Ph.D. Program Review

&

Candidacy Examination Procedures for

Early Childhood Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

The University of Texas at Austin
(effective Fall 1992)
Ph.D Program Review & Candidacy Examination Procedures  
Early Childhood Education

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Evaluating Ph.D. Students in Early Childhood Education
(entering in Fall 1992 or later)

First Review

Purpose

1. to monitor and evaluate the student's progress in the doctoral program;
2. to advise the student on planning his/her program of study.

Scheduling

The review will be scheduled when students have completed 18 hours of coursework in the doctoral program of which at least 3 hours will be a research course. The ECE faculty will establish a designated time in each semester for scheduling all students ready for the first review. The review will be scheduled as an informal interview for each individual student with the area faculty present. The ECE area will notify students as to date of review. Students will then be responsible for notifying the area of their intentions to go through the review and for scheduling their interview.

Transfer students will be reviewed when they have completed at least 18 hours of C & I graduate courses.

Review Criteria

Specifically, the review will be based on:

1) student's grade transcript, including work in progress,
2) student's participation/experience in research,
3) student's list of written papers and the selected example of written work turned in to faculty members, and
4) students' discussion of their interests/direction which they think they will pursue, such as Dissertation topic, intended area of work, etc.

A grade point of at least 3.0 must be maintained for the first 18 hours in C & I.

Procedures

Two weeks prior to the scheduled review, students will submit to the area faculty members:

1) a copy of their transcript, including work in progress,
2) a list of participation/experience in research, and
3) a list of written papers with one example of written work.

Considered in the review will be each student's progress, based on grades in required courses (including foundations and research methodology courses) and faculty assessments of student progress in research.

Decisions

Decisions will be made by consensus of the Early Childhood faculty. Probation conditions may be specified by the Early Childhood Education faculty on an individual basis. It is expected that conditions will entail such prescriptions as coursework, independent readings, etc. Dismissal options will follow the guidelines of The Graduate School.

Reporting Procedures

Area faculty will inform the student of the results of the First Review immediately following the interview(s). The Early Childhood Education faculty will then report results of deliberations to the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Adviser's office. Notification of the Area's decisions will be communicated to the student by the C & I Graduate Office.

Mid-Program Review (after 27 hours)

Purpose

1. to monitor and evaluate the student's progress in the doctoral program;
2. to advise the student on planning his/her program of study.

Scheduling

The Mid-Program Review will be conducted when students have completed between 27 and 36 hours in the doctoral program at UT Austin. The ECE faculty will establish a designated time in each semester for scheduling all students ready for the Mid-Program review. The ECE area will notify all eligible students as to date of review. Students will then be responsible for notifying the area of their status, their intentions to go through the review, and for scheduling their interview.

Review Criteria

The review will be conducted as an informal interview for each individual student with the area faculty present. Considered will be 1) the content and quality of the required research project, 2) student progress, 3) remaining work, and 4) plans for Candidacy.
**Procedures**

Three weeks prior to the scheduled review, students will submit a report of research conducted while in the program to the area faculty members. The report may be based on a study (or series of studies) individually conducted or conducted under the direction of an area faculty member. The research report will likely be based on research conducted under the supervision of or in collaboration with UT graduate faculty, usually under the auspices of the EDC 396T, Directed Research.

**Research Report**

Students will consult with a supervising faculty member with regard to preparation and submission of the research report. The written report will follow the APA guidelines for research reports. It will be submitted to the designated area faculty members for review and reaction. Students will also present the completed research at the Doctoral Seminar as a panel presentation to area faculty and other graduate students.

Faculty may choose to advise that the report be submitted to a refereed journal for which research is most appropriate and/or be submitted for inclusion on the program of a professional conference. However, it is not necessary that the research report be submitted for publication for a successful Mid-Program Review.

The final copy of the research report may be co-authored by the professor who collaborated in the research study or with whom the student participated in research.

