

College of Education
Department of Educational Leadership
Qualifying Examination Study Guide 2025-2026

Please be advised that for the 2024-2025 academic year, the qualifying exams will be take-home exams. We kindly ask that you make every effort to access your qualifying exam in a timely fashion and submit it by the deadline. On the actual exam, please note that the requirements regarding formatting, Turnitin, and AI similarity guidelines must be strictly adhered to.

Each essay response should be between 350-400 words in length and must incorporate relevant theories, concepts, and research findings. Use appropriate terminology, conceptual frameworks, and reference authorities in the field. The actual exam is scenario-based. Please plan your time accordingly.

Overview:

Doctoral candidates are eligible to take the Qualifying Examination after completing a minimum of 12 hours and a maximum of 21 hours, which must include EDAD 6000, EDAD 7120 or EDCI 7120, and EDAD 7180.

Section 1: Research Methods (EDAD 7120 or EDCI 7120)

1. Compare and contrast quantitative and qualitative research methods. Discuss their strengths, limitations, and appropriate applications in educational leadership research.
2. Explain the purpose and process of conducting a literature review in educational research. Describe strategies for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant sources.
3. Discuss the role of validity and reliability in educational research. Describe methods for establishing validity and reliability in both quantitative and qualitative studies.
4. Describe the ethical considerations involved in conducting research with human subjects. Explain the purpose and process of obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.
5. Discuss the importance of mixed-methods research in educational leadership. Provide an example of a research question that could be effectively addressed using a mixed-methods approach.

Section 2: Statistics (EDAD 6000 and EDAD 7180)

1. Explain the concept of statistical significance and its role in interpreting research findings. Discuss the difference between statistical significance and practical significance.
2. Describe the process of conducting a multiple regression analysis. Explain how to interpret the results and discuss the assumptions that must be met for the analysis to be valid.
3. Compare and contrast parametric and non-parametric statistical tests. Provide examples of research questions that would be appropriate for each type of test.

4. Discuss the purpose and process of conducting a factor analysis. Explain how to determine the number of factors to retain and how to interpret the results.
5. Describe the concept of effect size and its importance in educational research. Provide examples of common effect size measures and explain how to interpret them.

Section 3: Statistical Analysis in Educational Leadership II (3) (EDAD 7180)

1. Discuss the role of statistical software packages (e.g. SPSS) in educational research. Describe the advantages and limitations of using these packages.
2. Explain how to use technology to facilitate collaboration and communication among research team members. Provide examples of tools and strategies that can be used to support effective teamwork.
3. Describe the process of creating and managing a database for a research project. Discuss the importance of data validation, data cleaning, and data security.
4. Explain the importance of data visualization (chart, graphs, tables...) in communicating research findings. Provide examples of effective data visualization techniques and describe how to create them using appropriate software tools.

Section 4: Major Area of Specialization

1. Discuss the role of leadership in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in educational organizations. Provide examples of strategies that leaders can use to foster a more inclusive and equitable environment.
2. Analyze the impact of globalization on educational leadership. Discuss the challenges and opportunities that globalization presents for educational leaders and describe strategies for preparing students to succeed in a global society.
3. Discuss the concept of transformational leadership and its application in educational settings. Provide examples of how transformational leaders can inspire and motivate others to achieve shared goals.
4. Explain the importance of data-driven decision-making in educational leadership. Describe the types of data that educational leaders should collect and analyze to inform their decisions and discuss strategies for using data effectively.
5. Discuss the role of educational leaders in promoting innovation and change in their organizations. Provide examples of successful innovation and change initiatives in education and describe the leadership strategies that contributed to their success.

Rubric for Qualifying Exam Essays
Department of Educational Leadership, Tennessee State University
2024-2025

Criteria	5 - Exceptional	4 - Advanced	3 - Proficient	2 - Developing	1 - Unsatisfactory
Content Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates a deep and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter- Provides a thorough, accurate, and well-supported response - Effectively incorporates relevant theories, concepts, and research findings - Consistently uses appropriate terminology and conceptual frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates a strong understanding of the subject matter - Provides an accurate and well-supported response - Incorporates relevant theories, concepts, and research findings - Uses appropriate terminology and conceptual frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates an adequate understanding of the subject matter - Provides a mostly accurate and supported response - Incorporates some relevant theories, concepts, and research findings - Uses mostly appropriate terminology and conceptual frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates a limited understanding of the subject matter - Provides a partially accurate or supported response - Incorporates few relevant theories, concepts, or research findings - Uses some appropriate terminology and conceptual frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates a lack of understanding of the subject matter - Provides an inaccurate or unsupported response - Fails to incorporate relevant theories, concepts, or research findings - Uses inappropriate or inaccurate terminology and conceptual frameworks

