



Ph.D. Doctoral Student Assessments
CISE Department
Curry School of Education
University of Virginia

CISE Department
Doctoral Student Assessment Plan

To keep you and the CISE faculty apprised of your learning and growth, over the course of your program there are five points of direct assessment, in which faculty examine your papers and presentations (see table below). This document supplies information on each of those assessments and the rubric CISE faculty have created to examine your work.

Each of these assessment points contributes to your competence as an emerging Ph.D. level scholar. The rubrics, essentially checklists of critical elements rather than guides to structuring your work, provide information for you on your progress. For the faculty, your performance on these assessments over time fosters discussions of (a) your learning and performance and (b) the success of our curriculum and pedagogy in supporting your achievements.

Additionally, there are two types of indirect, self-assessments, which ask you to reflect on your accomplishments: (a) a doctoral student annual report, completed at the end of each academic year and (b) an employment survey, completed during your first year of employment after graduating. The faculty use these reports to help make improvements to the doctoral program.

Direct Assessments

Year in Program	Assessment
Year 1	Preliminary Exam; Beginning of spring semester
Year 2	Qualifying Paper; Middle of spring semester
Year 3	Comprehensive Exam; End of spring semester
Year 4	Dissertation Proposal
	Dissertation Defense

Indirect Assessments

Year in Program	Assessment
Annually	Doctoral Student Annual Report
Upon Graduation	Employment Survey

Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education

Preliminary Exam

Purpose

All students in the Ph.D. program in CISE complete a preliminary exam after their first semester of full-time study. This preliminary exam, designed to assess and support the student's continued success in Ph.D. study, consists of three parts: an original paper, a critique of a research study, and an oral presentation to faculty. This initial assessment is structured to achieve four purposes: (a) to evaluate the student's strengths, weaknesses, motivation, and potential for acquiring an in-depth knowledge of education issues in the declared area of study; (b) to assess the student's ability to write and present clearly; (c) to determine whether there is a match between the student's professional goals and the degree program; and (d) to identify specific coursework, internships, or other experiences that will enhance the student's planned course of study and/or address identified weaknesses.

The examining committee consists of the student's advisor and at least two other faculty in the student's graduate unit (i.e., Curriculum, Teaching and Learning; Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies; STEM (Science, Math), or Special Education. These three faculty members are charged with formally evaluating the student and making recommendations. Other faculty members in the graduate unit are invited to attend and can participate in discussions during and after the exam.

Procedure

The exam presentation, scheduled at the beginning of the second semester of study, lasts approximately 1.5 hours. It consists of three parts: (a) an oral summary of professional goals, with the student's curriculum vitae (C.V.), Record of Progress, and grades serving as supporting materials; (b) a discussion of an original 15-page paper written for the exam on a topic of significance in the field of study; and (c) an oral critique of a published research article.

The student is responsible for preparing and distributing a packet with his/her CV, Record of Progress, original paper, and research article to all committee members one week before the scheduled exam:

1. ***Curriculum vitae (resume)***. The C.V. informs the examining committee of the student's general academic and employment history and professional accomplishments. The student describes her/his professional history and answers questions from the committee regarding relevant professional experiences and perspectives.
2. ***Record of Progress***. This document is completed to the point of the examination. (The form is available from the Curry School Office of Admissions and Records or on-line at <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/admissions/pdf/eddrop.pdf>). The Record of Progress informs the examining committee of the courses in which the student is currently enrolled as well as any courses requested to be transferred into the doctoral program. During the preliminary exam, the student reports on and evaluates his/her experiences in the program to date and answers questions from the committee regarding career goals and aspirations.

The committee also approves or disapproves classes transferred from prior graduate work.

