

UELP Certification Examination Guidelines Ed.D. in Education Leadership

Urban Education Leaders Program (UELP)
Education Leadership Program
Department of Organization and Leadership
Teachers College, Columbia University

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Purpose and Overview

The UELP Certification Exam is the student's demonstration of proficiency in doctoral study in education leadership and readiness to pursue their dissertation research. The key deliverable for the certification exam is the UELP Research Portfolio, which is a carefully curated electronic record of the student's academic and professional growth in the Urban Education Leaders Program (UELP). The research portfolio provides your advisor and select program faculty the information needed to assess your growth and development as a scholar-practitioner and readiness to proceed to dissertation study. It also gives students the space to document their doctoral journey in an organized and cumulative fashion for critical self-reflection and in preparation for dissertation study and evaluation. The UELP Research Portfolio represents the scope and depth of a student's goals, plans, and accomplishments in coursework, independent study, research experiences, the internship, and other advanced learning activities. It also provides an opportunity for reflective practice and comprehensive account of progress toward academic and professional goals. The portfolio review and evaluation process includes two informal presentations with the student's advisor and one formal presentation by the student to a committee composed of the student's dissertation sponsor and second reader.

UELP Research Portfolio

The UELP Research Portfolio aims to ensure each student can/will:

1. Clearly articulate their academic and professional identity and goals;
2. Formulate specific plans to achieve those goals through coursework and field-based action research activities;
3. Demonstrate growth in understanding education leadership as a field of study and the advancement of knowledge through research and inquiry;
4. Engage in critical self-reflection and modify goals and plans based on feedback from advisors, research mentors, and invited faculty; and
5. Demonstrate readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase of the doctoral program.

As students progress through the program, they will meet periodically with their program advisor and by the end of the second spring semester, identify a dissertation sponsor who will serve as the student's faculty sponsor and research supervisor. This portfolio is evaluated by the student's dissertation sponsor and second reader (to be identified in consultation with the dissertation sponsor) for a pass/fail grade and in accordance with the rubrics included as part of these guidelines.

It is important that students communicate with their program advisors and faculty sponsors to make sure they have met portfolio requirements before scheduling your certification exam. Students who are unable to provide acceptable evidence of readiness will need to meet with

their program advisor and faculty sponsor to determine next steps regarding their status in the program. Students who do not pass the portfolio assessment have up to three months to revise and resubmit their final portfolio for a second and final review by the committee.

Certification Exam Oral Hearing

After students successfully complete and receive a passing grade on their UELP Research Portfolio, and in consultation with their advisor, they are ready to take the UELP Certification Exam, which requires an oral defense of the student's approved UELP Research Portfolio. For the hearing, students deliver a 15-minute slide presentation that covers the main elements of their research portfolio (i.e., professional reflections, required essays, literature review) and how the student's program experiences to date have informed their proposed dissertation research plans, methods, and timeline. The presentation is followed by 30 minutes of questions and discussion between the student and committee. The committee will then use the rubric and score sheet at the end of this guide (*UELPP Certification Exam Assessment and Feedback*) to reach consensus on whether the student earned a passing grade for the certification exam. The committee will then review its feedback with the student and provide suggestions for improvement in preparation for dissertation study.

Scheduling the Oral Hearing

The student, in consultation with and prior approval from her or his faculty sponsor, is responsible for scheduling the oral hearing, which must be attended by the student, faculty sponsor, and second reader. **Before scheduling the exam, you must first register to take the certification exam with the Office of Doctoral Studies by completing the [Certification Exam Application in accordance with ODS deadlines](#).** Again, students should make sure to do this in consultation with their program advisor and/or faculty sponsor. The student must also share with the committee, at least three weeks in advance, an email indicating the meeting date, time, location (on ground or virtual) of the oral hearing, along with a calendar invite for the oral hearing that includes the student's last name in the invitation and a link to their electronic portfolio for easy reference. The dissertation sponsor is responsible for completing the ODS Certification Examination Results form and returning the signed form to the Program Manager for Education Leadership, who will secure the required program and department level approvals signatures for final submission to ODS.

