**ECDE DOCTORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS POLICY**

Students are tested on four major subject areas:

1. Theory
2. Research Methods
3. Statistics
4. Content Specialty (Child Development)

Questions within each of the four areas above should address the following:

**DAY 1:**

1. Theory:

* Comprehensive knowledge of theories important to family sciences
* Synthesis and integration of various theories
* Application of theories to research

2. Content Specialty:

Comprehensive knowledge of child development content, including:

* Development from infancy through childhood
* Context of development
* Application to practice based work, such as child care, early education, family or agency

3. Integrating content knowledge, theory, and research

**DAY 2:**

1. Research Methods:

* Comprehensive knowledge of research methods and design (quantitative and qualitative methodologies and traditions, types of designs, etc.)
* Comprehensive knowledge of concepts related to research methods and design (reliability, validity, sampling, instrumentation, etc.)
* Knowledge of APA style
* Understanding ethics in research

2. Statistics:

* Comprehensive knowledge of basic and advanced level statistics
* Ability to identify appropriate analysis strategies
* Understanding the connection between research design and statistical analysis

Comprehensive exam questions will be constructed by the ECDE faculty, and all ECDE doctoral students who sit for comprehensive exams will receive the same questions that semester. Questions will change each semester. After completion of comprehensive exams each semester, the questions used that semester will be made available in a binder titled “Sample Comprehensive Exam Questions for ECDE Students.” This binder will be housed in the Family Sciences office for students to view.

**Day 1 and Day 2**

Day 1 and Day 2 questions will be administered one week prior to the departmental writtens, providing relief to the current issues with space limitations of the current space used to administer departmental comprehensive exams. ECDE faculty will proctor Day 1 and Day 2.

Answers to Day 1 and Day 2 questions will be evaluated by the ECDE faculty and faculty will evaluate the answers using an 80% metric (see rubrics). This means that the written answers will need to meet the objectives of the question at an 80% level, rather than 100%. If a student passes all four of the written answers at this 80% level, they may move on to “Day 3” (see “The New Day 3” below). Students will be notified about the results of their Day 1 and Day 2 examinations by departmental staff using the Comprehensive Examination Results Form.

If a student does not pass the written answers at an 80% level, he or she will be required either to complete minor revisions within the same semester, or for more substantial errors, re-sit the failed question(s) within one year of the first attempt. If a student passes 3 of the 4 questions at the 80% level, but needs minor revisions on one answer, he or she may move on to Day 3 once the minor revisions have been addressed to the satisfaction of the ECDE component faculty. Students who have successfully addressed the revisions will receive a new Comprehensive Examination Results Form signifying their readiness for Day 3. If revisions are not completed to the satisfaction of the ECDE faculty by the deadline given, the student will be required to re-sit those questions during the next semester in which comprehensive exams are offered.

A student must pass 3 of the 4 content areas in order to move forward to Day 3; therefore, if a student passes only 1 or 2 questions at the 80% level, but it is determined revisions (minor or major) are still required to pass the other 2 or 3, the student will be considered to have not passed and be required to re-sit within one year of the original attempt. Any student who earns less than 15 points (60%) on any one section of the exam will have to re-sit the entire exam within one year of the original exam date, even if the student passed the other three sections.

Students will be notified about the results of their Day 1 and Day 2 examinations by departmental staff using the Comprehensive Examination Results Form. Recommendations will be made by the ECDE faculty to assist in preparation for the re-sit in the form of a growth plan.

Failure of written questions during a second sitting will result in dismissal from the program, per departmental policy.

**The new “DAY 3”:**

Students will no longer provide an answer to the Philosophy of Science question.

Students who have passed the written comprehensive exams to the satisfaction of the ECDE faculty will move on to “Day 3” in which they will be given a five-day period to compose a mini-research proposal. This five-day period will be determined by the ECDE faculty and all students moving on to Day 3 will be asked to begin their mini-proposal on the same day at the same time and expected to work on this section as a “take home” exam. Students will create a mini proposal as follows:

**Mini Research Proposal:**

Mini proposal should include statement of a problem/issue, literature review, complete method section, complete analysis strategy, and discussion of implications of expected results

Students will continue to select 5 faculty members to serve on their degree plan committee (advisor/committee chair plus 4 additional faculty members, at least two of whom must be from the ECDE component). It will be this committee who will review and evaluate the completed mini-proposal. At the conclusion of “Day 3” the committee chair will disseminate the completed mini-proposal to the members of each student’s committee. Committee members will review and evaluate the mini-proposal using the rubric and the student will arrange a time for the entire committee to meet for the oral exam. These oral exams need not occur during the same weeks as the traditional orals occur, but rather at the convenience of the committee and the student. During the oral exam, the committee will ask the student questions about the mini proposal and make a decision about the student’s pass/fail status of the oral at the conclusion of the meeting. Students who pass the oral will move on to candidacy. Students who do not pass the oral will have to re-sit Day 3 during the next semester in which comprehensive exams are offered.

**Appeals**

The ECDE faculty values a student’s right to appeal the decision of the component and/or the student’s five-person committee if it is not satisfactory to the student. Students who wish to appeal a decision should follow the [student appeals process](http://www.twu.edu/academic-affairs/academic-complaints-appeals/) provided by Academic Affairs. Appeals should be addressed to the entire committee responsible for the decision and follow all policies and procedures of the appeals process. The committee whose decision has been appealed will meet to discuss the appeal and determine an appropriate response through a majority (2/3) vote. This response will go forward to the student.