

Developmental Science Doctoral Training Program  
Qualifying Examination Rubrics

Introduction:

The process of preparing for the Qualifying Exam in Developmental Science provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate, synthesize, and extend their general and discipline-specific knowledge in Developmental Science Theory, Developmental Science Methods, and Developmental Science Specialty area, and to apply their expertise acquired through coursework and research to generate an original answer to the exam questions.

1. The purpose of the Qualifying Exam taken by Developmental Science graduate students is:
  - a. To examine the student's general and discipline-specific knowledge in the competency domains of theory, methods, and specialty area.
  - b. To test the student's ability to identify, articulate, present, and defend (in written form) an original answer to questions in each domain.
  - c. To examine the student's ability to formulate cogent and articulate arguments/answers and support them with relevant scholarship demonstrating an understanding of the relevant published literatures.
  - d. To test the student's ability to write an advanced theoretical argument that directly answers the specific examination questions.
2. The Qualifying Exam should demonstrate that the student has mastered the critical theory, methods, and specialty content to earn a doctoral degree in the field.
3. Passing the Qualifying Exam is a requirement for admission to Candidacy for the Ph.D.

Quals format:

Students are required to answer questions in three competency domains: (1) Developmental Science Theory, (2) Developmental Science Methods, and (3) Specialty. A list of questions in each competency domain will be prepared by the Program Director. The list is not available in advance to students sitting for the qualifying exam or their major professors. If the Program Director has a student taking the exam that year, a faculty member who does not have a student taking the exam will select the questions.

Scoring:

Each of the questions is scored individually using the rubrics below. Questions in the Developmental Science Theory and Developmental Science Methods competency domains are scored by all Developmental Science faculty. A Developmental Science faculty member may abstain from scoring a Specialty area domain question depending on his/her/their expertise. If a Developmental Science graduate student is working closely with a faculty member outside of the program, the Program Director (or faculty member supervising the exam) may ask that external faculty member to evaluate the Specialty question only. On each question, scores range from 0 – 25. The lowest and the highest scores are dropped. The remaining faculty scores are averaged for a single score per question per student and divided by 5 to determine pass – fail on each question. A passing score per question is “4”. If a student scores less than “4” on one or more questions, question(s) in the deficit competency domain(s) may be retaken once in the following semester. Students who score less than “4” on any question on the retake exam will be formally dismissed from the doctoral program per FIU UGS policy.

Rubric for the Assessment of Subject Content Knowledge in **Developmental Science Theory**

Indicators of Subject Content Knowledge	Level of Achievement					Score
	1	2*	3	4**	5	
<b>Demonstrates competence in seminal scholarship</b>	Little inquiry; limited knowledge shown.		Demonstrates some knowledge of developmental science theory. Explores topic with curiosity; adequate knowledge from variety of relevant sources displayed; applies knowledge of scholarship appropriately to answer question.		Knowledge base displays scope, thoroughness, and quality, clear understanding of theoretical foundations and ability to apply and extend them to answer question in novel and creative way.	
<b>Examine &amp; Identify all facets of the problem/question</b>	Does not identify or summarize the problem/question (or all parts of the problem/question) accurately, if at all.		The main theoretical question/sub-questions/issues are identified and clearly stated, and answered appropriately.		The main question and subsidiary, embedded or implicit aspects of a question are identified, clearly stated, and answered. The answers go beyond the question to demonstrate advanced competencies, and ability to expand and apply knowledge of developmental theory.	
<b>Analyzes &amp; Synthesize:</b> Identifies and evaluates the quality of supporting data/evidence; detects connections and patterns.	No supporting data or evidence is utilized; separates into few parts; detects few connections or patterns.		Evidence is used but not carefully examined; source(s) of evidence are not questioned for accuracy, precision, relevance and completeness; facts and opinions are stated but not clearly distinguished from value judgments.		Evidence is identified and carefully examined for accuracy, precision, relevance, and completeness; facts and opinions are stated and clearly distinguished; combines facts and ideas to create new knowledge that is comprehensive and significant.	
<b>Constructs &amp; Interprets:</b> Identifies and evaluates conclusions, implications, and consequences; develops ideas.	Combines few facts and ideas; needs more development; conclusions, implications, or consequences are not provided.		Accurately identifies conclusions, implications, and consequences with a brief evaluative summary; uses perspectives and insights to explain relationships; states own position on the question.		Accurately identifies conclusions, implications, and consequences with a well-developed explanation; provides an objective reflection of own assertions.	
<b>Written Expression/Indicators of Effective Writing</b> Includes assessment of (1) Content and Development (ideas, examples, reasons and evidence, point of view); (2) Organization (focus, coherence, progression, and development of ideas); (3) Language and grammar (appropriate word choice, grammar, and punctuation)	(1) Topic is poorly developed, lacking support, vague, general, ideas are trite, simplistic; (2) writing and arguments are disorganized and unfocused, lack of progression of ideas, weak or non-existent development of ideas; (3) displays frequent and fundamental errors in vocabulary, sentence structure, ability to communicate ideas effectively, poor grammar and punctuation.		(1) Ideas are evident, provides some supporting detail, reflects through writing an understanding of topic, generally organized and focused, demonstrates coherence and progression of ideas and articulates thesis, (2) competent use of language and sentence structure; (3) occasional errors that do not interfere with ability to communicate through writing.		(1) Thesis/ideas/arguments are well developed and clearly articulated, with specific and appropriate use of evidence presented in an effective, clear, and cohesive answer. (2) answer is clearly focused and organized in a compelling and convincing way that conveys point of view/arguments well; (3) strong choice of language and sound sentence structure, demonstrating mastery of scientific writing, and command of language, and free of most spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.	

