

GSOE PhD Written Qualifying Examination Procedures

The Written Qualifying Examination is used to evaluate students' broad knowledge of core areas in their field, research methods related to their area, and ability to construct a research study. Examinations can be taken in fall, winter, or spring term. Typically, to maintain normative time to degree and with approval from their advisor, students take the written examination during the 8th week in Spring Quarter of their 2nd year* of full-time study, or after completion of 60 units, including at least 8 units of methods courses. During the term students take this examination, they are encouraged to register for 4 or more units of 291 to provide time for study. Students register for the examination in winter of their 2nd year, or in the quarter before taking the exam. Official examination dates for each quarter are posted on the GSOE website.

The examination consists of three to four questions that are determined by the area group and methods faculty. The examination for all program areas has a Friday through Monday take-home format, during which students work independently but can use their books, notes, and course materials. Exam questions are emailed to students by the Graduate Program Coordinator by 10 AM Friday, and students email responses to questions back to the Graduate Program Coordinator by 10 AM Monday.

The Written Qualifying Examination has four possible outcomes: Exceptional pass, pass, low pass, or fail. To determine the outcome of the written examination, at least two faculty independently read students' responses to each question. The first assessment will be made by the faculty member who wrote the question. The second assessment will be made by a member of the faculty with knowledge in the area of the question. If faculty do not agree on the pass or fail outcome, a third faculty reader determines the outcome. A student is considered to pass the examination if they receive a rating of low pass, pass, or exceptional pass on **all** questions. If any of the questions are rated as failed, the student is considered to have failed the written qualifying examination. Students may schedule an appointment with the Graduate Program Coordinator to review comments on the exam evaluation sheets. They may only take notes and the reader information will be redacted.

Students who fail one or more questions in their first attempt at the written examination are allowed to retake the failed written examination question areas one time, usually during the next quarter. If a student fails an examination question on the second attempt, the student is NOT allowed to take it a third time or continue in the program and will be dismissed.

After passing the written examination, students will often continue to take courses and in consultation with their advisor, initiate the dissertation proposal process. Students begin writing the pre-proposal in preparation for their Oral Examination. Students also draft their

protocol for the Institutional Review Board, as appropriate. Advisor approval is required before students nominate their Oral Examination Committee, disseminate copies of the pre-proposal, or schedule the Oral Examination date.

* School Psychology Program Addendum: The written exam in School Psychology is administered during the 8th week in the Spring Quarter of Year 3, and employs the same format described above. Content coverage includes questions (typically one per topic area) on research (i.e., statistics, advanced test theory, single case design) and school psychology foundations (i.e., assessment, intervention, consultation, child behavior therapy).