Comprehensive Examination Policy and Procedures
(AKA - "Comps" and/or the Qualifying Exam

PURPOSE:
The qualifying exam is structured to provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate the thoroughness of your understanding of the knowledge base of leadership and your program area. You will be asked to answer one question related to leadership that all students in the department answer irrespective of program area. You will also answer two additional questions based on content from your program area: school leaders, adult and community leaders, and higher education leaders.

REQUIREMENTS:
The Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology (EDLRM) requires all doctoral students enrolled in any School Leaders, Higher Education Leaders, or Adult and Community Education Leaders programs to sit for and pass the comprehensive exams to be classified as "doctoral candidate." Students must also 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).

OUTCOME:
Passing comprehensive exams marks a ritual of passage from coursework to initiating the dissertation process. Please note that students must be classified as doctoral candidates BEFORE THEY can begin registering for the 20 credits of dissertation which is the MINIMUM number of dissertation credits required to graduate. In this sense, passing comprehensive exams qualifies the doctoral student to not only enroll in dissertation credits with their dissertation chair, but to begin the dissertation process in general.

EXPECTATIONS:
Comprehensive exams are intended to demonstrate to doctoral faculty that doctoral students are able to:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of leadership theory and research as it relates to its intellectual origins, and the values and beliefs the doctoral student holds about leadership within their field of study or practice.
2. Demonstrate the ability to integrate learning across coursework, assigned and unassigned texts, identify seminal scholars, support responses with published research; cite authorities in their field; note legal cases if relevant, follow the most recent edition of writing guidelines from the American Psychological Association (APA), and connect scholarly literature to personal and professional experiences.
3. Demonstrate the ability to present responses to the comprehensive exam questions in a thoughtful, coherent and grammatically correct way.
4. Demonstrate the ability to cite from peer-reviewed studies published in top-tier journals as well books from seminal scholars.

SCHEDULE:
Comprehensive exams are scheduled during the spring and fall terms of every academic year
Fall – The <u>THIRD</u> Friday of October each Year.

Spring - The <u>FIRST</u> Friday of March each Year.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES:
- **Eligibility-** Students are eligible for comprehensive exams after successfully completing at least 60 percent of their required coursework (not including research methods courses). Doctoral students must obtain the approval of their advisor at least one month prior to the comprehensive exams date each semester.

- **Application -** At the point when a student believes he/she has met the requirements above, he/she should complete the Qualifying Exam Form and submit it to their advisor one month prior to the exam date**.** [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 and signing the Qualifying Exam form.

- The Qualifying Exam form must be: (a) completed by the student; (b) signed by the student's doctoral advisor; (c) signed by the chair; (d) distributed to the Departmental Secretary; and (e) an original copy given to the Office of Academic and Student Services (OASS) by the deadline.

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

- **Accommodations** – Students should notify the qualifying exam coordinator if accommodations need to be made due to disabilities.

QUALIFYING EXAM PROCESSES:

On the day of the exam:

1. Students are expected to arrive in the room assigned for the exam to receive your exam packet and final instructions at least 15 minutes before the start of the exam. (the exact location of the exam is announced prior to the exam)

2. All personal belongings should be stored on a table or chair away from the area where the student is taking the exam.

3. Students may have bottled water and snacks at their work station.

4. Students may use earplugs.

5. Students may leave the testing room for breaks as needed. Accessing materials via the internet or discussing the exam with other students at any time is forbidden.

6. The On-Site portion of the exam will be held in a four hour block of time. Students should monitor their time as to not spend too much time on any one question. Students are expected to answer all questions thoroughly.

7. Students will receive a packet that contains a USB drive pre-loaded with the exam questions and a corresponding unique student identification number. Pencils and a blank pad of paper to draft responses will be provided. Anything written on the pads should be turned in at the end of the exam and will be destroyed by the exam proctor(s).