3. **Original paper.** The paper is approximately 15 pages (excluding title page, abstract, and references) and prepared according to the guidelines of the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. By October 15th of the first semester, the student meets with his or her advisor and poses possible topics for the paper. By December 15th, they agree on the topic. The paper may build upon papers or projects completed the first semester, but it is prepared expressly for the preliminary examination. The student has not submitted this paper for any course or independent study assignment prior to the preliminary exam; in addition, the student does not submit the paper afterwards to fulfill requirements for any courses. The preliminary exam is the exclusive work of the student. No faculty member, including the advisor, and no fellow students may provide specific feedback on the paper prior to the exam. The examining committee evaluates the paper according to the scholarly and technical components delineated for the preliminary exam paper rubrics. At the exam the student does not present the paper, but does address any questions faculty have about the paper.
4. **Critique of a published study.** On the first day of the first semester's final exam week, the student submits three possible studies for critique, all from peer-reviewed journals and none critiqued in previous coursework. The selected published research studies must: (a) have a clear methodology and (b) when possible, have been published within the past 5 years. If none is found appropriate, the advisor may request that the student submit additional studies from which to select. By the last day of exam week, the advisor determines which one of the selected studies will become part of the preliminary exam and notifies the student. At the preliminary exam, the student presents an oral critique of the study (this skill has been acquired during first semester course work) and answers questions from the examining committee regarding:
 - problem investigated
 - research methodology
 - internal and external validity (or credibility and transferability in qualitative research)
 - conclusions
 - implications of the findings

Order and Content of the Preliminary Examination

The order of the examination appears below. The student briefly introduces him or herself. Next, faculty members pose questions regarding the original paper. Then the student orally critiques the research article. Following this portion of the exam, which lasts approximately one hour, the student leaves the room while the faculty evaluate and discuss the student's performance. The committee reaches a consensus recommendation. The following outlines the order of the exam's components:

- Student Introduction
 - Educational history
 - Teaching experiences
 - Evolution of interests in area of focus and professional goals
 - Record of progress
 - Response to faculty questions

- Paper Discussion: Response to faculty questions
- Article Critique: Summary and critique of research, response to faculty questions

After these presentations, the student leaves the room and the committee deliberates.

- Committee rubric scores and discussion of rubric scores
- Consideration for approval of classes transferred from prior graduate work
- Discussion of specific coursework, internships, or other experiences that will address enhance the student's program and/or address identified weaknesses as a supplement to the student's planned course of study

Scheduling

During the fall semester a preliminary exam period is scheduled by each graduate unit for the beginning of the spring semester; these schedules and locations are coordinated within the department to avoid schedule and classroom conflicts. Exams occur over one to two days during the first week of spring semester classes, but all must be completed before February 1. Specific exam times are scheduled for eligible students by faculty in each graduate unit.

Evaluation

Prior to the exam, the committee reads the student's materials and assesses the student's paper using the preliminary exam paper rubric. During and immediately following the exam each faculty member independently assesses the student's performance on the preliminary exam presentation rubric. Once the student leaves the exam room, these assessments are discussed by the graduate unit faculty, and they may make changes to their scores and comments based on the discussion. The faculty reach a decision on the student's performance on that day and provide verbal feedback to the student. Written feedback to support the committee's decision is provided within one week. The committee indicates one of the following options:

1. ***Continue in the program without contingencies.*** The student has completed the preliminary exam successfully, and s/he may continue in the doctoral program without special contingencies. The committee may suggest coursework or other experiences as the student progresses through the program in order to address minor weaknesses. These suggestions are non-binding.
2. ***Continue in the program with contingencies.*** The student has completed the exam successfully, with the exception of a few important weaknesses the committee thinks can be remedied with certain actions. The advisor specifies these in writing to the student. Items can include, but are not limited, to the following: (a) successful completion of specific coursework to address weak areas detected by the committee or (b) successful completion of other professional experiences deemed necessary by the committee. The advisor and student sign a "contract" with respect to fulfilling these requirements.
3. ***Advise to apply for a transfer to another program.*** The preliminary examination process suggests a mismatch between the student's career goals and the program offerings in the student's area of study, but the student shows a high degree of potential for doctoral study in another field. The student is encouraged to apply for admission to a different degree program.
4. ***Discontinue doctoral study.*** The preliminary examination indicates substantial weaknesses in the student's ability to complete doctoral study, and the committee discontinues the student from the program. The advisor meets with the student to discuss other possible options.

Within three days, the advisor prepares a written summary of results of the exam and shares a draft with the graduate unit faculty for their immediate input. The summary indicates the range of scores for each item on the rubric as well as a synthesis of the comments for each item. The advisor shares a final version of this assessment statement with the student and graduate unit faculty within one week following the preliminary exam.

Next Steps

After successful completion of the Preliminary Exam, the student selects his or her program committee. This committee, the composition of which follows Curry School guidelines, approves the student's course of studies. The deadline for selecting the committee is the May 1.

Rubric for Preliminary Exam

Criteria	Unacceptable; important aspects are neglected or unfinished	Marginally acceptable; not all aspects of the task have been fulfilled	Adequate; meets all requirements	Exceptional; exceeds requirements
	1	2	3	4
Paper:				
<i>Scholarly Aspects</i>				
Addresses a topic relevant to scholarly research in the student's field of study				
Grounds writing in current theory, if appropriate				
Shows cognizance of relevant research and informed opinion				
Avoids over- generalizing or otherwise arriving at conclusions that exceed findings				
Qualifies statements that are speculative or that apply to narrow circumstances				
Distinguishes between what is known and what would be desirable to know				
<i>Rhetorical Aspects</i>				
Achieves general cohesion of ideas; uses logical transitions between and within paragraphs & sections				
Creates a logical text structure, signaled by appropriate headings and subheadings				
Displays sense of intended readership through appropriate assumptions concerning prior knowledge				
Appropriately incorporates tables, charts, figures, and other graphics to complement ideas presented in text.				
Embeds in-text citations appropriately to document assertions				
<i>Technical Aspects</i>				

Uses correct spelling and punctuation				
Uses proper grammar and usage				
Adheres to APA or discipline--suggested style, (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style, MLA)				
Presentation:				
<i>Scholarly Aspects</i>				
Describes professional goals that are clear, realistic, and well matched to program capacity				
Accurately summarizes research study in an organized fashion				
Identifies and presents study strengths and limitations				
Describes internal validity aspects in quantitative research (characteristics of design and measurement); or credibility in qualitative research				
Describes external validity aspects in quantitative (research hypotheses, participant description, transfer & maintenance of effects); or transferability in qualitative research				
Rhetorical Aspects				
Offers a well-organized, coherent oral presentation				
Demonstrates effective oral skills for communication in presentational settings, e.g., vocal projection, positive body language, articulate discussant style, pacing, eye contact, verbal flow				
Displays sense of audience through appropriate choice of focus for purposes of defense and discussion				
Responds with clarity, conciseness, and confidence to				

committee questions.				
Effectively incorporates well-designed supporting materials (handouts, visuals such as tables, charts, figures, power point graphics, etc.) to complement presentation and discussion				
Technical Aspects				
Uses grammar and usage appropriate to formal oral presentations				
Uses correct spelling, punctuation, and APA or discipline-suggested style, (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style, MLA) in supporting materials (handouts, power point, etc.)				

Written materials include: C.V., Record of Progress, original paper, any handouts on research critique, possible Power Point presentation

Presentation includes: Professional goals, research critique, and response to faculty questions on professional goals, paper, and research critique

Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education

Qualifying Paper

Purpose

Faculty use the Qualifying Paper to assess the student's progress in academic writing and scholarship, and students obtain feedback on their progress and gain experience and support in writing for publication. This paper may be co-authored with faculty and/or fellow students, but the student takes the lead role in the writing effort (refer to APA ethical guidelines and current publication manual). Although this paper may not be the same as one submitted for previous coursework, with approval from the program committee, it may be based on previous papers or work.

Procedure

Students submit a Qualifying Paper to their program committee by March 15th of their second year. The Qualifying Paper may take one of three forms:

1. a research report, in which the student describes an original investigation, its findings, and conclusions based on the findings;
2. a position paper, in which the student contrasts varying positions on an issue, including his or her own, justified with appropriate citations of authority; or
3. a research or literature review, in which the student discusses findings related to a particular question or set of questions and draws appropriate conclusions.

The length of the Qualifying Paper is 20 to 30 pages (double spaced; including references, figures and tables). The student submits electronic and hard copies of the Qualifying Paper to members of the program committee.

Evaluation

Each program committee member evaluates the paper, using the Qualifying Paper rubric, and supplies results to the committee chair no later than two weeks after the paper is received. The chair summarizes the judgments of the members, including recommendations for improving the manuscript, and shares with them the collective evaluations. If all committee members agree that the paper is satisfactory, the chair notifies the student and provides him or her and the committee with a summary of the committee's comments. If the committee concludes that the scholarly aspects of the paper are satisfactory but that there are significant problems with rhetorical and technical aspects, the student may be required to attend a remedial course in writing. In cases when the committee does not agree on the question of whether the student has passed or failed, the chair convenes the committee to discuss the question. Should the student's program committee collectively deem the Qualifying Paper inadequate, the chair provides a written statement to the student, in which specific recommendations are offered together with an invitation to resubmit the paper by a date determined by the committee, which shall be no later than the first day of classes of the following fall semester. Should one or more committee members determine the resubmission to be unacceptable, the chair convenes the committee a second time. At that meeting, the committee decides whether continued studies are in the best interests of the student, and, if so, what further steps may lead to an acceptable level of scholarly writing. This judgment is conveyed to the student by the program committee chair, who takes appropriate steps to carry out the committee's decision.

Final Stage: Submission to Journal

Following faculty review of an acceptable paper, the student submits the work to an appropriate journal. The student is determined to have passed the assessment of the qualifying paper when he or she provides evidence of the submission (e.g., e-mail message from editors or printed evidence from journal submission site).

Rubric for the Qualifying Paper

Criteria	Unacceptable; important aspects are neglected or unfinished	Marginally acceptable; not all aspects of the task have been fulfilled	Adequate; meets all requirements	Exceptional; exceeds requirements
	1	2	3	4
Scholarly Aspects				
Addresses a topic relevant to scholarly journals in the student's field of study				
Grounds writing in current theory				
Shows cognizance of relevant research and informed opinion				
Embeds text citations appropriately to document assertions				
Avoids overgeneralizing or otherwise arriving at conclusions that exceed findings				
Qualifies statements that are speculative or that apply to narrow circumstances				
Distinguishes between what is known and what it would be desirable to know				
Rhetorical Aspects				
Achieves general cohesion of ideas; uses logical transitions between and within paragraphs & sections				
Creates a logical text structure, signaled by appropriate headings and subheadings				
Displays sense of intended readership through appropriate assumptions concerning prior knowledge				
Appropriately incorporates tables, charts, figures, and other graphics to complement ideas presented in text.				
Embeds in-text citations appropriately to document assertions				
Technical Aspects				
Uses correct spelling and punctuation				
Uses proper grammar and usage				
Adheres to APA or discipline--				

suggested style, (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style, MLA)				
---	--	--	--	--

Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education Comprehensive Exam

Purpose

Students complete a comprehensive exam during or immediately following the final semester of their doctoral coursework. Students pass the comprehensive examination before proposing their dissertation research. The comprehensive exam consists of two parts (A and B) structured to achieve two purposes: (a) to evaluate students' breadth and depth of knowledge in their chosen field of study; and (b) to assess students' ability to apply their accumulated knowledge to a real-world scholarly task, such as grant writing; submitting a single-authored manuscript for publication; or conducting a pilot study. Students achieve the first purpose through Part A of the comprehensive exam, which consists of a written response to two questions from a set of questions provided by the program area to the student upon matriculation. Students achieve the second purpose through Part B, which each student negotiates with his or her advisor and which is approved by the student's doctoral program committee. The comprehensive exam is designed to move the student toward the final stage of the CISE doctoral program, doctoral candidacy, achieved after the dissertation proposal is approved.

Procedure

In the final semester of required coursework, students consult with their advisor and program committee members to plan for the comprehensive examination. Each member of the committee reads and evaluates Parts A and B of the exam, with all members signing the student's Record of Progress.

Part A: Content Knowledge. By November 1st of the first semester, the advisor provides the student with a set of potential exam questions reflecting core knowledge content, agreed upon by the program area faculty. Three weeks prior to the due date, the advisor informs the student of the two specific comprehensive exam questions he or she must answer. Answers to each of the questions reflect and expand on the content addressed in the required seminars and coursework in their field of study. Students rely chiefly on primary sources but may also draw modestly on secondary sources. They work on an open-book basis, with full access to all available text resources. Responses to each question do not exceed 15 pages in length, not including references, and conform to APA style.

Part B: Application of Content Knowledge. Upon passing part A, the student meets again with his or her advisor to determine the format and timeline of part B. The work in part B is designed to contribute to students' growing research agendas; although it can build on previous work, it is not duplicative of previous scholarly efforts or course activities. The student may pursue one of three options for part B; the choice is made in careful consultation with one's advisor and program committee:

- Write a grant proposal in order to secure funding for future dissertation research. If this option is selected, the student identifies the funding agency and then works with all relevant offices within the Curry School to submit the proper application forms, including research narratives, timelines, and budget. (Passing this Part B option is not contingent

upon securing actual funding; it is considered complete when the student provides evidence of the grant's submission.)

- Conduct a pilot study, which may lay the groundwork for future dissertation study. Students who choose to conduct a pilot study may use extant data or they may choose to collect new data. Regardless of the approach, if human subjects are involved, the student secures IRB approval before undertaking the pilot study. Once the pilot is completed, the student prepares for the committee a research report that adheres to APA requirements and follows a conventional reporting framework.
- Write a single-authored scholarly manuscript for a specific, peer-reviewed journal. Students who choose to write a manuscript for publication work with their advisor to identify the purpose of the article and an appropriate journal, given its scholarly intent. The manuscript may be a concept piece, a research report, or a review of the literature; the program committee approves the choice. No matter the choice, the student prepares the manuscript according to the guidelines specified by the target journal. The student submits the manuscript for publication after receiving program committee feedback. (Passing this Part B option is not contingent upon manuscript acceptance by the journal; Part B is considered complete when the student provides evidence of the manuscript's submission.)

Evaluation

The program advisor and members of the program committee independently read the student's responses to both parts of the comprehensive examination and assess the student's work using the departmental rubrics. After reading each part of the exam, the committee may (a) judge it satisfactory, (b) judge it unsatisfactory, or (c) require an oral exam for purposes of clarifying the student's responses. Once the work has been submitted, the advisor will convey results to the student within a three week period.

When necessary, oral exams defending the work take approximately one hour. At the meeting the student responds to committee members' questions. The student then leaves the room, and faculty evaluate and discuss the student's responses.

All committee members must judge the student's performance satisfactory and verify successful completion of Part A and Part B of the exam by signing the student's Record of Progress form. If the student performs unsatisfactorily on either part of the exam, he or she may petition the committee for one re-examination. Failure on the re-examination precludes further doctoral study in CISE. The advisor meets with the student to discuss other possible options.

Rubric for Comprehensive Exam: Part A, Content Knowledge

Criteria	Unacceptable; important aspects are neglected or unfinished	Marginally acceptable; not all aspects of the task have been fulfilled	Adequate; meets all requirements	Exceptional; exceeds requirements
	1	2	3	4
Content Knowledge: Q 1				
Grounds response in current theories				
Situates response within the purview of the relevant line of research and thoroughly reviews the pertinent empirical literature on the topic				
Identifies and defines key concepts and terms and discusses them within the context of the relevant literature				
Identifies competing theories and links them logically to the research presented				
Embeds text citations appropriately to document assertions				
Accurately articulates essential issues and distinguishes between what is known and what remains to be discovered				
Content Knowledge: Q 2				
Grounds response in current theories				
Situates response within the provenance of the relevant line of research and thoroughly reviews the pertinent empirical literature on the topic				
Identifies and defines key concepts and terms and discusses them within the context of the relevant literature				
Identifies competing theories and links them logically to the research presented				
Embeds text citations appropriately to document assertions				
Accurately articulates essential issues and distinguishes between what is known and what remains to be discovered				

The following section applies to both answers:

Rhetorical Aspects				
Achieves general cohesion of ideas; uses logical transitions between and within paragraphs & sections				
Creates a logical text structure, signaled by appropriate headings and subheadings				
Displays sense of intended readership through appropriate assumptions concerning prior knowledge				
Appropriately incorporates tables, charts, figures, and other graphics to complement ideas presented in text.				
Embeds in-text citations appropriately to document assertions				
Technical Aspects				
Uses correct spelling and punctuation				
Uses proper grammar and usage				
Adheres to APA or discipline-suggested style, (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style, MLA)				

**Rubric for Comprehensive Exam: Part B, Application of Knowledge
Grant Proposal**

Criteria	Unacceptable; important aspects are neglected or unfinished	Marginally acceptable; not all aspects of the task have been fulfilled	Adequate; meets all requirements	Exceptional; exceeds requirements
	1	2	3	4
Significance				
Provides a clear statement of problem(s) to be addressed				
Provides theoretical and empirical support for the proposed research				
Addresses how the research will advance scientific knowledge in the area studied				
Addresses the practical importance of the research				
Poses clear, concise hypotheses or research questions				
Innovation				
Makes a case for the project being original and innovative (e.g, it challenges existing paradigms or practice; addresses an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field; or develops or uses novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies in this area)				
Research Plan				
Thoroughly describes the sample or case in terms of age, SES, race/ethnicity, educational services, disability status, etc., as well as the criteria for selection				
Clearly states the research design and justifies its appropriateness to the research questions; all relevant independent & dependent variables and/or sources of data are clarified				
Operationalizes the measures and/or coding systems and describes their technical adequacy (e.g. validity, reliability, item & scoring format,				

etc.) AND/OR Describes how the data are to be analyzed to address the key research questions and how the validity or trustworthiness of the data are ensured				
Describes procedures clearly enough that they can be replicated by others				
Provides a clear plan for dissemination of results to appropriate audiences				
Personnel				
Provides clear description of experiences and expertise of key personnel already identified (e.g., student investigator, faculty members involved) and desired experiences and expertise of those to be hired (e.g., graduate research assistants)				
Identifies key personnel who have the experience and expertise to carry out the project				
Resources				
Demonstrates an understanding of the level of resources needed to complete the project				
Demonstrates access to institutional resources needed to conduct the research				
Demonstrates access to stakeholders outside the institution needed to conduct the research (e.g., letters of support from school divisions, government agencies)				
Budget				
Provides a clear description for each item budgeted				
Provides a justification for each item budgeted				
Technical Aspects Throughout				
Uses correct spelling and punctuation				
Uses proper grammar and usage				

Adheres to APA or discipline-suggested style, (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style, MLA)				
--	--	--	--	--

Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education

Dissertation Proposal Defense: Written Document

As explained in the Curry School of Education’s (2008-2009) dissertation manual, “a dissertation is required to demonstrate that the student can carry out important, independent research in his or her field” and “describe the project and its outcomes in lucid writing” (p. 1). Its conceptualization (at proposal stage) and execution (the completed written research report) represent the final assessment points for the Ph.D. candidate (candidacy is achieved following successful defense of the dissertation proposal).

The written document presented for the CISE dissertation proposal defense should closely approximate the first three chapters of the final dissertation itself. In essence, it should represent a penultimate draft of the final dissertation. Members of the dissertation committee review this document for potential problem areas or insufficiencies; their goal is to suggest improvements to strengthen the proposed study.

Students should refer to the Curry School dissertation manual on the Curry website for information on procedures and protocols related to dissertation research, including the Institutional Review Board if human subjects are involved in the approved study. The manual also describes the procedures to be followed should the proposal fail faculty review. The rubric for assessment of the written dissertation proposal follows.

Criteria	Unacceptable; important aspects are neglected or unfinished	Marginally acceptable; not all aspects of the task have been fulfilled	Adequate; meets all requirements	Exceptional; exceeds requirements
	1	2	3	4
Scholarship: Chapter 1 (Introduction)				
Provides a clear statement of problem to be addressed				
Situates the research within the broad area to be examined				
Frames the problem statement with a strong, clear rationale				
Poses the research questions to be addressed in a straightforward and understandable manner				
Scholarship: Chapter 2 (Literature Review)				
Provides a theoretical/conceptual rationale				
Situates the study within the provenance of the relevant line of				

research and thoroughly reviews the pertinent theoretical and/or empirical literature on the topic				
Identifies and defines key concepts and terms and discusses them within the context of the relevant literature				
Introduces key variables or constructs to be used in the study and justifies them theoretically				
Presents a logical progression of ideas (argumentation) that lead to the purpose of the study				
Discusses hypotheses (where appropriate) and links them logically to the theory and research presented				
Identifies how the research question extends the current knowledge base in the research topic				
Scholarship: Chapter 3 (Methods)				
Thoroughly describes the sample or case in terms of age, SES, race/ethnicity, educational services, disability status, etc., as well as the criteria for selection				
Clearly states the research design and justifies its appropriateness to the research questions. All relevant independent & dependent variables and/or sources of data are clarified				
Operationalizes the measures and/or coding systems and describes their technical adequacy (e.g. validity, reliability, item & scoring format, etc.)				
Describes procedures clearly enough that they can be replicated by others				
Describes how the data are to be analyzed to address the key study issues and how the validity and trustworthiness of the data are ensured.				
Rhetorical Aspects Throughout				
Achieves general cohesion of ideas; uses logical transitions between and within paragraphs & sections				
Creates a logical text structure,				

signaled by appropriate headings and subheadings				
Displays sense of intended readership through appropriate assumptions concerning prior knowledge				
Appropriately incorporates tables, charts, figures, and other graphics to complement ideas presented in text.				
Embeds in-text citations appropriately to document assertions				
Technical Aspects Throughout				
Uses correct spelling and punctuation				
Uses proper grammar and usage				
Adheres to APA (or discipline-suggested, e.g. Chicago Manual of Style, MLA) requirements				

Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education

Dissertation Proposal Defense: Oral Presentation

The oral defense of the dissertation proposal, scheduled for 1 ½ hours, provides the dissertation committee an opportunity to advise the Ph.D. candidate on potential problems and suggested improvements for the proposed study. At the oral defense, the student defends the need for and summarizes the study and its proposed methodology. It is also appropriate for the candidate to have a few aspects of the study that are still not fully developed and to present those in such a way that the committee can provide appropriate guidance. However, it is not the committee's task to construct a major revision of the study, and, if there are sufficient concerns, the proposal can be rejected.

The candidate takes no longer than 30 minutes to present the above content. Members of the dissertation committee then propose questions, focused on any aspect of the study: its context, the literature review, related theory, methods of inquiry and analysis, and implications of possible findings. The rubric for assessment of the oral defense of the written dissertation proposal follows.

Criteria	Unacceptable; important aspects are neglected or unfinished	Marginally acceptable; not all aspects of the task have been fulfilled	Adequate; meets all requirements	Exceptional; exceeds requirements
	1	2	3	4
Scholarship Aspects				
Effectively synthesizes the primary components: introduction to the research question(s); relevant literature & theoretical underpinnings of the study; the study design and choice of research methodology/ies; methods of data analyses; the study's limitations; and its projected contribution to the field.				
Demonstrates requisite knowledge in response to committee questions, using the faculty's questions to deepen discussion of the study, i.e., its methodology/ies, potential findings and their implications, as well as the study's limitations				
Responds appropriately to the committee's suggested changes, i.e., shows a willingness to accept				

committee's recommended changes, maintaining an open stance to the recommendations and arguing persuasively where opposed				
Rhetorical Aspects				
Offers a well-organized, coherent oral presentation				
Demonstrates effective oral skills for communication in presentational settings, e.g., vocal projection, positive body language, articulate discussant style, pacing, eye contact, verbal flow				
Displays sense of audience through appropriate choice of focus for purposes of defense and discussion				
Responds with clarity, conciseness, and confidence to committee questions.				
Effectively incorporates well-designed supporting materials (handouts, visuals such as tables, charts, figures, power point graphics, etc.) to complement presentation and discussion				
Technical Aspects				
Uses grammar and usage appropriate to formal oral presentations				
Uses correct spelling, punctuation, and APA (or discipline-suggested, e.g. Chicago Manual of Style, MLA) style in supporting materials (handouts, power point, etc.)				

Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education

Dissertation Defense: Written Document

Students should consult the most recent edition of the Curry School of Education Dissertation Manual for specific advice in writing the dissertation. The first three chapters are similar to those in the dissertation proposal. However, the student may have revised Chapters 2 and 3, in particular. For example, Chapter 2 may include additional information linked to discussion of the results, and Chapter 3 may incorporate information from the dissertation proposal defense or modifications approved by the committee since the proposal defense. The rubric for assessment of the written dissertation follows.

Criteria	Unacceptable; important aspects are neglected or unfinished	Marginally acceptable; not all aspects of the task have been fulfilled	Adequate; meets all requirements	Exceptional; exceeds requirements
	1	2	3	4
Scholarship: Abstract				
Purpose of the study and importance of the work within the larger theoretical framework are clearly delineated				
Identification of the specific problem(s) the study addressed are clearly tied to the study's purpose				
The methodology employed to address the research questions is clearly presented				
Overall results are presented				
Implication of the study's findings and their fit within the larger theoretical framework are clearly delineated				
Scholarship: Chapter 1 (Introduction)				
Provides a clear statement of problem to be addressed				
Situates the research within the broad area to be examined				
Frames the problem statement with a strong rationale				
Poses the research questions to be addressed in a straightforward and understandable manner				

Scholarship: Chapter 2 (Literature Review)				
Provides a theoretical/conceptual rationale				
Situates the study within the provenance of the relevant line of research and thoroughly reviews the pertinent empirical and/or theoretical literature on the topic				
Identifies and defines key concepts and terms and discusses them within the context of the relevant literature				
Introduces key variables or constructs to be used in the study and justifies them theoretically				
Presents a logical progression of ideas (argumentation) that lead to the purpose of the study				
Discusses hypotheses (where appropriate) and links them logically to the theory and research presented				
Identifies how the research question extends the current knowledge base in the research topic				
Scholarship: Chapter 3 (Method)				
Thoroughly describes the sample or case in terms of age, SES, race/ethnicity, educational services, disability status, etc., as well as the criteria for selection				
Clearly states the research design and justifies its appropriateness to the research questions. All relevant independent & dependent variables and/or sources of data are clarified				
Operationalizes the measures and/or coding systems and describes their technical adequacy (e.g. validity, reliability, item & scoring format, etc.)				
Describes procedures clearly enough that they can be replicated by others				
Describes how the data are to be analyzed to address the key study issues and how the validity and trustworthiness of the data are				

ensured				
Scholarship: Chapter 4 (Results)				
Organizes results by research question				
Uses the appropriate analyses to answer the key study questions				
Reports all relevant information associated with particular statistical procedures or qualitative coding systems				
Reports the findings accurately; provides evidence of the dependability and trustworthiness of all findings				
Scholarship: Chapter 5 (Discussion)				
Briefly recaps the study for the reader				
Summarizes the results in relation to the study hypotheses (support, did not support)				
Presents study limitations & frames them in terms of the internal and external validity (or trustworthiness) of the study				
Compares study results to other pertinent studies discussed in the literature review				
Clearly articulates how the study adds to the knowledge domain of the topic; discusses the theoretical implications of the study				
Provides practical, pedagogical implications, if appropriate				
Provides future directions for subsequent research that would advance the general line of research				
Rhetorical Aspects Throughout				
Achieves general cohesion of ideas; uses logical transitions between and within paragraphs & sections				
Creates a logical text structure, signaled by appropriate headings and subheadings				
Displays sense of intended readership through appropriate				

assumptions concerning prior knowledge				
Appropriately incorporates tables, charts, figures, and other graphics to complement ideas presented in text.				
Embeds in-text citations appropriately to document assertions				
Technical Aspects Throughout				
Uses correct spelling and punctuation				
Uses proper grammar and usage				
Adheres to APA or discipline-suggested style manual (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style, MLA) requirements				

**Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education
Dissertation Defense: Oral Presentation**

Students should consult the most recent edition of the Curry School of Education Dissertation for specific advice regarding the oral defense. The purpose of the oral defense of the dissertation, scheduled for 2 hours, is for the student to synthesize the study in such a way that its results and implications receive nuanced discussion and the study's unique contribution to the literature is made clear.

The candidate should take no longer than 30 minutes to summarize the study, with particular emphasis on the results and their implications. Members of the dissertation committee then propose questions, focused on any aspect of the study: its context, the research question(s), the literature review, related theory, research methodologies, methods of data analysis, findings, implications, conclusions, and recommendations for future research. The rubric for assessment of the dissertation oral defense follows.

Criteria	Unacceptable; important aspects are neglected or unfinished	Marginally acceptable; not all aspects of the task have been fulfilled	Adequate; meets all requirements	Exceptional; exceeds requirements
	1	2	3	4
Scholarship Aspects				
Effectively synthesizes the primary components: introduction to the research question(s); relevant literature & theoretical underpinnings of the study; the study design and choice of research methodology/ies; data analyses leading to reported results; findings and their implications; conclusions; the study's limitations; its contribution to the field; and projected directions for future research				
Demonstrates requisite knowledge in response to committee questions, using the faculty's questions to deepen discussion of the study, i.e., its methodology/ies, findings and their implications, as well as the study's limitations and possibilities				
Responds appropriately to the committee's suggested changes, i.e., shows a willingness to accept committee's recommended changes,				

maintaining an open stance to the recommendations and arguing persuasively where opposed				
Rhetorical Aspects				
Offers a well-organized, coherent oral presentation				
Demonstrates effective oral skills for communication in presentational settings, e.g., vocal projection, positive body language, articulate discussant style, pacing, eye contact, verbal flow				
Displays sense of audience through appropriate choice of focus for purposes of defense and discussion				
Responds with clarity, conciseness, and confidence to committee questions.				
Effectively incorporates well-designed supporting materials (handouts, visuals such as tables, charts, figures, power point graphics, etc.) to complement presentation and discussion				
Technical Aspects				
Uses grammar and usage appropriate to formal oral presentations				
Uses correct spelling, punctuation, and APA or discipline-suggested style, (e.g., Chicago Manual of Style, MLA) in supporting materials (handouts, power point, etc.)				