

IST Qualifying Exam Procedure – EdD Majors

The IST qualifying exam for EdD students is the capstone experience in the first phase of the doctoral program, and must be completed successfully prior to a student being admitted to candidacy. As such, the purpose of the qualifying exam is to: (1) determine the general knowledge of our EdD students with respect to the breadth of IST content in our field, and (2) verify the ability of our students to conceptualize and complete research for their dissertation.

With these goals in mind, the qualifying exam will consist of three questions:

- Question 1: (Departmental question) Focus on assessing general breadth and depth of knowledge of IST concepts and topics, as well as the ability to critically examine current research in our field.
- Question 2: (Departmental question) Focus on assessing general breadth and depth of knowledge of educational (and specifically IST-relevant) research methods and procedures.
- Question 3: (Committee question) Focus on assessing a student's specific breadth and depth of knowledge relevant to their proposed dissertation topic.

Qualifying exam preparation:

1. One week prior to the beginning of the semester (Fall, Spring), all current EdD students will be notified via email of the format of the qualifying exam. Students will be informed that if they plan to take the qualifying exam that semester, they must notify the IST departmental administrative assistant prior to a specific date (generally the date that coincides with the beginning of the third week of classes).
2. The departmental administrative assistant will compile the list of students requesting to take the qualifying exam (along with the name of their major advisor), and will provide the list to the chair of the IST qualifying exam committee.
3. The qualifying exam committee chair will provide the list of student(s) requesting to take the qualifying exam to each major advisor. The major advisor will verify that the student is ready to take the qualifying exam, and will approve (or disapprove) the request.
4. In consultation with students and IST faculty (particularly advisory committee members), the qualifying exam committee chair will identify the dates the qualifying exam will be administered. Ideally, the dates for the exam will be at the beginning (Mon – Tues) or end (Thurs – Fri) of a week, and the dates will be in the second half of the semester (late October – early November in Fall; late March – early April in Spring). Students will be notified of the date as soon as possible in order to provide adequate time for them to make travel arrangements.
5. Prior to the end of the 5th week of the semester, each student will meet/consult with their IST advisory committee members and collaboratively develop the **committee question** for the qualifying exam. The question should be tailored to the interests and potential dissertation topic of the student, and should generally provide the student with an opportunity to explore in-depth theoretical foundations and current literature related to that topic. The advisory committee has the final decision on approval of the committee question.
6. In consultation with IST faculty, the chair of the qualifying exam committee will generate the two **departmental questions** for the qualifying exam. These questions will be agreed upon prior to the middle of the semester (October 15 for Fall, March 1 for Spring).

Qualifying exam administration procedures:

Prior to exam date

1. Student will complete a draft of their **committee question** independently, and email a copy of their draft to their advisory committee members **two weeks prior** to the date of the qualifying exam. Advisory committee members will review the committee question and be prepared to discuss this question with the student on day 2 of the exam. If a student does not meet the deadline for submitting their committee question, then they will not be allowed to proceed with their qualifying exam that semester.
2. Student will prepare a 15-20 minute presentation that provides an overview of the key areas addressed in their response to the committee question, and will be prepared to present on day 2 of the exam.

