

SPECIAL EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

POLICY MANUAL

**Last Updated: September 2005
November 2007: In the process of being updated.**

TASKS FOR COMPLETION OF THE PH.D. IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

ADMISSION

1. Student applies and is accepted to begin advanced study.
2. Student begins coursework (e.g., statistics and doctoral seminar).
3. * Student and advisor work to develop an Individualized Doctoral Plan (IDP) in the second semester of the first year. Then, student drafts course sequence in the first semester of the second year and has the course of study and tentative timeline of courses and other requirements approved by the Special Education Faculty.
4. Student passes qualifying exam (in the second year of study or **30-45** credits post master's). Students may not register after completion of **45** credits if they have not passed the qualifier.
5. Student is formally admitted to doctoral program after passing the qualifying exam.

* If M.Ed. is not in SpEd, additional coursework for “master’s equivalency” would be required based on the transcript review. Students would need to take a minimum of 75 credits, with the additional 15 credits in Special Education.

PROGRESS TOWARDS DOCTORAL DEGREE

1. Student continues to take coursework as prescribed.
2. Student completes a residency (1 year full-time - 18 credits in a 12-month period).
3. Student develops qualifying exam with advisor during first or second year of program.
4. Student submits written qualifying examination proposal to special education faculty.
5. Student completed qualifying examination.
6. Student passes qualifying examination (written and oral).
7. * Student petitions to take comprehensive (general) exam when close to last 10 credits. Even if all credits are completed, student continues to enroll for at least one credit per semester of a graded independent study until candidacy (passing of dissertation proposal) is achieved. This ongoing registration until candidacy may include participation in the Special Education doctoral seminar each fall at the discretion of the program faculty. The grade is based on progress towards the

- dissertation (This is a Special Education program requirement and may not apply to other doctoral students).
8. Student passes comprehensive exam.
 9. * Student develops dissertation proposal with dissertation advisor (The proposal format in Special Education consists of the first three chapters).
 10. Student passes dissertation proposal (written and oral).
 11. Student is admitted to candidacy and may register just for maintenance of candidacy.
 12. Student runs study and completes dissertation.
 13. All committee members informally approve written draft of dissertation (not formal defense) by deadline. Draft is submitted to the Dean of the College of Education to graduate.
 14. *Oral defense passed.
 15. About two or three weeks before graduation, a final copy of the dissertation must be submitted to the Dean of the College of Education. A bound copy should also be given to each committee member.

* No committees are scheduled for exams or dissertation defense in Special Education in the months of June, July, or August.

NOTE: The above requirements were approved for all doctoral students in Special Education by the Special Education Faculty. It is an individual program faculty's prerogative to require more than the university requirements for its doctoral students. The rationale for additional requirements are to prepare students to be competitive for the positions they hope to achieve in their own field and to assist them in meeting the faculty's expectations for quality.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The doctoral degree in Special Education requires a minimum of 60 credits post M.Ed. in Special Education. The doctoral degree is designed around the following four areas: Doctoral seminar (12 credits), Research core (18 credits), Special Education core (15 credits), Electives (9 credits - includes Multicultural Issues), Apprenticeship (6 hours). Other requirements include Qualifying Exam, Comprehensive Exam, and Dissertation (may require independent study beyond the 60 credits until maintenance of candidacy is obtained). Students should meet with their advisor to develop an Individualized Doctoral

Plan (IDP) by the end of their second semester (spring). After the first IDP meeting, the course of study should be submitted to the special education faculty for approval.

PH.D. PROGRAM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

MAJOR IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

(60 hours or credits post M.Ed. In Special Education)
Prerequisite: M.Ed. in Special Education or Equivalent

-
Doctoral Core (12 hours)

-
*Doctoral Seminars in Special Education or School Psychology

- **Research Core** (18 hours)

- *Educ 408 Introduction to Statistics
- Educ 409 Analysis of Experimental Data (3 hours)
- *Educ 410 Univariate Statistical Models (3 hours)
- *Educ 411 Multivariate Statistical Models (3 hours)
- Educ 461 Single-Subject Research Design (3 hours)
- *Cpsy/SchP 473 Advanced Research Methods in Applied Psychology
- Cpsy/SpEd XXX Qualitative Methodology
- Educ 495 Independent Study (3 hours)

-
Special Education Major Core (15 hours)

-
*Proposed course of study in Special Education (15 hours) (To develop a defined area of expertise.