Critical Thinking	- Exhibits exceptional critical thinking skills - Provides insightful and sophisticated analysis and well-reasoned conclusions - Effectively evaluates and synthesizes information from multiple sources - Offers highly original and innovative	- Exhibits strong critical thinking skills - Provides indepth analysis and wellreasoned conclusions - Evaluates and synthesizes information from multiple sources - Offers original and innovative ideas or solutions	- Exhibits adequate critical thinking skills - Provides valid analysis and logical conclusions - Evaluates and integrates information from multiple sources - Offers some original ideas or solutions	- Exhibits limited critical thinking skills - Provides superficial analysis or conclusions with weak reasoning - Minimally evaluates or integrates information from multiple sources - Offers few	- Exhibits poor critical thinking skills - Lacks analysis or draws illogical conclusions - Fails to evaluate or integrate information from multiple sources - Offers no original ideas or solutions
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Criteria	5 - Exceptional	4 - Advanced	3 - Proficient	2 - Developing	1 - Unsatisfactory
	ideas or solutions			original ideas or solutions	
Organization and Clarity	- Presents an exceptionally well-organized, clear, and coherent response - Consistently uses effective transitions and maintains a logical flow of ideas - Includes a strong and engaging introduction, body, and conclusion - Fully adheres to the prescribed format and length requirements	- Presents a wellorganized, clear, and coherent response - Uses effective transitions and maintains a logical flow of ideas - Includes a strong introduction, body, and conclusion - Adheres to the prescribed format and length requirements	- Presents an organized and mostly clear response - Uses appropriate transitions and maintains a logical flow of ideas - Includes an adequate introduction, body, and conclusion - Mostly adheres to the prescribed format and length requirements	- Presents a somewhat organized response with limited clarity - Uses weak transitions or partially maintains a logical flow of ideas - Includes a weak introduction, body, or conclusion - Partially adheres to the prescribed format and length requirements	- Presents a disorganized, unclear, or incoherent response - Lacks transitions and fails to maintain a logical flow of ideas - Lacks an introduction, body, or conclusion - Fails to adhere to the prescribed format and length requirements

Writing Mechanics	- Demonstrates exceptional writing mechanics - Consistently uses proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation throughout - Employs a highly varied and professional vocabulary - Flawlessly follows APA formatting guidelines	- Demonstrates excellent writing mechanics - Uses proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation throughout - Employs a varied and professional vocabulary - Consistently follows APA formatting guidelines	- Demonstrates good writing mechanics - Uses mostly proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation - Employs an appropriate vocabulary - Mostly follows APA formatting guidelines	- Demonstrates fair writing mechanics - Uses somewhat proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation - Employs a limited or repetitive vocabulary - Partially follows APA formatting guidelines	- Demonstrates poor writing mechanics - Uses improper grammar, spelling, and punctuation - Employs an inappropriate or confusing vocabulary - Fails to follow APA formatting guidelines
Criteria	5 - Exceptional	4 - Advanced	3 - Proficient	2 - Developing	1 - Unsatisfactory
Evidence and Examples	- Provides compelling and highly relevant evidence to support claims - Uses a wide variety of credible sources to enhance the response - Includes specific, illustrative, and highly effective examples to clarify ideas - Seamlessly integrates evidence and examples into the response	- Provides strong and relevant evidence to support claims - Uses a variety of credible sources to enhance the response - Includes specific and illustrative examples to clarify ideas - Effectively integrates evidence and examples into the response	- Provides adequate evidence to support claims - Uses some credible sources to enhance the response - Includes relevant examples to clarify ideas - Adequately integrates evidence and examples into the response	- Provides limited evidence to support claims - Uses few credible sources to enhance the response - Includes vague or irrelevant examples to clarify ideas - Minimally integrates evidence and examples into the response	- Provides no evidence to support claims - Uses no credible sources to enhance the response - Includes no examples to clarify ideas - Fails to integrate evidence or examples into the response