

Research and Evaluation Methods Program Comprehensive Examination

(Version: 11.12.10)

Graduate students entering their doctoral studies in REMP beginning in the fall 2009 semester must satisfy the comprehensive exam requirement using the new exam format described herein. This format includes both written and oral examinations. The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to ensure students have sufficient knowledge of the fields of research design, educational statistics, and psychometric methods, to proceed toward candidacy for the Ed.D. degree.

Comprehensive Examination Committee

Each student, along with his/her primary academic advisor will, by the beginning of his/her fifth semester of coursework, create a Comprehensive Examination Committee. This committee will consist of the primary academic advisor (selected by the student, and may be different from the student's guidance chairperson), and two other university faculty members (at least one of whom must be another REMP faculty member).

Reading List

To aid students in their preparation for the written component of the comprehensive examination, a reading list agreed upon by the Comprehensive Examination Committee will be provided at least three months prior to a student's written exam. The reading list will include books, reports, and research articles that each graduate student is expected to have read and/or studied before the comprehensive exam itself. Many of the readings will include required materials from the students' previous coursework, but some additional readings should be anticipated by each student. At that time, students will have two weeks to review the reading list and suggest any revisions, additions, or deletions to the Committee. The Committee may, at that time, modify the reading list. The Committee, however, retains the right to finalize the list as they feel is appropriate. Students should have a comprehensive understanding of the reading list materials prior to sitting for the written examination.

Written Examination

The written examination will take place over the course of three consecutive days. This closed-book (unless otherwise indicated specifically) written examination is designed to assess both the student's knowledge and understanding of research design, measurement theory, and statistical methods, as well as the student's ability to apply this knowledge to solve real-world problems. Students will receive open-response (i.e. essay) examination questions, developed by REMP faculty members, that address three broad topics:

Topic 1: Research Designs and Statistics

Topic 2: Measurement Theory (including Structural Equation Modeling, Scaling, Validity Theory, Item Response Theory, and Classical Test Theory)

Topic 3: Applications of Measurement, Statistics, and Research Methods

Topics 1 & 2 will be administered as two four-hour sessions over the course of two consecutive days in a secure room supervised by a committee member. Topic 3 will be administered on the third day and students will have 24-hours to complete the question(s). The number of items per topic may vary depending on the breadth, or depth, of the individual items. Students will receive a standardized set of questions, but may (at the discretion of the comprehensive exam committee & based on their specific research interests) receive one or more individualized questions.

Written Exam Evaluation

Following the written portion of the exam (i.e., the completion of topic 1 & 2 essays as well as topic 3 practical exercise), the Comprehensive Exam Committee distributes the exam responses for grading to the designated REMP faculty members. After the papers are graded, the Comprehensive Exam Committee will discuss each student's performance. Each of the three papers will receive one of three possible ratings: Fail, Pass, and Honors. For any rating of "Fail" the Comprehensive Exam Committee will meet with the student to discuss the paper. A simple majority vote (i.e. at least 2 of 3 committee members must be in agreement) of the Comprehensive Exam Committee will determine pass/fail/honors for such exams.

Oral Examination

The oral examination will (must) be two hours in length, attended by all members of the student's Comprehensive Examination Committee, and taken within three months of the written exam. In conjunction with the Comprehensive Examination Committee, each student will select a research topic of particular interest for more in-depth study. A written proposal that details the topic and its scope must be approved by the student's committee. The oral examination will consist of two components: 1) preparation and oral presentation of a written paper (of publishable quality) detailing the current literature, research methods, findings, and conclusions, and 2) questions from both the Comprehensive Examination Committee and REMP faculty about the written paper and oral presentation. Graduate students with questions about the oral presentation of the paper should submit them in written form to the committee chairperson.

Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Process

To pass the comprehensive examination, a student must receive a passing grade on all written essays and on the oral presentation. Students who fail one section of the exam may apply to retake that section. Permission to retake will be determined by the REMP faculty. Students must pass the entire comprehensive exam to be advanced to candidacy for their doctorate. Only upon successful completion of the comprehensive examination at an appropriate time during the program will a student be permitted to move forward to work on the thesis portion of the degree program.

Scheduling Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination should be scheduled after students have completed the equivalent of two years of full-time coursework. Students should consult with their faculty advisors when scheduling comprehensive examinations. All exams must be scheduled at least three months in advance. The written exam will be offered three times annually: spring (May), summer (August), and winter (January).

Announcement of Examination

The oral comprehensive examination is open to all members of the faculty and shall be announced by the School of Education. Graduate students are responsible for announcing their own oral examination comprehensive examination dates, locations, and times to all REMP faculty and graduate students. This needs to be done at least four weeks in advance of the Oral Examination.

Procedures for Appealing Results

Students disagreeing with the outcomes of either the written examination or the oral examination may file a grievance with the Department Chair.