8. Do not type your name anywhere on the exam. Instead, students should place their assigned identification number in the running head of each page. Grading is done by student number to ensure anonymity during the grading process.

9. Responses to each new question should begin on a new page. First copy and paste or type the question on the page; then answer it.

10. If a question has multiple parts, students are to use section headings to indicate which part of the question the student is responding to.

11. Giving credit to researchers whose ideas or work you are citing is expected. However page numbers are optional

12. Students should save their work on the USB drive provided. However, students must create a new file on the USB drive, separate from the exam file, to save their work. It is strongly recommended students save their work frequently during the exam so they do not lose their work. Making copies of the exam questions is prohibited.

13. Once you have responded to the required questions, please put the USB drive in the manila folder the exam proctor will provide. Turn in the folder to the Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology suite in the College of Education. At that point, an assigned secretary will print each student's exam. If there is line of students waiting for their exam to be printed, please wait patiently and quietly.

14. After the exam is printed, students should carefully review them to see that the file printed correctly. One satisfied with the exam responses, sign the exam and turn it into the assigned secretary

15. Exam packets are due by 1:30 p.m. for a 9:30 a.m. start or 4 p.m. for a Noon start.

16. Comprehensive exams are monitored by a faculty member.

17. Students should be knowledgeable of the ethical code of conduct [below] which is expected to be followed by all doctoral students all of the time, which includes comprehensive exams.

18. Responses to exam questions must 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 and to the department's comprehensive exam coordinator. A sound rationale for why the exception should be granted must be provided.

19. In cases where the student is not going to be able to take the comprehensive exams exam because of an emergency, both the departmental secretary and the comprehensive exams' coordinator must be notified. The students must follow up with the comprehensive exam coordinator and the student must provide a written explanation and supporting documentation to the coordinator.

20. In case of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, comprehensive exams will be re-scheduled based on the availability of the computer lab and consideration of other relevant factors.

ETHICAL CODE:
The faculty expects doctoral students in Educational Leadership and Research Methodology to adhere to ethical codes of behavior. Therefore, students are expected to report any violations of ethical conduct during the exam to the exam proctor. Please understand that dishonesty and cheating are 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. It is assumed doctoral students of EDLRM at FAU will act honestly and with integrity. **Sharing the exam questions or student responses with anyone other than the designated faculty or staff or outside editing of the Take Home or On-Site exam responses is strictly prohibited.**

CONTENT:
The qualifying exam is divided into two parts: Part one is a *Take Home question focused on leadership* theory. Part two, is a On-Site exam and is focused on theories related to the program core for each program area. The following performance standards apply to all responses for all questions.

Performance Standards: The respondent is expected to demonstrate ability to:

1. Exhibit a deep understanding of leadership and program theoretical content as it relates to the questions posed.

2. Identify, elaborate on, and connect the underlying departmental values to the case in a way that provides an explanation and rationale for actions, behaviors, and events described in the case.
3. Use higher order thinking skills including, critical thinking, synthesis, and interpretation. These skills require that students go far beyond recalling facts, concepts or theories.
4. Connect your explanation and conclusions to the literature and use of major authors to support your explanation, assumptions, opinions, and conclusions is required.
5. <u>On-Site Questions:</u> Provide a <u>750 to 1200</u> word response to each of the 2 On-Site questions, using proper academic vocabulary. The word count should be stated at the end of each response.
6. <u>Take Home Question:</u> Provide a 3500 <u>to 4000</u> word response including references and abstract, using proper academic vocabulary and APA citations. The word count should be stated at the end of the response.

THE LEADERSHIP CORE QUESTION – <u>The Take Home Exam</u>

Directions: Two weeks prior to the exam, students who have met the criteria to take comprehensive exams will be sent a copy of <u>the scoring rubric</u> and the Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology Core Values via email.

