PhD Qualifying Examination Guide

For students who started prior to 2012

Version Date: January, 2017
All students who started prior to Fall 2012 are required to satisfactorily complete two qualifying papers. The purpose of the papers is to allow students the opportunity to situate their chosen area of research in a broad educational context. The papers serve as the Qualifying Examination. As the 9789 Ph.D. Qualifying Examination calendar description notes:

“This examination will provide an opportunity for candidates to consider a variety of approaches to research in their area of specialization. They will be expected to demonstrate their ability to bring a variety of theoretical perspectives and research methodologies to bear on their intended area of research, thereby addressing their potential and readiness to proceed with independent thesis research in a Ph.D. program where a commitment to a cross-disciplinary approach is a defining characteristic.”

PH.D. QUALIFYING PAPERS:

The first qualifying paper is based on your response to the following problem:

Place your thesis project within the context of theoretical discourses that have informed educational research and scholarship. In doing so, please identify and describe at least two theoretical traditions and the ways in which they relate to your thesis.

The second qualifying paper is based on your response to the following problem:

Discuss methodological issues that need to be considered in the design of your thesis research study. Clearly show how the methodologies and methods being considered relate directly to the central problem/s, topic/s, question/s framing the study. It is expected that your discussion will be informed by relevant issues addressed in your reading to date.

FORMAT:

• Your response to each of the problems above should be set up like a regular paper, double spaced, and must follow a consistent style manual (APA or alternative). You will write 2 papers; one for each problem.
  There is an absolute maximum of 4000 words per question, exclusive of the reference list.
  You may discuss the questions with anyone, including professors, but you may not submit drafts of your papers to anyone.
  You are strongly encouraged to discuss the problems with your Supervisor and possibly members of your committee, as it is envisioned that these papers will make a contribution to your research proposal.

REGISTERING IN QUALIFYING EXAMINATION:

As soon as you have completed your coursework, you will start your Qualifying Exam process and must be completed in one term. Qualifying Exams are a Milestone and will not show up as a course in your Student Centre. Once you have passed your Qualifying Exam, it will appear at the end of your transcript under the Milestones area.

REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATION OF QUALIFYING EXAMINATION:

Students must submit the following to the Graduate Programs Office at least four weeks prior to the end of the term of registration:

• 1 copy of each of the two qualifying papers (Can be submitted electronically).
• Request for Administration of Qualifying Examination form (located on the “Forms & Guidelines” page of the Graduate Programs’ website).

GRADING:

Grading will be pass or fail.

Each paper is read by two people: your Supervisor plus a second reader. Each reader will independently determine whether your paper is satisfactory or not and notify the Graduate Programs Office within two weeks after the submission date. The Graduate Programs Office will then notify your Supervisor who will share the results with you. In addition, the readers will be available to meet with you to provide
feedback.

If a student’s paper(s) is/are not judged to be of sufficient quality to be marked “Pass” by the reader(s), the student will be permitted to re-submit a revised version of the paper(s) within two weeks of its/their return. The revised paper(s) will be re-read by the same reader(s).

If after reading the revised paper(s) the reader does/do not assign a “Pass,” the student will be asked to withdraw from the program. If the reader(s) assign(s) a “Pass,” the student may proceed in the program to complete degree requirements.

*If you have any further questions, please contact the Graduate Programs Office.*