-
Electives (9 hours) - includes Multicultural Issues)

- *Educ 471 (CPsy 471) Multicultural Issues (3 hours)
- Electives (6 hours)

-
Apprenticeship (supervision of interns, college teaching, grant writing, research) (6 hrs.)

-
Also required:

- Qualifying Exam
- Comprehensive Exam

Dissertation (may require independent study beyond the 60 credits until maintenance of candidacy is obtained)

* Required courses

QUALIFYING EXAM

Successful completion of the qualifying exam serves as the formal admission of the student to the doctoral program. The qualifying exam should be completed **before 30-45 credits post Master's.**

For the qualifier exam, the doctoral student is required to conduct a research study. Research studies may be experimental or non-experimental. Experimental research may be true experimental or quasi-experimental and may be group or single subject design. Non-experimental research may use qualitative or quantitative methodologies and may include: descriptive (e.g., survey, curriculum analysis, meta-analysis), case and field, correlational, and causal-comparative or ex post facto. The proposed research may be (a) a pilot study to a larger study (e.g., dissertation) or (b) a small-scale study designed by the student to be implemented within the context of a faculty member's larger research project. The study does not necessarily have to include all the possible measures (e.g., maintenance, generalization).

Steps for the Qualifying Exam. The following process will be used to complete the qualifying exam:

1. The student develops an idea for a project with the advisor and gives the advisor a written proposal that includes an overview of the Introduction, Method, and Data Analysis sections. The proposal does not require the student to formally complete a comprehensive written review of the relevant literature. However, the student will need to review the literature to describe the rationale for the study and potential contributions to the literature. In addition, the introduction should include the purpose(s) of the study and/or research questions, if appropriate. The proposal should clearly outline (textually and/graphically) the key information to the reader. At the same time, proposed protocols and measures critical to the study should be developed and presented in the proposal.
2. Upon approval of the proposal by the advisor, the student provides the written proposal to all special education faculty members. After approval by special education faculty members, the student provides an oral presentation at a special education doctoral research forum. The research forum will be used to obtain feedback from the group for refining and/or designing a conceptually sound study.
3. If the project is a research study involving children or adults with or without disabilities, the student obtains Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Lehigh University for conducting Human Subjects research.
4. The student conducts the research study and writes up the paper in a format similar to journal submissions. The student's advisor provides one or more rounds of feedback on the writing. After the advisor determines a draft is suitable for internal dissemination, the student distributes it to the other faculty in the program.

Note: The disseminated paper may not necessarily be approved as a final version by the advisor, but is deemed acceptable for faculty review following several rounds of feedback.

5. The faculty meets to evaluate the paper and decides if the student passes the written component. The student's advisor summarizes the faculty's comments and feedback to the student, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the qualifying exam. In the event that the student passes the written component, a formal presentation is scheduled.
- *6. The student presents the paper at a formal research forum that is open to all faculty and students in the department. The faculty meets with the student after the presentation to share the evaluation of the oral presentation. If the student passes the Qualifying Exam, the student may write the paper in collaboration with the advisor and/or the other faculty and submit the paper for publication. Order of authorship will be jointly determined based on amount of input on the research study. Because this may be the first formal research conducted by the student, faculty generally will provide extensive input on the research topic, procedures, design, and writing.

NOTE: *If the faculty deems that the student has failed the qualifying project, the committee will decide the appropriate course of action. This may include rewriting the paper, redesigning a new study, or exit from the program.

DOCTORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

The comprehensive examination is used to evaluate the doctoral student's synthesis of information and knowledge directly relevant to his or her advanced graduate program. The exam assesses broad and specialized knowledge in the following areas of special education:

1. Curriculum and Instruction
2. Assessment
3. Inclusion/Current Issues
4. Problem Behaviors
5. Research Design and Methodology

Exam Format

The examination will include an in-class, closed book written exam and a take-home exam. For the in-class exam, students will receive 6 written questions related to curriculum and instruction, assessment, inclusion/current issues, and problem behaviors. These questions will assess students' knowledge in core areas of special education and will be given three months in advance of the examination date. The faculty will select three of the six questions, and the student will respond to these questions on the day of the 4-hour examination.