Some time prior to the date scheduled for the Take Home part of the exam, students who applied to take comprehensive exams and were approved will be sent the comprehensive exam guidelines, EDLRM's core values, and a copy of the rubric that will be used to assess their response. On the morning of the Take Home portion of the exam, students will be sent two cases studies and the questions pertinent to the case studies. Students will choose one of the two cases to respond. **The first part of the Take Home exam question requires students to analyze the case using relevant leadership theories and 3 of the following lenses**: Leadership, Research and Scholarship, Social Responsibility, and Learning Community. The second part of the question asks students to recommend appropriate action based on their analysis and connect their proposed actions with relevant theories found in the three lenses selected for the analysis.

Create a Word document that should be named as follows: Spring or Fall and year of the Qualifying Exam followed by your student identifying number (Ex Spring14Qualifying Exam 4355)

Set up your document by typing or cut and paste each of the three parts of the question into the document. Make sure that your identifying number appears on each page of your response. Proceed to answer each of question's sub parts. Remember you should not spend any of your allocated words describing the facts in the case; those are known to the faculty.

<u>Deadline for submission:</u> Students must submit the answer to the *Take Home* exam at least two days prior to the *On-Site* exam in order to enable staff to transfer it to a USB drive that will be given to the student the morning of the On-Site exam. The USB drive is each student's ticket to SIT for the On-Site portion of the Qualifying Exam. If a student misses the three-day deadline, they are disqualified from taking the On-Site part of the exam and must reapply for comprehensive exams in a future semester.

THE PROGRAM AREA QUESTIONS - <u>The On-Site Exam</u>

When you enter the exam room, the proctor will give you an envelope containing (a) the instructions for the *On-Site* portion of the exam, and (b) a USB drive with your student number. The USB Drive will contain a list of the Program Core Questions from which students will select two questions to answer. Instructions will also be included.

Directions:

Set up your document by typing or cut and pasting each of the two questions you have selected to answer into the document. Make sure that your assigned identifying number is on the running head of each page of your response. If the question is divided into separate parts, students should indicate the beginning of a response to each separate part with a side heading. Proceed to answer each of the two questions you have selected from the provided list.

EXAM ASSESSMENT:

The Qualifying Exam Coordinator will assign faculty readers for all questions using the above criteria.

- The Leadership Core question will be assessed by three professors across the department who teach in the leadership core.
- The Program Area questions will be assessed by three professors who teach doctoral level courses in each program area.
- In the event that there are not 3 doctoral level faculty available, the Comprehensive Exam Coordinator will use their best judgment in assigning knowledgeable readers.

Faculty Assessors will use two Rubrics to assess the questions. Rubric 1 will be used to assess the Leadership Core knowledge on the Take Home Exam. Rubric 2 will be used to assess the Program Content for the *On-Site* exam.

SCORING:

Scores will be recorded and then averaged from each reader and the following scoring rubric will be applied to the Exam.

- **Honors -** Candidates scoring 3.6 or higher.
- **Pass** - Candidates scoring 3.0 to 3.5
- **Deferred** – Candidates scoring from 2.4 to 2.9 receive a deferred grade and will be referred to their doctoral committee chair for recommendations concerning how the candidate can remedy their results.
- **Fail -** Candidates scoring 2.3 or below fail the exam but may retake it at the next administration with the approval of their program committee chair. Candidates who score 2.3 or below on the second attempt are removed from candidacy.

RESULTS:

- Qualifying exam results will be communicated to students in a letter sent electronically to their FAU email address. Students will be told if they passed, passed with honors, were deferred or failed the exam and directed to their adviser for further advising.
- The faculty will make every effort to provide the results within a six week timeframe. Please do not call or email the office for our test results.
- Passing the qualifying exam marks the passage from coursework to initiating the dissertation process.