Day 1

1. Students will arrive at the IST office (ED2276) by 7:45 AM on the date of the first day of the exam. They will be escorted to a classroom/conference room reserved for the exam by the proctor (either the IST administrative assistant or a volunteer IST faculty member). Students will be allowed to bring any materials with them they think will assist them with the exam. They will also be allowed to bring their own computer. If they do not have a computer, the department will provide one for them for purposes of completing the exam.
2. The proctor will review the “code of student conduct” with the students prior to administration of the exam. Each student must read and sign the statement prior to receiving the departmental questions.
3. The proctor will provide each student with the **first departmental question**. Students will be asked to review the question and the proctor will answer any questions from students. Students will be given 3.5 hours (8 AM – 11:30 AM) to complete the first question.
4. Once completed, students will provide an electronic version of their response to the proctor (via thumb drive or email). The proctor will verify that the file received is in an acceptable format (MS Word) and can be opened and read.
5. Students will be given a one-hour break for lunch (11:45 AM – 12:45 PM). They will be asked to return to the quals classroom by 12:45 PM. During that time, the proctor will print out a hard copy of each student’s response to the first question as a back-up.
6. Once all students have returned from lunch break, the proctor will provide each student with the **second departmental question**. Students will be asked to review the question and the proctor will answer any questions from students. Students will be given 3.5 hours (1 PM – 4:30 PM) to complete the second question.
7. Once completed, students will provide an electronic version of their response to the proctor (via thumb drive or email). The proctor will verify that the file received is in an acceptable format (MS Word) and can be opened and read.
8. Students will be dismissed for the day. At that time, the proctor will print out a hard copy of each student’s response to the second question as a back-up.

Day 2 (this also serves as the “orals” portion of the qualifying exam)

1. Student will meet with IST advisory committee at a location and time designated by the committee.

2. Student will deliver the presentation they prepared that provides an overview of their response to the departmental question.
3. Advisory committee members will address questions to the student related to the committee question response as well as any other area(s) they feel necessary to assist them with their assessment of the student's breadth and depth of IST knowledge.
4. Advisory committee will provide feedback to student regarding their committee question response.
5. If time permits, advisory committee will discuss proposed dissertation topic and timeline with student.
6. Advisory committee will inform student that the final version of the committee question response should be delivered to advisory committee members prior to the last day of classes for that semester.
7. The length of this portion of the exam should not exceed 3 hours.

Qualifying exam assessment procedures:

1. Student responses to all three questions will be reviewed using a plagiarism detection tool (e.g., turnitin.com). Detection of plagiarism will be subject to review by appropriate IST faculty. A determination of plagiarism will result in an automatic failure of the entire exam, and possibly other actions as determined by IST faculty.
2. The two departmental questions will be graded independently by two IST faculty members who are not members of the student's advisory committee. The chair of the qualifying exam committee will be responsible for assigning faculty members to students.
3. All questions will be "blind" graded using the same evaluation rubric. Only the chair of the qualifying exam committee will know faculty grading assignments.
4. Once faculty have independently graded the questions for their assigned student(s), they will meet to discuss their evaluations and come to a consensus regarding the final grade for each question. The final grade for **each** question must be either **pass** or **fail**.
5. Faculty will report their grade for each question to the qualifying exam committee chair within **two weeks** of the administration of the exam.
6. The qualifying exam committee chair will report the results of the departmental exam questions to each student.
7. A student's advisory committee will be responsible for grading the committee question and reporting the results to the student.

Qualifying exam results:

1. Results of departmental portion of qualifying exam can take three forms: pass, fail, or undecided.
2. A **pass** is given to a student if the assessment of **both** departmental questions results in a grade of pass.
3. A **fail** is given to a student if the assessment of **both** departmental questions results in a grade of fail.
4. An **undecided** is given to a student if the assessment of **one** departmental question results in a grade of pass. In this case, the student will be given two weeks to revise their response to the question that received a failing grade. Faculty graders will review the student's revised response and determine if the question warrants a passing grade. If this is the case, then the student will receive a **pass**. If not, then the student will receive a **fail**.
5. The student's advisory committee will determine whether a student passes or fails the committee question.
6. A student must pass **all three** questions to pass the qualifying exam.

7. If a student fails the qualifying exam, they have an additional opportunity to re-take the exam. A student failing the qualifying exam a second time will be encouraged to exit the program with an EdS degree.
8. A student may appeal their qualifying exam results to the **IST department chair**. The student must provide credible evidence regarding why they believe their grade on the qualifying exam is not accurate. If the department chair agrees, then the department chair will assign two additional IST faculty members to re-grade the questions and provide the results to the department chair. If the re-grading still results in a fail, then the student can appeal to the office of graduate studies.