

Comprehensive Examination Policy and Procedures (AKA - “Comps” and/or the Qualifying Exam)

PURPOSE:

The qualifying exam is structured to provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate the thoroughness of your understanding of the knowledge base of leadership and your program area. You will be asked to answer one question related to leadership that all students in the department answer irrespective of program area. You will also answer two additional questions based on content from your program area: school leaders, adult and community leaders, and higher education leaders.

REQUIREMENTS:

The Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology (EDLRM) requires all doctoral students enrolled in any School Leaders, Higher Education Leaders, or Adult and Community Education Leaders programs to sit for and pass the comprehensive exams to be classified as “doctoral candidate.” Students must also meet eligibility requirements by documenting they have completed the necessary coursework which is verified by attaching the signed Program of Study to the Qualifying form (see descriptions below).

OUTCOME:

Passing comprehensive exams marks a ritual of passage from coursework to initiating the dissertation process. Please note that students must be classified as doctoral candidates BEFORE THEY can begin registering for the 20 credits of dissertation which is the MINIMUM number of dissertation credits required to graduate. In this sense, passing comprehensive exams qualifies the doctoral student to not only enroll in dissertation credits with their dissertation chair, but to begin the dissertation process in general.

EXPECTATIONS:

Comprehensive exams are intended to demonstrate to doctoral faculty that doctoral students are able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of leadership theory and research as it relates to its intellectual origins, and the values and beliefs the doctoral student holds about leadership within their field of study or practice.
2. Demonstrate the ability to integrate learning across coursework, assigned and unassigned texts, identify seminal scholars, support responses with published research; cite authorities in their field; note legal cases if relevant, follow the most recent edition of writing guidelines from the American Psychological Association (APA), and connect scholarly literature to personal and professional experiences.
3. Demonstrate the ability to present responses to the comprehensive exam questions in a thoughtful, coherent and grammatically correct way.
4. Demonstrate the ability to cite from peer-reviewed studies published in top-tier journals as well books from seminal scholars.

SCHEDULE:

Comprehensive exams are scheduled during the spring and fall terms of every academic year:

- Fall 2021 – Exam e-mailed on Fri., 10/8, with completed materials due on Fri., 10/22.
- Spring 2022 – Exam e-mailed on Fri., 2/25, with completed materials due on Fri., 3/11.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

- **Eligibility-** Students are eligible for comprehensive exams after successfully completing at least 60 percent of their required coursework (not including research methods courses). Doctoral students must obtain the approval of their advisor at least one month prior to the comprehensive exams date each semester.
- **Application** - At the point when a student believes he/she has met the requirements above, he/she should complete the Qualifying Exam Form and submit it to their advisor one month prior to the exam date. [The Qualifying exam form is found on the College of Education web site, under Educational Leadership. Follow the link to “forms” and to the Qualifying Exam Form.]
- **Verification-** The advisor must verify course completion by attaching a signed Program of Study to the Qualifying Exam form and signing the Qualifying Exam form.
- The Qualifying Exam form must be: (a) completed by the student; (b) signed by the student’s doctoral advisor; (c) signed by the chair; (d) distributed to the Departmental Secretary; and (e) an original copy given to the Office of Academic and Student Services (OASS) by the deadline.
- **Deadlines** - Qualifying Exam Forms must be received *by the Departmental Secretary* **NO LATER THAN** October 1st for fall exams and **NO LATER THAN February 18th** for spring exams.
- **Accommodations** – Students should notify the qualifying exam coordinator if accommodations need to be made due to disabilities.