Rubric 1 - *TAKE HOME EXAM*
Performance Criteria to Assess the Leadership Core Question

Student ID _____ **Reader/Sig**_____ **Date**_____

Scoring Key
1= Very weak or missing   2 = Present but not well developed   3 = Present and well developed   4 =Exemplary

Scale Score	1	2	3	4
Content (score is weighted by 2)				
1. Clearly identifies and uses three of the four lenses (leadership, research, social responsibility, and learning community) and underlying theories and concepts to examine aspects of the case and connect them to the case details and their recommendations for action				
2. Identifies and discusses the behaviors of various key leaders, identifying leadership concepts and issues profiled within the case				
• Lens #1 – Student answer demonstrates ability to analyze, synthesize, and interpret. (see thinking skills described below)				
• Lens #2 – Student answer demonstrates ability to analyze, synthesize, and interpret. (see thinking skills described below)				
• Lens #3 – Student answer demonstrates ability to analyze, synthesize, and interpret. (see thinking skills described below)				
• Offers a set of recommended actions which flow logically from the case analysis, and which are supported by relevant theory/authors				
1. Total of each column under *Content* =				
2. Total of each column under *Content* * 2. =				
3. Total for *Content* – Sum of all totals from line 2. above =				
Interpretation -- Judge the value of material (e.g., appraise, argue, assess, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, support, value, evaluate).				
Mechanics				
• The essay is clear, consistent, and concise.				
• The candidate displayed proficiency in syntax, grammar, and spelling.				
• Identifies and uses a minimum of 14 or more citation references. The 14 citations should be APA correct and an APA correct cover page, heading levels, abstract, and reference page should be provided.				
4. Total of each column under *Mechanics* =				
5. Total for *Mechanics* – Sum of all totals from line 4. Above =				
Total for *Content* from line 3. above				
+ Total for *Mechanics* from line 5. above				
Grand Total				
Overall Rating (Divide Grand Total by 11)				

COMMENTS:

Rubric 2 - *ON-SITE EXAM*
Performance Criteria to Assess the Quality of a Candidate's Responses to the Program Core Question of the

Student ID _____Reader/Sig_____Date_____

Scoring Key (for Individual Rubrics)

1= Very weak or missing   2 = Present but not well developed   3 = Present and well developed   4 =Exemplary

Scale Score	1	2	3	4
Content(score is weighted by 2)*				
• **Completeness of Answer -** Response demonstrates thorough understanding of the content question and its significance. Response goes beyond factual information demonstrating nuanced understanding of the question. All parts of the question are thoroughly answered.				
• **Validity of Facts and Perspectives -** All facts, conclusions, and statements are accurate and/or valid. They also logically support the topic being discussed. Evidence of knowledge of research methodology approach.				
• **Evidence of Background Knowledge and Integration of Theory and Practice -** Integration of theory and practice is strong. Respondent used inter and intra disciplinary approaches as appropriate in addressing the problem and/or question.				
• **Citations of Relevant Research -** Consistently cites references that support all key issues resulting in a scholarly, thoughtful voice throughout the response. Literature used and theorists used were appropriate choices for the question under review. Cited relevant disciplinary and interdisciplinary literature				
1. **Total of each column under Content** =				
2. **Total of each column under Content * 2** =				
3. **Total for Content – Sum of all totals from line 2. above** =				
Thinking Skills				
Analysis: Break down material or concepts into component parts so that the organizational structure may be understood (e.g., analyze, appraise, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, and test).				
Synthesis – Use component parts to form a new whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure (e.g., arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up).				
Interpretation -- Judge the value of material (e.g., appraise, argue, assess, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, support, value, evaluate).				
Mechanics				
• The essay is clear, consistent and concise.				
• The candidate displayed proficiency in syntax, grammar, spelling, and APA				
• Identifies and uses 7 or more citations within the response to each question.				
4. **Total of each column under *Mechanics*** =				
5. **Total for *Mechanics* – Sum of all totals from line 4. above** =				
Total for *Content* from line 3 above				
+ Total for *Mechanics* from line 5. above				
Grand Total				
Overall Rating (Divide Grand Total by 11)				

COMMENTS: