

## The Chicago School of Professional Psychology Online Campus

## Applied Behavior Analysis Department

# Doctoral-Level Comprehensive Evaluation Manual

Effective June 1, 2017 Revised March 14, 2019

The Comprehensive Evaluation is one component of the Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Applied Behavior Analysis from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Online Campus. The processes included in the evaluation are described within this manual. For further information, please contact your academic advisor.

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## General Description

The objective of the Doctorate in Philosophy (Ph.D.) program in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (TCSPP) is to train individuals to contribute to behavior-analytic scholarly and political communities in addition to providing various clinical services. Graduates are equipped with a repertoire to function as leaders in their respective positions (e.g., clinical director, academic professor, etc.), are prepared to address a wide-range of issues and problems, and to design, implement, and test effective solutions that work in the real world.

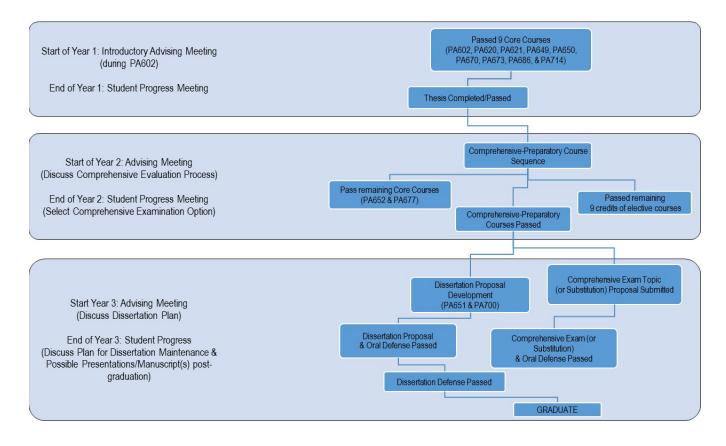
Doctoral-level students will develop a comprehensive understanding of the four domains of Behavior Analysis: Experimental Analysis of Behavior (EAB), Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Service Delivery, and Theory and Philosophy from the curriculum. EAB is commonly described and the "basic" realm of behavior analysis. It commonly includes research conducted with non-human animals or human-operant research. Some courses which cover EAB content include, for example, PA621 (Foundations of Behavioral Acquisition) and PA714 (Experimental Analysis of Behavior). ABA extends EAB by focusing on research questions with more-direct social significance and purpose. This may be accomplished by replicating EAB research with a human population or using a more-natural setting to conduct research. Some courses which cover ABA include, for example, PA620 (Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis) and PA650 (Research in Psychology and Education). Service Delivery courses focus on the practice of applying behavior-analytic principles and procedures. Some courses which cover service delivery procedures include, for example, PA670 (Supervision and Consulting) and PA677 (Essentials in Instructional Design). Theory and Philosophy courses focus on content which is considered more abstract or academic in nature. Some courses which cover theory and philosophy include, for example, PA673 (Radical Behaviorism) and PA686 (Critical Analysis of Research in Verbal Behavior).

This program operates using the junior-colleague model of mentorship. Using this model, a student typically has one advisor, which will be automatically assigned upon admission to the program; however, he or she may work with multiple faculty members to complete the various program requirements and/or change advisors. It should be noted that the adviser and student do not need to be "friends" to be colleagues; however, all advisers will help guide and mentor students in research and professional development. The student and faculty share responsibility to ensure success and timely progression through academic requirements. Also, although students are considered junior colleagues, it is important to remember that they are also students; faculty are still responsible for grading and evaluating. As such, advisors will hold an annual meeting with their advisees called the "Student Progress Meeting" in which students will update and present

their *Doctoral Progress Form* (Appendix A). Faculty and students will discuss progress and make decisions regarding competence and readiness for academic progression.

#### **Purpose of this Manual**

The purpose of the *Doctoral-Level Comprehensive Evaluation Manual* is to provide students with more information about the comprehensive evaluation process, which encompasses program requirements (i.e., Comprehensive Preparatory Courses, Comprehensive Exam, & Substitution options). It should be noted that students are not only required to complete the comprehensive evaluation for the above-mentioned practice and scholarly objectives, but also to actively increase their repertoire of independent academic behaviors such as initiating, developing, and executing research-based tasks. The comprehensive evaluation process provides the students with a means of demonstrating doctoral-level knowledge extemporaneously through a variety of methods including course assignments, written documents, and verbal presentations. This manual provides an overview of the comprehensive evaluation process and procedures, but students are expected to seek out additional information or support as needed. Below is a visual aide to show the progress through the various requirements.