QUALIFYING EXAM PROCESSES:

The Qualifying Exam will be conducted remotely in fall 2021. Students may complete the exam in its entirety at home within the designated two-week period (10/8 to 10/22). The following requirements must be followed:

1. Students must work independently and cannot discuss the exam with anyone else.
2. Students will receive an e-mail before 5 p.m. on Friday, 10/8, containing the materials and questions for both components of the exam.
3. The first component of the exam entails a case-study analysis, and the second component, depending on the program area (ACE, Higher Ed, School Leaders), includes a question or set of questions to address.
4. As students write their responses to both components of the exam, they should not type their name anywhere on the exam in the Word Doc. Instead, students should place their assigned identification number in the running head of each page. Grading is done by student number to ensure anonymity during the grading process.
5. Responses to each new question should begin on a new page. First copy and paste or type the question on the page; then answer it.
6. If a question has multiple parts, students are to use section headings to indicate which part of the question the student is responding to.
7. Giving credit to researchers whose ideas or work you are citing is expected. Include page numbers for direction quotations.
8. Students should save their work periodically as they write their responses to the exam questions. However, students must save their responses to each component of the exam in separate files. Part I should have its

own Word Doc file, and Part II should have its own Word Doc file. Students should e-mail both files as attachments when they submit their work by the deadline. It is strongly recommended students save their work frequently during the exam so they do not lose their work. Making copies of and distributing to other students the exam questions is prohibited.

9. Once you have responded to the required questions, and you have saved your responses in two separate files (one file for Part I, a second file for Part II), please e-mail your work to Kathy DuBois, kdubois4@fau.edu, in the Department of Educational Leadership & Research Methodology. She will work with the faculty to distribute your exam questions for review.
10. After students e-mail exam responses to Kathy, they are not able to withdraw or replace their submission; students cannot send new or revised files for consideration.
11. The completed exam is due by 5 p.m. on Friday, October 22nd; no extensions may be granted.
12. Students should be knowledgeable of the ethical code of conduct [below] which is expected to be followed by all doctoral students all of the time, which includes comprehensive exams.
13. Responses to exam questions must be typed by students. Any other arrangements are considered extremely unusual and accommodations will be considered only if the request is made by the student's advisor and to the department's comprehensive exam coordinator. A sound rationale for why the exception should be granted must be provided.
14. In cases where the student is not going to be able to take the comprehensive exams exam because of an emergency, both the departmental secretary and the comprehensive exams' coordinator must be notified. The students must follow up with the comprehensive exam coordinator and the student must provide a written explanation and supporting documentation to the coordinator.
15. In case of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, comprehensive exams may potentially be re-scheduled.

ETHICAL CODE:

The faculty expects doctoral students in Educational Leadership and Research Methodology to adhere to ethical codes of behavior. Therefore, students are expected to report any violations of ethical conduct during the exam to the exam proctor. Please understand that dishonesty and cheating are grounds for dismissal from the program. Any student who knowingly ignores another student's dishonesty and fails to report it also faces dismissal from the program. It is assumed doctoral students of EDLRM at FAU will act honestly and with integrity. **Sharing the exam questions or student responses with anyone other than the designated faculty or staff or outside editing of the exam responses is strictly prohibited.**

CONTENT:

The qualifying exam is divided into two parts: Part one is a *case-study question focused on leadership theory*. Part two is focused on *theories related to the program core for each program area*. The following performance standards apply to all responses for all questions.

Performance Standards: The respondent is expected to demonstrate ability to:

1. Exhibit a deep understanding of leadership and program theoretical content as it relates to the questions posed.
2. Identify, elaborate on, and connect the underlying departmental values to the case in a way that provides an explanation and rationale for actions, behaviors, and events described in the case.
3. Use higher order thinking skills including, critical thinking, synthesis, and interpretation. These skills require that students go far beyond recalling facts, concepts or theories.

4. Connect your explanation and conclusions to the literature and use of major authors to support your explanation, assumptions, opinions, and conclusions is required.
5. **Part I Case-Study Question:** Provide a 3,500 to 4,000-word response including references and abstract, using proper academic vocabulary and APA citations. The word count should be stated at the end of the response. Use of outside help editing or even reviewing student responses prior to submission to the department is strictly prohibited.
6. **Part II Program-Specific Question(s):** Provide a 750 to 1,200-word response to each of the 2, Part II questions, using proper academic vocabulary. The word count should be stated at the end of each response.

