

Approved 9/17/19

Revised 6/15/21

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**Department of Human Development,  
Family Studies, and Counseling**

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**— Doctoral Qualifying Exams Policies and Procedures  
Effective Summer 2021\***

The purpose of qualifying exams is to demonstrate scholarly competence, self-directed inquiry, synthesis and integration of course content, and the ability to conduct and disseminate research in students' niche areas in order to demonstrate readiness to move to dissertation. Students should be able to demonstrate that they can understand the research process, apply theory, and effectively conceptualize and communicate complex ideas.

Qualifying exams may be completed in the last or second to last semester of coursework as long as: (1) all research tool courses have been completed and (2) any coursework necessary for successful completion of the exams. The student's dissertation committee oversees the qualifying exams.

Note: The department may elect to generate other documents that aid in the administration of this policy. Such documents will be made available to students and will be in effect for any exams given in a particular academic year.

In collaboration with their major professor and dissertation committee, students will complete one of two options for qualifying exams:

- Written Exam
- Portfolio

### **MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

1. Students must be in their last or second to last semester of coursework.
2. Students must have completed 12 hours of research tools as follows:
  - a. One theory course (HDFS 6403 Theory Building in Family Sciences)
  - b. One advanced statistics course (e.g., HDFS 6193 Advanced Statistics for Family Sciences)
  - c. One qualitative methods course (e.g., HDFS 6203 Frameworks and Ethics for Qualitative Research in Family Sciences)
  - d. One quantitative methods course (HDFS 6693 Advanced Quantitative Research Methods in Family Sciences)
3. Students must submit the Qualifying Exams Application form (located on the department website) to the HDFSC Academic Programs Coordinator. Students should submit this form one semester in advance of the qualifying exam.

**Note:** Students may not enroll in HDFS 6983 Dissertation until they have been admitted to candidacy by the Graduate School. If all coursework has been completed prior to taking the qualifying exam, students may enroll in HDFS 6921 Research in Family Sciences the semester they take the exam.

**\* Students admitted prior to Spring 2020 may elect to follow and complete the previous qualifying exams procedures until Spring 2022.**

## **WRITTEN EXAM OPTION GUIDELINES**

The written exam option is constructed in a way for students to demonstrate integration, synthesis, and application of course content to their research domain. The written responses will help the student to apply course content to the student's dissertation proposal. The written responses must be entirely the student's work. With the approval of the student's major advisor, content written by the student during the exam process may be used for the dissertation proposal.

### **CONTENT**

In collaboration with the student, the committee will develop three questions related to the student's research and content area as outlined below.

It is the responsibility of the student to arrange a one-hour meeting with their dissertation committee. Given the number of committees in which faculty are involved, it is strongly recommended that this meeting occurs prior to the semester in which the student takes the exam. In no event may this meeting take place later than the second week of the semester in which they take the exam. Any student that does not arrange for this meeting by the deadline will not be allowed to take the exam that semester. \*Students wishing to complete their qualifying exam in a summer semester should consult with their advisor and committee members to ensure they are available during that semester.

During the first 30 minutes, the student will discuss his or her research interests and present ideas for the dissertation topic. Additionally, the student and committee members should discuss possibilities for the questions. During the final 30 minutes, the student will leave and it is recommended that the committee members use the remaining time to develop and finalize the three questions.

Once the questions are finalized, the student's major advisor will share the questions with the HDFSC Academic Programs Coordinator, who will distribute the questions and exam instructions to the student on the first day of the exam period.

The exam must be written in APA style (double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman Font, 1-inch margins). In addition to the sections outlined below, the final exam document should include a cover page, reference list, and graphs or figures (if applicable). Suggested length per section is indicated below. The maximum length of the exam should be no more than 45 pages, excluding cover page and references.

#### **1. Theory & Literature Review (15-20 pages)**

- This question will capture the theoretical underpinnings to the student's research and content area as well as situating the theory within the context of student's focused research area. The question may ask the student to compare and contrast theories, examine differences across similar frameworks/theories, or apply extant theory to the research and content area.

#### **2. Research Aims & Methodology (10-15 pages)**

- This question will encapsulate the student's research questions/hypotheses and consider the methodological approach that may be well suited for proposed research

aims. This question will also include an analysis proposal and dissemination plan. This question will build on the theory and literature review from question #1.

### **3. Implications for Practice and/or Future Research (5-10 pages)**

- This question will demonstrate the relevance and importance of the research aims by describing their implications for practice and/or future research and how the student's proposed research (identified in questions 1 & 2) will impact the field.

#### **DURATION AND SUBMISSION**

Students have up to 30 days to complete their written qualifying exam. Students will receive instructions regarding the written option, as well as the questions developed by their dissertation committee, from the HDFSC Academic Programs Coordinator. Day one will begin during the fourth week of the Fall or Spring semester (or the third week of the Summer semester) for all students completing written qualifying exams. Students needing special accommodations or those with extenuating circumstances may submit a request for alternate exam dates, along with supporting documentation, to the department chair no later than the first week of the semester in which the student will be taking the exam. Students must submit their completed answers to the HDFSC Academic Programs Coordinator by 5pm on the 30<sup>th</sup> day. The Academic Programs Coordinator will then disseminate answers to committee members.

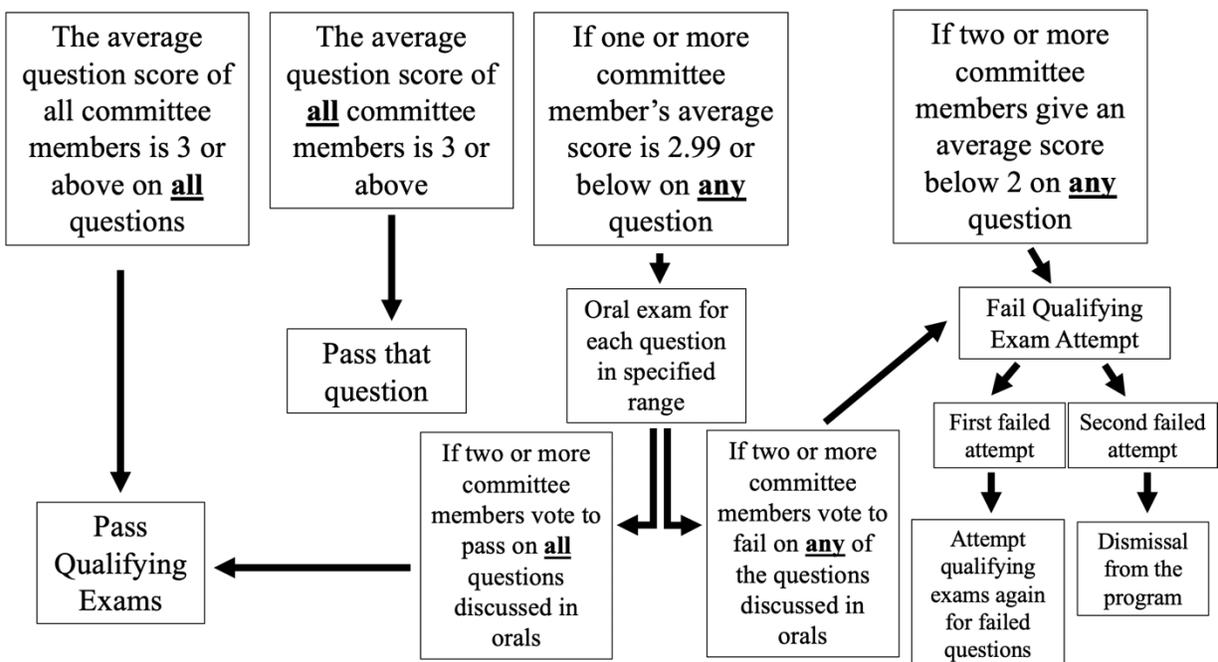
#### **CONDITIONS OF WRITING**

The written examination will be open-book and take home. However, the student may not consult with anyone about the examination. If it is discovered that academic dishonesty of any kind has occurred, the student will fail and be dismissed from the program.

#### **EVALUATION**

Dissertation committee members will evaluate the written qualifying exam according to the departmental rubrics in effect for the year in which the exam occurs. The committee will then decide the outcome as PASS, ORAL DEFENSE, or FAIL.

Students who PASS all questions are advanced to candidacy (student's advisor will submit the Request for Admission to Candidacy form to the Graduate School). Students who receive ORAL DEFENSE should consult with dissertation committee members regarding days/times and with department staff in the main office to reserve a room for a 2-hour time period. This oral defense needs to be scheduled within 15 days of notification of the exam outcome. The oral defense must be completed within the same semester or the student may have to retake the exam in a future semester. Students who FAIL must repeat the qualifying exam, if eligible. The table below illustrates this process.



Results of Evaluation	Required Steps	Outcome
PASS	No oral defense required	Student is admitted to candidacy
ORAL DEFENSE	Oral Defense of each question that did not receive a passing score	If successful, student is admitted to candidacy If unsuccessful, it is considered a failed attempt, and student has to repeat the qualifying exam the following semester, if eligible. <sup>1</sup>
FAIL	Student has to repeat the qualifying exam the following semester, if eligible. <sup>1</sup>	

<sup>1</sup>Students have two attempts at the qualifying exam. Students may choose either qualifying exam option for their second attempt. Any student who fails both attempts will be dismissed from the program.

## **PORTFOLIO OPTION GUIDELINES**

The portfolio is designed to demonstrate the student's body of work and application of knowledge in the practice of the student's major at the doctoral level. The portfolio requirements encapsulate the standards and procedures to demonstrate such proficiency. Students are responsible for accomplishing these portfolio requirements.

The portfolio is created throughout the duration of the student's tenure in the doctoral program. Students are encouraged to meet annually, during each Spring semester, with their major advisor and dissertation committee to assess progress towards completion of the portfolio option and to establish goals for the next calendar year. All items selected by the student to include in the portfolio are subject to approval by the student's major advisor and dissertation committee. Students should consult frequently with their major advisor and dissertation committee regarding questions, concerns, and feedback.

In line with TWU's mission to cultivate engaged leaders who are committed to transformational learning, discovery, and service, and the mission of the department to foster the education of family scientists, educators, and leaders who make significant and valued contributions to the quality of living, learning, and leadership in communities, schools and related human development contexts, the portfolio option consists of the following major sections:

- A. Research and Scholarship
- B. Teaching and Outreach
- C. Leadership, Service, and Citizenship
- D. Program Specific Parameters

The following describes each of these major sections, its requirements, and what documentation to maintain and gather.

### **Part A: Research & Scholarship**

1. **Research Agenda.** Students must write a 5-page paper, double spaced in APA-style that discusses the following:
  - A brief description of the student's research niche
  - The student's motivation and reason for interest in this research area
  - The student's specific methodological specialization (if applicable)
  - The student's relevant experience in the research area
  - Research goals, with timeline and measurable objectives
  - Examples of grants that support the research area
  - A justification statement that demonstrates how this research area is beneficial to the student's major area of study (e.g., for clinicians, researchers, educators, and/or policy makers)

*Required Documentation: Research Agenda*

**2. Publications.** Students must have at least 2 of the following:

- One article published or accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, ideally as first or second author
- One article with positive reviews (revise and resubmit) in a peer-reviewed journal, ideally as first or second author
- A peer-reviewed book chapter that is published or accepted for publication, ideally as first or second author

*Required Documentation:*

- Citations for all publications on CV
- Attach all manuscripts (either submitted, revised-for-resubmission, or published version)
- Attach correspondence with journal or book, including editorial feedback
- Attach evidence that the journal is peer-reviewed

**3. Presentations.** Students must have completed at least 2 from either of the following:

- One refereed workshop accepted and presented at local, state, regional, national, or international level
- One refereed poster or paper presentation at local, state, regional, national, or international level as first author

**Note:** students may complete two workshops or two poster presentations to fulfill this requirement.

*Required Documentation:*

- Citations for all presentations on CV
- Attach a copy of acceptance letters
- Attach copy of presentation materials (handouts, Power Point slides, poster)
- Attach a copy of the program pages

**4. Funding and Grant-Writing.** Students must have completed at least one of the following:

- An external fellowship or scholarship application
- A grant proposal submitted by the student (local, university, state, national, private, or public)
- A grant proposal submitted by a faculty with the student (local, university, state, national, private, or public)
  - Note: The student must get approval by the faculty beforehand that their work for the grant proposal may count toward the portfolio requirement. The student must be an active participant in all stages of the grant writing proposal, including: attending meetings, joining in discussions and conceptualization of the grant proposal, and completing all tasks assigned by the faculty.

*Required Documentation:*

- Attach a copy of the materials submitted
- Attach a confirmation of submission
- If working with a faculty member, attach confirmation that the work was approved for portfolio requirement and a statement written and signed by the faculty member describing the student's work and contribution to the grant proposal.