## The Comprehensive Evaluation

The purpose of the comprehensive evaluations process is three-fold: 1) further develop the student's understanding and conceptual application of the four domains of behavior analysis, 2) demonstrate the student's proficiency and conceptual application of a specialized area of behavior analysis, and 3) allow the student to create an innovative research extension and comprehensive literature review.

#### **Official Catalog Description**

Students are required to take and pass a written-comprehensive examination (or petition to substitute a written-scholarly manuscript or grant) and pass an oral-comprehensive examination before they are allowed to defend their dissertation research to their committee. Four, 1-credit courses allow for structured preparation to take the written examination and orally defend their answers. Students have two chances to pass the exam and defense (a third attempt may be allowed under extenuating circumstances). In addition to the exam and defense, the student will present and defend his or her dissertation research proposal. Following a successful proposal defense, the student will become a Doctoral Candidate, and may continue with the dissertation process.

#### **Eligibility**

Students are responsible for communicating with their academic advisor and ensuring they meet all eligibility requirements to complete the comprehensive evaluation process. See appendixes for copies of all necessary documents.

Two, pre-requisite components must be completed to begin the comprehensive evaluation process: successful completion of pre-requisite core courses and successful completion and defense of a thesis.

- 1. During the first 3-4 semesters (6-8 terms), students will complete the core-course sequence, with the possible exception of PA652 (Statistical Analysis I) and/or PA677 (Essentials of Instructional Design), as pre-requisite courses for the Comprehensive Preparatory course sequence. Students must complete all courses with minimally passing grades prior to enrolling in their first Comprehensive Preparatory course.
- 2. Students are also required to complete a thesis. This requirement may be achieved upon admission to the doctoral program if they completed an experimental, single-subject design thesis at another institution, or it may be accomplished during their first year to year and a half by completing the Research Experience course sequence (i.e., PA660, PA661, & PA662), and successfully conducting and defending their thesis to a committee. Upon completion of these requirements, the student will be automatically enrolled in their first, comprehensive-exam preparatory course.

## Comprehensive Evaluation Components

The comprehensive evaluation process includes two overall components, 1) a series of four, 1-credit preparatory courses, and 2) a written examination and oral defense of a specific area in behavior analysis (or substituted alternative).

The student must pass all four comprehensive-preparatory courses to be eligible to propose his or her dissertation and take the comprehensive written examination. After these courses are successfully passed, the order of completion is a little more flexible. The dissertation proposal and oral defense may be completed prior to or following the comprehensive written examination. The comprehensive written examination and oral defense, or petition to substitute an alternative scholarly manuscript or grant, proposal must be submitted prior to the dissertation proposal defense, but may also follow the proposal defense. However, the comprehensive examination and oral defense (or substituted alternative) must be passed a minimum of 6 months prior to the student's final dissertation defense.

#### Course Sequence

Students must pass the following courses: PA730 (Comprehensive I [Experimental Analysis of Behavior]), PA731 (Comprehensive II [Applied Behavior Analysis]), PA732 (Comprehensive III [Service Delivery]), and PA733 (Comprehensive IV [Theory and Philosophy]). These courses are designed to allow students to (a) review and improve understanding and conceptual application of the four domains of behavior analysis and (b) gain experience in thoroughly and fluently answering questions related to these domains at a doctoral level in both written and oral domains.

<u>Grades.</u> Comprehensive-course grades are determined as Credit (C) or No Credit (NC), and credit is allocated per the syllabus requirements for each course. Broadly speaking, each course requires regular participation in discussion boards regarding course topics, completion of practice comprehensive exam questions with *minimally passing* grades, completion of practice oral defenses with *minimally passing* grades, and regular communication with the course instructor through live class meetings. Should a student earn an NC in one (or more) of these courses, that student must repeat that course again when offered. A student may not progress to the comprehensive written examination until he or she has earned a CR in all four courses.