THE LEADERSHIP CORE QUESTION – Part I Case-Study

Directions: Prior to the date scheduled for the exam, students who applied to take comprehensive exams and were approved will be sent the comprehensive exam guidelines, EDLRM's core values, and a copy of the rubric that will be used to assess their responses. On the day that the exam is e-mailed to students, students will be sent two cases studies and the questions pertinent to the case studies. Students will choose one of the two cases to analyze. **The first part of the exam—the case-study—requires students to analyze the case using relevant leadership theories and 3 lenses from the department values; you will receive, as an e-mail attachment, the values to review. The second part of the case-study question asks students to recommend appropriate action based on their analysis and to connect their proposed actions to relevant theories and the three selected lenses.**

Create a Word document that should be named as follows: Spring or Fall and year of the Qualifying Exam followed by your student identifying number (e.g., Fall 21 Qualifying Exam 4355)

Set up your document by typing or cut and paste each of the three parts of the question into the document. Make sure that your identifying number appears on each page of your response. Proceed to answer each of question's sub parts. Remember you should not spend any of your allocated words describing the facts in the case; those are known to the faculty.

Deadline for submission: Your answer to Part I of the exam is due by 5 p.m. on Friday, October 22nd. You may e-mail it as an attachment along with a copy of your answer/response to Part II of the exam. Part II of the exam is described next.

THE PROGRAM AREA QUESTIONS – Part II Material

When you receive an e-mail from the department on Friday, 10/8, you will find attached the material and questions for Parts I and II of the exam. For the Part II section of the exam, you will receive a list of the Program Core Questions from which you will select two questions to answer. Instructions will also be included.

Directions:

Set up your document by typing or cut and pasting each of the two questions you have selected to answer into the document. Make sure that your assigned identifying number is on the running head of each page of your response. If the question is divided into separate parts, students should indicate the beginning of a response to each separate part with a side heading. Proceed to answer each of the two questions you have selected from the provided list.

EXAM ASSESSMENT:

The Qualifying Exam Coordinator will assign faculty readers for all questions using the above criteria.

- The Leadership Core question will be assessed by three professors across the department who teach in the leadership core.
- The Program Area questions will be assessed by three professors who teach doctoral level courses in each program area.

- In the event that there are not 3 doctoral level faculty available, the Comprehensive Exam Coordinators will use their best judgment in assigning knowledgeable readers.

Faculty Assessors will use two Rubrics to assess the questions. Rubric 1 will be used to assess the Leadership Core knowledge on Part I. Rubric 2 will be used to assess the Program Content for Part II.

SCORING:

Scores will be recorded and then averaged from each reader and the following scoring rubric will be applied to the Exam.

- Honors** - Candidates scoring 3.6 or higher.
- Pass** - Candidates scoring 3.0 to 3.5
- Deferred** – Candidates scoring from 2.4 to 2.9 receive a deferred grade and will be referred to their doctoral committee chair for recommendations concerning how the candidate can remedy their results.
- Fail** - Candidates scoring 2.3 or below fail the exam but may retake it at the next administration with the approval of their program committee chair. Candidates who score 2.3 or below on the second attempt are removed from candidacy.

RESULTS:

- Qualifying exam results will be communicated to students in a letter sent electronically to their FAU email address. Students will be told if they passed, passed with honors, were deferred or failed the exam and directed to their adviser for further advising.
- The faculty will make every effort to provide the results within a six-week timeframe. Please do not call or email the office for our test results.
- Passing the qualifying exam marks the passage from coursework to initiating the dissertation process.

