

**TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES GRADUATE PROGRAMS
HDFS DOCTORAL DEGREE**

DOCTORAL QUALIFYING EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

The doctoral qualifying examination is taken after the completion of most course work and after fulfilling the requirement for the research presentation (HDFS 7000). **Presentation of the 7000 project and all coursework covered by the qualifying exam must be completed with a grade of at least B- before taking the qualifying exam.** Students must take this examination within one calendar year of completing all requirements listed on the degree plan. Failure to do so will be cause for dismissal from the program. The exam will consist of take-home written followed by oral portions in each of the major areas of the degree plan: (1) specialization (2) research methods and (3) theoretical foundations. The three questions will be prepared and graded by ad hoc subcommittees. One Adjunct Graduate Faculty member may serve on a qualifying exam committee, subject to the case-by-case approval of the Graduate Faculty. These committees will also serve as the examining committees for the oral portion of the exam.

The examination reflects the philosophy that students should have a common expertise as well as a unique expertise in the specialization. It permits the student to integrate materials from a variety of different courses and to identify specific strengths and weaknesses prior to beginning the dissertation. Students are required, however, to be engaged in research throughout their program (i.e., via their HDFS 7000 research, at a minimum), and initial work on the dissertation proposal or studies related to the dissertation research are often in progress prior to the qualifying examination. **A period of at least four months must elapse between the dates of the qualifying examinations and the defense.**

The purpose of the oral exam is for students to defend and discuss their own work, ideas, and knowledge. It allows students an opportunity to clarify their written work and constitutes an important professional skill. Because the qual exam represents the student's own written and oral work, there should be no consultation about the content of the exam between the student and other students, faculty, and/or tutors between the time the qual questions are distributed and all the oral exams are completed. Students may consult the chair of the relevant qualifying examination committee for clarification on the written question.

In the preparation of questions, committee members shall attempt to avoid duplication of material covered in any single course. Questions should require **integration of material** that may have been covered in a variety of courses and other experiences.

Students must declare intention of taking the qualifying examination by submitting a notification form (page 11). **We strongly recommend that students take the specialization portion of the doctoral qualifying examination before taking the research methods or theoretical foundations portion.** The specialization portion **may not be taken after** the research methods and theoretical portions of the exam.

Qualifying exams are given prior to the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. The results of the written and oral exams are forwarded to the GHDFS Director for action by the Graduate Faculty. The review cycle for the Graduate Faculty's periodic evaluation of quals procedures will be three years. Thus, the qualifying examination will be reviewed again in the spring of 2009. Students should expect to hear their results approximately one month after the due date of exams.