**Decisions**

Area faculty will judge the research report to be of high quality, based on a range of criteria, including importance of question, appropriateness and rigor of methods, comprehensive review, clarity of presentation. Split decisions or ambiguity of judgments with regard to a report will lead to review by an additional faculty member, until a clear majority is reached. Results may include decisions to continue in the program, to revise the research report, or to undertake another research project/report. Continuation in the program is contingent on a favorable Mid-Program Review. Dismissal options will follow the guidelines of The Graduate School.

**Reporting Procedures**

Area faculty will inform the student of the results of the Mid-Program Review immediately following the interview(s). The Early Childhood Education faculty will then report results of deliberations to the Curriculum and Instruction Graduate Adviser's office. Notification of the program area's decisions will be communicated to the student by the C & I Graduate Office.
Candidacy Examination

Purpose

• to evaluate the student's understanding of content important to the field of early childhood education;
• to evaluate the student's understanding of the processes of research related to the field of early childhood education
• to evaluate the student's preparedness to conduct a dissertation study.

To be admitted for candidacy for the Ph.D., students will be examined by the faculty in the Early Childhood Education program area through a written examination followed by an oral examination over the written examination.

Scheduling

When a student has completed the First and Mid-Program Reviews and during the semester prior to the completion of all coursework, he or she is eligible to schedule the Candidacy Examination. The planning for the examination is done with the chairperson of the student's Candidacy Examination committee. The student, in conjunction with the faculty members selected for the committee, will set the dates for the Comprehensive and Specialization Examinations (Parts 1 and 2) at the convenience of faculty and student. The exam will be scheduled through the Curriculum & Instruction Graduate Office. (See Description of the Candidacy Examination Components for an explanation of each part.) Thereafter, the Oral Defense (Part 3) will be scheduled by the chair, committee members, and student.

Candidacy Examination Committee Constituency

The Candidacy Examination committee will consist of a chairperson and four other faculty members with the following stipulations:

• The chair or one of two co-chairs must be from the Early Childhood Education Program Area.
• A minimum of three members of the committee must be representative of the student’s program area.
• One member of the committee must be from another department (or may be from another institution).

The Candidacy Examination committee need not be the student’s Dissertation Committee; however, it is recommended that at least one member of the Candidacy Examination Committee be on the student's Dissertation Committee.
Components of the Candidacy Examination

Candidacy examinations consist of three parts: Part 1) a four-hour Comprehensive Examination related to broad knowledge of the subject field; Part 2) a four-hour Specialization Examination related more specifically to the student’s areas of expertise, interest, and research; and Part 3) a two-hour Oral Defense in which the student is expected to elaborate or justify the written examination before the Candidacy Examination Committee.

Description of Examination Components

**Comprehensive Examination (Part 1)** is a four-hour examination that will be prepared by the Student's Examination Committee faculty, representing the knowledge structure of the Area.

**Specialization Examination (Part 2)** is a four-hour examination prepared expressly in the student's area of interest, expertise, and research by the Candidacy Committee.

**Oral Defense (Part 3)** is a two-hour oral examination conducted by the student’s Candidacy Examination Committee and open to any additional readers of the examination who have interest in the student’s performance. It is expected that the written examination serve as the basis for the oral defense.

Scheduling the Written Exams

Students will schedule the Candidacy Examination after they have completed the First and Mid-Program Reviews and during the semester prior to the completion of all course work.

**Step 1:** When students are ready to begin their candidacy examinations, they should choose the Candidacy Examination Committee which will supervise them through all three parts (1, 2, and 3). Refer to the attached sheet for information about selecting Candidacy Committee Members. (NOTE: Because a smooth transition from Candidacy Committee to Dissertation Committee is desirable, the Graduate Adviser recommends that as students choose members for the Candidacy Committee, they should bear in mind the requirements for membership on the Dissertation Committee.)

