

**College of Education  
School of Teaching and Learning**

**Guidelines for Ph.D. Qualifying Exams in Curriculum and Instruction** (adopted April 2013)

**Graduate School Requirements for Qualifying Exams:** The qualifying exam is required of all Ph.D. candidates. The student must be registered in the term in which the qualifying exam is given. The examination, prepared and evaluated by the full supervisory committee, is both written and oral and covers the major and minor subjects. The chair and external member of the supervisory committee must be physically present with the student at the oral portion. If a student fails the qualifying exam, the Graduate Coordinator must be notified. No more than one re-examination may be requested, but it must be recommended by the supervisory committee and approved by the Graduate Coordinator. At least one semester of additional preparation is required before re-examination. A minimum of two semesters must elapse between the oral portion of the qualifying exam and graduation. The semester in which the qualifying exam is passed is counted, provided that the exam occurs before the midpoint of the term.

**Purpose of Qualifying Exams:** Qualifying exams are usually completed during the last semester of coursework. The written and oral qualifying exams should provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate, both orally and in writing, their depth and breadth of knowledge and their ability to clearly articulate this knowledge regarding each of the following areas:

- Theoretical and Historical Foundations of Curriculum & Instruction
- Core Learning Theories
- Specialized Focus (e.g., literacy, educational technology)
- Research Methodologies and Methods
- Principles of Pedagogy

**Options for Written Qualifying Exams:**

- Two- or three-day structured written exam
- Take-home exam, with a maximum of two months to complete the exam
- Combination of structured and take-home exam

**Guidelines for Preparing Qualifying Exams:**

- The student's doctoral committee must approve the choice of written exam format.
- The doctoral committee chair should indicate whether or not each written qualifying exam question is "open book" or "closed book."
- The doctoral committee chair should solicit questions from each committee member and make sure the questions adequately assess the student's competence in the areas of: theoretical and historical foundations of curriculum & instruction, core learning theories, specialized focus, research methodologies and methods, principles of pedagogy.
- Throughout the qualifying exam process, three decision points for the doctoral committee must be unanimous: the content of the examination, the timeline for completion of the exam, and the decision to pass or fail the student.
- The doctoral committee chair should put the agreed-upon exam format, timeline, and questions in writing and make sure the student, the committee members, and the Graduate Coordinator have a copy.
- If the doctoral committee is unanimous that extenuating circumstances warrant it, the student may have an extension to complete the exam, with the approval of the Graduate Coordinator.
- Per the guidelines of the UF Graduate School, there must be at least ten days between the completion of the written exam and the meeting for the oral exam.