

**University of Delaware
School of Education**

**Comprehensive Examination for PhD students in the
Literacy Development and Learning Problems specialization**

The comprehension examination in Literacy Development and Learning Problems (LDLP) is designed to help sharpen students' analytical and writing skills for the dissertation. Students are encouraged to submit the review for publication in an appropriate journal, such as *Review of Educational Research*.

Students may take the comprehensive exam after they have completed all three doctoral seminars in the specialization area. The comprehensive exam may be submitted in either the fall or the spring. Students should discuss the choice with their advisor.

The task is to construct a comprehensive literature review to summarize the state of knowledge in a well-defined area of interest to you *and for which you can locate a minimum of 15 empirical studies*. The literature review may not exceed 50 pages (15,000 words) of written text including abstract, references and any tables and figures, and it should be in APA 6th format. Specific requirements for the literature review are explained in the literature review rubric that is provided when students begin the comprehensive exam.

Process:

1. The completed literature review is due not later than 5:00 pm on September 15 (for the fall semester) or February 15 (for the spring semester). Please provide an electronic copy of your review and also provide electronic copies of the studies you have reviewed.
2. At least two faculty members will assess the exam. Students will be notified of the Literacy Faculty's response **no later than one month** following the receipt of the exam. Students receive one of the following three evaluations: pass, minor revisions required, or major revisions required. Note that your advisor is not one of your reviewers.
3. A student whose review receives a PASS will advance to the next phase of the program.
4. A student whose written response receives MINOR REVISIONS REQUIRED must make those revisions within one month of receiving the faculty's feedback. The revised exam must be submitted along with an explanation of why the revisions attend to the feedback from the faculty. If revisions are not completed within the timeframe or do not address the faculty's concerns, the student will fail the exam and will need to take a new comprehensive exam the following fall or spring semester.
5. A student whose written responses receive a MAJOR REVISIONS REQUIRED may revise and resubmit the exam or select a new topic. This new submission will follow the same procedure outlined above. If the second attempt is not rated PASS or MINOR REVISIONS REQUIRED, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Students who successfully complete this comprehensive examination and all required coursework are eligible for doctoral candidacy and may prepare for the dissertation proposal defense.