**Step 3:** When students have secured agreement of five faculty members to serve on the Candidacy Committee and are ready to schedule specific writing dates for each part, they pick up from the Graduate Coordinator at Education Building 406 the following two forms: 1) **Intent to Take C & I Doctoral Candidacy Exam**, and 2) **Program of Work**. The Intent form asks for a listing of the names of the Candidacy
Examination Committee members and the dates and times scheduled for Parts 1 & 2. Decide on a four-hour block of time in which to write each part. Each time period should be scheduled Monday through Friday, beginning and ending between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Program of Work form, a listing of courses taken and following the guidelines of Early Childhood Education, is to be completed by typing. Both the Intent form and the Program of Work should be returned to the Graduate Coordinator about two to three weeks before the student wants to take Part 1.

Step 4: The Graduate Coordinator will then send to members of the Candidacy Examination Committee a memo officially appointing them, a call for questions, and a copy of the student's Program of Work. For Part 1, the chair of the committee will confer with the committee members to decide on the questions for that part; those questions will be prepared and given to the Graduate Coordinator at least 3 working days before that exam. For Part 2, each committee member will be asked to write and submit one question to the chair of the committee. The chair will then include his/her question, and hand the final version of the Part 2 examination to the Graduate Coordinator at least 3 working days before the exam. For each part of the exam, students are responsible for making sure that the Graduate Coordinator has the questions in sufficient time. Students will be sent a copy of the call for questions; that memo will also state the room in which the student will write the examination.

Step 5: If student wishes to use paper and pencil: On the day of the exam, the student will go first to EDB 406 to pick up the examination. Bring paper and a pen with black ink (or a #2 pencil); student may ask for a dictionary if desired.

If the student wishes to use a computer: Prior arrangements must be made with the C & I Graduate Coordinator.

Step 6: After completing the examination, the student turns in the question sheet and answers to the Graduate Coordinator in EDB 406, who will duplicate the questions and responses and send a copy of the entire examination to each committee member and to the student.

Scheduling the Oral Defense

For the Oral Defense, it is the student's responsibility to schedule a two-hour block of time on a date agreeable to all members of the Candidacy Committee. When the date and time are firm, notify the C & I Graduate Coordinator, who will send a written notice of date, time and place of Part 3 to each committee member and to the student (usually at the same time the Comprehensive and Specialization—Parts 1 and 2—Examination responses are mailed).
It is advisable to schedule the Oral Defense (Part 3) approximately two to three weeks after the last written examination. The lapse of time between the last written examination and Part 3 allows the Graduate Coordinator opportunity to duplicate the entire examination and the committee time to review the written responses.

**Evaluating the Candidacy Examinations**

The entire written Candidacy Examination (Parts 1 and 2) will be read and evaluated by the Candidacy Examination Committee, who will be asked to judge the adequacy of the student’s written answers. To ensure that the Comprehensive Examination (Part I) is satisfactory to the Early Childhood Education Area faculty, program area faculty along with selected faculty from related areas will review the Comprehensive Examination. In addition, any faculty member is welcome to attend any student’s Oral Defense.

**Decisions**

A decision to pass the student on both the Comprehensive and Specialization Exams, and the Oral Defense means the student will be allowed to advance to candidacy.

A decision to pass with conditions means the student will be allowed to advance to candidacy as soon as specified conditions are met. The imposition of these conditions is intended to help the student strengthen possible areas that are of concern to the faculty (e.g., additional research coursework, additional involvement in research projects, additional courses in content areas). The Candidacy Examination Committee chair is usually responsible for monitoring student work on the conditions set.

A decision to fail will carry the recommendation that the student be dropped from the program or that the student retake either or both parts of the Candidacy Examination. In the case of a recommendation to redo, the student will be given specific suggestions on how to strengthen areas of weakness.

**Reporting Procedures**

A student is told following the Oral Defense whether he or she is being recommended for advancement to candidacy without conditions, advancement with conditions, asked to retake the examination in total or in part, oral and/or written, or dropped from the program. One retake is permitted according to Graduate Studies Committee policy.

The Candidacy Committee Chair then reports results of deliberation to the C&I Graduate Adviser’s office. When the student is recommended for advancement to candidacy, the Graduate Studies Committee in C&I will vote on the recommendation. The C & I Graduate Coordinator will then notify the student of the results and guide the preparation and submission of candidacy papers.