Science or Mathematics Education Doctoral Program Written Examination
Policy dated June 1, 2015

Exam Process
1) The student and advisor (with communication from SME faculty) determine if the student is appropriately prepared to begin the exam before a committee is selected.
2) After there is agreement that the student is ready to enter the examination process, the student must be registered during the quarter the exam is being assessed.
3) The student and advisor communicate with the (co) director(s) of the SME doctoral program the intent of the student/advisor the desired exam commencement date three weeks prior to the desired date, to allow for selection of a Written Exam Committee with adequate planning time. In addition, the student is responsible for communicating with the (co) director(s) of the SME doctoral program if she/he has a documented disability. This communication must include the student forwarding to the (co) director(s) any associated official documentation concerning the disability so that any relevant accommodations can be made. In addition, the student is responsible for communicating with the (co) director(s) of the SME doctoral program if she/he desires the committee to consider allowance of writing support. (Any accommodations for the exam must be approved in advance of the student receiving either exam question. In addition, any writing support must be documented and apparent as “track changes” with record of who provided support in the student’s responses that are distributed to the committee. The Oregon State University writing center will not provide writing support on any written exam per the writing center’s policies.)
4) A Written Exam Committee of three SME and associated faculty is appointed by the (co) director(s) of the SME doctoral program to write and assess student’s response to questions. This committee includes the student’s advisor and two other faculty members assigned on a rotating basis.
   a. The student arranges meetings to discuss with the committee members his/her future trajectory to inform the formulation of two exam questions.
   b. The advisor and two other committee members confers on both questions prior to distributing the questions to the student to assure substance adheres to the program purpose and processes and revise appropriately.
   c. Questions can be on any topic relevant to the SME program. Select references may, or may not, be provided by question writers.
5) An exam timeline, including for student response/writing regarding questions and faculty assessment, is agreed to by the committee and student.
   a. The student has three weeks for each question.
   b. A committee meeting to discuss evaluation of responses should be made when setting up the initial exam timeline (usually within two weeks of receiving responses from the student; see description below under Evaluation Process.
   c. The student is encouraged to be in contact throughout this process with his/her advisor to ensure that the exam preparation is progressing adequately.
6) The questions are distributed by the advisor to student (using the format included on pp. 4 of this document).
   a. The advisor assures the student turns in to all committee members’ responses to questions within the writing timeline.
b. The student is encouraged to be in contact throughout this process with his/her advisor and other committee members regarding inquiries about the questions or overall exam process. However, student interactions with advisors and other faculty about the exam during the writing/response period is limited to the student’s inquiries regarding clarification concerning questions. In no instance should a student expect, or receive, help, explicitly, with their writing from faculty members, or others.

c. The written product is limited to 2000 to 4000 words for each response to each question, not including references.

**Evaluation Criteria**
The criteria below are used to assess the written exam responses.
The exam as a whole must:

1) Summarize and synthesize meaningful and relevant literature as it relates to the question,
2) Critically evaluate key pieces of empirical and theoretical research relevant to the question, and
3) Synthesize and state explicitly a coherent point of view using evidence-based and theoretical arguments relevant to the question.
4) Be written with clarity and effectiveness of writing expected from advanced graduate students, in a scholarly style with exceptional use of grammar and free from writing errors.

**Students should begin their responses with a restatement of the exam question (not counted in total word count).**

**Evaluation Process**

1) The Written Exam Committee determines if the responses meet the criteria within **two weeks** after BOTH student responses are complete and distributed to the committee.
   a. Strengths and weaknesses of the two responses are discussed among committee members in person or via other communication and the committee makes a final determination if the set of responses holistically meet the program criteria listed in this document.
   b. Results of exam are communicated to the student by the advisor within **three weeks** of the return of BOTH student responses. The committee may meet with the student or the advisor may present the committee’s evaluation and feedback, including in writing (using the format included on pp. 5 of this document).

2) Committee evaluation of responses results in one of the following outcomes:
   a. Satisfactory Written Exam
      i. Comments on responses summarized and presented to student by the advisor within three weeks of completion of exam, including in writing (using the format included on pp. 5 of this document).

