, and for committee members to sign their agreement to a focus on these topics.
- The meeting in which negotiation of claims of knowledge/areas of expertise takes place must occur during the semester prior to which students wish to write their examination responses.
- Committee members and students must complete the form available in the Student Services office to define their claims/areas to be tested.

*Examination Questions and Responses.* No fewer than 2 and no more than 4 questions will be written by the committee relevant to these claims of knowledge/areas of expertise.

- During the POS meeting, the student and committee members will negotiate the number of questions and the distribution of students' effort to be associated with each question.
- More than one claim of knowledge/area of expertise can be incorporated into a single question.
- At least one of the responses should be written as a paper intended to be published or presented professionally. The student and committee members will decide which area(s)/claim(s) will be targeted for this purpose. Students are strongly encouraged to submit this work for review for conference presentation or publication.
- Specific questions will be written by the faculty members of the committee.
- Following this meeting, students will know the areas/topics on which questions will focus. They will receive the exact questions on the day that writing is scheduled to begin.
- The text of students' responses to the set of questions (not including reference lists) may not exceed a total of 50 pages, typed in 12-point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, single-sided, with 1" margins. Students must follow APA format in their responses.
- Students must indicate their adherence to the UNC-CH Honor Code through their signature on the comprehensive examination form.

*The Writing Period.* Students will write their responses to their assigned questions over a 6 week period (42 days). In order to provide POS committee members sufficient time to evaluate student responses, and to allow students to learn the results of their written examination during the semester in which writing takes place, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Student services will set each semester final dates by which writing must begin and conclude. These dates reflect a 5-week period of time allotted to faculty members and the Chair to evaluate and communicate feedback to the student, prior to the last day of classes. Writing may begin prior to this date in the semester, but if students commence writing after this date, their responses will not be evaluated by faculty during that same semester.

- At least two weeks prior to writing, students will identify a start and end date to writing that spans a 6-week period (42 days). This start/end date will be noted on the POS Claims/Areas tracking sheet and communicated to POS members by the Chair via email.
- At least two weeks prior to writing, the student must generate a reading list to be circulated to all POS committee members (in electronic and hard copy). Faculty have one week to make changes to the reading list. Changes must be communicated to the Chair of the POS committee; the Chair will communicate changes to the student at least five days prior to the beginning of writing.
- Students will receive the specific list of questions to be addressed from their Chair or Chair's designee, via email, by 9 a.m. on the day on which writing is to begin.
- During the writing period, students may consult written materials relevant to their topic. They may not consult live sources to inform their responses. Student responses must be drafted independently.
- Students will turn in a hard copy and electronic copy no later than 4 pm on the final day of writing to the POS Chair's support staff. The Chair or Chair's designee will distribute paper and electronic copies to committee members.
- Students will receive the results of POS committee members' evaluation in writing no later than 5 weeks following their final writing from the POS Chair.
- The Oral Defense of the written responses may take place during the semester that follows the written examination.
- Students may elect to write their responses over the summer or over winter break, if the Committee members agree to this timeline and the Chair agrees to be available to obtain and supply the questions to the student during this time. Students must follow University requirements regarding registration during the time period that they write their responses. Written responses completed outside the beginning and end dates of classes during the fall and spring semesters will not be distributed to the faculty until the first day of classes in the following semester; faculty will have four weeks from this date to evaluate the responses and return their evaluations to the Chair. Students will receive notification of the results of their examination within 5 weeks from the first day of classes.

Ph.D. in Education  
Written Comprehensive Examinations

Claims of Knowledge/Areas of Expertise to be Assessed:

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POS Committee Agreement: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[Student] \_\_\_\_\_

[Chair] \_\_\_\_\_

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Start Date for Writing:

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End Date for Writing: Written Response to be submitted in hard copy and electronic copy no later than 4:00 PM on :

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(note: Must be a day that University offices are open)

**Honor Pledge:**

[I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this examination]

Student Signature.