

Rubrics for Evaluating the Qualifying Document and Exams

Rubric for Rating the Qualifying Document

Any document receiving a rating of 2+ or less is considered not passing whereas a score of 3- or more is on the passing side of the scale. We recommend that you use the rating scale as follows: Most documents should receive a 3, a few may receive a 2 if they have important problems that need to be addressed, a few may receive 4's if they are remarkable, and 5's should be given to the rare gem.

- 1 The document is incomplete with large sections missing or severely flawed. This rating makes it clear that the student will need to re-do the document.
- 2 Although all sections have been provided, the document has flaws that are serious enough to indicate the need for it to be re-done. Examples of major flaws: the review is truly too narrow in scope; proposed study has a clear flaw in design that the student would benefit from re-thinking; connection between research questions, hypotheses, and proposed analyses is off in a major way.
- 2+ This rating (although still not a passing rating) is given when a document deserves a 2 except that its problems seem slightly less devastating than is implied by a rating of "2"; with a 2+, there is clear indication that the reader is looking to the written exam (if applicable) and oral exams as avenues to assuage worries about the student's understanding of the area and research process.
- 3- This rating indicates a document at a borderline pass; it fulfills requirements of a document deserving of a "3" but just barely; it's possible with a 3- that responses on the written and/or oral exams might reveal more major problems or much better understanding.
- 3 All required sections of the document are there and done well. The review of literature is broad and deep enough to represent a good grasp of an area of educational research and the research question(s) follow(s) from the literature review in a coherent, reasonably well-argued way. Design and method are satisfactory and analyses proposed appropriate. There may be an oversight or less than adequate feature of the review, design, or analyses but this flaw is compensated for by the strength of the project as a whole.
- 4 The document meets all the requirements as stated in 3 but there is, in addition, something remarkable and particularly well done about one or another of the sections of the document. There are no clear flaws, and the project is thoughtfully and gracefully executed.
- 5 Every aspect of the document is excellent. The approach is thoughtful and sophisticated, the writing has the proper tone and authority for the area, and the proposed study is truly innovative, even cutting-edge.

Rubric for Rating the Written Exam

We would say that most written exams receive a 3, those with problems as specified below receive a 2, a few receive 4's if they are remarkable, and 5's are given rather rarely. All members of the committee read all three answers, and the rating of the whole exam is a holistic impression of the full exam.

- 1 Answers are clearly not complete or do not address the point of the questions. One or more answer is entirely missing.
- 2 Every answer is there and represents a serious attempt at addressing the questions asked. However, one or more of the answers is truly weak (i.e., too brief, too incomplete, indicates a serious misunderstanding), and the responses that are not obviously flawed or weak are barely adequate.
- 2+ Answers meet the basic requirement of written exams deserving a "2" but one or more of the responses seems a little more adequate.
- 3- Answers to all three questions are adequate but barely so; or, one or two of the answers would easily get a 3 but one of the questions shows some misunderstanding or misinformation that will need to be addressed in the oral exam.
- 3 All three responses are to the point and bring in appropriate and relevant information to bear on the question. Good answers to all three.
- 4 Answers are all very good, and one or two of them are impressive and bring in a fresh and interesting perspective.
- 5 All three answers are outstanding and represent the sort of thinking we would expect from our most advanced students.

Rubric for the Oral Exam

- 1 Student could not answer any substantive question posed and did not seem even to understand questions or to respond to hints provided by the faculty. A "1" would be given if a student so thoroughly "freezes" that the exam cannot proceed.
- 2 Student seems not to know perspectives or information associated with the qualifying document in particular and the general discipline to which it belongs that we expect for someone at that stage. If a written exam was completed, student seems not to have tried to understand further issues or problems indicated by the questions asked on the written exam. These problems prevail across all questions.
- 2+ Oral deserves a rating of "2" except that there seems to be a slightly better understanding than is implied by a straight 2 rating. Nevertheless the oral performance is below a "Pass" criterion, and it is clear that major problems from other components of the qualifying process (the document or the written exam) are still unresolved.
- 3- Oral performance is barely above a "Pass" with adequate (but barely so) answers to issues raised.
- 3 Student seems to understand questions asked, is able to answer the questions adequately, and shows an ability to think "on-the-spot." Student is able to answer questions that come from the broader discipline represented by the qualifying document area.
- 4 Answers are thorough, right on the mark, and smoothly provided. There is no or little sense of defensiveness, and the student seems to understand thoroughly what the research process involves.
- 5 The conversation at the oral is truly remarkable and impressive. The student seems to be very knowledgeable and thoughtful about the area chosen for the qualifying document.