Comprehensive Examination Manual

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Capella University
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DISCLAIMER
Neither the Comprehensive Examination Manual, nor any of the information and requirements contained herein, constitute a contract or create any contractual commitments between Capella University and any student, any prospective student, or any third party. The information and program requirements contained in the Comprehensive Examination Manual are subject to change.
OVERVIEW OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Purpose of the Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to directly assess your demonstration of program-level learning outcomes in order to determine your preparedness to design, implement, analyze, and report independent dissertation research and pursue a scholar-practitioner career.

The comprehensive examination is designed to challenge you to step back from the specific deliverables expected in courses and reflect critically on your discipline through synthesis and integration of your knowledge, skills, and experiences across significant topics in your academic discipline.

Fulfilling the comprehensive examination requirements is a critical step in your doctoral program. You started your doctoral journey with coursework and PhD Residency. Once you have successfully completed the comprehensive examination, you will be ready to continue your journey as an independent researcher as you complete your dissertation. Completion of the comprehensive examination signals a learner’s transition to PhD Candidacy and is a significant achievement.

To progress to the dissertation stage of your doctoral program, you are required to receive a Satisfactory grade on the written examination. Successful completion of this stage requires high level, polished, scholarly responses to three examination questions developed by program faculty. Your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator will select three examination questions that address the identified program outcomes for your specialization, with focus on three different themes:

- Theme 1. Synthesizing and Applying Theory
- Theme 2. Reviewing the Scholarly Literature
- Theme 3. Understanding and Applying Research Methodology

Your responses should represent your best scholarly writing and critical thinking. In writing your comprehensive examination responses, you are expected to integrate critical thinking and evidence your ability to analyze, synthesize evaluate and apply scholarship in your specialization. At this level of writing, learners demonstrate mastery of program learning outcomes and authenticate their readiness for the scholar-practitioner research of an independent research project and dissertation.
THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION COURSE

The comprehensive examination course provides an orientation to the comprehensive examination and an opportunity to discuss details of the examination process with your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator. It also provides administrative support to assist you in submitting necessary documents to track your progress through the comprehensive examination process. It is important that you carefully review your course syllabus, which provides critical details relating to comprehensive examination policies and procedures. You must also complete the Unit 1 and Unit 2 studies to ensure you are prepared for the examination. A PDF of the comprehensive examination course may be accessed via the Campus iGuide (Academic Skills > Doctoral Process Resources) and includes links to resources to help you prepare for the comprehensive examination.

In the Comprehensive Examination course you will:

- Prepare for the comprehensive examination by completing Unit 1 activities.
- Gain an understanding of the three core themes, evaluation criteria, and the university’s expectation regarding academic honesty and integrity.
- Receive three examination questions as prepared by the Comprehensive Examination Facilitator no later than Tuesday of Week 2 of the quarter.
- Write responses to the three examination questions and submit them through the Unit 2 assignment by the deadline.
- Use any remaining time to prepare for the impending start of the dissertation or fieldwork.

The three units in this course are the pre-comprehensive examination period, comprehensive examination writing period, and the post-comprehensive examination period.

Unit 1–Pre-Comprehensive Examination Period (Week 1)

Unit 1 occurs during the first week of the course, so it is important to get started immediately. All Unit 1 activities, including the quiz and discussion, must be completed prior to receiving your comprehensive examination questions. The questions are distributed during the end of the first week or start of the second week of the course. Unit 1 provides an overview of the themes for each of the three examination questions as well as fundamental preparation for the examination.

This overview includes

• Review of Academic Honesty expectations, use of SafeAssign for creating the Originality Report, use of APA, and practice of direct quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing.

• Completion of a quiz to document your understanding of comprehensive examination requirements, academic honesty expectations, use of SafeAssign, and APA requirements.

• Selection of one of four possible start dates to receive your questions and officially begin the comprehensive examination.

• Review of a comprehensive examination PowerPoint presentation.

**Unit 2 – Comprehensive Examination Writing Period**

In this unit, learners write their responses to the questions they have received. Questions have been developed based on the competencies of your program and reflect three themes: synthesizing and applying theory, reviewing the scholarly literature, and understanding and applying research methodology. More information on each question type is available in Appendix A. You have 28 calendar days (4 weeks) to write your responses to the three comprehensive examination questions. It is recommended that you spend one week on each question and use the fourth week to edit and polish your work, with careful attention to ensuring the academic integrity of your responses and appropriate direct quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. The format editing revisions toolkit includes a range of useful handouts to support accurate source citation and careful revision. Your responses should represent your best scholarly writing and critical thinking and will be submitted through the u02a1 assignment.

Once submitted, your examination will be sent to three independent faculty readers, who will evaluate your examination through a double blind review process using the Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Scoring Rubric. Once your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator has reviewed your SafeAssign report they will forward it to the readers. Faculty readers have seven calendar days (one week) to evaluate your examination. The Comprehensive Examination Team within Academic Operations will process your results within three business days and official notification of a Satisfactory or Not Satisfactory grade will be posted by your facilitator in the assignment grading area of the courseroom within approximately 10 calendar days. You will receive specific feedback and scores from the faculty readers; if faculty readers determine that one or more questions receive a Not Satisfactory grade, you will have an opportunity to make improvements during a 14 calendar day (two-week) "rewrite" period and submit your rewritten responses through the u02a2 assignment.

**Unit 3– The Post-Comprehensive Examination Period**

Unit 3 offers guidance for the transition to dissertation or fieldwork for learners who receive a Satisfactory grade on all three
If the comprehensive examination is successfully completed, you will proceed to Unit 3, the Post-Comprehensive Examination Period. There are several main activities in Unit 3:

- Review feedback from the readers regarding your responses to the comprehensive examination questions and use this information to determine what skills need to be strengthened in order to make a successful transition to writing the dissertation.

- Begin preparing for entering the dissertation phase of your program, including completing a draft of the Plan of Action (PoA) which will guide your progress during the first quarter of dissertation.

- If you have received a *Satisfactory* grade on the comprehensive examination, you will also receive an e-mail from doctoral@capella.edu with your dissertation mentor assignment. You should prepare a letter of introduction for your new mentor. Once your mentor is assigned, forward them a copy of your comprehensive examination and the reader feedback.

- Finally, you will be contacted by your Advisor during the final weeks of your comprehensive examination quarter, during the quarter break, or during the initial weeks of your first dissertation quarter, to discuss your transition to dissertation.