\*Exhibits most characteristics of '1' and some of '3' \*\*Exhibits most characteristics of '3' and some of '5' Key: Raw scores range from a low of 5 to a high of 25. Passing: Average of "4".

Rubric for the Assessment of Subject Content Knowledge in **Developmental Science Methods**

Indicators of Subject Content Knowledge	Level of Achievement					Score
	1	2*	3	4**	5	
<b>Demonstrates competence in seminal scholarship</b>	Little inquiry; limited knowledge shown.		Demonstrates some knowledge of developmental science methods. Explores topic with curiosity; adequate knowledge from variety of relevant sources displayed; applies knowledge of scholarship appropriately to answer question.		Knowledge base displays scope, thoroughness, and quality, clear understanding of theoretical foundations and ability to apply and extend them to answer question in novel and creative way.	
<b>Examine &amp; Identify all facets of the problem/question</b>	Does not identify or summarize the problem/question (or all parts of the problem/question) accurately, if at all.		The main methodological question/sub-questions/issues are identified and clearly stated, and answered appropriately.		The main question and subsidiary, embedded or implicit aspects of a question are identified, clearly stated, and answered. The answers go beyond the question to demonstrate advanced competencies, and ability to expand and apply knowledge of developmental theory.	
<b>Analyzes &amp; Synthesize:</b> Identifies and evaluates the quality of supporting data/evidence; detects connections and patterns.	No supporting data or evidence is utilized; separates into few parts; detects few connections or patterns.		Evidence is used but not carefully examined; source(s) of evidence are not questioned for accuracy, precision, relevance and completeness; facts and opinions are stated but not clearly distinguished from value judgments.		Evidence is identified and carefully examined for accuracy, precision, relevance, and completeness; facts and opinions are stated and clearly distinguished; combines facts and ideas to create new knowledge that is comprehensive and significant.	
<b>Constructs &amp; Interprets:</b> Identifies and evaluates conclusions, implications, and consequences; develops ideas.	Combines few facts and ideas; needs more development; conclusions, implications, or consequences are not provided.		Accurately identifies conclusions, implications, and consequences with a brief evaluative summary; uses perspectives and insights to explain relationships; states own position on the question.		Accurately identifies conclusions, implications, and consequences with a well-developed explanation; provides an objective reflection of own assertions.	
<b>Written Expression/Indicators of Effective Writing</b> Includes assessment of (1) Content and Development (ideas, examples, reasons and evidence, point of view); (2) Organization (focus, coherence, progression, and development of ideas); (3) Language and grammar (appropriate word choice, grammar, and punctuation)	(1) Topic is poorly developed, lacking support, vague, general, ideas are trite, simplistic; (2) writing and arguments are disorganized and unfocused, lack of progression of ideas, weak or non-existent development of ideas; (3) displays frequent and fundamental errors in vocabulary, sentence structure, ability to communicate ideas effectively, poor grammar and punctuation.		(1) Ideas are evident, provides some supporting detail, reflects through writing an understanding of topic, generally organized and focused, demonstrates coherence and progression of ideas and articulates thesis, (2) competent use of language and sentence structure; (3) occasional errors that do not interfere with ability to communicate through writing.		(1) Thesis/ideas/arguments are well developed and clearly articulated, with specific and appropriate use of evidence presented in an effective, clear, and cohesive answer. (2) answer is clearly focused and organized in a compelling and convincing way that conveys point of view/arguments well; (3) strong choice of language and sound sentence structure, demonstrating mastery of scientific writing, and command of language, and free of most spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.	

