

# **Graduate Programs in Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment**



**Department of Educational Psychology  
Neag School of Education  
University of Connecticut**

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## **Welcome**

Welcome to the Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment (MEA) program in the Department of Educational Psychology at UCONN!

We have designed an intellectually stimulating and rigorous program that prepares graduate students to become more knowledgeable about MEA practices in schools and other formal or informal educational settings. Our program promotes the scientific uses of MEA within the field of education and related disciplines. Coursework focuses on current and emerging topics including, but not limited to, classical and modern measurement theory and applications, instrument development, quantitative research methods, program evaluation, and educational assessment. Emphasis is on the development of professional competencies in these areas.

Our philosophy is grounded in a commitment to a learning environment that stresses a well-organized and explicit curriculum with clear expectations, informal student faculty interaction that encourage the student's professional development and identification with the field, and acquainting our students with the diverse array of theories and practices within the MEA fields. We value student-faculty interaction, critical debate, and respect for theoretical diversity of practice. Such a stance encourages and reinforces creativity and intellectual risk-taking that are fundamental in the student's further development in Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment. We wish nothing but success for our students in the program. At the same time, we also recognize that they will encounter challenges along the way, and hope that this handbook might help them in these circumstances.

Unless explicitly noted, this handbook is not meant to replace or supersede the policies and procedures set forth by the UCONN Graduate School (<http://www.grad.uconn.edu/>). The MEA graduate handbook is intended to complement those regulations, introduce our department, and outline the policies and procedures that are specific to students enrolled in one of our graduate degree programs. Additional information is contained on the MEA program website (<http://mea.education.uconn.edu/>).

Best wishes,

The MEA Faculty

## Degree Programs

### The Doctoral Degree Program

The Department of Educational Psychology (EPSY) offers a Ph.D. in the area of *Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment* (MEA). The program prepares graduates to become leaders in educational measurement, program evaluation, assessment, educational statistics, quantitative research methodology, and/or educational research methods.

The Ph.D. program in MEA integrates theory and practice to promote the scientific uses of measurement and quantitative research methodologies within the field of education and related disciplines. Coursework focuses on current and emerging topics including educational assessment, classical and modern measurement theory and applications, item response theory, program evaluation, instrument development, multivariate statistical techniques, multilevel modeling, latent variable modeling, research design, educational statistics, causal inference, and quantitative research methodology.

Individuals with a master's degree with a strong interest in measurement, evaluation, or assessment are encouraged to apply. We will also consider individuals with a bachelor's degree, with an exceptional educational history and very strong interest in measurement, evaluation, or assessment issues that affect schools, students, and educational policy.

Generally, at least eight to ten semesters of full time study are required to complete the doctoral degree. A background in statistics is helpful but is not required. Research experiences are available through the University through participation in faculty research grants and projects at UCONN as well as in schools and educational organizations.

Contact the program coordinator, Dr. Betsy McCoach ([betsy.mccoach@uconn.edu](mailto:betsy.mccoach@uconn.edu)), or visit our website at <http://mea.education.uconn.edu/> for more information.

### The Master's Degree Program

The Department of Educational Psychology (EPSY) offers a Master of Arts degree in Education in *Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment* (MEA). The program is designed for educators and practitioners who wish to become more knowledgeable about measurement, evaluation and assessment practices in schools and other formal or informal educational settings.

The M.A. program in program emphasizes the application of measurement, assessment, and evaluation theory and procedures. Coursework focuses on foundational knowledge in MEA. We encourage students to supplement their MEA coursework with courses in other discipline areas that best suit their individual goals and objectives.

Individuals with a bachelor's degree in any major are encouraged to apply. We particularly seek students with a strong interest in measurement, evaluation and assessment issues that affect schools, students, and education policy. The expectation is that graduates will use their training to meet the needs of organizations and schools involved in developing and/or evaluating educational interventions, and/or improving educational programming and practice. A background in statistics is not assumed or required. Generally, three semesters of full time study are required to complete the master's degree.

Contact the program coordinator, Dr. Betsy McCoach ([betsy.mccoach@uconn.edu](mailto:betsy.mccoach@uconn.edu)), or visit our website at <http://mea.education.uconn.edu/> for more information.