### Course Prerequisites

Registration in the comprehensive examination requires completion of all required and elective course work with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better, and fulfillment of all Dissertation Research Seminars (*University Policy 3.04.05 Attendance at Residencies*). Depending on your program, these requirements cannot be fulfilled by transfer of credit. Learners in programs with licensure and/or practicum requirements should check with their schools for additional eligibility requirements.

### Determining Eligibility for the Comprehensive Examination

You must complete a comprehensive examination audit to ensure you have met prerequisites and are eligible to proceed to the comprehensive examination. Submission of the Comprehensive Audit Request Form triggers this audit. Once you have submitted the form, an audit will be conducted to determine whether you are eligible to be registered for the comprehensive examination.

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1 Learners in the PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) may choose to concurrently enroll in dissertation while completing their fieldwork requirements. The Unit 3 course activities will help CES learners prepare for the fieldwork and dissertation phases of their programs.
Registration
Once you pass the comprehensive examination audit and are determined eligible to take the comprehensive examination you will automatically be registered.

Late Registration
Learners must request and receive permission from their school’s Comprehensive Examination Lead to register for the comprehensive examination course between the end of open course registration and the eighth calendar day of the course. You should contact your Advisor to discuss the possibility of late registration and email CompExam@capella.edu to request late registration.

Course Participation
You must participate in the course by completing the Unit 1 quiz before the end of the first Friday of the course in order to remain enrolled in the comprehensive examination course. Communicating with your instructor via courseroom mail, in the “Ask your Instructor” discussion board, or communicating outside of the courseroom, does not count as initial course participation. Learners who do not participate in the course before 11:59 pm Central Time on the second Friday of the course will be dropped.

Drop/Withdrawal
Learners may drop their registration in the comprehensive examination course within the first 12 days of the quarter prior to the release of their comprehensive examination questions.

Under approved extenuating circumstances such as unexpected illness, death in the family, or military leave, learners may withdraw from the comprehensive examination course after the first 12 days of the quarter and prior to the last official day to withdraw, or prior to the due date of their completed responses to the examination questions, whichever comes first. Challenges with work schedules, childcare, or planned vacations or activities are generally not considered extenuating circumstances. Learners who wish to drop or withdraw from the comprehensive examination course must submit the Comprehensive Examination Withdraw Request form or contact their Advisor by emailing doctoral@capella.edu to determine their options.

Grading
Grading for this course is Satisfactory (S) or Not Satisfactory (NS). You must complete the Unit 1 quiz with a score of 100% by the end of the first Friday in order to begin your comprehensive examination. You may retake the quiz until you have scored 100%.
Comprehensive examinations are evaluated by three faculty readers in a double blind review, using the Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Scoring Rubric. In order to receive a Satisfactory grade on the comprehensive examination, a learner must receive a Satisfactory grade on each of the three comprehensive examination questions. A course grade of Satisfactory (S) will be awarded upon successful completion of all requirements. A course grade of Not Satisfactory (NS) will be assigned for failure to fulfill all requirements.

**Disability Services and Accommodations**

Capella University recognizes the importance of accommodating the needs of learners with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and similar state laws. Capella University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified learners with disabilities in university programs and activities. Learners needing academic accommodations should refer to Disability Services information on iGuide, e-mail DisabilityServices@capella.edu, or call 1-888-CAPELLA and ask to speak with a Disability Services team member.

If you are approved for academic accommodations for the comprehensive examination, you will receive a Letter of Eligibility for Accommodations from the Disability Services office. The Disability Services office will provide a copy of the Letter of Eligibility for Accommodations to your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator. Learners should follow up with the Disability Services office with any questions concerning comprehensive examination accommodations. **It is important to note that you must submit and obtain accommodations specific to the comprehensive examination since accommodations obtained for your coursework may not be applicable to the comprehensive examination. Accommodations should be set up as early as possible, as they cannot be applied retroactively.**

Visit Disability Services on iGuide.
THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PROCESS

A sample timeline of the comprehensive examination process is available in Appendix B. The following describes the steps of the comprehensive examination process:

Step 1: Preparation through Completion of Unit 1 and Unit 1 Quiz

Completion of the pre-comprehensive examination work in Unit 1 of the comprehensive examination course is a critical part of your preparation for the comprehensive examination and your success. A score of 100% is considered a passing score on the Unit 1 quiz. You may take the quiz multiple times until a 100% score is obtained. You should strive to obtain a 100% score on the Unit 1 quiz to ensure your preparation; If you are unable to pass the quiz, contact your Advisor by emailing doctoral@capella.edu to discuss areas of challenge and whether or not to continue in your comprehensive examination.

Step 2: Selection of Start Date

You may select one of the following start dates for your comprehensive examination:

- Thursday of Week 1
- Friday of Week 1
- Monday of Week 2
- Tuesday of Week 2

Take a look at your calendar and determine the date on which you would like to receive your examination questions. Respond to the Unit 1 discussion in your comprehensive examination course by the end of the first Friday of the course to select your start date. Copy and paste one of the above 4 options into the Subject Line of the discussion post. There is no need to include information in the body of the discussion or respond to other learners’ discussion posts.

Late Question Release Exceptions

In cases in which unforeseen, extenuating circumstances occur beyond the control of the learner during the examination timeframe such as illness, hospitalization, or death in the family, learners may formally request an exception to receive their questions after the Tuesday of Week 2 of the quarter. Challenges with work schedules, childcare, or planned vacations or activities are generally not considered extenuating circumstances warranting an exception request. Such circumstances may warrant postponement of the comprehensive examination to the following quarter. If you would like to request an exception to receive your questions late due to an extenuating circumstance, submit the Comprehensive Examination Extension Request.
form at least 72 hours prior to the Tuesday of Week 2 of the quarter. You will need to explain the circumstances leading to the request and provide appropriate documentation. All requests must be approved by the dean or dean's designee. Comprehensive Examination Facilitators are not authorized to approve a late question release exception. Learners may not receive their questions after Friday of Week 3 of the quarter. If you do not stipulate a preferred start date or request an extension, you will by default receive your questions on the Tuesday of Week 2 of the quarter.

**Step 3: Question Release and Start Date**

Your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator will select three examination questions focused on three different themes:

1. Theme 1: Synthesizing and Applying Theory
2. Theme 2: Reviewing the Scholarly Literature
3. Theme 3: Understanding and Applying Research Methodology

The Comprehensive Examination Facilitator will use a form to send your questions to the e-mail address you have registered with Capella as your preferred e-mail address on the date you have selected as your start date. This marks the start of the comprehensive examination. NOTE: Double check that the e-mail address you have registered with Capella is your preferred e-mail address. If you do not register a preferred e-mail address, the default e-mail address used by Capella is “yourusername@capellauniversity.edu.” While waiting to receive your comprehensive examination questions, you should check your e-mail inbox regularly. It is critical that you notify your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator immediately if you do not receive your questions or are unable to access your questions. You should also confirm receipt of your questions with your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator as directed.

**Step 4: Comprehensive Examination Writing Period**

You will have 28 calendar days to complete the comprehensive examination. All deadlines refer to the U.S. Central Time zone. The 28 calendar day period begins the day the Comprehensive Examination Facilitator distributes the comprehensive examination questions to the learner. Responses are due by 11:59 p.m. Central Time on the day of the deadline. Note: In cases of rewrites or extension requests, comprehensive examination submission deadlines may fall during a break between academic terms; the comprehensive examination deadline is not extended for learners due to term breaks.

**Extension Requests**

In cases in which unforeseen, extenuating circumstances occur beyond the control of the learner during the examination timeframe such as death in the family or illness/hospitalization related to a known disability or chronic health condition
documented with Disability Services, learners may request an extension to the deadline of the comprehensive examination. Challenges with work schedules, childcare, vacation/travel or technology are not considered extenuating circumstances; remediation strategies for handling such situations should be part of your planning process. Learners may request an extension to the deadline of the comprehensive examination by submitting the Comprehensive Examination Extension Request form as well as providing documentation to CompExam@capella.edu explaining the circumstances leading to the extension request. All extension requests must be approved by the dean or dean's designee. Comprehensive Examination Facilitators are not authorized to approve an extension to the deadline of the comprehensive examination. **Extension requests must be received at least 24 hours (one business day) before the 11:59 p.m. Central Time due date of the examination.** You may be required to submit documentation to CompExam@capella.edu to support your request. The maximum extension granted is 14 calendar days. Both you and your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator will be notified of the school's decision as soon as possible after receipt of the request.

We encourage you to contact Disability Services at DisabilityServices@capella.edu before the quarter begins to discuss accommodations to address a known disability or chronic health condition.

If you have requested an extension, you are encouraged to continue to work on your examination until you receive notification of the school’s decision regarding your extension. You should aim to submit as much of your responses as you are able by your original deadline. If your submission deadline passes and you are not granted an extension and have not submitted your examination responses, you will receive a *Not Satisfactory* grade on the examination due to non-submission. As a result, you will forfeit your chance to obtain feedback based on the readers’ evaluation of your work. Additionally, if you fail due to non-submission you will enter the rewrite period immediately (see below for more information concerning the opportunity to rewrite).

**Comprehensive Examination Writing Template and Requirements**

Learners should complete the comprehensive examination using the Comprehensive Examination Writing Template. Use of the template promotes adherence to APA requirements; failure to use the template may result in errors that could lower the overall examination score. When using the template, each comprehensive examination question should be clearly labeled and start a new page, with the written response to each question starting on top of the following page. Each written examination response should be typed and double-spaced. Each page should have one inch margins all around and use of Times New Roman 12-point font is recommended. Avoid use of ornamental font elements or script fonts.

While there is no required page length for the comprehensive examination, it is essential that each component of the comprehensive examination question be substantively addressed in accordance with the Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Scoring Rubric. All responses will be reviewed holistically in alignment with grading criteria, regardless of length. However,
satisfactory responses to comprehensive examination questions have typical characteristics: A high quality response to a comprehensive examination question generally incorporates no fewer than 20 peer-reviewed journal articles, avoids referencing more than 3 textbooks and ranges between 12 and 17 pages in length, not including cover page, question pages, and reference pages. Comprehensive examination responses should be limited to no more than 17 pages for each question, excluding cover page, question page, and reference pages, as readers are not required to read beyond 17 pages.

Each comprehensive examination response must have its own reference section, which must immediately follow that response in the comprehensive examination document. The reference list for each comprehensive examination response should reflect only the sources used in that comprehensive examination response. Both foundational and recent (published within the last 5 years) scholarly literature should be incorporated into each examination response as applicable. General audience dictionaries and doctoral dissertations are typically not considered peer-reviewed scholarly work and as such should not be included in the 20 recommended references for the comprehensive examination responses. However, one or two dissertations that provide new information that may be of particular relevance to the learner's topic may be used in addition to the other references.

Within the comprehensive examination questions, learners may be asked to identify their proposed (or School-approved) dissertation research topic, the focus of which needs to be an approved program of research topic within the learner's specialization. NOTE: While the focus of the learner’s proposed dissertation research topic may be an approved program of research topic within the learner’s specialization for comprehensive examination purposes, it does not guarantee that the proposed dissertation research topic will be School-approved for dissertation purposes. Additionally, a Satisfactory grade on the comprehensive examination is not a guarantee that the literature review meets the standards required for the dissertation or that a specific theory can be utilized for the dissertation.

**De-Identification of Documents for Double-blind Review**

Capella uses a "double-blind" comprehensive examination review process. In a double-blind review, the learner does not know the identity of the readers and the readers do not know the identity of the learner. To facilitate the double-blind review process, the comprehensive examination must not contain any information to identify the learner. This requires changes to the document properties. If you do not appropriately remove identifying information, it is possible that your identity may not be blind to the readers. Please note that de-identifying your examination is your responsibility and the examination you submit will be sent to the readers "as is."

The Comprehensive Examination Writing Template includes a title page that does NOT include your name, address, e-mail address, or telephone number. The only identifier is your 7-digit learner ID#. It is very important that you use this template to write your comprehensive examination response. Each Word document includes embedded file properties that may also contain your personal name or organization name. These file properties need to be reviewed and "cleaned" before submitting the
examination document. To do this cleaning, with your document open in Word:

1. Access the "File" menu.
2. Choose "Properties."
3. On the "Summary" tab remove your name and/or organization name if present.
4. Click "OK" to close the properties window.
5. Save your document.
6. Note: the process above may be slightly different depending on the version of Word you are using. If you need more detailed assistance, contact Capella Learner Support at 1-888-CAPELLA.

Find more information and screenshots by reviewing Finding and Removing Data and Personal Information Using Microsoft Word 2010 which is linked in the comprehensive examination courseroom.

**Step 5: Comprehensive Examination Academic Integrity Check Using SafeAssign**

To ensure the originality of your work and the use of appropriate citations, you are required to submit your comprehensive examination through SafeAssign. SafeAssign is a free source-matching tool provided to Capella learners. SafeAssign analyzes your examination responses for unintentional plagiarism and improper source referencing. If you have questions about using SafeAssign, review the tutorials on the [SafeAssign Campus page](#). It is especially critical to understand how to interpret your originality report and how to revise plagiarized or matching text.

As you work through your comprehensive examination, you will use the SafeAssign source-matching tool to check drafts of your examination responses. Remove the title page, question pages, and all reference list pages when submitting comprehensive examination responses to SafeAssign. You may use the SafeAssign draft link multiple times to resubmit your work for analysis as part of your editing process.

**Step 6: Comprehensive Examination Submission**

Learners must submit their comprehensive examination via the Unit 2 Comprehensive Examination Initial Submission Assignment (u02a1) in the courseroom. Submissions must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Central Time on the day of the deadline. Failure to submit your work in the correct assignment area of the courseroom is grounds for failure of your Initial Submission of your comprehensive examination. Your comprehensive examination will be graded exactly as submitted. It is
your responsibility to confirm that you have submitted the correct document and the final edited version of your examination response.

**Step 7: Comprehensive Examination Evaluation and Grade**

Once submitted, your examination will be sent to three independent faculty readers, who will evaluate your examination through a double blind review process using the Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Scoring Rubric. Once your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator has reviewed your SafeAssign report they will forward it to the readers. Faculty readers have seven calendar days (one week) to evaluate your examination. The Comprehensive Examination Team within Academic Operations will process your results within three business days and official notification of a *Satisfactory* or *Not Satisfactory* grade will be posted by your facilitator in the assignment grading area of the courseroom within approximately 10 calendar days. You will receive specific feedback and scores from the faculty readers; if faculty readers determine that one or more questions receive a *Not Satisfactory* grade, you will have an opportunity to make improvements during a 14 calendar day (two-week) "rewrite" period and submit your rewritten responses through the u02a2 assignment.

Evaluation of your comprehensive examination is based on the Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Rubric. Each examination question is scored using the Comprehensive Examination Evaluation Scoring Rubric. A *Satisfactory* grade on each question requires at least four of seven categories marked Proficient or Distinguished by at least two of three readers on the same categories. You must receive *Satisfactory* grades on all three questions for successful completion of the comprehensive examination. You will receive specific feedback on your responses to the comprehensive examination questions via e-mail as well as notification of a *Satisfactory* or *Not Satisfactory* grade in the courseroom.

After receiving a *Satisfactory* grade on the comprehensive examination, you have completed the comprehensive examination process and will begin preparation for dissertation. Unit 3 of the comprehensive examination course contains information to help you prepare for your first quarter in dissertation or fieldwork.

**Comprehensive Examination Rewrite**

If you receive a *Not Satisfactory* grade on your comprehensive examination, you will have the opportunity to complete a rewrite of the comprehensive examination. You will rewrite only the initial comprehensive examination responses that received *Not Satisfactory* grades, and include only the corresponding references for those rewritten responses.

Learners submit the completed rewritten responses through the Unit 2 Comprehensive Examination Rewrite Assignment (u02a2). **Failure to submit your work in the correct assignment area of the courseroom is grounds for failure of your Rewrite Submission of your comprehensive examination.** Submissions must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Central Time 14 calendar days (2 weeks) from the date of receipt of the initial comprehensive examination *Not Satisfactory* grade. If the learner submits the
rewritten responses after the deadline for the 14 calendar day rewrite period, the learner will automatically receive a *Not Satisfactory* grade for the comprehensive examination.

Note: Faculty readers are not required to review exams over any quarter break. Rewrites submitted after the Sunday of Week 10 will not be reviewed until the beginning of the next quarter.

**Rewrite Deferral**

Learners who are unable to complete the rewrite within the allotted 14 calendar days, due to extreme extenuating circumstances, may request a deferral (a postponement of the rewrite) by submitting the Comprehensive Examination Rewrite Deferral Petition Form on iGuide within one week of the *Not Satisfactory* notification. Deferrals require approval from the school’s Comprehensive Examination Lead.

Learners who receive a deferral must start the rewrite process within 42 calendar days of the original *Not Satisfactory* notification. Learners will receive a **new question** for each question that received a *Not Satisfactory* grade. The rewrite start date will be specified on the approved Comprehensive Examination Rewrite Deferral Petition Form. When the deferral period ends, the Comprehensive Examination Facilitator will email the new question(s). Learners have 9 calendar days per written question from the receipt of the new question(s) to complete the rewrite. Learners must submit their examination no later than 11:59 p.m. Central Time on the date of the examination deadline.

**Comprehensive Examination Retake**

If faculty readers determine that one or more questions receive a *Not Satisfactory* following rewrite, you will receive a *Not Satisfactory* grade for the course. If this is your first attempt, you will have one opportunity to retake the comprehensive examination course. You will initiate this process by completing the Comprehensive Examination Failure Option Form on iGuide within 14 calendar days of notification of the *Not Satisfactory* grade. You may contact your Advisor with any questions by emailing doctoral@capella.edu.

When retaking the course, you will respond to three new questions and the process includes the 2-week rewrite opportunity described previously. If you receive a *Not Satisfactory* grade on the comprehensive examination and are eligible for a retake, contact doctoral@capella.edu to connect with your Advisor to discuss the feedback you received from the faculty readers and plan for any additional preparation that may be needed for a successful retake. If you do not receive a *Satisfactory* grade on the retake of the comprehensive examination, you will be withdrawn from the University.

PLEASE NOTE: In the event that a violation of Capella’s University Policy 3.01.01 Academic Honesty is documented in your comprehensive examination responses, an automatic failure may result. In such cases, the academic honesty violation will be
reported and depending on the egregiousness of the infraction, the examination may not be sent to readers and the case may be referred for review by the University’s Faculty Review Panel.

**Appeal of Not Satisfactory (“NS”) Grade – Capricious Grading or Error**

Learners may appeal a *Not Satisfactory* grade earned as a result of academic performance on either the Initial Comprehensive Examination Attempt or the Retake if there is evidence that the grade resulted from capriciousness or significant administrative error. Learners may appeal ONLY on the basis of capricious grading or significant administrative error, pursuant to *University Policy 3.04.09 Appealing a Grade*. Learners who fail the written portion of the comprehensive examination for violating *University Policy 3.01.01 Academic Honesty* may appeal the allegation and/or the grade if they believe the academic honesty violation allegation was erroneous. There is no other basis of appeal for the “NS” grade. Learners are responsible for communicating to their Advisor and the Comprehensive Examination Facilitator any ongoing life situations and/or extenuating circumstances throughout the quarter.

