

**PROGRAM OF STUDY QUALIFYING SCHOLARLY PAPER
Step-by-Step Procedures**

Guidelines for the Qualifying Scholarly Paper

Written and Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the General Examination

Each student works closely with his/her advisor and subsequently with his/her Supervisory Committee to identify and define the questions and issues to be pursued in the student's individual Program of Study. This is presented in the written Qualifying Scholarly Paper, which serves as the written component of the General Examination and which must be submitted for publication. Presentation of the completed paper serves as the official Graduate School Oral General Examination.

Purpose

Through writing and presentation of the Qualifying Paper, the student demonstrates the capacity to integrate theory and research bearing on a social welfare problem. This competence is shown by articulating a significant social welfare question, using the most relevant social science theory and empirical research to elucidate and frame the problem, implementing an appropriate analytic procedure to extend knowledge about that problem, and by presenting and discussing the results of that inquiry. The manual section outlining the [Program of Study Guidelines](#) provides general and specific learning objectives.

The Qualifying Paper should be written during the second year in the program and must be completed by the end of year three. It must be completed and presented as the formal Oral General Examination before the dissertation proposal can be submitted for approval.

Format

The paper should clearly demonstrate the student's substantive knowledge (theoretical and empirical) of a social welfare issue and analytical (research) capabilities. The paper should follow a standard format for the type of scholarly article that the paper represents.

As a general guide, the paper is expected to be 25-40 pages in length and must conform to a particular journal's style requirements (such as the common APA format used by many social welfare and social science journals).

The paper may be written for a social science, behavioral science, or social welfare-related journal. Early in the process, the student and committee should identify potential target journals (just one if appropriate) for the paper. There are different methods of structuring scholarly papers. Whatever type of scholarly paper, it is imperative that the approach selected allow the student to display a mastery of the subject, its theoretical base and empirical foundations, and its applicability to a social welfare problem or issue.

Content

The student selects the paper topic in consultation with the Supervisory Committee. The specific topic should be significant to social welfare and should be sufficiently broad and established so that there is a body of scholarly literature and research that can be critically brought to bear on the topic. The student's analysis should be rigorous. The type of analysis undertaken must be appropriate for the research topic. Whether the paper is based on original or secondary data, qualitative or quantitative methods of inquiry, or involves an experiment, survey or case study, it must conform to accepted, rigorous methods of inquiry and analysis.

The paper would generally begin with a clear description of the problem in question, followed by a critical review and assessment of the theory and research bearing on that problem, a rigorous analysis of new or existing information or data, and a discussion of the implications of this analysis.

The student may be able to design the Research Practicum quarters so that the paper will be an extension of a that work, or it could arise from work done in a research assistantship or traineeship. If approved by the Supervisory Committee, a comprehensive and advanced literature review that is of publishable quality could be acceptable, e.g., one written for *Social Science Review* or *Psychological Bulletin*.

Process and Evaluation Standards

All members of the Supervisory Committee approve the Qualifying Paper before the student submits it for publication and presents it in fulfillment of the Oral General Examination.

The content, quality, and format of the paper must be comparable to scholarly articles in major professional journals, as judged by student's Supervisory Committee members. The paper need not be actually accepted by a journal for satisfaction of this requirement, and acceptance by a journal is not considered sufficient evidence of meeting the standards. Not all articles published in professional journals meet the standards of a "scholarly" article, and some excellent scholarly manuscripts fail to be accepted for publication.

Procedures for Writing the Paper

1. Students work closely with their Supervisory Committee in preparing the scholarly paper. The student first prepares a detailed outline of the proposed paper (e.g., 3-5 pages) that must be approved by the Committee and submitted to the Program Director for inclusion in the student's official file. The outline contains the following components:
 - (a) brief description of each proposed section of the paper
 - (b) description of the analytic approach
 - (c) representative bibliography
 - (d) sources of data that will be used
 - (e) specific journal (or journals listed in order of preference) for which the paper will be written.
2. The student works with the Supervisory Committee or others who may have expertise in the subject matter in drafting the paper. A publishable paper should reflect a distillation and synthesis of knowledge; thus students will likely revise the paper many times as they gain mastery of the subject matter and work to convey that mastery succinctly.

Evaluation and Approval

1. When the paper has been approved by the Supervisory Committee, the student submits the four copies to the PhD Program Office along with the Qualifying Scholarly Paper Approval Form and Evaluation forms completed by all members of the student's Committee.
2. The PhD Program Director, in consultation with the student and Supervisory Committee Chair, will recruit two faculty reviewers who will review the paper, also completing the evaluation form (see Forms section). Reviewers are instructed to evaluate the paper, making comments about it either on the manuscript or separately, complete the evaluation form, and forward the form, comments and manuscript to the PhD Program Director. The rating form will ask the reviewer to determine whether the paper: (a) meets the requirement of a scholarly publication, (b) needs minor revisions to meet the requirement, or (c) needs major revisions to meet the requirement. If the two reviewers disagree substantially on the rating, the PhD Program Director or a member of the PhD Steering Committee will serve as a third reviewer. Reviewers' comments about the paper will be forwarded to the student and Supervisory Committee Chair.
3. When all members of the Supervisory Committee and the reviewers agree that the manuscript meets the standard of a publishable paper, the requirement is fulfilled and the PhD Program Office informs the student and Supervisory Committee Chair that the Oral Presentation of the paper may be scheduled in fulfillment of the Graduate School Oral General Examination.

If the reviewers agree that the paper needs minor revisions, the PhD Director will forward the reviewers comments and discuss potential revisions with the student and Supervisory Committee Chair. A revised version addressing the concerns of the reviewers must be resubmitted within three months. The student is encouraged to meet with the reviewers to discuss the revisions. Upon receiving the revised manuscript, the PhD Director may accept the revised manuscript as now fulfilling the requirement or ask one or more of the original reviewers to reassess the paper.

If the reviewers agree that the paper needs major revisions, the PhD Director will forward the reviewers comments to the student and Supervisory Committee Chair. The student must revise the manuscript, addressing the concerns of the reviewers and resubmit the paper within six months. The student is encouraged to meet with the reviewers to discuss the revisions. Upon receiving the revised manuscript, the PhD Director will submit the revision to all the original reviewers to reassess the paper. If the revised submission is judged to require major revisions, the PhD Steering Committee will meet with the student's Supervisory Committee Chair to determine the student's status in the program.