Department of Educational Psychology
Guidelines for Doctoral Students

MILESTONES

All doctoral students in the Department of Educational Psychology are required to successfully accomplish the following tasks/milestones (also see flowchart):

- Assist his/her academic advisor in preparing and submitting the degree plan before the end of his/her second semester following admission and fully follow that degree plan. Any subsequent changes to the degree plan must be signed and submitted by the advisor, and approved by the department and the UNT Graduate School;

- Pass the DEPARTMENTAL CORE EXAM (see below) no later than the semester after completing 24 hours that will apply to the degree. This number also includes any transferred courses that are approved by the department. If Masters level courses are required (15 hours for students who are admitted without a Masters degree, or if the program/adviser requires/recommends additional prerequisite courses), these courses should be taken before the 63 hours of doctoral courses, to prevent issues with the time limit requirement for CORE exam. Failure to take the test during the semester after completing the 24 hours leads to a “Failed” designation for the exam (students are responsible for tracking this and making sure they do not pass the deadline). Work with faculty advisor to ensure courses that cover the Core competency areas are taken first. Any needed exceptions to this general requirement must be initiated by the adviser and approved by the department well in advance. Since this information is listed in detail below, can we just have a bulleted ‘Departmental Core Exam’ and ‘see details below’?

- Pass the QUALIFYING EXAM (see below) no later than the semester after he/she completes all required courses. This will admit the student to Candidacy (ABD). Dissertation hours are not permitted until a student has passed the Qualifying Exam. Student should consult with advisor for appropriate planning or to request an exception.

- Begin taking dissertation hours with his/her selected Major Professor after passing the Qualifying Exam; See Continuous Enrollment policy regarding dissertation hours in the UNT Graduate Catalog.

- Attend two proposal defenses in the department and submit a Certificate of Participation signed by the Chair of each attended proposal; Information on defenses are emailed to all students with the time/date.

- Under the supervision of his/her Major Professor, prepare a dissertation proposal and defend it. Dissertations consist of two manuscripts (one for proposal defense, and a second for the final defense) and additional sections, as advised by the Major Professor (please see the details attached).
• Attend two final dissertation defenses in the department and submit a Certificate of Participation signed by the Chair of each attended defense; Information on defenses are emailed to all students with the time/date.

• Under the supervision of his/her dissertation Chair, prepare the final version of the dissertation and defend it.

REQUIRED COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Doctoral students in EPSY are required to take a 2-step comprehensive exam, at two pre-specified time periods:

(1) DEPARTMENTAL CORE EXAM is taken no later than the long semester after the student completes 24 hours of core/required coursework. This exam is in-house, conducted once per regular semester on a pre-specified date (in March and October), and includes doctoral competencies in four broad areas described below.

(2) QUALIFYING EXAM is taken during the long semester that the student completes the last of his/her required courses or no later than the following long semester. This will admit the student to Candidacy (ABD). This exam will start on a fixed date once each long semester (March and October), but its structure, duration, and format is determined and announced by each Concentration faculty (i.e., may be take-home or in-house, written and/or oral).

(1) DEPARTMENTAL CORE EXAM:

The EPSY CORE exam will include 100 multiple-choice or similar items (e.g., fill-in-the-blank or matching) in four domains of competencies (25 items per domain) that have been covered in multiple the departmental and/or degree core courses. Each domain of competencies is covered in more than one course (i.e., there is no one-to-one correspondence between each domain and a single course). A list of general topic areas under each competency will be provided on the EPSY web site for the exam. The 4 domains of competencies are as follows:

Domain 1. Educational Psychology (Foundations and Learning Theory)
Domain 2. Human Development/Life Span
Domain 3. Statistics/Quantitative Data Analysis, and
Domain 4. Research Methods

The following sections provide further information about the exam and its components:

(a) The Core Exam will be administered on a set date once each Fall (October) and Spring (March). Each student must take the exam no later than the semester after finishing 24 required hours. Otherwise, a score of zero is assigned for that test administration (leaving one more opportunity for passing the exam in the following long semester, as in section d below).
(b) The test will take 4 hours, with questions randomly generated from item pools that have been constructed/approved by faculty. Two domains of competencies are included in the 2-hour morning session, and two in the 2-hour afternoon session.