PORTFOLIO I (SPRING I)

Upon completing their third semester of coursework, UELP students will have completed Portfolio I – the first draft of what will eventually become the UELP Research Portfolio and includes the following components:

1. Current Professional Resume or CV

2. Professional and Research Identity Essay

Reread the original personal statement you prepared for admission into the UELP program and reflect on how you are now viewing your role and identity as a doctoral

student alongside your professional identity. Provide evidence of growth, changes highlighted, and relevant work accomplished. Items to be included this section are:

- a) A copy of your original personal statement from your admissions file.
- b) A written description (3-5 pages) detailing your academic goals (specialization and supporting areas of study), your professional goals, and tentative research goal (topic, problem, theories you are drawing on to conceptualize your research, major research question, 3-5 research questions). This assignment is intended to begin to prepare you to begin work on Chapter 1 of your dissertation proposal and dissertation.
- c) A pictorial representation of how your interests, experiences, and plans fit together into a coherent conceptual framework. This creative diagram should concisely portray the intellectual substance of your developing identity as a scholar-practitioner.

3. Education Leadership Research Summary

In a 500–1000 word research summary, describe and analyze what you have learned about the field of education leadership through your coursework, relevant readings, and independent research. This research summary should demonstrate your knowledge of and familiarity with major theories, trends, concepts, methodologies, cases, and emergent themes in urban education leadership, and how these literatures are informing and influencing your own developing research questions and interests.

PORTFOLIO II (FALL II)

Portfolio II incorporates feedback and suggestions on Portfolio I and demonstrates student growth and development in light of subsequent coursework, professional experiences, and independent research and practice activities. Students should carefully review the comments and recommendations provided on Portfolio I and make sure to present even richer descriptions and reflections and synthesis of course and independent readings. Portfolio II includes the following deliverables:

1. Updated Professional Resume or CV

2. Updated Professional and Research Identity Essay

In your updated essay of 500-1000 words, address the following questions:

- *Since Portfolio I, in what ways have you been engaged in your professional community?*
- *How have you addressed the feedback received on Portfolio I?*
- *How have the courses you have taken informed you?*
- *How have your courses influenced your thinking and work?*
- *What are your academic and intellectual goals at this point in the program?*
- *What are your professional goals at this point in the program?*
Provide evidence of any changes.

3. Education Leadership Research Synthesis

For this research synthesis paper (roughly 1000-1500 words), students are expected to provide an updated understanding of the field of education leadership at this point in the program with a focus on your proposed research questions, interests, and related literature. Additionally, you must provide an overview and synthesis of seminal and contemporary literature in your field about this issue and discuss the theory and methods used for studying it. Ideally, this research synthesis can inform the development of your conceptual framework and/or literature review for your dissertation.

UEL P RESEARCH PORTFOLIO (SPRING II)

The UELP Research Portfolio is the third and final portfolio product, which serves as the key deliverable for the certification exam, which also requires an oral hearing and defense of the final portfolio. This culminating research portfolio should be presented to the student's dissertation sponsor and second reader prior at the conclusion of the Spring II term. Students should make sure to use the feedback received on Portfolio II to prepare your UELP Research Portfolio, which is due no later than the last day of the Spring II semester, and must include the following:

1. Updated Professional Resume or CV

2. Updated Professional and Research Identity Essay

In your updated essay of 500-1000 words, address the following questions:

- *Since Portfolio I, in what ways have you been engaged in your professional community?*
- *How have you addressed the feedback you received on Portfolio II?*
- *What have you done and how have the courses informed you?*
- *How have your courses influenced your thinking and work?*
- *Provide evidence of these changes through your coursework products and assignments with hyperlinks to course products including the assignments you were given to complete as appropriate.*

3. Literature Review

The literature review should be a 15-page synthesis of the literature related to your proposed dissertation topic and serves as an opportunity for you to demonstrate your knowledge of a researchable topic or problem in urban education leadership and ability to use the various literature databases. Be sure to address the following questions:

- *What is the topic?*
- *What is the problem related to the topic?*
- *What does the literature say about the topic and the problem?*
- *What databases have you searched?*
- *What are the theories that inform the field?*
- *What types of studies have been conducted about the topic and the problem?*

4. Research Methods

The research methods section should address your knowledge of the various types of research methods that are commonly used in research in your field, which research methods would be appropriate for your research problem and why, how you would apply a particular research method to your proposed research, your research problem, 3-5 research questions, possible research site, sample size, and process.