Upon successful completion of the course sequence, students may decide which comprehensive exam option they would like to complete and approach a faculty member to be their comprehensive examination/substitution committee chair and begin the process for the written examination (or substitution) proposal and dissertation proposal. The chair of the comprehensive examination/substitution committee may be the same as the chair of the dissertation committee (see below), but this is not a requirement.

#### Comprehensive-written Examination & Oral Defense

The comprehensive-written examination is meant to allow doctoral students to demonstrate expertise in a specific area within behavior analysis. The student, in conjunction with his or her examination committee, will select and define an area of expertise within behavior analysis. This will include providing an exhaustive list of peer-reviewed references within the proposed area. The committee will then develop a written exam to test the student's academic competence.

#### Committee Selection

The examination committee must be made of up at least three members (committee chair and two readers). The committee chair must be a fulltime, ABA department faculty member who may or may not serve as the student's academic advisor or dissertation chair. The additional committee members may be fulltime or affiliate ABA department faculty or adjunct ABA faculty with their doctorate. One committee member may be an "outside" member, similar to the dissertation committee. The written-examination committee may or may not be the same as the student's dissertation committee.

<u>Changing Committee Members</u>. Students may choose to replace members of their examination committee at their discretion. If a change occurs, students are responsible working with the committee and department to find a replacement.

#### Written Exam Procedures

<u>Topic Proposal</u>. After finalizing his or her committee, the student will submit a written proposal describing a specific topic area within behavior analysis using *The Comprehensive Examination Topic Proposal Form* (Appendix B). The proposed specific topic area may overlap with the general topic area of the student's thesis and/or dissertation.

The proposal form includes a description of the proposed topic in abstract which must be within 150 – 300 words and be formatted according the APA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition Manual. The student must also include a reference list containing relevant seminal and important peer-reviewed studies, all formatted according to the APA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition Manual. The length of the list may vary based on topic area; however, the committee must agree that the list is comprehensive. All references must be made available electronically through OneDrive which should be shared with the committee. If requested, the student must also provide electronic copies of any proposed reference to a committee member via email. The student may also include sample questions in his or her petition; however, these questions may or may not be used by the committee.

<u>Committee Review</u>. The committee will review the student's written proposal and either accept, reject, or request modifications the proposal. In modifying the proposal, the committee may delete or add references, or propose a new area(s) of focus. The student may then accept or reject the committee's proposal. If the student rejects the committee's proposal, he or she may write a second proposal on a different topic.

<u>Exam Arrangements</u>. Following a proposal acceptance by the committee, the date, time, and place of the exam may be scheduled. A minimum of two weeks must be provided for the committee to create the exam based on the proposed readings. The exam may be scheduled prior to or following the dissertation proposal, but must, at minimum, occur 6 months prior to the final dissertation defense.

<u>Exam Methods</u>. Exams will consist of 5-6 questions based on the reading list agreed upon by the committee. Students will be provided up to 6 hours for the exam, which may be split across two, 3-hour sittings. Student will not be provided the questions prior to the exam. Student will access the exam using ProctorU and Canvas (see ABA Resource Café for instructions). Students will be given access to 2-3 questions in the first sitting, and the remaining questions will be presented in the second sitting. As student finish responses and proceed to other questions, they will not be allowed to return to previous questions. Additionally, students will not be able to see questions presented across sittings. Written exams must be closed-book, meaning no materials are available as references which will be ensured by ProctorU representative. Finished exams will be sent to the committee members by the comprehensive examination chair upon completion.

<u>Overall Scoring</u>. The full, written exam will be graded by all the committee members, independently. Each committee member has two weeks to grade the written exam and submit their evaluation to the committee chair. The chair will then compile the scores and report the results to the student.

Scoring per question. Each essay will be scored as a pass, conditional pass, or fail by each committee member. When the chair compiles the scores, if all faculty members score "pass" for an essay, it is passed without need for additional defense. If at least one faculty members scores a "conditional pass" or "fail" for an essay, that essay will be conditionally passed; meaning, the student will have to orally defend that answer to bring it up to a passing level across all committee members. If two or more faculty members score a conditional pass for an essay, the essay will be conditionally passed, and the student will have to orally defend that answer to bring it up to at least a passing level across committee members. If two or more faculty members score a fail for an essay, the essay will be failed, and the student will have to orally defend that answer to bring it up to at least a conditionally pass level across all committee members. A minimum of 80% of essay responses must be passed or conditionally passed to pass the written exam and continue to the oral defense.