(c) In 2014-2016, the dates for the EPSY CORE Exam are as follows:
   
   - October 16, 2014
   - March 12, 2015
   - October 15, 2015
   - March 10, 2016

(d) To pass the exam, students must score 80% overall AND 60% on each of the 4 domains. Students who do not meet the 80% threshold on the entire exam must retake the full exam again during the next scheduled exam (next long semester). Students who meet the 80% total threshold, but do not meet the 60% passing in any one domain must retake the exam for that domain during the following scheduled exam period (next long semester). If the 80% overall threshold AND the 60% on all 4 domains is not achieved on the second attempt, the student will be given notice of discontinuation from the Ph.D. program.

(e) No specific feedback will be provided regarding students’ performance on items or segments of the test.

(g) No study aide or material (including the internet) will be permitted during the course of the exam. Students may use calculators and scrap paper for their work, but no other software programs (e.g., Excel or SPSS) are allowed.

Students who plan to take the core exam must register by emailing Laura.Coleman@unt.edu at least 4 weeks prior to the exam.

(2) QUALIFYING EXAM:

This exam is scheduled once per semester on pre-specified dates (see below). It is required of all students no later than the long semester during which they complete their last required doctoral class (es). This will admit the student to candidacy (ABD), allowing them to take dissertation hours. Student should work closely with advisor to plan for this, and request an exception if deemed necessary.

- The Qualifying Exam is scheduled on a fixed date once per semester, but its structure, duration, and format is determined and announced by each Concentration (i.e., may be take-home or in-house, written and/or oral).

- The Qualifying Exam includes the required competencies in the student’s Concentration, including advanced research methods and statistics applications and any other areas deemed important by the Concentration.
The structure and content of this exam is determined by Concentration faculty who may decide to make it an on-site or take-home exam (to be picked up on day 1, with a set period of days to return), over one or both of the scheduled days, with or without an oral exam component, or any combination of these options. Concentration faculty advise students about the structure, content, and format of this exam.

Dates for Qualifying Exam are as follows:

October 16-17, 2014  
March 12-13, 2015  
October 15-16, 2015  
March 10-11, 2016
## Journal Article Format for Dissertations
### EPSY Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Article Format</th>
<th>Traditional Format</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New format, Preferred for all EPSY Dissertations</td>
<td>(old, not encouraged for EPSY)</td>
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### Proposal

- **Literature Review Manuscript**: formatted as an article for submission to a journal and adheres to formatting and all submission guidelines of a specific journal. In the absence of a specific journal, APA format is preferred and length should be no more than 30 pages inclusive of references, figures, and tables.

- **Proposed Project**: Beginning of the empirical manuscript that will be required for the final defense. This document includes the Introduction and Methods sections. Methods section should restate the research questions (RQ)/objectives and/or hypothesized relationships (as applicable), data sources (or sample selection procedures/rationale), planned data collection procedures, and planned data analyses for each RQ in sufficient detail for committee members to determine the appropriateness of the methods proposed.

- **Appendices**: Any other elements the student and Major Professor (MP) determine to be relevant for committee review. For example, the appendices may include an extended literature review if the MP determines the Literature Review Manuscript referenced above is insufficient. However, such appendices are not necessary or required by the Department.

### Final Dissertation

- A single empirical manuscript suitable/ready for submission to a quality professional journal in the student’s area of specialization. The journal should be identified, and the manuscript should adhere to the journal’s submission guidelines regarding formatting and length.

- If necessary (i.e., if the results are too lengthy for this manuscript), a second, or third formatted manuscript may be included to present the remaining results. Often, this added manuscript contains a highly similar literature review but with different methods, results, and discussion to address the additional research questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Dissertation Document</th>
<th>Proposal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Chapter 1 – Introduction</td>
<td>- Chapter 1 – Introduction</td>
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<td>- Chapter 2 – Literature Review</td>
<td>- Chapter 2 – Literature Review</td>
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<td>- Chapter 3 – Method</td>
<td>- Chapter 3 – Method</td>
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<td>- Chapter 4 – Results</td>
<td>- Chapter 4 – Results</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Chapter 5 – Discussion</td>
<td>- Chapter 5 – Discussion</td>
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- At the final defense, the student will present/defend all research questions and/or hypotheses from the approved proposal, regardless of whether those RQs or hypotheses appear in the formatted manuscript for journal submission.

- Appendices: Any other elements the student, Major Professor, and the committee determine to be relevant for committee review.