- *What are the most commonly used types of research in your field?*
- *Examples of research about your research problem?*
- *Research method(s) most appropriate for your proposed research? Why?*
- *Research topic*
- *Research problem*
- *3-5 Research questions*
- *How you would apply this particular research method? (sample size, where, how long, etc.)*

You should view both papers as dissertation planning documents (Literature Review is Chapter 2 and Research Methods is Chapter 3) of your dissertation proposal. They do not, however, bind you to a particular topic or research problem for your proposed dissertation research. Rather, this final portfolio, along with other evidence, will assist the student's advisor, dissertation sponsor, and research mentor in determining if the student is prepared to undertake original research and proceed to the dissertation phase of the program.

UELP Certification Exam Assessment Rubric

Portfolio III Sections	Not Acceptable	Competent	Advanced
Section 1: Updated Professional Resume	Does not correspond to accepted features of the model resume. Entries not in APA style.	Corresponds to accepted features of the model resume. Entries in APA style.	
Section 2: Professional and Research Identity Essay. (Update from Portfolio II)	Intellectual and professional goals are not clearly stated. Gaps from Portfolio II not addressed. Influence of coursework on student thinking is not stated. Engagement in professional community missing.	Intellectual and professional goals are clearly stated. Gaps from Portfolio II addressed. Influence of coursework and literature on student thinking is clearly articulated. Evidence demonstrates continuous engagement in professional community.	Demonstrated a sophisticated and holistic understanding of the student's integration of her/his research and professional goals. Professional and research experiences evident beyond the scope of coursework requirements.
Section 3: Literature Review	Rationale for the significance or importance of the problem area is provided but lacks clarity. Connections to the research and literature in the student's specialization(s) are not well-articulated.	Rationale for the significance or importance of the problem area, or issue, is clearly identified and articulated leading to a researchable question(s). The study of the problem/issue represents a contribution to the field. Clear connections to the research and literature in the student's specialization(s) are well-articulated and gaps in the literature are identified/presented. Student includes the databases and search history for this research. The analysis of the literature is clearly and convincingly presented with the positions of the major scholars presented and discussed.	In addition to all expectations for a competent essay, an advanced essay also includes sophisticated analyses and critiques of theories, methods and conclusions mentioned in the literature. Student analyzes the gaps in the literature and proposes an inquiry agenda to address those gaps. The student also includes a thorough and clearly presented history of the databases and search history conducted for this problem area/issue. Resulting essay meets the standards for a research publication.

Section 4: Research Methods	<p>The proposed methods and/or approach to inquiry are incomplete. Chosen research method needs further development. Research questions do not adequately address research problem. Research site, sample and process must be further elaborated.</p>	<p>The proposed methods and/or approach to inquiry are clear and relevant. Selected research method is appropriate for research problem and rationale is clearly stated. Research questions address key aspects of research problem. Research site, sample and process are appropriate.</p>	<p>Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of research methods and/or approach to inquiry. Research method exhibits creativity. Research questions demonstrate deep understanding of research problem. Research site, sample and process likely to generate new knowledge for the field.</p>
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UELP Certification Exam Assessment and Feedback

In the UELP Certification Exam Oral Hearing, the focus shifts from academic and professional development to formal evaluation of the student's readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase of doctoral study. Please use the scoring rubric to guide your evaluation of the student's portfolio, and then score and use the comment boxes for feedback.

Student's Name _____ TC ID# _____

First semester in the program _____ Current Semester _____

Number of credits student has taken to date (including this semester) _____

Section 1: Professional Resume or CV

1	2
Not Acceptable	Competent
Comments:	

Section 2: Professional and Research Identity Essay

1	2	3
Not Acceptable	Competent	Advanced
Comments:		

Section 3: Literature Review

1	2	3
Not Acceptable	Competent	Advanced
Comments:		

Section 4: Research Methods

1	2	3
Not Acceptable	Competent	Advanced
Comments:		

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Language and Writing

1	2	3
Unacceptable	Competent	Advanced
Comments:		

The results of the UELP Certification Exam are summarized below:

_____ **Pass.** The student has demonstrated readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase of the program (non-binding recommendations for modifications or additional work may be specified here):

_____ **Pass With Revisions.** The student may proceed to the dissertation phase of the program when required actions are completed; a second meeting is not required; non-binding recommendations or additional work, along with specific procedures for verifying completion may be specified here:

_____ **No Pass.** The student may not proceed to the dissertation phase of the program and a second and final certification exam hearing will be scheduled when the following required actions are completed:

Student _____ Date _____

Dissertation Sponsor (please sign legibly) _____ Date _____

Second Reader (please sign legibly) _____ Date _____