The second part of the exam will assess student's ability to critically evaluate research. A week following the written exam, students will be given two empirical articles that include a single-subject and a group design study. These articles may include either a manuscript submitted for publication or a published research article. Students will be asked to identify the strengths and limitations of each study and provide suggestions to strengthen the study. Strengths and limitations should address all aspects of the study, focusing on the following: significance of research problem, review of previous research, purpose of the study, research hypotheses and/or questions, sampling procedures, sample characteristics, methodology (research design, procedures, data selection/collection, technical characteristics of instruments, treatment fidelity, interrater reliability), data analysis/interpretation, conclusions/generalization, and writing style and presentation of manuscript using APA guidelines. This exam is due two weeks after the articles are given to the student.

Fall	Spring
April 15 – Petition	Oct. 15 – Petition
June 1 – Questions given for in-class written exam	Dec. 1 – Questions given for in-class written exam
Sept. 1 – In-class written exam date*	Mar. 1 – In-class written exam date*

Sept. 22 – Research article critiques due	Mar. 22 – Research article critiques due
---	--

*The exam is given on weekdays nearest to the 1st.

The student must submit the petition no later than the date shown (April 15 or October 15). The student may opt to postpone the exam only once to the alternate date. If the student does not take the exam on the alternate date, then the process must be repeated (student submits new petition for new set of questions).

Grading procedures for the exam will include an initial independent evaluation of the exam by each faculty in the special education program followed by a program meeting to discuss the vote and make a final decision. The student will not receive the individual faculty vote. Only the outcome of the faculty voting and overall feedback will be conveyed to the student. The final decision for passing the comprehensive examination will be made by the faculty based on the scoring criteria below. Both components must be passed. Failure of the exam is defined as failing both components of the exam or a recommendation of remediation in the two components. Specific criteria for passing/not passing the comprehensive examination are as follows:

For Component 1 (in-class written exam), the criterion for a pass decision is passing all three questions. Remediation is recommended if one question only is failed. If the student fails two or more questions on the exam, then the student fails Component 1.

For Component 2 (research article critiques), the criterion for a pass decision is passing both single-subject and group design research critiques. Remediation is recommended if either one of the two research article critiques is failed. If the student fails both research article critiques, then the student fails Component 2.

A recommendation for one remediation will be scheduled within one month of grading the entire exam. The remediation process will require the student to adequately respond to oral questions by the faculty to probe the student's knowledge of the topic. The faculty will meet privately at the end of the examining period to vote pass or fail. If the student fails to adequately remediate the failed question, the student is deemed to have failed that component of the exam, and therefore the exam.

Recognition will be given for outstanding performance (high pass), which is defined as receiving a high pass rating (scoring criteria to be developed) by the majority of the faculty on at least one of the two components and no failures.

University policy applies to failure (a new petition should be submitted for new questions no sooner than 5 months after the failed exam; only one retake is allowed). If the student fails the second exam, the student will be exited from the doctoral program.

Evaluation. All faculty in the Special Education Program will grade both components.

Evaluation Criteria for Written Exam

The criteria for passing the in-class written exam will emphasize the following elements:

Content - information related to subject matter that is adequately expressed in support of the question. Characteristics include (a) clear main points, (b) no contradictions or irrelevancies, and (c) fully answered questions as addressed.

Organization - a sense of order, ability to stay on topic, and ability to relate all details to a central idea or argument. Characteristics include (a) logical order, (b) clarity, no circular arguments, (c) relates details to support central idea or argument, and (d) stays on target topic.

Citation of Research - research evidence, not opinion, to support central idea or argument. Characteristics include (a) quality studies (basic, key references; use of current research as much as possible), (b) review studies, if appropriate, (c) adequate supporting references.

The following scoring rubric will be used to grade the exam.

<i>Score</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
High Pass	<p><u>Content</u> (Defined as information related to subject matter that is adequately expressed in support of the question)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considered all or most information related to the topic. No necessary information (i.e., main points and supporting details) is overlooked and there is no padding.• Sound information with no errors or contradictions.• Common characteristics include (a) originality/insight, (b) clear main points and details that support central idea or argument, (c) no contradictions, and (d) question completely answered. <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p><u>Organization</u> (Defined as a sense of order and ability to stay on topic)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay is carefully paragraphed and includes an introduction, body, and conclusion.• Information is logically ordered from beginning to end according to the demands of the question.• Main points are clear (i.e., uses organizational signals such as first, second, etc.)• Common characteristics include (a) logical order, (b) target topic maintained, no circular arguments, and (d) clarity. <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p><u>Citations</u> (Defined as research evidence, not opinion, to support central idea or argument)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essay includes current and good supporting evidence in terms of appropriate and adequate (exceeds basic, key references) research support.• Common characteristics include (a) key representative citations, (b) quality studies, (c) review studies, if relevant (d) sufficient number of references.
Pass	<p><i>All three features (content, organization, and references) are present, but not at the level required for a high pass)</i></p> <p><u>Content</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The essay presents information (i.e., main points and details) that indicates the student has considered most information related to the subject.