## **Part B: Teaching and Outreach**

**1. Teaching Philosophy Statement.** Students must write a 2-3 page, double-spaced philosophy of teaching statement. The statement should include the following:

- A description of the student's pedagogical aspirations, goals, and objectives
- Teaching method the student will or has used to reach the above goals and objectives
- A description of formal or informal assessment tools to measure learner progress
- A plan for how the student will improve upon his or her teaching

*Required Documentation: Attach teaching philosophy statement*

**2. Teaching or Outreach Experience.** Students must have completed at least 2 experiences from one or more of the following:

- Teacher of record (GTA) for one university class

*Required Documentation:*

- *Attach course syllabus*
- *Attach student evaluations (including comments)*
- *Attach evaluation of effectiveness of teaching*

- Assist for one university class, either as a graduate assistant or a teaching internship

*Required Documentation:*

- *Attach course syllabus*
- *Attach evaluation of effectiveness from teacher of record*
- *Attach student evaluations (if applicable)*

- Primary responsibility for a programmatic series of six to ten presentations for a local service agency

*Required Documentation:*

- *Evidence that identifies the program presented and the institution or agency*
- *List of all presentation materials*
- *Peer or supervisor evaluation of quality of materials and presentation*
- *Participant evaluations (including comments)*

- Ongoing clinical work or outreach with a specialized population in an institutional setting (e.g., hospital, school, service agency, etc.)

*Required Documentation:*

- *Identify institutional setting, specialized population, and role within institution*
- *Evaluation by direct supervisor*
- *Evidence of licensure (where applicable)*

- Significant involvement in research evaluation for a specific program, including creation of an evaluation report

*Required Documentation:*

- *Attach program evaluation process and documents*
- *Attach evaluation report*
- *Evaluation of direct supervisor, including description of the student's role and responsibilities in the evaluation report*

### **Part C: Leadership, Service, and Citizenship**

**1. Professional Membership.** Students must have two of the following:

- Membership in a national or international organization or society
- Membership in a local, regional, or state organization or society
- Membership in a university organization or society

*Required Documentation:*

- *Evidence of membership*

**2. Participation in Leadership or Professional Activities.** Students must select two of the following:

- Volunteer at a regional, state, national, or international conference
- Membership on a professional organization board
- Review for a refereed journal
- Review for a local, regional, state, national, or international conference
- Election to a local, regional, state, national, or international organization
- Serve as a session discussant or moderator for a regional, state, national, or international conference
- Any other activity approved by the student's major professor and dissertation committee

*Required Documentation:*

- *Official documentation or correspondence for activity selected*

### **Part D: Program Specific Parameters**

#### **CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY EDUCATION:**

There are no additional requirements for Childhood Development and Early Education students at this time.

#### **FAMILY STUDIES:**

There are no additional requirements for Family Studies students at this time.

#### **MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPY:**

**1. Philosophy of Supervision.** Students must write a philosophy of supervision (15-page maximum length), which includes the following AAMFT Philosophy of Supervision Guidelines:

- The theoretical framework that guides your work as a supervisor
- How your philosophy of supervision addresses multicultural issues and contexts
- That you think about treatment and supervision in relational terms (for example, in terms of patterns, sequence, context)
- That you are aware of patterns and sequences of replication at various systems levels (for example, interconnection and interrelationships of the individual, family, therapist, supervisor, and context of training)

- That you understand MFT supervision literature by citing recent articles, chapters, and/or books, and how his/her supervision philosophy and methods of supervision relate to the current MFT supervision literature
- That you are sensitive to the multilevel implications of developmental, biological, socio-cultural, gender, and family-of-origin issues
- The ways in which personal values, beliefs, life experiences, and theoretical assumptions impact upon your philosophy and practice of supervision
- Your theoretical consistency, whether from one prominent model or from an integrative perspective
- Your rationale for the choice of supervisory methods and how the methods facilitate achievement of supervision goals

*Required Documentation: Attach Philosophy of Supervision*

**2. Supervision Training.** Students must select two of the following:

- Supervision of 1 master's student across 1 semester
  - Assist in Prepracticum, Practicum, or Internship class
  - Supervision of 1 LMFT-Associate across at least 6 months outside of the university
- Note:** Students may complete two of any of the above options to fulfill this requirement

*Required Documentation:*

- *Supervisor evaluation of student's supervision*
- *Supervisee(s) evaluation of student's supervision*
- *Attach evidence of AAMFT Approved Supervisor Candidate Status*

