

Work and Organizational Psychology PhD Programs Qualifying Exam Criteria

Final Draft

The purpose of the qualifying exam is to ascertain that the student working towards earning a PhD **a)** has mastered the basic knowledge and the philosophy of the field; **b)** has potential to contribute to a designated literature in Work and Organizational Psychology; and **c)** is prepared to conduct independent research at the level of a PhD dissertation.

The qualifying exam includes two parts:

1. Written examination in the form of a major review paper,
2. Oral defense (content differs for students with and without a first-author publication/submission).

The process for the qualifying exam includes the following steps for the students to follow:

1. Formal application to METU Social Sciences Institute indicating consent to take the qualifying exam at a given semester.
2. Meeting with the PhD advisor to determine the scope and content of the paper. The student and advisor will discuss possible topics in light of student interests and the current state of the literature.
3. Preparing an outline, executive summary, and reading list. After meeting with the advisor, the student is expected to prepare an outline, as detailed as possible, an executive summary with the intended frame of the study, and an initial reading list.
4. The student is expected to submit a final copy of the paper to each committee member two weeks before the deadline for evaluation.
5. The committee will prepare a written evaluation of the major paper and decide whether or not the student can come for an oral defense.
6. Oral defense: The student will give the oral defense. Format of the oral defense will depend on whether or not the student has submitted a publication.
7. Final decision: Each committee member will indicate a decision of Pass or Fail.

1. Major Review Paper

Students are expected to write a **major paper** on a topic including a comprehensive review of the literature, critical evaluation of the research questions posed or methodologies employed in the literature, and suggested directions of future research.

1.1 Guidelines for Preparing the Major Review Paper

1.1.1 Format Guide:

1) The qualifying paper should consist of the following sections:

- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary (a 2-3 page overview of the purpose and findings of the paper)
- Text of the Paper: Numbered subheadings will cover a review of the literature, critical evaluation of the literature, propositions by the student (proposed model, framework etc).
- References
- Appendices

2) The paper should follow APA format and style guidelines except for tables which can be embedded in text.

3) The *text* section of the paper is expected to be between 35 and 50 pages (1.5 spacing), not exceeding 50 pages.

4) Times New Roman or Calibri font with 12 punto. Tables, appendices can include smaller punto.

1.1.2. Quality Guide:

The major review paper for the qualifying exam is expected to demonstrate a certain level of quality and scope compatible with "Psychological Bulletin" papers. Thus, the following goals are determined:

1. Demonstration of proficiency and knowledge in the proposed area of expertise: The student is expected to identify and integrate ideas, principles, theories, frameworks, and arguments across relevant but distinct literatures by citing empirical evidence and theoretical arguments. The student should come forth as the expert in this field.
2. Demonstration of proficiency in following and evaluating methodology and statistics: The student is expected to make reference to the research methods and statistics employed in the cited literature with the purpose of preparing an evaluation of such.
3. Demonstration of critical thinking skills: The student is expected to analyze and evaluate the focal literature rather than just review it and to defend/criticize any findings, frameworks, applications, or methodologies.
4. Demonstration of creative thought: A major component of the qualifying paper is the presentation of ideas that are not contained in the focal literature but are supported by it. The student is expected to provide a presentation of a theoretical framework which lends itself to empirical testing. In other words to generate new hypotheses, models, and/or frameworks with possible solutions to problems (e.g. about the methodology) identified in the literature review with a substantial potential for contribution to the relevant literature. Note that this will not include a full research proposal nevertheless the accumulated ideas could lead to a dissertation proposal as the student makes progress in the PhD program.
5. Demonstration of writing skills: The student is expected to prepare a qualifying paper that is well-organized, coherent, as well as grammatically correct.

2. Oral Defense

The content of the oral defense varies depending on how advanced the student is in his/her research pursuit. Specifically, those who have either published or submitted a paper (see paper guides below in Section 2.1) will be subjected to questions related to their paper and programmed research as described in Section 2.2. Those who have not submitted a paper that adheres to the specified standards in Section 2.1 will be posed questions that relate to the content and methodology of Work and Organizational Psychology as described in Section 2.3.

2.1. Paper Submission Standards:

The paper is expected to demonstrate a certain level of quality and scope compatible with manuscripts published in credible outlets such as Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology or Psychological Bulletin.

1. The student has to be the first author (but does not have to be the sole author) on the paper.
2. The study is related to Work and Organizational Psychology or methodology applied to WOP.
3. The paper could be in the form of an empirical study or a review article.
4. The journal will be an internationally recognized journal covered by either SSCI or expanded indices, OR a book chapter or a book published by an internationally/nationally recognized publisher, not including papers related to validity and reliability studies.
5. The journal/book publishes in English.
6. The journal will not be a paid journal.
7. The manuscript at least needs to be assigned to reviewers under “under review” status.

2.2. Qualifying Exam for Those with a Publication or Submitted Paper

For those with publications or submissions meeting the above standards, the oral examination will include defending the major review paper and the programmed research the student plans to pursue. The student is expected to prepare a concise presentation of the paper. The defense should particularly focus on the critical evaluation of the literature and future propositions by the student.

2.3. Qualifying Exam for Those without a Publication or Submitted Paper

For those with **no** publications or submissions meeting the above standards, the oral examination will cover topic in three areas of psychology:

- a. **Quantitative:** Research Methods, Statistics, Testing and Measurement
- b. **Personnel Psychology:** Job/Work Analysis, Personnel Selection, Performance Management, Personnel Training
- c. **Organizational Behavior:** Vocational Behavior, Individual Differences, Leadership, Motivation, Gender

A study guide related to the major content areas will be provided before the oral exam.