Rubric 1 – Part I Case-Study

Performance Criteria to Assess the Leadership Core Question

Student ID _____ Reader/Sig _____ Date _____

Scoring Key

1= Very weak or missing 2 = Present but not well developed 3 = Present and well developed 4 = Exemplary

Scale Score	1	2	3	4
<i>Content* (score is weighted by 2)</i>				
1. Clearly identifies and uses three of the four lenses (leadership, research, social responsibility, and learning community) and underlying theories and concepts to examine aspects of the case and connect them to the case details and their recommendations for action				
2. Identifies and discusses the behaviors of various key leaders, identifying leadership concepts and issues profiled within the case				
• Lens #1 – Student answer demonstrates ability to analyze, synthesize, and interpret. (see thinking skills described below)				
• Lens #2 – Student answer demonstrates ability to analyze, synthesize, and interpret. (see thinking skills described below)				
• Lens #3 – Student answer demonstrates ability to analyze, synthesize, and interpret. (see thinking skills described below)				
• Offers a set of recommended actions which flow logically from the case analysis, and which are supported by relevant theory/authors				
1. Total of each column under Content	=			

2. Total of each column under <i>Content</i> * 2.	=				
3. Total for <i>Content</i> – Sum of all totals from line 2. above	=				
Interpretation -- Judge the value of material (e.g., appraise, argue, assess, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, support, value, evaluate).					
<u>Mechanics</u>					
• The essay is clear, consistent, and concise.					
• The candidate displayed proficiency in syntax, grammar, and spelling.					
• Identifies and uses a minimum of 14 or more citation references. The 14 citations should be APA correct and an APA correct cover page, heading levels, abstract, and reference page should be provided.					
4. Total of each column under <i>Mechanics</i>	=				
5. Total for <i>Mechanics</i> – Sum of all totals from line 4. Above	=				
Total for <i>Content</i> from line 3. above					
+ Total for <i>Mechanics</i> from line 5. above					
Grand Total					
Overall Rating (Divide Grand Total by 11)					

Comments:

Rubric 2 – Part II Program Area Questions**Performance Criteria to Assess the Quality of a Candidate's Responses to the Program Core Question of the****Student ID _____ Reader/Sig _____ Date _____***Scoring Key (for Individual Rubrics)***1= Very weak or missing 2 = Present but not well developed 3 = Present and well developed 4 =Exemplary**

Scale Score	1	2	3	4
Content*(score is weighted by 2)				
• Completeness of Answer - Response demonstrates thorough understanding of the content question and its significance. Response goes beyond factual information demonstrating nuanced understanding of the question. All parts of the question are thoroughly answered.				
• Validity of Facts and Perspectives - All facts, conclusions, and statements are accurate and/or valid. They also logically support the topic being discussed. Evidence of knowledge of research methodology approach.				
• Evidence of Background Knowledge and Integration of Theory and Practice - Integration of theory and practice is strong. Respondent used inter and intra disciplinary approaches as appropriate in addressing the problem and/or question.				
• Citations of Relevant Research - Consistently cites references that support all key issues resulting in a scholarly, thoughtful voice throughout the response. Literature used and theorists used were appropriate choices for the question under review. Cited relevant disciplinary and interdisciplinary literature				
1. Total of each column under Content	=			
2. Total of each column under Content * 2	=			
3. Total for Content – Sum of all totals from line 2. above	=			
<u>Thinking Skills</u>				
Analysis: Break down material or concepts into component parts so that the organizational structure may be understood (e.g., analyze, appraise, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, and test).				
Synthesis – Use component parts to form a new whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure (e.g., arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up).				
Interpretation -- Judge the value of material (e.g., appraise, argue, assess, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, support, value, evaluate).				
<u>Mechanics</u>				
• The essay is clear, consistent and concise.				
• The candidate displayed proficiency in syntax, grammar, spelling, and APA				
• Identifies and uses 7 or more citations within the response to each question.				
4. Total of each column under Mechanics	=			
5. Total for Mechanics – Sum of all totals from line 4. above	=			
Total for <i>Content</i> from line 3 above				
+ Total for <i>Mechanics</i> from line 5. above				
Grand Total				
Overall Rating (Divide Grand Total by 11)				

COMMENTS: