

Qualifying Examination: Policies and Procedures (AKA - “Comps”)

PURPOSE:

The Department of Educational Leadership’s rationale for the comp exam is to provide doctoral students with the opportunity to demonstrate their thorough understanding of specific content as it applies to their respective program areas; to apply their knowledge to specific problems and areas; and to review and integrate their leadership coursework across their studies by making conceptual and abstract linkages to seminal studies and authorities in their chosen fields of study. Passing comps marks a ritual of passage from coursework to initiating the dissertation process. In this sense, passing comps qualifies the doctoral student to begin the dissertation process and as one student who passed comps stated, “Above all, the comprehensive examination is intended to be a stimulating learning experience that empowers students to move to the next level of their intellectual and professional development. In reflection, the process of preparing to take my comprehensive exam was a pivotal point in my academic and professional career.”

SCHEDULE

The comprehensive exams are available in the spring and fall terms of the academic year. The following schedule is provided for your planning purposes

*Fall Comps – The **THIRD** Friday of October each Year.*

*Spring Comps - The **FIRST** Friday of March each Year.*

GUIDELINES

Requirements, Procedures, Content Assumptions, Exam Processes, Ethical Code, Topical Areas for Study, Study Suggestions, Assessment, Scoring, Logistics for the Day of the Exam, and the Reporting of Results

REQUIREMENTS:

The Department of Educational Leadership requires all doctoral students enrolled in any of our programs of K-12 School Leaders, Higher Education, and Adult and Community Education to sit for the comprehensive exam and to pass comps **BEFORE THEY** can begin the dissertation process. Students must meet eligibility requirements by documenting they have completed the necessary coursework which is verified by attaching the signed Program of Study to the Qualifying form (see descriptions below).

PROCEDURES

Eligibility- Students are eligible for Comps when they have successfully completed 60 percent of the doctoral coursework.

Application - The student is responsible to determine their eligibility and then complete the Qualifying Exam Form and submit it to their advisor. [The Qualifying exam form is found on the College of Education web site, under Educational Leadership. Follow the link to “forms” and to the Qualifying Exam Form.]

Verification- The advisor must verify course completion by attaching a signed Program of Study to the Qualifying Exam form. The Qualifying Exam form must be: (a) completed by the student; (b) signed by the student’s doctoral advisor

Deadlines - Qualifying Exam Forms must be received by the comps coordinator ***NO LATER THAN*** October 1st for fall exams and ***NO LATER THAN February 16th*** for spring exams.

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING THE EXAM CONTENT:

Content within the exam is based on several overall assumptions:

1. All students should be able to respond to a general leadership question and demonstrate their understanding about leadership as it relates to their intellectual origins and the values and beliefs they hold about leadership.
2. All students should be able to demonstrate integrated learning across their coursework; identify seminal scholars in their respective fields; justify their responses with published research; cite authorities in their field; note legal cases if relevant; and transfer scholarly literature to personal and professional experiences.
3. All students should be able to discuss their answers in thoughtful, coherent and grammatically correct ways to provide evidence they have ANSWERED the questions and supported their responses with appropriate scholarly works and authors.
4. All students should be prepared to answer two or three additional questions besides the leadership question.

EXAM PROCESSES:

1. Students take the exam in a computer lab on the third floor of the Education Building on the Boca Raton Campus (unless told otherwise).

2. Students begin the exam at 9 a.m. and finish by 3 p.m. Everyone must turn in the exam packet by NO LATER THAN 3 p.m.
3. All students will answer a total of three or four comp questions. Everyone answers the leadership question. The other exam questions differ within each program area's exam parameters.
4. Responses to exam questions will be typed by students. Any other arrangements are considered extremely unusual and accommodations will be considered only if the request is made by the student's advisor to the department's comp coordinator to discuss with the department; a sound rationale for why the exception should be granted must be provided.
5. All written materials, copies of the actual exam, and the USB drive will be sealed in the manila envelope with each student's answers to all questions.
6. On the day of the exam, students will be provided instructions in terms of how to respond to each exam question. More specifically, they will be instructed to start the response to each new question on a new page. Please use your assigned unique identification number (UIN) as a header on top right hand corner.
7. Always begin each response by copying and pasting the question itself and then answering the question. Please save your work in a separate file from the exam.

A professor will be assigned to monitor comps. The ethical code below is expected of all doctoral students taking the comp exam.

ETHICAL CODE:

Students are escorted to the computer lab by the professor in charge of comps for the day. The professor will make sure that all the computers are ready for the students to begin writing their exams. All of the computers will have been disabled from the Internet so that word processing is available, but not access to the Internet. Students are expected to report any violations of ethical conduct to the professor in charge of comps. The assumption is that all doctoral students in educational leadership will adhere to the strictest ethical codes of behavior for taking comps. Thus, any and all acts of academic dishonesty **MUST** be reported to the comps coordinator. Dishonesty and cheating during comps is grounds for dismissal from the program. Any student who knowingly ignores another student's dishonesty and fails to report it also faces dismissal from the program. Given that the Department of Educational Leadership sets high standards, we expect the best from our students. The professor in charge of the exam will visit the lab to ensure that all the students are O.K., but not to monitor ethics by sitting in the room all day. Students are assumed to act honestly.