## **Program Philosophy and Goals**

The faculty is committed to a learning environment that stresses a well-organized and explicit curriculum with clear expectations. However, there is also a strong commitment to informal student-faculty interaction that further encourages the student's professional development and identification with the field. In addition, the program is designed to acquaint students with the diversity of theories and practices within the field of Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment, allowing the student sufficient intellectual freedom to experiment with different theoretical and applied approaches.

The atmosphere is intended to enhance student-faculty interaction, critical debate, and respect for theoretical diversity of practice, leading to an intense and exciting learning experience. Such a philosophy encourages and reinforces the creativity and intellectual risk-taking that are fundamental in the student's further development in Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment.

## **Core Program Faculty and Research Interests**

### **Dr. Aarti Bellara:**

Assistant Professor. Research interests: propensity score analysis, multilevel modeling, measurement, and assessment

### **Dr. Noel Card**

Associate Professor. Research interests: Dyadic data, Longitudinal data, Meta-analysis, Structural equation modeling, Aggression, Character strengths, Peer relations, Peer victimization.

### **Dr. D. Betsy McCoach**

Professor. Research Interests: Multilevel modeling, Instrument design, Structural equation modeling, Longitudinal analysis, Assessing school effectiveness, Gifted education, School Effectiveness, Underachievement.

### **Dr. Bianca Montrosse-Moorhead**

Assistant Professor. Research interests: Program evaluation, Policy evaluation, Validity in evaluation, Research on evaluation practice.

### **Dr. Christopher Rhoads**

Assistant Professor. Research Interests: Hierarchical/multi-level modeling, Design of field experiments in education research, Non-experimental designs for causal inference, Meta-analysis, Missing Data.

### **Dr. H. Jane Rogers**

Associate Professor. Research interests: Item response theory, Differential item functioning, Bayesian analysis, Scaling and equating.

**Dr. H. Swaminathan**

Professor. Research interests: Item response theory, Multivariate statistical analysis, Longitudinal analysis, Factor analysis and structural equations modeling, Bayesian inference, Large scale assessments.

**Admissions**

Prospective students applying to the M.A. or Ph.D. program must submit a completed application to the Graduate School. Admission to the Graduate School at the University of Connecticut requires the completion of an application form, current Graduate Record Examination (GRE) general test scores (*required for Ph.D. applications, strongly recommended for M.A. applications*), current Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or equivalent for foreign students (see “A note about English Proficiency” below), undergraduate and graduate transcripts, three letters of recommendation, a personal statement, and a processing fee. The personal statement explicitly should include 1.) the reason for pursuing a degree in the area of measurement, evaluation, and assessment, 2.) description of any prior experiences or coursework that are relevant to the degree in measurement, evaluation, and assessment, 3.) post degree career goals, 4.) areas of research interest within measurement, evaluation, and assessment.

After receipt by the Graduate School, the application is forwarded to program faculty for admission consideration.

Our program considers applications each winter for fall admission. If possible, it is best to submit applications by **December 1st** for consideration of admission for the following fall semester. Applications are reviewed starting in December. Admissions decisions are based on the quality of the student’s prior academic and professional career, the fit of his/her research interests with those of the faculty in our program, and the admissions committee’s assessment of the student’s ability to successfully complete doctoral level work at the University of Connecticut and to make substantial contributions to a field of expertise in a methodological and/or substantive area after graduation. Funding (generally in the form of graduate assistantships) may be available to students of exceptional promise. Generally, admissions decisions are made in January-March and funding decisions are made in March. All funding notifications are complete by April 1st. Students offered admission must respond by April 15. For program descriptions and further details about the Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment program or the Department of Educational Psychology, please visit our website at <http://mea.education.uconn.edu/>.

**Selection of Students**

Admissions decisions are made on the basis of the students’ scholarly potential, academic achievement and promise, the fit of the students’ research interests with those of faculty in the program. To make admissions decisions, we consult all available sources of information, including the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, undergraduate and (if applicable) previous graduate course performance, the personal statement, letters of recommendation, previous relevant work experience, and, when possible, an informal personal interview. The personal statement explicitly should include 1.) the reason for pursuing a PhD in the area of

measurement, evaluation, and assessment, 2.) description of any prior experiences or coursework that are relevant to the PhD in measurement, evaluation, and assessment, 3.) post PhD career goals, 4.) areas of research interest within measurement, evaluation, and assessment.

The Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment Faculty, the Department of Educational Psychology, and the Neag School of Education are committed to practices of affirmative action and equal educational opportunity in admissions decisions.

### **A note about English Proficiency:**

If you are not a native speaker of English, you are required to submit evidence of your proficiency in the English language. If you have received a degree in an English speaking University from English speaking country, you may qualify for a waiver. Otherwise, you may use the results (*no more than two years old*) from one of the following standardized tests to satisfy this requirement:

- 1.) Receiving a score of 79 (electronic test) or 550 (paper based) or higher on the [TOEFL](#) test.
- 2.) Receiving a score of 6.5 on the [IELTS](#) test.
- 3.) Receiving a score of 53 or higher on the [PTE](#) test, or

Please see the [graduate school website](#) for more information about this requirement.

## **Evaluation of Program Applicants**

General prerequisites for Ph.D. study include undergraduate or graduate preparation in education, psychology, statistics, or related disciplines. Admissions decisions are made on the basis of: Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, undergraduate and (if applicable) previous graduate course performance, the personal statement (which describes your interest in pursuing a Ph.D. in MEA), letters of recommendation, previous relevant work experience, and, when possible, an informal personal interview.

General prerequisites for M.A. study include undergraduate preparation in education, psychology, statistics, or related disciplines. Admissions decisions are made on the basis of: Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, undergraduate course performance, the personal statement (which describes your interest in pursuing an M.A. in MEA), letters of recommendation, previous relevant work experience, and, when possible, an informal personal interview.

Additional information concern minimum qualifications for admission to the Graduate School can be found on UConn's Graduate School website (<http://grad.uconn.edu/prospective-students/admissions-requirements/>). The MEA Faculty, the Department of Educational Psychology, and the Neag School of Education are committed to diversity. A copy of the UConn

Graduate School *Diversity Commitment Statement* can be accessed at <http://grad.uconn.edu/current-students/a-scholars-life/diversity/>.

## **General Program Considerations**

Upon formal admission to the Ph.D. or M.A. program, each student is assigned an initial major advisor who will guide the student in developing the plan of study. For M.A. students, during the second semester of the program, the student selects an advisory committee chairperson and at least two committee members to advise and direct the student's course of study. For Ph.D. students, during the second year of the program, the student selects an advisory committee chairperson and at least two committee members to advise and direct the student's course of study. We encourage students to re-evaluate their selection of their major advisor and advisory committee after completion of the comprehensive exams to ensure alignment of student and faculty research interests.

A Ph.D. degree is a research degree. Therefore, in addition to developing knowledge and skills through coursework, students should develop and apply their methodological skills through the conduct of authentic research. During the early years of the program, PhD students generally serve under the tutelage of the faculty mentors to develop research skills. However, as the student progresses toward the dissertation, it is expected that he/she will develop more independence in his/her research skills and endeavors.

Students are evaluated with a variety of methods throughout the program. In addition to formal evaluations, such as course grades, the faculty will evaluate the student's progress on research projects. In addition to semi-annual planning and evaluation meetings with the major advisor, all MEA faculty members review each M.A. and Ph.D. student's progress annually to evaluate the student's continued progress toward the degree. More information on this process is included in the *Professionalism and Annual Review of Students* section of the handbook.

Although the Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment M.A. and Ph.D. programs are designed so that students are involved full-time in their graduate studies, some students do work part-time research or teaching. In most cases, these part-time positions are related to the student's graduate program and consequently enhance the student's skills, professional maturity, and overall educational goals. In addition to support from faculty research projects, the Department of Educational Psychology may have a limited number of graduate assistantships and fellowships for Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment students. However, such financial aid is competitive and is typically offered only to Ph.D. students.

## **Student Housing**

The University of Connecticut is situated on a 3100-acre campus in Northeastern Connecticut. Assistance in securing either University or off-campus housing is provided by University agencies (e.g., Department of Residential Life, <http://reslife.uconn.edu/>, or the off-campus housing website, <https://offcampushousing.uconn.edu/>).

