

PH.D. IN CAREER AND WORKFORCE EDUCATION

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

The Qualifying Examination (QE) in CWE represents a shared responsibility between professors and their students. Professors are responsible for informing advisees about the format and general content of the QE. Students are responsible for being prepared to successfully complete the examination as well as for meeting administrative requirements and deadlines specified in the College of Education Advanced Graduate Handbook. The QE in CWE is a written examination designed as an opportunity for students to demonstrate the expected level of scholarship mastery required for independent research.

Under the program specific option for the qualifying examination, there are three alternatives available to CWE doctoral students: The college-wide option, conducting a literature review, or writing a research prospectus. The doctoral student and major professor will agree on the best option fitting individual needs given the diversity of students' interests, knowledge bases, and methodological approaches to research questions.

College-Wide Option. The college-wide option for the qualifying examination is centrally administered by the college and is a 12-hours integrated exam taken over a 3-day period in 4-hour segments. This option integrates the work in the student's specialization area, the cognate area, and the foundations area. This option is for doctoral students who have yet to identify a topic for a dissertation or are undecided about competing topics.

Conducting a Literature Review. Conducting and reporting a literature review is an option that permits students to prepare a critical literature review. Students may be able to write on the topic of their dissertation and to use the material generated for the exam, but they will have to update and/or expand their literature review as they move into the formal dissertation proposal development. This option is appropriate for doctoral students who have identified a topic for a dissertation but have yet to explore the literature in depth. Thus, a literature review can provide the mechanism to demonstrate scholarly skills and capacity to report their findings following standard conventions for related writing.

Writing a Research Prospectus. The third option allows the development of a research prospectus to demonstrate overall scholarly skills required to conceptualize and draft a research prospectus representing a worthwhile study. Students may be able to write a prospectus based on a seminal idea for a potential dissertation in an area clearly aligned with their professional goals and interests. The resulting research prospectus will be considered as a draft, meaning that students will have to update and improve the initial draft if they decide to formally pursue the proposed study for dissertation purposes as they move on to the dissertation phase. This option is appropriate for doctoral students who have identified a topic for a dissertation, are already familiar with related literature, and have a good idea of the appropriate research method for conducting a resulting study.