### **Portfolio Oral Defense**

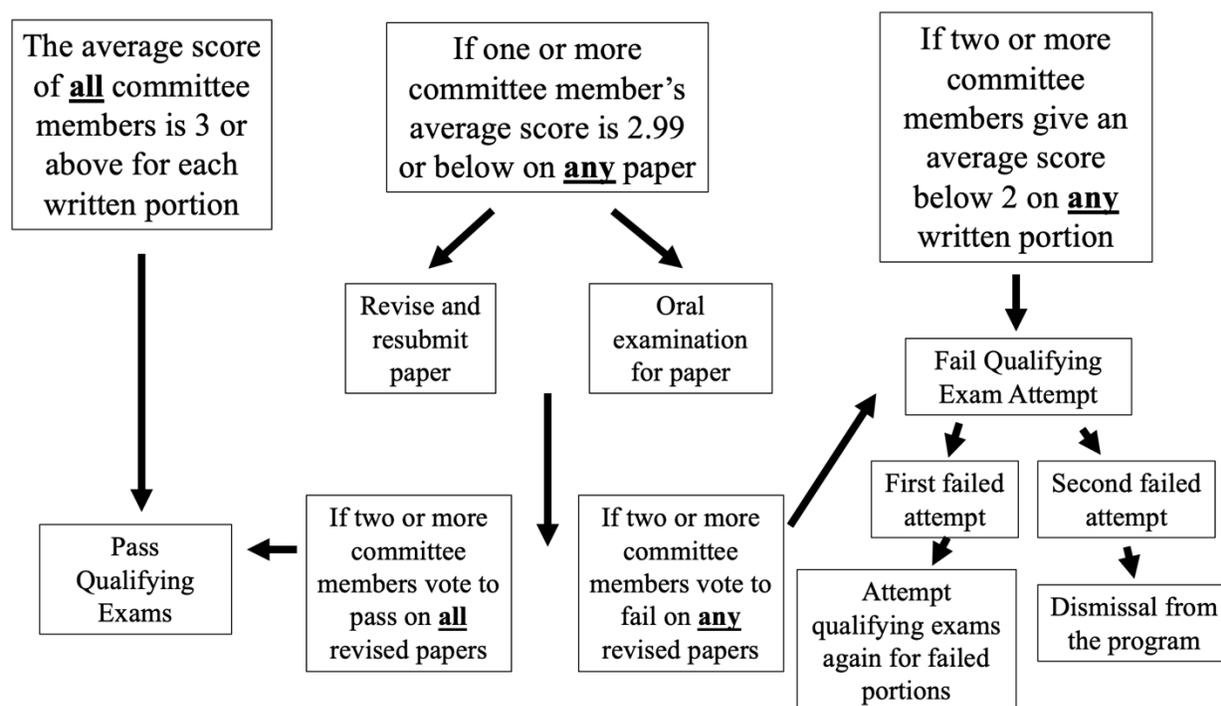
Students will arrange the oral defense by consulting with dissertation committee members regarding days/times and with department staff in the HDFSC office to reserve a room for a 2-hour time period. The student must provide a copy of the portfolio to his or her dissertation committee 2 weeks (minimum 10 working days) prior to the oral defense. Portfolios must be submitted to the student's dissertation committee no later than the first week of November in the fall semester, the first week of April in the spring semester, or the first week of July in the summer semester.

\*Students wishing to complete their qualifying exam in a summer semester should consult with their advisor and committee members to ensure they are available during that semester.

The portfolio must be submitted electronically as one document in PDF format with bookmarks linking to individual components of the document. The portfolio should be organized according to the major sections and contain an overview page (e.g., table of contents, checklist, executive summary, etc.).

Dissertation committee members will evaluate portfolio content and evidence. The written papers will be graded according to the departmental rubrics in effect for the year in which the exam occurs. The committee will then decide the outcome as PASS, REVISE AND RESUBMIT, or FAIL. Students who pass are advanced to candidacy (student's advisor will submit the Request for Admission to Candidacy form to the Graduate School). Students who receive a score below 3 on

any written portion of the portfolio will choose between 1) proceeding to oral examinations for the specified written portions or 2) revising and resubmitting the specified written portions within 10 business days. After the selected option is complete, committee members will vote on whether the student passes or fails the exam. Students who receive average scores below 2 from two or more committee members on any written portion will fail the qualifying exam attempt. The table below illustrates this process.



Results of Evaluation	Required Steps	Outcome
PASS		Student is admitted to candidacy
REVISE AND RESUBMIT	Revise required sections and resubmit to committee within 10 business days. Committee evaluates within 10 business days and shares evaluation with Academic Programs Coordinator.	If a majority of committee members vote to pass, student is admitted to candidacy If a majority of committee members vote to fail, it is considered a failed attempt, and student has to repeat the qualifying exam the following semester, if eligible. <sup>1</sup>
FAIL	Student has to repeat the qualifying exam the following semester, if eligible. <sup>1</sup>	

<sup>1</sup>Students have two attempts at the qualifying exam. Students may choose either qualifying exam option for their second attempt. Any student who fails both attempts will be dismissed from the program.