Learners whose appeal of an “NS” grade for the Initial Comprehensive Examination Attempt is denied may request a retake of the examination as described in the section above.

Learners who receive a grade of “NS” for the Retake Attempt and do not appeal the grade within the timeframe stated in *University Policy 3.04.09 Appealing a Grade*, or whose appeal is denied, are administratively withdrawn from the program.

As outlined in the *University Policy 3.01.04 Academic Standing*, learners who are administratively withdrawn due to failure to earn passing grades on the comprehensive examination will not be eligible for readmission to their former program.

**Appeal of Administrative Withdrawal**

Learners notified of administrative withdrawal have 7 calendar days to appeal, pursuant to *University Policy 3.01.04 Academic Standing*, by submitting the *Administrative Withdrawal Appeal Form* located on iGuide.
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION LEARNER EXPECTATIONS

Capella University has specific expectations for learners in the comprehensive examination.

You are responsible for reading and understanding the policies and procedures available in the Learner Expectations section of Campus iGuide, which include information regarding the Academic Honesty policy, the Learner Code of Conduct and more:

- Capella University Policies
  - 3.01.01 Academic Integrity & Honesty
  - 4.02.02 Learner Code of Conduct
  - 4.02.04 Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault
- Academic Honesty and APA Resources
- Capella's Technical Requirements

Academic Honesty, Integrity, and Plagiarism

Academic honesty is one of Capella University’s highest values. Appropriately crediting other scholars is an ethical imperative for all academics and one which demonstrates an author’s own integrity. The same principles that guide expectations of academic honesty and integrity in course work hold true for the comprehensive examination. Learners must be the sole authors of their work and they must include specific and appropriate citations and references whenever they use another person’s ideas. It is each learner’s responsibility to understand the definition of plagiarism and how to avoid it.

You must adhere to Capella University Policy 3.01.01 Academic Integrity & Honesty throughout the comprehensive examination process. Also, you must use SafeAssign to check your work. SafeAssign is a tool that assists you in conducting a thorough evaluation of your work for proper attribution of your sources.

The Comprehensive Examination Facilitator uses SafeAssign as a means to validate appropriate choices of source material, appropriate citation, paraphrased or summary statements that are close enough to the original passages to be ethically problematic, and appropriate attribution of intellectual property such as ideas, models, or theories. Additionally, as experts in particular fields of practice, readers will have read and deeply understood the literature being reviewed by a writer and will be able to identify places that improperly use others’ work. Where citations do not provide source attribution, readers will consider the work plagiarized. In reporting potential plagiarism in your comprehensive examination, faculty will use the Academic
Honesty and Integrity Violation Scale in Appendix D. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the Academic Honesty and Integrity Violation Scale and avoid infractions.

The following steps will help ensure your understanding of Capella University Policy 3.01.01 Academic Integrity & Honesty as well as requirements for using SafeAssign. You will also have an opportunity to refresh your skills in directly quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing:

1. Review Capella University Policy 3.01.01 Academic Integrity & Honesty
2. Review Capella’s Academic Honesty Resources for help in understanding the policy and avoiding plagiarism mistakes.
3. Review the SafeAssign resources. For more information see the SafeAssign information that follows.
4. Review Capella’s APA Resources and find tips for using the APA publication manual.
5. Review the Writing Center resource on Direct Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing. Complete the practice exercises to refresh your academic writing skills.

**Use of Previous Work**

The comprehensive examination is an opportunity for PhD learners to demonstrate mastery of program outcomes and doctoral competencies. In demonstrating this mastery, learners are allowed to use their own previous coursework and their own prior attempt comprehensive examinations submitted at Capella. Allowing learners to build on their prior coursework and comprehensive examinations aligns with Capella’s competency-based educational model and philosophy. Learners are not permitted to use coursework or comprehensive examinations submitted at other institutions.

It is important to call out that while the use of previous coursework and comprehensive examinations should not be considered academic dishonesty, overuse of previous coursework or comprehensive examination materials in the examination is not considered a best practice and may not be consistent with a quality examination response. Learners must “organize the elements of the examination paper to form a cohesive whole” and integrate and synthesize information within their responses. This means that learners who choose to utilize their own previous coursework or their prior attempt comprehensive examination must do so carefully, making certain to comprehensively respond to all examination criteria. In short, a learner who simply reuses their own previous coursework or prior attempt comprehensive examinations without providing a cohesive and well-integrated response is unlikely to receive a passing grade.

The learner is responsible for any plagiarism not previously identified within any of the learner’s work being utilized in the comprehensive examination.
Requirements for Independent Academic Work

Learners may not receive or solicit any coaching, editing, or counsel from any person, resource, or tool on how to develop or write the responses to their comprehensive examination questions (see exceptions noted in paragraph below). Contacting other learners, faculty, or alumni about the comprehensive examination is prohibited. Purchase of any portions of your examination, use of Smarthinking after questions have been delivered, or solicitation of outside writing or editing support are also prohibited. Additionally, learners are not permitted to share, publish, market, sell, or distribute their comprehensive examination questions or responses before, during, or after the completion of the comprehensive examination. Learners who receive or solicit any coaching, review, or editing from any person, resource, or tool in the development or writing of the responses to their comprehensive examination questions or who share, publish, market, sell, or distribute their comprehensive examination questions or responses are in violation of Capella University Policy 3.01.01 Academic Integrity & Honesty and subject to receiving an automatic Not Satisfactory grade for those comprehensive examination responses. Any violation of the integrity expectations noted above and/or Capella University Policy 3.01.01 Academic Integrity & Honesty may also result in dismissal from Capella University or other sanctions.

There are two exceptions to the above. You may contact your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator or Advisor to seek clarification concerning the process or logistics of the examination, but you may not ask questions regarding how to respond to the examination questions. You may also contact Capella’s Ask-A-Librarian services for help accessing library materials. While you are responsible for pulling your own resources, the librarians are available to support you in identifying and accessing materials. Please also see the Comprehensive Exams: Library Strategies guide available on the library Campus page. Additionally, you may use bibliographic management tools such as RefWorks to organize and manage your citations. Finally, learners may use the grammar and spell-checking tools in Microsoft Word. Tools not included in Microsoft Word are not permitted.

Learners who are not successful in achieving a Satisfactory grade in their initial attempt of the comprehensive examination may need additional writing support and skill development. Learners may take a writing course, consult with a writing coach, or utilize Smarthinking during quarter break or a quarter of inactivity. However, under no circumstances may the learner submit any portion of their comprehensive examination to Smarthinking or solicit specific feedback on their comprehensive examination from a writing coach, writing course instructor, or editor.
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Success on the comprehensive examination reflects your mastery of program level competencies and preparation for dissertation. Success also reflects your ability remain organized, manage time, and engage in focused academic work over a period of time. The following steps will help you prepare for this challenging experience:

1. Find information on what to expect in the comprehensive examination process and strategies for success on the Managing Your PhD Journey page in Campus iGuide.

2. Develop a strategy and plan for completing the examination. Think of the comprehensive examination as a major project requiring significant time, careful organization, and critical attention to detail. To make sure you complete this “project” consider the following specific steps:
   - Select a specific question to answer each week. Use the fourth and final week to revise.
   - Make a weekly schedule and spend about 35–40 hours writing each week.
   - Remain disciplined with your schedule. It is critical that you meet your deadline.

3. Learners who receive Not Satisfactory grades on the examination often cite challenges with time management as their biggest barrier. Consider strategies for managing your time:
   - Communicate with individuals who are part of your personal and professional networks so they can support you during this important phase of your doctoral studies. Say "no" or “not now” to new projects.
   - Remind individuals within your personal and professional networks that you are committed to writing your comprehensive examination for one month.
   - Turn down social obligations and commitments that demand large blocks of time. Do not plan any trips or vacations.
   - Stay away from the phone and let voice-mail pick up all incoming calls.
   - Set reasonable limits on social media activity.
   - Include mini-breaks in your schedule. This will help you manage any stress or anxiety you may be experiencing and remain sharp and focused so that you can remain on track with your overall timeline. Take a short walk, engage in active movement, connect with someone supportive, or eat a healthy snack.
4. Set up your work space. Find a dedicated space where you can research, write, and revise without having to relocate over the course of the 28-day examination. Also make sure to have a plan for backing up your work.

5. Organize your library resources. If you have utilized a database for tracking the articles you evaluated in your coursework and PhD Residency, make sure it is up to date, easily accessible and well organized. Review the library’s guide for the comprehensive examination for helpful strategies and tools and brush up on strategies for library research and literature review.

6. Review resources in the Writing Center to brush up on fundamentals:
   - Stages of Writing
   - Organization
   - Direct Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing
   - APA Style and Format
   - Grammar
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION EVALUATION RUBRIC

The comprehensive examination evaluation rubrics are available for review in Appendix C. You should become familiar with each rubric before beginning the comprehensive examination process.

There are three rubrics, one for each question theme. Each rubric consists of three content categories (Research, Application, and Theory or Ethics), and four writing categories (Critical Thinking and Organization; Grammar, Usage, Mechanics (GUM), and APA; and Writing Style). All criteria are derived from your program’s learning outcomes.

Comprehensive Examination Criteria

Theme 1: Theory
- **Research**: Analyze the theoretical implications of research literature in the specialization and field.
- **Theory**: Discuss theory in a cohesive, logical, comprehensive, and clear way, addressing how theory informs research in the specialization and the field.
- **Application**: Integrate the application of theory and how theory informs research in the specialization and field in a cohesive, logical, comprehensive, and clear discussion.

Theme 2: Literature Review
- **Research**: Appraise previous research findings in the specialization and field to logically imply the scientific merit of the proposed or approved research topic.
- **Ethics**: Appraise ethical issues in the literature related to the proposed or approved research topic.
- **Application**: Integrate scholarly literature in a cohesive, logical, comprehensive, and clear discussion supporting the proposed or approved dissertation topic.

Theme 3: Research Methodology
- **Research**: Interpret research concepts and methodology for the proposed or approved dissertation topic.
- **Ethics**: Address ethical research requirements related to the methodology of the proposed or approved dissertation topic.
- **Application**: Apply research concepts and methodology to the proposed or approved dissertation topic.

Writing criteria common to all question themes:
- **Critical Thinking & Organization**: Organize the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole, requiring original, creative thinking.
- **Structure**: Write with logic, flow, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question.
- **GUM/APA**: Write with proper grammar, usage, mechanics and APA format and style.
- **Writing Style**: Write with proper paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone.

Comprehensive Examination Readers will assess each category using one of four performance levels: Non-Performance, Basic, Proficient, and Distinguished. Refer to Appendix C for descriptions of proficiency levels on each question and evaluation category. *A Satisfactory* grade on each question requires at least four of seven categories marked Proficient or Distinguished by at least two of three readers on the same categories.

To help illustrate this, refer to the grading results below. Reading from left to right, any category that has at least two highlighted grades of Proficient or Distinguished is considered to be *Satisfactory* (pass). This question was passed due to at least four out of the seven categories being marked Proficient or Distinguished by at least two of three readers on those same categories.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Reader 1</th>
<th>Reader 2</th>
<th>Reader 3</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research/Theory</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Passed Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics/Application</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Failed Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application/Research</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Passed Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking and Organization</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Passed Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Passed Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUM/APA</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Passed Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Style</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Passed Category</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade: PASS
APPENDIX A: COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

You will receive three comprehensive examination questions that correspond to three themes. The first question is focused on theories in your specialization. The second question centers on your analysis of scholarly literature in your specialization. The third question explores your knowledge about research methodology.

Theory

The purpose of the question you receive about theory is to explore the breadth and depth of your knowledge of theories. You will be asked to synthesize and apply this knowledge of theory in a way that clearly demonstrates your grasp of common theories in your specialization. For example, you should be able to clearly articulate the structure of the theory. What does the theory assume about the world? Your discussion should always be based within the literature in your field. Since some useful theories have been used for longer than 5-10 years, you may want to include at least one reference to foundational research in your answer.

Literature Review

The literature review question will allow you to demonstrate your understanding of peer-reviewed scholarly literature. For example, there are typically three types of articles published in scholarly journals:

1. Literature reviews
2. Theoretical works
3. Primary research articles.

Your review should be comprehensive and can reference all three types of articles. However, the review should clearly synthesize the literature in a way that demonstrates your knowledge of current trends in research in your specialization.

Research Methodology

The question about research methodology will allow you to thoroughly describe various aspects of research methodology. In your answer, it is important to demonstrate your understanding of how existing literature and theory are integrated into a good study design. When demonstrating your knowledge of research methodology, it is helpful to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of study design. Remember that your writing should always integrate examples from research journal articles in your area of specialization. Textbooks on research methodology are rarely considered primary sources of information, since they typically reference other authors.
APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE TIMEFRAME OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PROCESS

The information below shows an example of the timeframe for the Comprehensive Examination process. Practices may vary in your school.

Prior to Course Start

Tasks:

- Learner reviews Comprehensive Examination Manual
- Learner practices direct quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing and use of SafeAssign
- Learner prepares work space and establishes work plan and time management strategy
- Learner identifies dissertation topic to be used as basis for examination questions.

Week 1

Tasks:

- Learner completes Unit 1 studies and quiz. Learners must receive a 100% score on the quiz in order to receive their questions.
- Learner completes Unit 1 discussion, identifying start date for the comprehensive examination

Weeks 2-6

Tasks:

- Comprehensive Examination Facilitator provides three examination questions no later than Tuesday of Week 2 of the quarter.
- Learner writes responses to questions, submits drafts of work to SafeAssign, and submits examination to Comprehensive Examination via the Unit 2 course assignment. Learners have 28 days (4 weeks) to submit their initial examination responses.

Week 7

Tasks:
Readers evaluate examination; results are submitted within 7 calendar days of receipt. The Comprehensive Examination Team within Academic Operations will process your results within three business days and official notification of a Satisfactory or Not Satisfactory grade will be posted by your Comprehensive Examination Facilitator in the assignment grading area of the courseroom within approximately 10 calendar days.

**Weeks 8-10**

Tasks:

- If learner receives a Satisfactory grade on all three questions:
  - Learner uses remaining time in 9919 to prepare for fieldwork or dissertation
- If a learner received a Not Satisfactory grade on their initial submission they will move immediately into the re-write period. Learners will have 14 days (2 weeks) to submit their rewrite

Specific points to remember are:

- Readers are not expected to evaluate exams that are returned after Week 10 until the first week of the following quarter.
- Learner timelines and deadlines do continue into quarter break.
- If the examination or rewrite is due during quarter break, the learner must submit the examination on the deadline (date and time stamp are captured in course assignment submission).
- If the examination is submitted during quarter break, the readers’ 7 day clock does not start until the first day of the new quarter.
- Learners may not register for dissertation or fieldwork until they pass the comprehensive examination.
- Learners contact their Advisor by emailing doctoral@capella.edu for late registration assistance if the next quarter has begun when results are received.
- The only time a learner is given new questions for the rewrite is when a learner requests and is granted a rewrite deferral.
## APPENDIX C: COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION EVALUATION RUBRICS