- The essay contains no factual errors or irrelevancies in the context of the subject matter.
- Less insight than a high pass answer

AND

Organization

- Although information is paragraphed (includes introduction, body, and conclusion), it may not be logically ordered according to the demands of the question.
- Main points are clear (i.e., uses organizational signals such as first, second, etc.)

AND

Citations

- The references are relevant and adequate (basic, key references).

Low Pass

One of the three features (content, organization, citations is not adequate

I

Content

- The essay presents sound information that indicates the student has given careful consideration to all or most information (i.e., main points and details) related to the subject. Information contains no factual errors or irrelevancies in the context of the subject matter.

AND

Organization

- Information is carefully paragraphed and logically ordered from beginning to end according to the demands of the question (i.e., main points and details are clearly organized).

BUT

Citations

- Although references are present and current, they do not include basic, key references.

II

Organization

- Information is carefully paragraphed and logically ordered from beginning to end according to the demands of the question (i.e., main points and details are clearly organized).

AND

Citations

- The references are relevant and adequate.

BUT

Content is inadequate for any one of the following reasons:

- The information presented indicates that the student lacks adequate understanding (surface level as opposed to depth of understanding) of the subject because the information presented is vague or ambiguous and/or contains a minor (inconsequential) error. Although most main points are specified, they are not described in detail.

III

Content

- The essay presents sound information that indicates the student has given careful consideration to all or most information related to the subject.

AND

Citations

- The references are relevant and adequate.

BUT

Organization is inadequate for any one of the following reasons:

- Information is not carefully paragraphed and/or logically ordered according to the demands of the question (e.g., details are presented in a random/haphazard order.
- Main points are not clear (must be inferred).

Fail

One or more of the three features (content, organization, citations) is either absent or is not sufficient for a low pass

Content

- The information presented indicates that the student lacks adequate understanding (surface level as opposed to depth of understanding) of the subject because the information presented is vague or ambiguous. The essay does not communicate clear understanding of the topic AND the essay contains one or more errors in terms of either (a) unclear or incorrect main points, (b) contradictions or irrelevancies, and (c) omissions (i.e., incomplete answer).

Organization is inadequate for any two or more of the following reasons:

- Essay is not carefully paragraphed with an introduction, body, and conclusion and/or not logically ordered according to the demands of the question.
- Student does not stay on target topic. For example, essay is characterized by circular arguments and opinion for the most part.
- Main points must be inferred and/important details are omitted.

Citations

- The references are not current or adequate. Either there is no supporting evidence, or when present, it is weak (not relevant basic, key references).

Evaluation Criteria for Journal Article Critiques

Introduction

___ Critique provides a succinct overview of the study

Strengths of Study

___ Critique describes strengths of the study

Limitations of the Study

___ Critique identifies all major limitations of the study

___ Critique considers limitations across all sections of the manuscript, if relevant (Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion)

___ Critique delineates specific weaknesses

___ Critique offers constructive alternatives for each limitation, if possible

Conclusion

___ Critique contains concluding paragraph summarizing strengths and limitations

___ Critique includes recommendation regarding publication (publish as is, publish with revision, revise and resubmit for further evaluation, do not publish)

General

___ Tone of the critique is positive and constructive

___ Critique is clearly and concisely written

Score

Characteristics

Above Standard

Critique includes a description of major strengths and *all* significant weaknesses. The nature of the weaknesses is fully described and alternative suggestions are strong. Introductory and concluding paragraph are succinct and explicit. Critique is constructive and clearly written.

At Standard

Critique identifies major strengths and *most* of the major weaknesses and nature of the weaknesses are fully described and alternative suggestions are strong OR Critique identifies major strengths and all major weaknesses but detail or alternative suggestions are adequate but not fully elaborated.

Approaching Standard

Critique identifies major strengths and *most* of the major strengths or weaknesses, but detail or alternative suggestions are weak.

Unacceptable

Critique does not identify strengths or most of major weaknesses.

DISSERTATION

The student should carefully study the university guidelines for the dissertation. Remember that the dissertation must be approved at least 6 weeks prior to graduation.

Content and Quality. The dissertation must reflect original research and be of publishable quality (however, publication itself is not a criterion for approval of the dissertation). The research must be an empirical study. Surveys and historical research may be appropriate pilots, but are not adequate as dissertations. The style and quality of writing must meet APA guidelines. Human subjects' rights must be respected in adherence with university guidelines.

Preparation. The dissertation is developed in consultation with a dissertation advisor. This may or may not be the person's program advisor, but should be a Special Education faculty member. Faculty members outside of Special Education may also be appropriate, but the Special Education faculty must approve any dissertation advisor for the student in the program.

Each dissertation advisor has the prerogative to set specific guidelines for the preparation of the proposal. However, these guidelines should be explicit. The student and the dissertation advisor select the dissertation committee. One member must be from outside the special education program. The proposal is submitted to this committee when approved by the advisor.

Proposal Evaluation. Upon advisor approval, the student submits the written proposal to the committee. Typically, an oral defense of the proposal will not be held until the student has negotiated a written draft that satisfies all committee members or the advisor judges the need for the committee to meet. In the meeting, each member asks questions about the proposal. At the end of the meeting, the members decide if the proposal is acceptable. All members of the committee must accept the proposal.

Final Evaluation. The student must not begin to collect data for this research until both human subjects and dissertation committee approval have been obtained. Any changes necessary should be submitted in a letter to the committee for approval. The final, complete written dissertation must be submitted to the dissertation advisor for approval prior to submission to the committee. In Special Education, a written draft of the dissertation must have the informal approval of all committee members. A final oral defense is then held.

It is extremely important that students obtain and follow the written guidelines for preparation and typing of the dissertation and the time line for submission of the dissertation for graduation.

Time Limit. All doctoral students have 7 years post master's to complete the degree from the time they are admitted into the program. An extension of time will only be considered if the student has a passed proposal. Approval of the extension is not

guaranteed and must be considered by the department chair. Students should plan to finish the program in the 7 year limit. Students who enter with the supervisor's certificate from Lehigh may petition for a credit reduction, but this limits the program to 6 years. Students are urged to allow at least two of the seven years for completion of the dissertation.

OTHER

1. It is mandatory that doctoral students attend and participate in Research forums. The research forums present an opportunity for doctoral candidates to critically think and evaluate research studies in addition to conceptualizing their own qualifier and dissertation studies. The research forums are usually scheduled once or twice a month at the beginning of the academic year by the program coordinator.
2. Doctoral students' course of study will be reviewed and approved by their advisor in the first year by reviewing the IDP and formally approved by the special education faculty following the qualifying exam.
3. International students must maintain full-time status (9 credit hours for fall and spring semesters) during their course of study in the doctoral program.
4. Requests for a reasonable accommodation (e.g., change from two long sittings to three sittings for taking the comprehensive exam) for a disability (physical or learning) must be provided in writing to the faculty in advance in order to provide the student with appropriate academic accommodations. Faculty may request formal verification of the disability.

NOTE: Students who request accommodation after failing will not be given special concession.

5. It is preferred that doctoral students are full-time. Exceptions are research scientists who must be actively involved in research and complete residency of 18 credits in a calendar year.
6. **A Guideline for successful completion of the program:** Form support groups and network with other doctoral students.

COMPETENCIES FOR COLLEGE TEACHING

DATES DEMONSTRATED

1.0 **Course Planning**

- 1.1 Write a course syllabus that reflects current research and practice
- 1.2 State course competencies
- 1.3 State criteria for student evaluation
- 1.4 Plan a well balanced semester schedule

2.0 **Course Delivery**

- 2.1 State purpose/goals of lecture
- 2.2 Present well prepared, organized lecture
- 2.3 Interact with students with poise and respect
- 2.4 Present alternative teaching activities (e.g., small group activities) to illustrate key points
- 2.5 Lead class discussion

3.0 **Student evaluation**

- 3.1 Develop an answer key (rubric) for the exam (especially if essay) and participate in grading the exam.

4.0 **Research**

- 4.1 Prepare a manuscript for collaborative writing with the instructor based on the topics in the class OR participate in a research study related to the course content with the instructor.

POLICY AGREEMENT

I, _____, have read and agree with the attached policy for the doctoral program. I realize that this policy differs in some ways from that in existence when I entered the program, but agree to the changes as written.