

## Comprehensive Exam Policy Statement

**The purpose of comprehensive exams is to encourage and ensure that students have mastered a broad, deep, and integrative knowledge of the field of I-O psychology prior to becoming a PhD candidate.** We assess student mastery through the examination of responses to 8 questions. Four of the 8 questions are drawn from the required areas of Industrial, Organizational, Methods, and Ethics. The other 4 questions are based on topics of the student's choosing (referred to hereafter as the "optional areas").<sup>1</sup> What is suitable as an optional area has been the subject of discussion among the faculty. This policy statement is intended to articulate the current approach agreed upon by the I-O faculty for the selection of optional areas and to serve as a guide to students in selection of their four optional areas.

1. Topics for which we currently offer a doctoral seminar are eligible (e.g., assessment centers, job analysis, occupational health psychology, selection, training, work-family).
2. Topics for which we do not currently offer a doctoral seminar, but that are commonly included as chapters in introductory I-O psychology textbooks are eligible (e.g., motivation).
3. One of the 4 optional areas can be narrower in scope than the topics described in points 1 and 2 if the topic is the subject of the student's dissertation. The purpose of this option is to give the student the opportunity to read more deeply in an area than would be expected of the otherwise competent student and to connect the material with his/her intended dissertation topic. For example, a student pursuing a dissertation on underemployment, which falls within the broader topic of careers, could take a question on underemployment instead of careers. A student pursuing a dissertation on the use of simulation techniques to train surgeons could take a question on simulation techniques instead of training. A student conducting a dissertation on counterproductive work behavior (CWB) could opt for a question on CWB instead of occupational health psychology.
4. A narrow topic deemed acceptable for one student does not mean that the same topic is acceptable for a subsequent student.
5. A topic should not be a subsection of another selected optional topic (e.g., students cannot select personality and negative affect as 2 of their 4 areas). Students can select two topics for which we have two doctoral seminars (see point 1 above) that share some overlap (e.g., assessment centers and selection).
6. The combining of two optional topics to form a third topic area is not acceptable (e.g., students cannot select personality, selection, and personality in selection as three of their four optional areas).

7. Students are encouraged to span both the I and the O side of I-O psychology in selecting their optional areas and should do so in consultation with their major professor.

<sup>1</sup>Students completing the OHP concentration must take OHP as one of their four optional area.

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TDA