

Department of Public & Community Health Doctoral Program

Qualifying Examination Guidelines

The two-part IN-SCHOOL and TAKE-HOME Qualifying Examination will test students' proficiency regarding the Doctoral program Competency Expectations. During the semester before their Qualifying Examination, students will be given the Qualifying Examination Guidelines, the Doctoral program Competency Expectations, and a sample of the IN-SCHOOL and the TAKE-HOME questions.

Part 1: IN-SCHOOL Examination

- The purpose of the IN-SCHOOL examination is to test whether the student can successfully synthesize, integrate, and apply the content and concepts of his/her courses and other relevant experience.
- The IN-SCHOOL examination will be a five-hour, closed-book examination.
- The IN-SCHOOL examination will have three sections: 1) Theory, 2) Study Design and Research Methods, and 3) Measurement and Analysis.
- An evaluation committee of at least three Public & Community Health graduate faculty will write and evaluate the IN-SCHOOL examination. The result of the evaluation will be based on consensus or majority vote of the readers.
- Students will receive a separate **Pass** or **No-Pass** on each of the three IN-SCHOOL examination sections.

Part 2: TAKE-HOME Examination

- The purpose of the TAKE-HOME examination is to synthesize literature and develop a state-of-the-art demonstration and evaluation project proposal.
- The TAKE-HOME examination will consist of challenging and innovative questions for which the student will provide a Statement of the Problem, Theoretical Basis for an Intervention, the Intervention and an Evaluation Design.
- A health topic and target population will be assigned for the TAKE-HOME examination.
- An evaluation committee of at least three Public & Community Health graduate faculty will write and evaluate the examination. The result of the evaluation will be based on consensus or majority vote of the readers.
- Students will receive a **Pass** or **No-Pass** for the TAKE-HOME examination as a whole.

Evaluation Policies for Qualifying Examinations

- Evaluators will be blind to the student examinee, and students will be blind to the specific review comments of each evaluator.
- The Graduate Program Director and the student's advisor will advise students who fail any part of the examination about remedial work.
- To proceed with individualized research plan course work, students must pass all sections of the IN-SCHOOL and TAKE-HOME examination.
- The student must re-take the failed section/part of the examination within one year of the failed exam. The earliest opportunity to re-take the examination will be the next semester in which the Department regularly administers the Qualifying Examination. Hence, the student's progression in the program will be delayed for at least a semester if any part of the Qualifying Examination is failed.
- A second **No-Pass** will result in the student being dropped from the program.

Tips for students

- Read the question carefully and answer the question as written.
- State your assumptions/interpretation of the question.
- Use prose rather than outlines or bulleted lists.
- Manage your time to permit adequate attention to all parts of the question.
- Describe the thought process by which you derive your conclusions.