### Theme 1: Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Non-Performance</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Distinguished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Discusses theory in a comprehensive and clear way, addressing how theory informs research in the specialization and the field.</td>
<td>Does not discuss theory in a comprehensive and clear way, addressing how theory informs research in the specialization and the field.</td>
<td>Discusses theory, but discussion is not comprehensive or clear, or does not address how theory informs research in the specialization and the field.</td>
<td>Discusses theory in a comprehensive and clear way, addressing how theory informs research in the specialization and the field.</td>
<td>Discusses theory in a comprehensive and clear way, addressing how theory informs research in the specialization and the field, and draws further conclusions related to the proposed or approved research topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Applies theory and how theory informs research in the specialization and field in a comprehensive and clear discussion.</td>
<td>Does not apply theory and how theory informs research in the specialization and field in a comprehensive and clear discussion.</td>
<td>Mentions the application of theory and how theory informs research in the specialization and field, but does not apply theory in a comprehensive or clear way.</td>
<td>Applies theory and how theory informs research in the specialization and field in a comprehensive and clear discussion.</td>
<td>Applies theory and how theory informs research in the specialization and field in a comprehensive and clear discussion, and draws further conclusions related to the proposed or approved research topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Non-Performance</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Distinguished</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Analyzes the theoretical implications of research literature in the specialization and field in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Does not analyze the theoretical implications of research literature in the specialization and field in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Describes but does not analyze the theoretical implications of research literature in the specialization and field in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Analyzes the theoretical implications of research literature in the specialization and field in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Analyzes the theoretical implications of research literature in the specialization and field, and identifies assumptions on which the analysis is based in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Synthesizes the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole, demonstrating one's own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td>Does not synthesize the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole that demonstrates one's own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td>Synthesizes the elements of the exam paper, but does not form a cohesive whole or does not demonstrate one's own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td>Synthesizes the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole, demonstrating one's own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td>Synthesizes the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole, demonstrating one's own analysis and thinking that meets professional publication standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Writes with logic, flow, organization, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question.</td>
<td>Does not write with logic, flow, organization, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question.</td>
<td>Writes with persistent and frequent errors in logic, flow, organization, structure, or content focus, or does not cohesively, comprehensively, or clearly answer all parts of the question.</td>
<td>Writes with logic, flow, organization, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question with minimal errors.</td>
<td>Writes with expert logic, flow, organization, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question, meeting professional publication standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Non-Performance</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Distinguished</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GUM/APA</strong></td>
<td>Writes with proper grammar, usage, and APA format and style.</td>
<td>Does not write with proper grammar, usage, and APA format and style.</td>
<td>Writes with persistent and frequent errors in grammar, usage, or APA format and style</td>
<td>Writes with proper grammar, usage, and APA format and style with minimal errors.</td>
<td>Writes with proper grammar, usage, and expert APA format and style, meeting professional publication standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Style</strong></td>
<td>Writes with proper paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone.</td>
<td>Does not write with proper paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone.</td>
<td>Writes with persistent and frequent errors in paragraph development or transitions, or without proper academic tone.</td>
<td>Writes with proper paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone with minimal errors.</td>
<td>Writes with expert paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone, meeting professional publication standards.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 2: Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Non-Performance</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Distinguished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Appraises previous research findings in the specialization and field to logically imply the scientific merit of the proposed or approved research topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Does not appraise previous research findings in the specialization and field to logically imply the scientific merit of the proposed or approved research topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Discusses but does not adequately appraise previous research findings in the specialization and field to logically imply the scientific merit of the proposed or approved research topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Appraises previous research findings in the specialization and field to logically imply the scientific merit of the proposed or approved research topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Appraises previous research findings in the specialization and field to logically imply the scientific merit of the proposed or approved research topic, and impartially considers conflicting theory and other perspectives in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Appraises ethical issues in the literature related to the proposed or approved research topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Does not appraise ethical issues in the literature related to the proposed or approved research topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Describes but does not appraise ethical issues in the literature related to the proposed or approved research topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Appraises ethical issues in the literature related to the proposed or approved research topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Appraises ethical issues in the literature related to the proposed or approved research topic, and impartially considers conflicting theory and other perspectives in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>Applies scholarly literature and discussion supporting the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Does not apply scholarly literature and discussion supporting the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Applies scholarly literature related to the proposed or approved dissertation topic, but the discussion is not comprehensive or clear.</td>
<td>Applies scholarly literature and discussion supporting the proposed or approved dissertation topic, identifying assumptions and impartially considering multiple perspectives in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking</strong></td>
<td>Synthesizes the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole, demonstrating one’s own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td>Does not synthesize the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole that demonstrates one’s own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td>Synthesizes the elements of the exam paper, but does not form a cohesive whole or does not demonstrate one’s own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td>Synthesizes the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole, demonstrating one’s own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td>Writes with logic, flow, organization, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question.</td>
<td>Does not write with logic, flow, organization, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question.</td>
<td>Writes with persistent and frequent errors in logic, flow, organization, structure, or content focus, or does not cohesively, comprehensively, or clearly answer all parts of the question.</td>
<td>Writes with expert logic, flow, organization, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question, meeting professional publication standards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUM/APA</td>
<td>Writing Style</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writes with proper grammar, usage, and APA format and style.</td>
<td>Writes with proper paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not write with proper grammar, usage, and APA format and style.</td>
<td>Does not write with proper paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writes with persistent and frequent errors in grammar, usage, or APA format and style</td>
<td>Writes with persistent and frequent errors in paragraph development or transitions, or without proper academic tone.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writes with proper grammar, usage, and APA format and style with minimal errors.</td>
<td>Writes with expert paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone, meeting professional publication standards.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writes with proper grammar, usage, and expert APA format and style, meeting professional publication standards.</td>
<td>Writes with expert paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone, meeting professional publication standards.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Theme 3: Research Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Non-Performance</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Distinguished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td>Interprets research concepts and methodology for the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Does not interpret research concepts and methodology for the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Identifies but does not interpret research concepts and methodology for the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Interprets research concepts and methodology for the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Evaluates research concepts and methodology for the proposed or approved dissertation topic, including clear descriptions of the characteristics of evaluation criteria in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethics</strong></td>
<td>Addresses ethical research requirements related to the methodology of the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Does not address ethical research requirements related to the methodology of the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Addresses ethical research requirements but the discussion is not related to the methodology of the proposed or approved dissertation topic or the discussion is not comprehensive and clear.</td>
<td>Addresses ethical research requirements related to the methodology of the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Addresses ethical research requirements related to the methodology of the proposed or approved dissertation topic, and draws further conclusions supported by literature in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>Applies research concepts and methodology to the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Does not apply research concepts and methodology to the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Describes but does not apply research concepts and methodology to the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Applies research concepts and methodology to the proposed or approved dissertation topic in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
<td>Applies research concepts and methodology to the proposed or approved dissertation topic, and impartially considers conflicting evidence or other perspectives in a comprehensive and clear way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Synthesizes the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole, demonstrating one's own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td>Does not synthesize the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole that demonstrates one's own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td>Synthesizes the elements of the exam paper, but does not form a cohesive whole or does not demonstrate one's own analysis and thinking.</td>
<td>Synthesizes the elements of the exam paper to form a cohesive whole, demonstrating one's own analysis and thinking that meets professional publication standards.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Writes with logic, flow, organization, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question.</td>
<td>Does not write with logic, flow, organization, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question.</td>
<td>Writes with persistent and frequent errors in logic, flow, organization, structure, or content focus, or does not cohesively, comprehensively, or clearly answer all parts of the question.</td>
<td>Writes with logic, flow, organization, structure, and content focus to cohesively, comprehensively, and clearly answer all parts of the question with minimal errors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUM/APA</td>
<td>Writes with proper grammar, usage, and APA format and style.</td>
<td>Does not write with proper grammar, usage, and APA format and style.</td>
<td>Writes with persistent and frequent errors in grammar, usage, or APA format and style.</td>
<td>Writes with proper grammar, usage, and expert APA format and style, meeting professional publication standards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Style</td>
<td>Writes with proper paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone.</td>
<td>Does not write with proper paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone.</td>
<td>Writes with persistent and frequent errors in paragraph development or transitions, or without proper academic tone.</td>
<td>Writes with expert paragraph development, transitions, and academic tone, meeting professional publication standards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D: ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY VIOLATION SCALE

The scale below is a guideline for determining the level of egregiousness of a learner’s violation of Capella University policy 3.01.01 Academic Integrity & Honesty.

Level of Violation

1 = The violation was a mistake on the learner’s part and occurred only once or twice.

Examples include neglecting to include page number(s) in citation of a direct quotation; citing the source but neglecting to enclose a direct quotation in quotation marks on both sides of the quotation; mistakenly modifying a word in a direct quote; not including cited sources in the reference list; not citing sources included in the reference list; or various technical errors in the implementation of APA style (reversing author names, not including doi when available, improper use of “et al.”, and so on).

The distinction of a level 1 violation is the frequency of occurrence (once or twice in the document) and seriousness (minor impact).

2 = The violation indicates that the learner does not understand the Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy and/or principles of properly crediting and documenting sources using APA (6th ed.) style.

Examples include poor paraphrasing of others’ work (attempting to paraphrase by replacing word with synonyms and/or rearranging parts of sentences); citing the source but neglecting to enclose a direct quotation in quotation marks; sections or paragraphs with no attribution for the presented ideas; confusing or inaccurate documentation of others’ work; improper use and/or documentation of secondary sources; citing nonexistent sources.

The distinction of a level 2 violation is the frequency of occurrence (more than twice in the document) and the seriousness (significant impact), and/or volume of the content that violates the policy.

3 = The violation is an egregious violation of the Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy.

Examples include using multiple full sentences and/or paragraphs of copied material not attributed to the owner; misrepresentation of others’ ideas; attributing the ideas of one source to another; clearly claiming that others’ ideas are their own.

The distinction of a level 3 violation is the pervasiveness, high frequency, and/or volume of content that violates the policy.