New Program Requirements for the Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction

In effect for students who began their studies in the fall semester of 2012 or after.

Milestones in the Ph.D. program have been revised to provide students more timely feedback on their progress, as well as to be sure they are well-prepared for the challenges of the dissertation process. The new milestones include 1) A Gateway Review after completing the first 12 credits of doctoral study; 2) a course-based inquiry tool requirement; and 3) a doctoral comprehensive exam structured around a pilot study to be carried out by each student, presented in journal article format and defended orally.

Doctoral Gateway Review

**Purpose:** A review of students’ writing skill, scholarly thinking ability, and understanding of research, as well as a sense of students’ strengths and where more work is needed (a formative assessment).

**Overview:** This review requires the student to submit a 10- to 12-page paper (double-spaced excluding references) that demonstrates the student’s developing understanding of research in a specific area of inquiry. This is a take-home, no grade review to be completed only one time.

- The paper can be started at any time but must be completed within the first full month of the semester following that in which the student completes the first 12 credits at the University at Albany. The student may apply for an extension at the discretion of the advisor.

- The student cannot be certified to have completed the Inquiry Course requirements until the Gateway Review is completed.

**Components of the Gateway Review Paper:**

1. **Problem statement in a specified area of inquiry**

   This statement may include research questions, but it must include a discussion of why this area of inquiry is important and how it relates to other important areas of inquiry in education.

2. **Preliminary review of the literature as related to the problem statement in the area of inquiry**

   This review should include attention to the “big ideas” that characterize this area of inquiry and should reflect an adequate knowledge of the key concepts, questions, research, and scholars that define the field.
3. Possible directions for future research

This section should reflect the student’s understanding of the field and interest in specific questions or problems that might be explored in future research.

Gateway Review Procedures:

1. The student has the responsibility of submitting the Gateway Review paper to the department secretary within the first full month of the semester following that in which the student completed the first 12 credits in the Ph.D. program. This will typically be February or September.

2. Once the paper is submitted to the department, the secretary informs the faculty of the submission. The faculty has 6 weeks to review the paper.

3. A discussion of the paper by the full faculty is scheduled for a faculty meeting no later than 6 weeks after submission. At that meeting, faculty members discuss their assessment of the paper and make recommendations to the student. The student’s advisor keeps a record of the recommendations made at that meeting.

4. Following the meeting, the advisor drafts a document summarizing the faculty review discussion. This document is distributed to the faculty for comment. The final version must be endorsed by a majority of the faculty.

5. The student receives the final review document, which is also placed in the student’s file. This document serves as one piece of evidence of the student’s progress in the program. Students will meet with the advisor to discuss recommendations and make plans for areas in need of improvement.

6. The student writes a memorandum of understanding in response to the review, after consulting with his/her advisor, that offers specific plans for addressing any problems or weaknesses. This memorandum is signed by the student and the advisor and then is attached to the review document in the student’s file.
**Gateway Review Rubric:**

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>1 (Improvement Needed)</th>
<th>2 (Competent)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Shows need for improvement in articulating ideas with clarity and coherence</td>
<td>Shows ability to articulate ideas with clarity and coherence</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scholarly Thinking Ability</strong></td>
<td>Shows need for improvement in ability to use evidence; to consider diverse perspectives and base analysis on an informed position</td>
<td>Shows ability to use evidence; Shows ability to consider diverse perspectives and based on careful analysis takes an informed position</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding of Research</strong></td>
<td>Shows need for improvement in ability to explain and interpret research; ability to identify major concepts, theories, and major methodological paradigms</td>
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**Inquiry Tool Requirement**

The University at Albany requires that doctoral students demonstrate competence in “research tools” appropriate to their professional specialties. In ETAP, this demonstration of skill with research tools is fulfilled through formal coursework applied to the graduate program.

**Required Coursework**

Research in education draws on a wide variety of research methodologies, drawing from traditions in history, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, sociology, linguistics, and other disciplines. Within these traditions, specific methods of inquiry are sometimes roughly divided into those which are quantitative and those that are primarily qualitative. To insure a breadth of understanding of current research methods, students should develop:

a) familiarity with the premises of inquiry and methodologies of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to educational research; and

b) the competence to employ one or more of these approaches in dissertation research.

These requirements are met through the completion of at least one course in each area (qualitative and quantitative), and at least two additional courses in one area of inquiry (four courses in all, totaling at least 12 credits).

The advisor must preapprove all courses that a student intends to use to fulfill the Research Tool Requirement.

**Minimum Grades**

A minimum grade of B+ in any one course and an A- average across all four advisor-approved courses are required to fulfill the Research Tool Requirement.

**Courses Offered**

A wide variety of relevant inquiry-related courses are offered in the Department, in other departments in the School of Education, and in other departments of the University. An incomplete list of inquiry courses follows:

**General Research Methodology**

ETAP 741: Advanced Issues in Methodology  
ETAP 743: Meta-analysis and Literature Review in Educational Research  
ETAP 771: Research Design Seminar in Educational Theory and Practice  
ETAP 772: Inquiry Skills in Program Development II  
ETAP 781: Research in Practice II  
ETAP 826: Advanced Methods for Studying Learning in Technology-Enriched Contexts
Qualitative Methods

ETAP 776: Theory and Practices of Interviewing in Interpretive Research
ETAP 777: Qualitative Research Methods
ETAP 778: Qualitative Research Field Methods

Quantitative Methods

EPSY 530: Statistical Methods I
EPSY 630: Statistical Methods II
EPSY 734: Multivariate Analysis with Computer Applications
ANT 600: Quantitative Methods in Anthropology
ANT 601: Advanced Quantitative Methods in Anthropology

Specific courses should be chosen in consultation with the student’s advisor, keeping in mind the twin goals of familiarity with diverse traditions (one course in each area) and competence to work within a particular tradition (two additional courses in one area). General research methodology courses may count as either quantitative or qualitative with the consent of the advisor.
Doctoral Comprehensive Exam

Purpose: From University website: “[to] ascertain general knowledge of a subject, acquaintance with scholarly research methods and skills, [and ability to] organize and present materials.”

Components of the Exam

Introductory Statement

This statement includes a description of the student’s trajectory of study in the doctoral program that reflects growing knowledge of chosen fields and understanding of the major ideas, issues, research and questions that characterize the field.

Part I: Completed study

This paper must be a completed pilot study carried out by the student that demonstrates knowledge of research design and reflects experience with data collection and analysis. This paper can be based on a paper that was previously submitted for a course like ETAP 781 or ETAP 778, or it can be a pilot study conducted as an independent study under the direction of the student’s advisor. This paper will be in a research article format.

This paper must be an executed study carried out independently by the student that
- demonstrates knowledge of research design
- reflects experience with data collection and analysis
- shows readiness to carry out a dissertation study in the students’ chosen area of inquiry.

Part II: A public presentation to the examining committee

The student will present the study to an examining committee in a public forum. The committee will question the student about the study; other faculty and students will be welcome to attend.

Procedures

After consultation with his or her advisor, the student notifies the department secretary that he/she is ready to submit the exam papers.

Examining committee: The committee chair and member are assigned by the department; the advisor is *ex officio*.

The examining committee will have one month to review the exam papers and schedule the public presentation. The committee will evaluate the student after the public presentation.

Evaluation criteria: The exam taken as a whole should demonstrate:
1. knowledge of areas of inquiry

2. knowledge of research methodology

3. competence in carrying out research

4. competence in presenting research in oral and written forms

Possible Outcomes:

Pass, demonstrating competence in all 4 areas.

Revise/Resubmit
• If the student is in need of improvement in 1, 2, or 3 areas (see above), the student may be asked to revise and resubmit with the same committee.
• This committee will have discretion in specifying what the student needs to do in revising the exam. This would include minor revisions to any one component of the exam as well as complete revisions of parts of the exam.

Fail/Retake
• If the student is in need of improvement in all 4 areas, the student will be required to retake the exam with a new committee.
• If a revised and resubmitted exam fails to demonstrate competence in all 4 areas, the student will be required to retake the exam with a new committee.

A student who fails on the first submission of the exam will have only one opportunity to retake the exam within 12 months from the date of the completion of the initial exam process.