Overview: The Project (ED-D 598) and the Comprehensive Examination (ED-D 597) represent the culmination of the M.Ed. candidate’s graduate education in the Learning and Development or Special Education focus areas of Educational Psychology. Although these courses fall under separate course numbers, they are best understood as a single process. The goal of this process is to give students a final opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skill as critical consumers of research and literature in either of the focus areas.

In order to complete this process, M.Ed. candidates will be given two weeks (14 days) to write 3 research critiques, then successfully complete an oral examination of the critiques and demonstrate a high level of achievement in the application of knowledge required in Educational Psychology related to Learning and Development or Special Education⁽¹⁾. Students may schedule their project and oral exam ahead of time, with the understanding that the oral exam will not proceed unless the project is passed.

I. ED-D 598 Project (Research Critique)

1. Choice of Articles to be Critiqued:

Five (5) research articles from peer-reviewed journals representing the disciplines of Learning and Development or Special Education will be selected by the supervising faculty. Two of the journal articles may be in an area or topic of interest that candidates identify to their supervisor.

Writing the Research Critiques:

a) Candidate Selects Three of the Five: The supervisor will provide the candidate access to the journal articles and the candidate will then select three (3) articles on which to write the critiques.

b) Format, Time, and Submission Guidelines:

- The maximum critique length is ten (10) pages double spaced, excluding references.
- Candidates have two (2) weeks from receipt of the journal articles to complete critiques.
- Completed critiques will be submitted electronically to the supervisor and examining committee members.

⁽¹⁾ Consistent with Faculty of Graduate Studies requirements for Project-based Master’s Degrees
2. **Evaluation of Critiques:**
   a) **Evaluation Criteria:** Successful project papers will demonstrate mastery of the following skills:
      - Ability to comprehend the article content accurately.
      - Ability to situate the article content within a larger body of research and theory.
      - Ability to identify any unnamed assumptions relevant to the authors’ hypotheses, methods, and or conclusions.
      - Ability to evaluate the soundness and appropriateness of the authors’ choice of participants, measurement methods, study design, and basic analyses. Knowledge of advanced statistical procedures is not required.
      - Ability to evaluate the importance and generalizability of authors’ findings and conclusions
      - Ability to identify potential applications to practice, policy, and future research.
   b) **Evaluation Procedure:**
      - Each examining committee member will use the above evaluation criteria to evaluate the quality of the critiques. Each criterion will be judged as either fail or pass.
      - Committee members will meet to share their evaluations, seeking consensus through discussion. If a majority view cannot be achieved, an additional faculty member will be asked to mark the critiques and cast the deciding vote.
      - Committee members will come to a consensus as to whether the critiques are ready for the comprehensive exam and oral defense.
   c) **If Passed:** If the critiques are deemed defensible, the supervisor will notify the student and ask the EPLS graduate program assistant to arrange an oral defense date.
   d) **If Not Passed:** If the critiques are not passable, feedback will be provided to the student by the supervisor and the other committee member, and students will be permitted to try once more with a new selection of articles to critique.

II. **Comprehensive Exam:**
   1. **Goal:** The goal of the M.Ed. Comprehensive Exam oral defense is to allow students to demonstrate the research-informed understanding of human development and learning, or special education in a collegial environment.
   2. **Prerequisite:** The comprehensive exam will only proceed if the research critique project is successful.
   3. **Examining Faculty:** The oral defense will be conducted by the student’s committee, which includes the supervisor and one additional departmental faculty member. Consistent

---

2 As per Faculty of Graduate Studies requirements for Project-based Master’s degrees.
with Graduate Studies Policies, an examination Chair from inside or outside the
department will oversee the oral exam procedures.

4. **Scheduling:** The oral defense will normally be scheduled to take place within two (2)
weeks of the student being notified that the project is passed. The graduate program
assistant will coordinate scheduling and room booking.

5. **Length:** The oral defense typically takes one and a half hours; additional time may be
needed for further clarification as the examination committee deems appropriate.

6. **Meeting Structure:** The structure of the oral defense is as follows:
   a) A brief (15-20 min) summary by the student of the project papers and the written
critiques.
   b) An oral examination by committee members of the student’s critiques, paying
special attention to issues missed or poorly communicated in the written critiques.
   c) Committee members may also ask questions regarding key principles of learning
and development or special education as covered in the program area’s core required
courses.
   d) Committee members will hold a brief *in-camera* meeting to adjudicate the oral
examination. The committee will immediately report their decision to the student.

7. **Outcome Reporting:** The supervisor and graduate program assistant will be responsible for
reporting the outcomes of both *Project* (ED-D 598) and the *Comprehensive Oral
Examination* (ED-D 597) to Graduate Studies. Grades assigned are Pass/Fail for each course.