## **Professionalism**

To be successful in our M.A. and Ph.D. programs requires more than a high level of academic performance. We believe that the best approach for you to deal with the challenges you will encounter is to clearly lay out our expectations, including how you will be evaluated during your time in our program. This section is intended to be as explicit as possible about our assumptions, expectations, and formal student evaluation procedures.

### **Assumptions of the MEA faculty about our students**

We hold two assumptions about our students:

1. Given the rigorous application review process, we only admit students who we believe are academically capable of succeeding in our program.
2. We believe graduate students are responsible for taking an active role in their graduate education. Our role is to provide the conditions necessary to succeed – namely, opportunities, resources, guidance, and encouragement. Your role is to actively maximize those conditions to achieve the educational and professional goals you set for yourself through hard work and personal responsibility.

### **Expectations of the MEA faculty about our students**

At the end of each academic year, the MEA faculty review each students' performance and progress in four areas: (1) Course work and grades, (2) Scholarship, (3) Timely progress toward degree, and (4) Personal and professional characteristics. We describe each below.

#### **1. Course work, grades, and class engagement.**

We expect for our students to perform well academically. Across MEA core courses, (those tested on our comprehensive exams), we expect for students to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.5. (Please note that this requirement is substantially higher than the graduate school's requirement for satisfactory academic progress.) For all MEA courses, we expect for students earn a grade of B or better in each class. A student who receives a grade lower than a B (including B-) will be required to repeat the course. Students who fail to maintain a 3.5 cumulative GPA or who receive a grade of C or lower in a required MEA course will be referred to the MEA student review committee. This committee will develop an action plan for support and remediation. However, chronic or continued poor academic performance may be grounds for dismissal from the Ph.D. program. Doing well academically is not the only requirement in terms of course work and grades. We also expect for our students to engage with coursework and with content in the areas of MEA. The quality and intensity of their inquiry, critical thought, and writing in courses are also criteria used in annual student performance reviews.

#### **2. Scholarship.**

After the 1<sup>st</sup> year in the Ph.D. program, we encourage every student to be engaged in a research project with an MEA faculty member every semester until they are ready to begin their dissertation study. It's not uncommon for students to assume that they should prioritize coursework over research experiences. In reality, for Ph.D. students these two should be equally prized, as the Ph.D. is a research degree. Students' progress toward becoming independent scholars is reviewed on an annual basis.

Further, being engaged in a research project means working with a faculty member as part of a sustained effort to engage in inquiry, including empirical, theoretical, or conceptual, as week-to-week activities. What form the research takes will vary by project and faculty member. Further, Ph.D. students should wait to begin developing their dissertation research until after they have successfully passed the MEA Program Comprehensive Exam, which is taken after all core coursework is complete.

We also strongly encourage our graduate students to assist in research dissemination efforts through annual conferences sponsored by professional associations. Examples of national professional association conferences that the MEA program faculty and students regularly attend include the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE), and the American Evaluation Association (AEA). Examples of regional professional association conferences that the MEA program faculty and students regularly attend include the Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA), and the Eastern Evaluation Research Society (EERS). Traditionally, proposals are due six to nine months prior to the conference. Conference presentations are an opportunity to gain feedback on your work before sending it out to a refereed journal. Further, conference attendance and presentations are a valuable opportunity for building your C.V. or resume and establishing your professional identity – both of which are important for securing employment opportunities upon graduation.

While you may also choose to collaborate with other non-MEA faculty, your advisor should approve this collaborative work, and it is up to you to make a clear and compelling argument for how this work is aligned with your measurement, evaluation, or assessment research interests. Further, when working with faculty, whether paid or unpaid, we expect for you to behave professionally. This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining academic, scientific, and ethical standards, satisfactorily completing assigned duties, fulfilling hourly commitments, and ensuring that you do not misuse university or faculty assets (e.g., using data from your GA for a course assignment without permission from your GA supervisor, viewing inappropriate content on a university-owned computer).

