Ph.D. in Social Work and Social Research
Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Committee
Committee Guide for the Oral Examination

Examination procedures

- Oral examination takes place when student has passed written examination.
- Only SSW faculty and Ph.D. students may attend, but do not participate.
- Only Comprehensive Examination Committee (CEC) members ask questions.
- Student presents paper and discusses annotated bibliography (≤ 30 minutes).
- CEC members engage in questions and discussions with student (≤ 90 minutes).
- Excusing student, CEC decides whether student passes exam; all must assent (≤ 30 minutes).
- CEC informs student of decision and offers commentary.

Evaluation framework

1. Publishable paper
   a. Student effectively frames paper with conceptual foundation and clearly stated purpose and/or question
   b. Student effectively explains and defends methods employed in paper
   c. Student effectively reports findings
   d. Student effectively draws and discusses appropriate conclusions

2. Annotated bibliography
   a. Student effectively selects the literature (i.e., review is comprehensive, organized, and presents a clear rationale for topics covered)
   b. Student effectively summarizes the literature (i.e., annotations highlight central features of readings in terms of conceptual frameworks, methods, findings, and implications)
   c. Student effectively evaluates and synthesizes the literature (i.e., describes patterns, identifies areas of consensus, highlights debates and issues, outlines future directions)

3. Connections to coursework
   a. Student can relate topic to the field of social welfare
   b. Student can frame topic as a social problem or issue
   c. Student can describe actual or potential interventions
   d. Student can discuss relevant research questions and research methods

4. Preparation for dissertation scholarship
   a. Student demonstrates sufficient knowledge of substantive area for dissertation research
   b. Student demonstrates sufficient methodological expertise for dissertation research
   c. Student demonstrates sufficient ability to discuss relevance and implications of research

Comps evaluation for oral Jan2013