

HEd PhD written comprehensive exam policy

4/6/17

We are revising our PhD written comps exam policy. The new form of the exam will be available to students immediately, and will be the format for all students admitted beginning in the Fall 2017. Current students in the program have the option to take their written exam utilizing the old format or the new format.

The (new) format for the PhD written comp exam includes two parts, both of which are take-home assignments, which students will have one week (total, for both parts) to complete.

Part I

Methods analysis of an article (5-7 pages, double spaced)

The focus of the methods analysis of an article is on the research methods used in the article. The student will choose whether they want to critique an article that utilizes primarily quantitative or qualitative methods. The faculty will choose the particular article. The student will write their responses, concentrating on the methods used. An analysis does not mean simply criticizing the weakness of the methods, it should also speak to the strengths of the methods employed in the research.

Part II

Framing a problem (15-20 pages, double spaced), selected by student in consultation with their advisor

The focus of this paper is fourfold:

- a) An integrative literature review on a problem that identifies the key schools/traditions in the literature, key authors within those schools/traditions, and gaps in the literature (what we don't know), specifying the contribution you are going to make;
- b) Working out of that literature review, develop a conceptual framework, coming out of the theories that you've addressed in your integrative literature review. Having identified the gap, you need to synthesize literature you've reviewed to challenge, confirm, disrupt, or extend the theories and concepts in that literature. So your conceptual framework should be aligned with the lit review, and elaborate on the idea of the contribution you are going to make to the literature and theories on your chosen topic area;
- c) Develop some research questions, and then frame working propositions or hypotheses around them that utilize the concepts in your conceptual framework. Again, make sure you have "alignment" between your integrative lit review, your conceptual framework, and your research questions.
- d) In a couple of pages, discuss the methods you will utilize to address and answer these questions. Again, be sure to think about alignment of each part of this paper.