If the written examination is failed, the student may retake the written examination on the same or a new topic, a minimum of two terms (14 weeks) after the first attempt. Additionally, an ADP will be developed to assist that student in preparing for the second attempt. If that student does not pass the second attempt, a referral will be made to SAC for disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal from the program.

If the exam is passed with a 100% score, the committee may vote to exempt the student from an oral defense. If this occurs, the faculty chair must inform the ABA Department Manager of the

date of the exam and oral defense and update the departmental spreadsheets accordingly If the written exam is passed, but an oral defense is necessary, the committee and student will arrange a date and time for the student' oral defense.

#### Oral Defense Procedures

<u>Defense Arrangements</u>. Following passing the written exam, the student and committee may schedule the date, time, and place of the oral defense. The oral examination should be scheduled within a month of the written exam.

<u>Oral Defense Methods</u>. Oral examinations will consist of up to 3 questions based on the reading list agreed upon by the committee. Any questions from the written exam which were not unanimously passed will automatically be included; however, the committee may include additional or follow-up questions. The defense will require, at most, 3 hours to complete. The student is responsible for ensuring all members have copies of the original essays prior to the defense. The oral defense should also be a closed-book exam, meaning no materials may be available for the student. At least two of the three committee members must be present for the oral defense to commence.

<u>Overall Scoring</u>. Each committee member will score the oral defense answers in situ and at the end of the examination, the committee will convene to compile the results. If all three members are present, or if two members are present and agree, the decision will be finalized at that time. If the two present members disagree, they will wait for the third member to view the recording of the defense. The committee may take up to 48 hours to make a final decision. The chair will then contact the student to report the results.

If the oral examination is passed, the faculty chair must inform the ABA Department Manager of the date of the exam and oral defense and update the departmental spreadsheets accordingly. This must be completed to schedule the final dissertation defense.

If the oral examination is failed, the student may retake the written *and* oral examinations with the same (or a new) topic, at minimum, two terms (14 weeks) after the first attempt. If a new topic is selected, the committee approval process must occur again. An ADP will be developed to assist that student in preparing for the second attempt, which will require passing a new written comprehensive exam with minimum requirements. If that student does not pass the second attempt, a referral is made to the SAC for disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal from the program.

#### Written Examination Alternative: Substitution of Scholarly Work

Upon passing the comprehensive preparatory course sequence and prior to his or her dissertation proposal, the student may petition his or her comprehensive examination committee to have a scholarly manuscript or grant substituted for the comprehensive examination. There are two

options for appropriate substitutions of the comprehensive exam, (a) first authorship of a manuscript or (b) primary investigator of a grant proposal.

Manuscript. First authorship of a scholarly behavior-analytic empirical research article, literature review/critique with philosophical/theoretical/historical focus, or book chapter previously published or submitted for publication may be considered as an appropriate substitution for the written examination. Nonexamples include published abstracts, brief (e.g., 3-4 pages) reviews or commentaries, and book/software reviews. If the manuscript is a previously published work, the reported affiliation must be The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. The manuscript may not be a publication of thesis or dissertation data; however, the topic area may overlap with thesis and/or dissertation topic area. This is determined by comparing the references. There may be up to 25% or 50% of references, respectively. This should be evaluated by the comprehensive examination committee chair. The manuscript should demonstrate proficiency in an area of study, display substantial breadth, and be related to the discipline of behavior analysis. There should be clear demonstration that the student has made substantial contribution to the preparation of the manuscript (e.g., be listed as first author). The following peer-reviewed journals are among the suitable outlets for the publication of manuscript: Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, Journal of Behavioral Education, Perspective on Behavior Science, Behavior and Philosophy, Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, The Psychological Record, Journal of Organizational Behavior Management, Behavioral Interventions, & Behavior and Social Issues. Students may provide a rationale for other similar journals to be considered by the committee.

