

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



College of Education Department of Educational Organization and Leadership Doctoral Qualifying Examination Policy

1. Consistent with the University of Illinois College of Education Graduate Handbook, www.education.illinois.edu/saao/handbooks.html, written comprehensive examinations will be administered to all doctoral students (Ed.D. and Ph.D.) near the completion of their course work. It is the preference of the EOL faculty that students will have completed all required coursework in the core curriculum and area of specialization, research, and cognate (Ed.D. only) before they are permitted to take the qualifying examinations. However, students who are completing their final course work may contact their advisor and the program area coordinator to obtain permission to complete their examinations in that semester.
2. The EOL department will establish and announce dates in the Fall and Spring semesters for educational administration and higher education doctoral students (Ed.D. and Ph.D.) for the General Field exam (required of Ed.D. and Ph.D.), the Special Field exam (required of Ed.D. and Ph.D.) and the Research Methodology exam (required of Ed.D. only). No qualifying examinations will be held during the summer term, unless they are scheduled for an EOL cohort. Students who are unable to complete their examinations on the scheduled dates will wait until the next semester these exams are offered by the department.
3. When a student declares intent to take the examinations, he/she will be required to complete all examination areas that he/she has yet to pass. (For example, a student may not selectively choose to take only the General Field exam in the Fall semester and then wait to complete the Special Field and/or Research Methodology exams in the Spring semester.)
4. It will be each program area's responsibility to collaboratively decide if students' responses to each examination area (General Field, Special Field, and/or Research Methodology) will be read by the program area faculty or by a subgroup of readers representing both programs of the EOL department or by faculty from other programs and departments. At a minimum, three faculty members will be required to read the responses in a given examination area. Through the use of University Identification Numbers, the identity of individual students and faculty readers will remain confidential during the entire examination process.

5. In advance of reading the questions, program faculty may meet to discuss the assessment process and reach consensus on student responses that meet the requirement for a rating of “Excellent,” “Satisfactory,” or “Unsatisfactory.” The assessment of each examination will be based on the faculty member’s professional evaluation of the competency level of the student in the field of study being examined, as evidenced by the written response to the question. Faculty members will review each response, reach a decision on “Excellent,” “Satisfactory,” or “Unsatisfactory” ratings, and provide appropriate comments supporting their ratings. All ratings should be returned to the program coordinator within two weeks of receiving the examinations for grading.
6. The program coordinator or designee will compile the faculty decisions on each exam and report the decisions as follows:
 - a. If the exam has received two or three (out of a possible three) “Excellent” decisions with all decisions at least “Satisfactory,” the student will be considered to have passed that qualifying examination with an “Excellent” rating.
 - b. If the exam has received one “Excellent” and two “Satisfactory” (out of a possible three) decisions, or all “Satisfactory” decisions, the student will be considered to have passed that qualifying examination with a “Satisfactory” rating.
 - c. If the exam has received all decisions of “Unsatisfactory,” the student will be considered to have not passed that qualifying examination.
 - d. If the exam has received one or two decisions of “Unsatisfactory,” the faculty members reading the examination will deliberate on the student’s performance on the exam. If the faculty members are unable to reach consensus, they will reach a decision on the final rating by majority vote of those scoring the examination.
7. It will be the responsibility of the program coordinator to notify students in writing of their performance on their examinations. This letter optimally would be provided to the student within three to four weeks of completing all sections of the qualifying exam. Students who fail one or more portions of their qualifying examinations on their first administration will have the option to retake the exam(s) at a later regularly scheduled qualifying examination administration date (Fall or Spring). Prior to gaining access to the second administration (i.e., the first retake), a conference between the advisor and student is highly recommended so that the student can obtain feedback on the unsatisfactory portions of the examinations and recommended strategies for preparing for the subsequent exams, and students are urged to keep their advisor informed of the progress they are making toward their readiness to retake the qualifying exam(s).
8. If a student fails the second administration of the exam (i.e., the first retake), he/she must submit a written petition to the program area coordinator with a copy to the advisor requesting approval to attempt a third administration of the examination. In this petition, the student will explain her/his understanding of the reason(s) for the failing decision. In considering this petition, the program faculty has the authority to take any of the following

actions: a) permit the retake at a later regularly scheduled examination date, with no additional formal requirements; b) require the student to successfully complete additional coursework or the submission of formal study/projects in preparation for the second retake; or c) deny the student's request for a retake. In no event will a student be permitted more than two retakes of an examination. In the event that a student's request for a retake is denied by the program faculty, the student would not be permitted to continue in the doctoral program.

Policies Related to the Educational Administration and Leadership Program Area

For both Ed.D. and Ph.D. students within the educational administration program area, the General Field examination will consist of one four-hour written examination encompassing the following areas: a) Organizational Theory and Leadership, b) School Improvement, and c) other Educational Administration content areas that may be assigned by the faculty. For students pursuing the Ed.D. only, the Research Methodology exam will be assigned as a take-home written examination. Upon successfully completing the General Field and Research Methodology exams, the Ed.D. student then will be assigned a Special Fields examination, which has been approved by their advisor and two additional educational administration program faculty members. For students pursuing the Ph.D. degree, upon successful completion of the General Field examination, the student will be assigned a Special Fields exam, which has been approved by their advisor and two additional educational administration program faculty members.

Policies Related to the Higher Education Program Area

For both Ed.D. and Ph.D. students within the higher education program area, the General Field examination will consist of two two-hour written examination areas: a) Foundations of Higher Education and b) Policy and Politics of Higher Education, followed by a four-hour Special Fields examination approved by the faculty advisor and two additional higher education program faculty members in one of the fields listed below or a field of comparable scope and importance:

- A. History and Foundations
- B. Legal, Financial, Economic, Social Policies and Politics
- C. Administrative Theory and Practice
- D. Curriculum and Instructional Leadership
- E. Community College Leadership
- F. Student Development/Services

Students pursuing the Ed.D. degree are required to take a written Research Methodology examination, utilizing a take-home format. The Research Methodology exam focuses on knowledge of research and evaluation design and methods applicable to higher education.