\*Exhibits most characteristics of '1' and some of '3' \*\*Exhibits most characteristics of '3' and some of '5' Key: Raw scores range from a low of 5 to a high of 25. Passing: Average of "4".

Rubric for the Assessment of Subject Content Knowledge in **Developmental Science Specialty**

Indicators of Subject Content Knowledge	Level of Achievement					Score
	1	2*	3	4**	5	
<b>Demonstrates competence in seminal scholarship</b>	Little inquiry; limited knowledge shown.		Demonstrates some knowledge of specialty area. Explores topic with curiosity; adequate knowledge from variety of relevant sources displayed; applies knowledge of scholarship appropriately to answer question.		Knowledge base displays scope, thoroughness, and quality, clear understanding of theoretical foundations and ability to apply and extend them to answer question in novel and creative way.	
<b>Examine &amp; Identify all facets of the problem/question</b>	Does not identify or summarize the problem/question (or all parts of the problem/question) accurately, if at all.		The main specialty question/sub-questions/issues are identified and clearly stated, and answered appropriately.		The main question and subsidiary, embedded or implicit aspects of a question are identified, clearly stated, and answered. The answers go beyond the question to demonstrate advanced competencies, and ability to expand and apply knowledge of developmental theory.	
<b>Analyzes &amp; Synthesize:</b> Identifies and evaluates the quality of supporting data/evidence; detects connections and patterns.	No supporting data or evidence is utilized; separates into few parts; detects few connections or patterns.		Evidence is used but not carefully examined; source(s) of evidence are not questioned for accuracy, precision, relevance and completeness; facts and opinions are stated but not clearly distinguished from value judgments.		Evidence is identified and carefully examined for accuracy, precision, relevance, and completeness; facts and opinions are stated and clearly distinguished; combines facts and ideas to create new knowledge that is comprehensive and significant.	
<b>Constructs &amp; Interprets:</b> Identifies and evaluates conclusions, implications, and consequences; develops ideas.	Combines few facts and ideas; needs more development; conclusions, implications, or consequences are not provided.		Accurately identifies conclusions, implications, and consequences with a brief evaluative summary; uses perspectives and insights to explain relationships; states own position on the question.		Accurately identifies conclusions, implications, and consequences with a well-developed explanation; provides an objective reflection of own assertions.	
<b>Written Expression/Indicators of Effective Writing</b> Includes assessment of (1) Content and Development (ideas, examples, reasons and evidence, point of view); (2) Organization (focus, coherence, progression, and development of ideas); (3) Language and grammar (appropriate word choice, grammar, and punctuation)	(1) Topic is poorly developed, lacking support, vague, general, ideas are trite, simplistic; (2) writing and arguments are disorganized and unfocused, lack of progression of ideas, weak or non-existent development of ideas; (3) displays frequent and fundamental errors in vocabulary, sentence structure, ability to communicate ideas effectively, poor grammar and punctuation.		(1) Ideas are evident, provides some supporting detail, reflects through writing an understanding of topic, generally organized and focused, demonstrates coherence and progression of ideas and articulates thesis, (2) competent use of language and sentence structure; (3) occasional errors that do not interfere with ability to communicate through writing.		(1) Thesis/ideas/arguments are well developed and clearly articulated, with specific and appropriate use of evidence presented in an effective, clear, and cohesive answer. (2) answer is clearly focused and organized in a compelling and convincing way that conveys point of view/arguments well; (3) strong choice of language and sound sentence structure, demonstrating mastery of scientific writing, and command of language, and free of most spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.	

\*Exhibits most characteristics of '1' and some of '3' \*\*Exhibits most characteristics of '3' and some of '5' Key: Raw scores range from a low of 5 to a high of 25. Passing: Average of "4".