### **3. Timely progress toward degree.**

Students' progress toward meeting program requirements for the M.A. and Ph.D. is reviewed on an annual basis. Students admitted to the Ph.D. program are expected to complete all requirements within seven years from the first semester of enrollment. Students admitted to the M.A. program are expected to complete all requirements within three years from the first semester of enrollment. Typically, programs of study are structured so as to promote completion of all requirements, including the dissertation, within this time period. In addition, the graduate school at the University of Connecticut stipulates the following time-limit requirements for M.A. students:

*All work for the master's degree must be completed within six (6) years from the beginning of the student's matriculation in the degree program. Failure to complete the work within this period or failure to maintain Continuous*

*Registration (See “Continuous Registration.”) as required may result in termination. A one-time extension of the student’s terminal date of no longer than two (2) years is considered only when there is substantial evidence that the student has made regular and consistent progress toward completion of degree requirements. A detailed recommendation to extend the terminal date must be signed by the major advisor and submitted in a timely manner to the Dean of the Graduate School. (Retrieved from <http://gradcatalog.uconn.edu/guidelines-for-grad-study/standards-degree-requirements/#DocPhil>.)*

The graduate school also stipulates the following time-limit requirements for Ph.D. students:

*All work must be completed within a period of eight (8) years of the beginning of the student’s matriculation in the degree program. Failure to complete the work within the periods specified or failure to maintain Continuous Registration (See “Continuous Registration.”) will require reevaluation of the student’s entire program and may result in a notice of termination. A one-time extension of the student’s terminal date of no longer than two (2) years is considered only when there is substantial evidence that the student has made regular and consistent progress toward completion of degree requirements. A detailed recommendation to extend the terminal date must be signed by the major advisor and submitted in a timely manner to the Dean of the Graduate School. (Retrieved from <http://gradcatalog.uconn.edu/guidelines-for-grad-study/standards-degree-requirements/#DocPhil>.)*

#### **4. Personal and professional characteristics.**

**Participation in program affairs.** Unless they are in a class at a time that overlaps with program affairs, we expect *all* students to attend MEA-related program meetings and “brown bags”. Monthly MEA program meetings will be announced at the beginning of each academic year. Further, during MEA program job searches, students are expected to attend candidate job talks, teaching demonstrations, and time slots when candidates are scheduled to meet with graduate students. Every semester, students will be asked to complete a brief progress report. Students will receive an annual written evaluation of their progress in the program at the end of each academic year. Annual Ph.D. student review meetings will be announced approximately one month before the end of the spring semester, and meetings will take place after final grades have been posted.

**Expected review time for papers.** Students should allow at least two weeks for faculty members to review drafts of their theses, independent research projects, or documents associated with other official program requirements (e.g., responses to comprehensive exam questions) (excluding dissertation chapters). For drafts that require more than one review by a faculty member, it is the student’s responsibility to keep the faculty apprised of the anticipated timeline for draft papers to be submitted. Dissertation drafts usually take longer to review and students are encouraged to ask faculty members

when they can expect comments when drafts are submitted. Finally, although many faculty elect to review drafts of theses, independent research projects, or other official program requirements during sabbaticals, holidays, and during the summer break, they are not required to do so. Please plan accordingly.

**Behavior.** Students' professional activities are expected to conform to the ethical standards outlined by the association they consider to be most aligned with their research interests (e.g., NCME, AERA, SREE, AEA). In addition, students' professional activities are to be characterized by:

- a) An appreciation of diversity and commitment to service that respects the worth, uniqueness, and potential for growth and development of all individuals.
- b) Ethical behavior including respect for copyright and confidentiality.
- c) The ability to work independently and collaboratively.
- d) Communication skills in writing, speaking, and multimedia formats.
- e) Commitment to developing new skills and knowledge, and continuing professional growth.

**Academic Knowledge.** Over the course of the M.A. or Ph.D. program, students are expected to develop knowledge and in-depth understanding of the following core content areas:

- a) Theories, Methods and Models for Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment
- b) Research Methodology and Advanced Quantitative Analysis

In addition, Ph.D. students are expected to develop substantial expertise in a specific sub-area within the fields of measurement, evaluation, and assessment, broadly defined. The dissertation research should serve to strengthen that expertise.

**Scholarly integrity in graduate education and research.** Scholarly activity at the graduate level takes many forms, including, but not limited to, classroom activity, laboratory or field experience, writing for publication, presentation, and forms of artistic expression. Integrity in all of these activities is of paramount importance, and the Graduate School of the University of Connecticut requires that the highest ethical standards in teaching, learning, research, and service be maintained.

