

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. In the first week 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 at the beginning of each semester.
5. Prior to the end of the 5th week of the semester, each student will meet/consult with their 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).
7. The qualifying exam will be administered virtually, with questions and responses shared

via IU email. The committee question meeting will be held through teleconference with the advisory committee and the student.

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.
3. The qualifying exam committee chair will send the “code of student conduct” to the students before the administration of the exam. Each student must read and sign the statement before day 1 of the exam.

Day 1

1. Students are supposed to prepare the best environment for focusing on the exam, avoiding any potential disturbances in advance. If they encounter any unavoidable circumstances, such as a house fire or appendicitis, they should contact the proctor and provide a copy of the police or doctor's report. Any interruptions that could have been prevented will result in a deduction from their exam time.
2. Students will be allowed to use any materials they think will assist them with the exam. However, the use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Bard, for drafting ideas is strictly prohibited.
3. The proctor will send the **first departmental question** to each student via their IU email account. Any questions from students about the question can be directed to the proctor through email. 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 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).
6. After the lunch break, the proctor will send the **second departmental question** to each student via their IU email account. Any questions from students about the question can be directed to the proctor through email. 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 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.

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

1. Students will meet with their advisory committee via teleconference, using tools such as Zoom or Teams.

2. Students will deliver the presentation they prepared that provides an overview of their response to the **committee 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 the student.
6. Advisory committee will inform the 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 **LDAE 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.