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1 Note that when the exam timeline falls over any portion of university breaks, the two-week evaluation timeline may be adjusted due to faculty schedules.
ii. Written responses distributed to Oral Graduate School Exam committee along with written exam committee results (using the format included on pp. 5 of this document).

iii. The written summary of exam committee’s evaluation (compiled by the advisor, using the format included on pp. 5 of this document) will be placed in student’s file.

b. Responses not sufficient

i. The committee will determine appropriate action for remediation, revision, or re-examination. If responses are insufficient the oral exam can not be scheduled until satisfactory responses are completed. It is the advisor’s discretion if the written exam committee will meet with the student or only the advisor will meet with the student to communicate results.

ii. The committee may choose one of three options:

   1. The student will revise one or both questions, response(s) will be returned to faculty after student is given 1-2 (upon agreement of committee) weeks to revise per question,
   2. Responses are left “as is” and one or two new questions are presented in a timeline determined in consultation with the student and committee and the responses will be returned to faculty within three weeks per question,
   3. A new committee will be convened, over a timeline determined in consultation with the student, advisor, and program (co)directors, and one or two questions will be prepared. The student is again given three weeks to answer each question,

iii. The written exam committee has two weeks to read responses and prepare evaluation. Advisor will communicate with student within three weeks of completion of revised or reconvened written exam. Student’s second response must pass standard or student is recommended to the master’s project option or termination. A written summary of the written exam committee’s evaluation (compiled by advisor) will be given to the student and placed in student’s file.

*** The written exam is followed by the Preliminary Oral Graduate School Examination. The advisor will send the Oral Exam Committee the questions and acceptable responses from the written exam two weeks prior to the exam (scheduled at least two weeks after successfully completing written exam & results communicated). The written exam is meant to inform the Oral Exam Committee of the student’s ability to communicate in writing. The written exam content is also possible for discussion during the Oral Examination.
Written Examination for [Student's Name]
Science or Mathematics Education Doctoral Program
Oregon State University

First Exam Question
Committee Members:
Proposed Timeline (Including Writing and Assessment Timelines):
Date Question Distributed:
Date Question Returned:

Second Exam Question
Committee Members:
Proposed Timeline (Including Writing and Assessment Timelines):
Date Question Distributed:
Date Question Returned:
First Exam Question:

Committee Members:

Exam Timeline:

Date Question Distributed:

Date Question Returned:

Committee Response Regarding Student’s Response To Question Per Programmatic Evaluation Criteria 1-4:

1) Summarize and synthesize meaningful and relevant literature as it relates to the question [Met or Did not meet]

2) Critically evaluate key pieces of empirical and theoretical research relevant to the question [Met or Did not meet]

3) Synthesize and state explicitly a coherent point of view using evidence-based and theoretical arguments relevant to the question. [Met or Did not meet]

4) Written with clarity and effectiveness of writing expected from advanced graduate students, in a scholarly style with exceptional use of grammar and free from writing errors. [Met or Did not meet]

Second Exam Question:

Committee Members:

Exam Timeline:

Date Question Distributed:
Date Question Returned:

Committee Response Regarding Student’s Response To Question Per Programmatic Evaluation Criteria 1-4:

1) Summarize and synthesize meaningful and relevant literature as it relates to the question  
   [Met or Did not meet]

2) Critically evaluate key pieces of empirical and theoretical research relevant to the question  
   [Met or Did not meet]

3) Synthesize and state explicitly a coherent point of view using evidence-based and theoretical arguments relevant to the question.  
   [Met or Did not meet]

4) Written with clarity and effectiveness of writing expected from advanced graduate students, in a scholarly style with exceptional use of grammar and free from writing errors.  
   [Met or Did not meet]

Committee’s Holistic Feedback Concerning Candidate’s Answers To Both Questions Per Programmatic Evaluation Criteria 1-4.

1) Summarize and synthesize meaningful and relevant literature as it relates to the question  
   [Summarized Committee’s Comments]

2) Critically evaluate key pieces of empirical and theoretical research relevant to the question  
   [Summarized Committee’s Comments]

3) Synthesize and state explicitly a coherent point of view using evidence-based and theoretical arguments relevant to the question.  
   [Summarized Committee’s Comments]

4) Written with clarity and effectiveness of writing expected from advanced graduate students, in a scholarly style with exceptional use of grammar and free from writing errors.  
   [Summarized Committee’s Comments]