Scholarly integrity encompasses "both research integrity and the ethical understanding and skill required of researchers/scholars in domestic, international, and multicultural contexts." It also addresses "ethical aspects of scholarship that influence the next generation of researchers as teachers, mentors, supervisors, and successful stewards of grant funds" (Council of Graduate Schools, *Research and Scholarly Integrity in Graduate Education: A Comprehensive Approach*, 2012). The Graduate Faculty Council, in accordance with the provisions of its By-Laws, has adopted this policy concerning scholarly integrity in graduate education and research and has approved the procedures set forth herein for addressing alleged violations. All graduate students are expected to

review these policies thoroughly and abide by the policies for the duration of their tenure at UCONN (and beyond).

Scholarly misconduct is an offense that MEA faculty take very seriously. Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the policies and procedures related to *UCONN's Policy on Scholarly Integrity in Graduate and Post-Doctoral Education and Research* (<http://policy.uconn.edu/?p=3282>), including how scholarly misconduct is defined. Scholarly misconduct violations are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, but at a minimum require the entire MEA faculty to be notified of the offense and documentation of the incident to be filed with the Graduate School.

## **Annual Review of Students**

Annual performance review is a part of any job you will secure once you enter the workforce. To try to give you the best opportunity to be successful while in graduate school and once you leave, M.A. and Ph.D. students will be required to submit an annual progress evaluation form. We view the annual review process as an opportunity for us to give you feedback about where you are doing well, and if applicable, where you have room for improvement. Our hope is that as a result of this process, you continue to do well in areas where you are excelling and address areas of concern.

A copy of the annual student review form follows and should be emailed to your major advisor and the program coordinator (currently Dr. McCoach) one month before the last day of classes for the Spring semester. After all forms have been submitted, the program coordinator will forward student-completed progress evaluation forms to the MEA faculty. After reviewing this form, the MEA program will provide feedback to the student on his or her performance and progress. The process of providing feedback is differentiated for M.A. and Ph.D. students.

For M.A. students, MEA faculty will review submitted forms and provide collective feedback with it. This collective feedback will be given to the student's academic advisor, who will then schedule a time to meet with the student individually to discuss annual review feedback.

Ph.D. students who have not yet successfully defended their comprehensive exams are required to attend a 30-minute meeting in which they will discuss their academic progress with their advisory committee (or, for those who have not filed a plan of study, a sub-set of no fewer than 3 MEA faculty, including their major advisor). The purpose of this meeting is to review the students' academic progress and research goals and interests. Meetings will take place *after* the deadline for all Spring semester final grades to be submitted to the registrar, and students should plan their schedules accordingly. MEA faculty will review submitted forms and provide collective feedback with it. This collective feedback will be shared with the student during the meeting. Students are encouraged to bring a copy of their submitted form to the meeting to record faculty feedback.

For Ph.D. students who have successfully defended their comprehensive exam, the process will be similar for M.A. students. MEA faculty will review submitted forms and provide collective feedback with it. This collective feedback will be given to the student's dissertation chair, who

will then schedule a time to meet with the student individually to discuss annual review feedback.

### **Graduate Student Annual Student Review Form**

Please complete this form and submit it via e-mail to your major advisor and to the program coordinator (Betsy McCoach) one month before the last day of classes for the Spring semester.

Name:

Major Advisor(s):

#### **Part 1: Overall progress toward degree description**

Directions: Please answer each question below, including evidence to support your claims. (Maximum 250 words per question.)

1. Please briefly describe your progress toward your degree in terms of courses, comps, etc.
2. What progress have you made toward degree completion in the last 6 months?
3. Please describe your current MEA-focused research projects.
4. What progress have you made toward completion of those research projects in the last 6 months?
5. What are your career goals? What do you plan to do after you complete your degree?
6. What are your goals for this semester (and for the next 6 months)?
7. How can the faculty help you to reach those goals?
8. Are there any experiences with the program of which we should be aware? Do you have suggestions for the program?
9. List any accomplishments, news, or concerns that you would like to share with the MEA faculty.

**Part 2: Annual student evaluation ratings**

**Directions:** Consider your accomplishments listed above, as well as information contained in the Professional section of the MEA graduate student handbook. For each criterion listed below, please provide an overall rating using the following guidelines:

- n/a = Not applicable. Provide a brief rationale in the box.  
 0 = Did not meet program expectations.  
 1 = Met minimum program expectations.  
 2 = Exceeded program expectations.

