

C. RESEARCH METHODS

Listed below are expected competencies for doctoral students at the completion of their course work. These are not just expectations for the qualifying examination but are the minimum methodological skills for dissertation-level work. The qualifying exam is an evaluation check point to determine if students are adequately prepared to proceed to their dissertation research. At the point of dissertation, students should be capable of designing and conducting research deemed by others as having the potential of making a substantial contribution to the literature. Students should expect their advisors and other dissertation committee members to play no more than an advisory role. In the research methods qualifying exam, students are expected to show a level of expertise which convincingly demonstrates to the faculty their ability to take responsibility for their research.

Through course work, independent research, and familiarity with published research (including methodologically-focused articles), an exam response will be given a grade of **PASS** if the student can demonstrate:

1. A solid foundation in basic research methods fundamentals as covered in the core course (Research Methods in HDFS) and additionally from the student's own research experiences (e.g., thesis, 7000 research).
2. An understanding of qualitative and quantitative analysis procedures as covered in the core courses (Quantitative Methods I—IV in HDFS, and Qualitative Methods in HDFS).
3. The ability to design research that adequately addresses research questions or hypotheses.
4. A general understanding of the major methodological issues and controversies in family studies and human development.
5. Within the student's specialization area, a sophisticated understanding of methodological problems and the ability to discuss (with reference to specific articles in the literature) various solutions that have been offered to handle these problems, along with the strengths and weaknesses of each.
6. Application of the above to critiques of the existing literature and to the development of an original proposal.
7. The ability to write an exam paper that specifically addresses the exam question and that is well-organized.