*Grant proposal.* Submission of a peer-reviewed grant proposal made to a Federal, State, or private granting agency with the student designated as the Primary Investigator may also be petitioned as an appropriate substitution for the written examination. The proposal must include a thorough literature review and rationale for funding. A grant proposal may be based on the student's dissertation topic and be used to fund the dissertation project. The student will work with a member of the faculty to identify a suitable request for proposals from a reputable funding source. Examples of appropriate funding sources include federal or state institutes/divisions (e.g., National Institute of Health or Department of Education) and private foundations. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the TCSPP training offerings associated with grant writing. Guidance of the process may be found in the Grants 101: A Webinar for Beginning Grant Seekers

#### Substitution Procedure

<u>Petition</u>. The student may submit a petition to his or her committee using the Written Examination Substitution Petition Form (Appendix C) to which a copy of the manuscript or grant proposal must be attached.

Manuscripts previously published or accepted for publication must include the copy of the manuscript and associate editor or editor's decision letter regarding acceptance for publication should be included with the petition. If the manuscript is currently under review, documentation

to this effect must be provided. Manuscripts which have been rejected or invited to resubmit, may be reviewed as well if the decision letter and reviews are also included.

Funded grant proposals must include the confirmation award letter with the petition. Also, similar to the manuscript option, if the proposal is under review, documentation must be submitted. Grant proposals which have not been funded may also be reviewed and should include agency and reviewer feedback in the petition.

<u>Committee Review</u>. The committee will consider the following criteria: 1) demonstration of behavior-analytic proficiency, 2) proficiency in topic area, 3) representation of scholarly advancement or contribution, 4) student's contribution to manuscript (e.g., must be first author), 5) sufficiently separate from thesis project and dissertation proposal project (if manuscript). The committee may reject the petition based on the criteria above or for other reasons if the petition does not constitute, in any member's judgment, an equivalent activity to the written-comprehensive examination in depth or breadth. The petition for substitution must be approved and signed by all members of the student's examination committee.

#### Oral Defense

If the manuscript has been published or accepted for publication, the oral defense is automatically passed. If this occurs, the faculty chair must inform the ABA Department Manager of the date of the exam and oral defense and update the departmental spreadsheets accordingly. If the manuscript is under review, or if it has been previously rejected, an oral defense may be arranged per committee request.

Similarly, if the grant proposal has already been funded, the oral examination is automatically passed. If this occurs, the faculty chair must inform the ABA Department Manager of the date of the exam and oral defense and update the departmental spreadsheets accordingly. If the proposal is under review, or if it has not been funded, an oral examination may be arranged per committee approval.

#### Defense Procedures

<u>Defense Arrangements</u>. Following committee review of the substitution proposal, an oral defense may be scheduled. This should be done at least 6 months of the prior to the student's final dissertation defense.

<u>Defense Methods</u>. Students will be given up to 30 minutes to present their manuscript or grant proposal to the committee. Their committee may ask any questions relevant to the presentation topic area throughout the presentation or following. The defense will require, at most, 3 hours to complete. At least two of the three committee members must be present at the oral defense.

<u>Overall Scoring</u>. At the end of the defense, the committee will convene to discuss their pass or fail decision. The oral defense must be passed by all members of the student's committee. If one committee member is absent, a recording of the defense will be provided to that member.

The committee may take up to 48 hours to reach a final decision. The committee chair will then contact the student to report the results.

If the oral examination is passed, the faculty chair must inform the ABA Department Manager of the date of the exam and oral defense and update the departmental spreadsheets accordingly. This must be completed prior to scheduling his or her final dissertation defense.

If the oral examination is failed, the student may elect to complete the original process for the written examination and oral defense, or the student may submit one additional substitution petition with a different manuscript or grant proposal. If the student fails the second substitution attempt, the student must proceed with the original written examination and oral defense process.

## TCS Student Guidelines

**Statement of Academic Integrity** 

Student Email and Use of School Technology

Policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

**Statement on Final Grades** 

## Appendixes

Appendix A: Doctoral Progress Form

Appendix B: Comprehensive Written Examination Topic Proposal Form

Appendix C: Written Examination Substitution Petition Form



#### Appendix A

## Applied Behavior Analysis Online Ph.D. Doctoral Progress Form

#### **Course Credits**

Students will be automatically enrolled in courses each term (1-2 courses per 7-week term) by the TCSPP registrar's office, but students should also monitor their progress to ensure all requirements are met.

