

## **HESA Qualifying Exam Process**

To qualify for nomination to candidacy, doctoral students must pass the HESA qualifying exam.

### **Prior to Application**

- A student must meet the following conditions to take the qualifying exam:
  - Have satisfied any conditions or post-matriculation requirements as related to their admission status
  - Have an appointed program advisory committee and a completed doctoral program of studies that has been reviewed and approved by the advisory committee, and submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
  - Have completed all major courses and most other doctoral coursework, with the allowable exceptions of EDUC-C788 Seminar in Research in Higher Education, also known as “Literature Review” and EDUC-C795 Dissertation Prep, with no more than six credit hours graded as incomplete
  - Have completed the early inquiry requirement (PhD program only)
- Each student works with their program committee chair (advisor) to determine readiness to take the exam and whether a minor exam is required
- When the advisor approves, the student applies to take the exam

### **Application**

- The student submits the HESA Qualifying Exam Application Form posted on the HESA website along with their program of study to the HESA student services staff member. The HESA student services staff member verifies that the student is eligible to take the exam, and has the advisor’s approval to take the exam.
- When everything is determined to be in order, the student and advisor are notified by the HESA student services staff member that the student is approved to take the exam
- The application can be submitted at any time of the year, with the agreement of the advisor, but should be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the exam start date.

### **Preparation and Format**

- The HESA program will hold a question and answer session at least once a year to provide students with guidance regarding the exam process as well as strategies for preparation.
- Students are encouraged to form study groups to assist in preparing for the exam
- The qualifying exam consists of two parts as follows:
  - Part 1 – The first part of the exam asks the student to apply foundational concepts and literature in our field. The student should demonstrate the ability to engage thoughtfully with important issues or challenges, analyze questions in depth, and express ideas clearly with appropriate grounding in relevant literature. Students respond to Part 1 in at most 20 double-spaced pages excluding references, title page, and tables or figures.
  - Part 2 – The second part of the exam asks the student to review literature and plan a study in one of the student’s areas of expertise. The subject matter for this part is determined by the advisor in consultation with the student. Students respond to Part 2 in at most 20 double-spaced pages excluding references, title page, and tables or figures.

- See HESA Quals Parts 1 & 2 Instruction Template on the HESA website for more details regarding the type of content and analysis expected in Part 1, as well as the formatting requirements for both parts.
- Each year at the last faculty meeting in the Spring, the HESA faculty will revise the Part 1 topic list for use the following year (July 1 through June 30). The advisor will select four to six topics from this list for the student to choose from. Those topics may not include the topical area that will be addressed in Part 2 of the exam.

### **Before the Qualifying Exam Period**

- The student works with the advisor to set the start date for the exam
- The advisor determines four to six topical areas the student can choose from to complete Part 1 of the exam (current Part 1 Topic list posted on HESA website)
- The advisor, in consultation with the student, prepares Part 2 of the exam
- The student signs the HESA Qualifying Exam Pledge (posted on HESA website) and submits it to the HESA student services staff member.
- The advisor sends the prompts for Parts 1 and 2 to the HESA student services staff member one week prior to the exam period.

### **Qualifying Exam Period**

- The exam period can be scheduled for any time of the year per mutual agreement between the student and the advisor
- No later than noon on the first day of the exam period, the written prompts for Parts 1 and 2 will be sent to the student from the HESA email account
- The student has 14 days to prepare written responses to Parts 1 and 2
- No later than 4:00 p.m. 14 days after the first day, the student submits the Part 1 and 2 responses as two email attachments to the HESA student services staff member
- No late submissions will be accepted
- If you encounter an unforeseen emergency during the exam period, contact your advisor or the program coordinator as soon as possible to determine the appropriate course of action

### **Written Feedback**

- HESA members of the student's advisory committee read and provide written feedback on each response, including a summary rating of Not Acceptable, Acceptable, or Outstanding
- Completed feedback forms are submitted to the HESA student services staff member within six weeks of response submission
- After all feedback is received, the feedback forms are sent to the student by the HESA student services staff member
- Unfinished or missing responses to either part will be rated Unsatisfactory

### **Oral Examination**

- The oral examination is a required element of the qualifying exam

- The primary purpose of the oral exam is for HESA members of the advisory committee to discuss the Part 1 and 2 responses with the student, request elaboration or clarification as needed, and assess the student's command of the material
- After receiving written feedback, the student works with the feedback authors to determine a date, time, and location for the oral exam
- At the exam, the student responds to the written feedback as well as questions from committee members
- At the end of the oral exam, committee members determine whether the student passed each part of the exam. The advisory committee may ask the student to revise portions of the exam before determining whether the student passed one or both parts. In any case, once the outcome is known, the decision is sent by email to the HESA student services staff member. If the student passes both parts, the date is noted as the beginning of the Candidacy clock.

### **Withdrawing or Retaking the Qualifying Exam**

- A student may withdraw a qualifying exam application any time *before* receiving the exam prompts. Only under exceptional circumstances and with permission from the students' advisor and the program coordinator may a student withdraw after receiving the prompts, but before responses are due.
- A student who fails one or both parts of the exam shall have ONE opportunity to retake the failed part(s) of the exam
- A retake of both parts of the exam follows the above procedures
- A retake of one part of the exam follows the above procedures except the examination period shall last seven days
- Students who fail a second attempt cannot be nominated for candidacy

### **Minor Qualifying Exam**

Some doctoral minors require a minor qualifying exam. The student works with the minor member to determine the requirements and procedures for the minor exam.

### **Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities (e.g. mental health, learning, chronic health, physical, hearing, vision neurological, etc.). Students must have established eligibility for support services through the appropriate university office.

Note that disability services are confidential, may take time to put into place and are not retroactive; Captions and alternate media for print materials may take three or more weeks to produce.

Please contact Disability Services for Students at <http://disabilityservices.indiana.edu>, or 812-855-7578 as soon as possible if accommodations are needed. A variety of campus resources for students that need assistance are available at: <http://www.iu.edu/~ada/index.shtml>