LOGISTICS FOR THE DAY OF THE EXAM:

1. On the day of the exam, students will report to the Melby Center by NO LATER than 8:30 for tests to be passed out.
2. Prior to 8:30, students will leave all their personal belongings in a room identified by the faculty test proctor. Students may retrieve their personal items upon completion of the exam.
3. Students may take bottled water and snacks (e.g., granola bars, candy, fruit) to the exam room. Any lunch bags will be held by the faculty proctor in a designated area. Students who want to break for lunch must eat outside the testing room.
4. Students may take breaks from the exam as needed to go to the restroom. Access to any materials – except FAU supplied pencils and paper – are forbidden. During the exam and breaks, no student is permitted to discuss the exam with other students.
5. Exams will be preloaded onto USB drives supplied by FAU. Upon completion of the exam, all USB drives will remain the property of FAU. Each USB drive will be color coded to assist with identifying School Leaders, Higher Education, and Adult Community Education curricula. Each student will be given a USB drive with their identification number (UIN). The UIN will appear on the USB to identify and match with the student's test responses. The process ensures students' confidentiality and anonymity. The UIN also ensures that no one will know who students are when qualifying exams are graded.
6. Students will be given pencils and a legal pad to draft their responses to questions for the exam. All FAU supplied materials will be collected at the completion of the exam and remain the property of FAU. The student shall include their assigned USB drive, any pencils and/or written materials inside a manila folder supplied by the proctor.
7. During the exam, the proctor will write "remaining time" on the presentation board. Students should monitor their time on each exam question. Proper management of time is essential. Students should NOT take all of their exam time on one question. They should plan accordingly.
8. The allotted time for the exam is six (6) hours. The exam will promptly start at 9 a.m. Tests should be completed and submitted by 3 p.m. Upon test submittal to the faculty proctor, students will be escorted by designated personnel to where the test will be printed out. The student will review their printed exam response. The student will sign her/his exam for authenticity as the author of the exam. At this point, the student will have completed the submittal process.
9. In cases where the student is not going to be able to take the comps exam because of an emergency, the departmental secretary/designated personnel and the faculty proctor must be notified. Students will be sent contact information in this regard prior to the exam. Students must follow up with a written explanation to the faculty advisor.
10. In case of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, comps will be re-scheduled based on the availability of the computer lab and considering other factors that may be deemed relevant.

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR EXAM PREPARATION:

1. Leadership Theories, concepts, approaches you have studied and how they
2. can be applied
3. Context and Perspective
 - x Local, State, Federal Role
4. History and Philosophy (related to your program area)
5. Organizational Theory
6. Organizational History, Culture, Core Values and Climate
7. Metaphors used in understanding organizational behavior and structure
8. Change Theory
9. Management
10. Teaching and Learning Approaches
11. Administration
12. School Reform, Restructuring and Innovation
13. Cultural Diversity
14. Community Education/Community Schools
15. Community Relations
16. Supervision
17. Moral and Ethical Dimensions of Leadership
18. Program Development
19. School and/or Higher Education Law/Legal Issues
20. Budgeting
21. Resource Allocation
22. Group Facilitation
23. Pupil/Student Personnel Service/Student Affairs
24. Human Resource Management
25. Staff Development
26. Technology and Learning
27. Assessment.

STUDY SUGGESTIONS FROM OTHER STUDENTS:

- Work in a study group
- Review course syllabi
- Talk to students who have taken comps about how to prepare for comps
- Talk to your professors in the department
- Know the seminal studies, their methodologies, findings and how the findings relate to other studies
- Draft responses to comp questions that you think could be asked by looking at the syllabi.
- Ensure that your responses have well crafted arguments that are supported by the empirical research.
- Keep note cards and review them
- Read from the suggested reading list for the courses you have taken.

EXAM ASSESSMENT RUBRIC:

The exam rubric is a scale from 1 to 5. The numbers indicate the quality of the response by the professor scoring the exam.

5- The candidate's response to the questions demonstrates superior and indepth knowledge and understanding of the subject.

4- The candidate's response to the question demonstrates above average knowledge and understanding of the subject.

3- The candidate's responses to the question demonstrates average understanding and knowledge of the subject.

2- The candidate's response to the question demonstrates below average understanding and knowledge of the subject.

1- The candidate's response to the questions demonstrates poor understanding and knowledge of the subject.

SCORING: (THIS IS THE OVERALL AVERAGE FROM YOUR EXAM.)

4.5 Candidates scoring 4.5 or higher pass the exam with honors.

3.5 Candidates scoring 3.5 or higher pass the exam.

3.4-3.0 Candidates scoring 3.4 through 3.0 will receive a deferred grade and will be referred to their doctoral committee for recommendations concerning the candidate's results.

Below 2.9 Candidates scoring 2.9 or below fail the exam but may retake it with the approval of their program committees. Normally the retakes should occur after a period of prescribed study or course enrollment. Candidates retaking the exam under this provision must score 3.0 or higher on the second attempt to stay in the program.

Readers also respond to the candidate's proficiency in utilizing syntax, grammar, and spelling.

RESULTS:

Examination results will be communicated to you via a letter sent to your home address. You will be told whether you passed, passed with Honors, were deferred or failed comps. The Department makes every effort to get the results to you within a six week period of time from your taking the exam. Please do not call the office for your test results.

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