Course Names	Term Completed
PA602 – Advanced Professional Development (1 credit)	
PA620 – Advanced Applied Behavior Analysis (3 credits)	
PA621 – Foundations of Behavioral Acquisition (3 credits)	
PA649 – Translational Research (3 credits)	
PA650 – Research in Psychology and Education (3 credits)	
PA652 – Statistical Analysis (3 credits)	
PA670 – Supervision and Consulting in ABA (2 credits)	
PA673 – Radical Behaviorism (3 credits)	
PA677 – Essentials in Instructional Design (2 credits)	
PA686 – Critical Analysis of Research in Verbal Behavior (3 credits)	
PA714 – Experimental Analysis of Behavior (3 credits)	
PA660 – Research Experience I	
PA661 – Research Experience II	
PA662 – Research Experience III	
PA730 – Comprehensive I	
PA731 – Comprehensive II	
PA732 – Comprehensive III	
PA733 – Comprehensive IV	
PA651 – Advanced Behavioral Research	
PA700 – Proposal Development Seminar	
PA741 – Dissertation Development I	
PA742 – Dissertation Development II	
PA743 – Dissertation Development III	
PA744 – Dissertation Development IV	
PA745 – Dissertation Development V	
Electives (9 Credits) – Manually List Below (with credits)	
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#### Research Experience

Each student will be required to complete a thesis and dissertation prior to graduation. A thesis project which was completed at another university prior to admission to the PhD program may be submitted at the time of admission for approval. If approved, the student will not need to complete the Research-Experience course sequence (PA660-PA662). For further thesis and dissertation procedures, see specific manuals.

Requirement Thesis Completed Prior to admission Thesis Approved Dissertation Proposal & Defense Passed Dissertation Defense & Defense Passed	Date Finished
Comprehensive Evaluation  Each student will be required to complete the comprehensive evaluation preparatory course sequence (listed above) and written exam and oral opetition to substitute a manuscript or grant for the exam and oral defension comprehensive evaluation manual.	lefense. Ä student may, however,
Requirement Examination Topic Approval Written Exam Passed Oral Defense Passed Substitution Proposal Approved Substitution Passed Substitution Defense	Date Finished
Residency Requirements Each student will be required to attend Residency once a year in Chicag	go, IL for a minimum of three years.
Requirement Residency I Residency II Residency III	Dates Attended
Student Progress Meetings  Each student will be required to meet with their advisor annually to discument the semester before the student's "new" y Cohorts will have this meeting during Summer 2, Spring cohorts Fall 2, and These are not the only meetings students will have with their advisors; humandatorily documented meetings.	ear would begin, for example, Fall and Summer cohorts in Spring 2.
Student Progress Meeting Year I Year II Year III	Date



#### Appendix B

## **Applied Behavior Analysis Online Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Topic Proposal Form**

Student Name:	
Advisor:	
Title of Thesis Project:	
Proposed Topic of Dissertation:	
Proposed Written Exam Topic:	
Abstract (150-300 words):	
List of Proposed References (electronic copies acce	essible via OneDrive):
List of Proposed Written Exam Questions (optional	):
Committee Approval	
Committee Member Name	Approved
	Yes/No/Modify
	Yes/No/Modify
	Yes/No/Modify

Committee Member Modification Requests:



#### Appendix C

## Applied Behavior Analysis Online Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Substitution Petition Form

Student Name:				
Advisor:				
Alternatives to Comprehensive	Examination			
Manuscript:				
Manuscript Title:				
Authors:				
Publication Outlet:				
Also Attached: Manuscript & E	ditorial Decision Le	tter (or proof of review status)		
Committee Member Name	Score	Committee Member Signature		
	Pass/Fail			
Grant Proposal:				
Grant Title:				
Authors:				
Funding Source:				
Amount Request:				
Also Attached: Proposal & Sou	rce Decision Letter	(or proof of funding status)		
Written Examination Substitution	on: Pass/Fail			
Oral Examination				
Waived: Yes/No				
Committee Member Name	Score	Committee Member Signature		
	Pass/Fail			
Committee Chair Signature:				
Student Signature:				
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