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Your rating</b>	<b>Average MEA Faculty Rating</b>
<b>Coursework &amp; Grades</b>		
Academic performance in core MEA courses (i.e., 3.5 cumulative GPA in these courses)		
Academic performance in non-core MEA courses (i.e., a grade of B or better in each course)		
For this academic year, the quality and intensity of the inquiry, critical thought, and writing you put into your courses		
<b>Scholarship</b>		
For this academic year, your engagement in research projects with MEA faculty		
For this academic year, your conduct in MEA-related research projects		
For this academic year, your engagement with MEA-related research dissemination efforts		
For this academic year, attendance of annual conferences sponsored by professional associations aligned with MEA		
<b>Timely progress toward degree</b>		
Timely progress in completing coursework		
Timely progress in completing thesis ( <i>M.A. students only</i> )		
Timely progress in completing 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Comprehensive Exam ( <i>Ph.D. students only</i> )		
Timely progress in completing MEA Program Comprehensive Exam ( <i>Ph.D. students only</i> )		
Timely progress in completing dissertation proposal defense ( <i>Ph.D. students only</i> )		
Timely progress in completing dissertation study ( <i>Ph.D. students only</i> )		
<b>Personal and professional characteristics</b>		
Participation in program affairs		
Professional Behavior		
Development of new discipline-specific knowledge within one of the areas of MEA		
Scholarly integrity in graduate education and research		

## **Required, Recommended, and Optional Courses for the Ph.D. Program**

The anticipated minimum total number of credits for the PhD is 75. This includes a minimum of 54-57 credits of coursework, 3-6 credits of independent study, internship or practicum credits, and 15 credits of Dissertation preparation (required by the graduate school). If a student has already taken required courses at another University or as part of another degree program here at UCONN, the requirement to complete 54 credits can be decreased if the major advisor and the advisory committee agree to the reduction or substitutions. However, it is expected that all PhD students in MEA will complete at least 48 credits of doctoral coursework at the University of Connecticut. Ultimately, the students' major advisor, in consultation with his/her advisory committee and the MEA program faculty, determine the degree requirements for each PhD student. In addition, we encourage doctoral students to take a lead role in pursuing summer internship and academic year internship and practicum opportunities to enhance their professional skills.

Core competencies and Ph.D. credit requirements are listed in Table 1 on the next page. Each student's individual program of study is planned with the major advisor and centered on the particular needs and interests of the student. Students are encouraged to take additional courses in substantive areas of their choosing with the understanding that taking additional electives could increase the time that it takes to complete the degree program but that it does not increase the number of semesters of funding that is available to the student.

For most students, the Ph.D. degree will require four or five years of full-time study, although for students with an M.A. in a highly relevant area, such as statistics, it may be possible to complete the Ph.D. in less time. On the next several pages (i.e., after Table 1), we outline typical course sequences for students who enter in either an odd (2015, 2017, 2019) or an even (2014, 2016, 2018) year, given that several of our advanced or specialized courses are only offered on a bi-annual basis.

## **Table 1. Core Competencies and Ph.D. Credit Requirements for the MEA Program**

### **Competency 1: Research Methodology and Quantitative Expertise. (24 credits or 8 courses)**

**Courses for which students must show competency, but do not count toward PhD credits---**

EPSY 5601	Introduction to Educational Research Methods*
EPSY 5605	Introduction to Quantitative Methods I *
EPSY 5607	Introduction to Quantitative Methods II *

#### **Required:**

EPSY 5610	Applied Regression Analysis
EPSY 5613	Multivariate Analysis in Educational Research
EPSY 6601	Methods and Techniques of Educational Research
EPSY 6611	Hierarchical Linear Models
EPSY 6615	Structural Equation Modeling
EPSY 6619	Advanced Modeling Using Latent Variable Techniques
EPSY 6651	Methods for Causal Inference from Educational Data
EPSY 6655	Advanced Methods for Causal Inference from Data

*\* Expected (equivalent or competency exam required to be waived), but do not count towards 24 credits in this area.*

### **Competency 2: MEA: Theories, Methods and Models. (24 credits or 8 courses)**

#### **Required:**

EPSY 5602	Educational Tests and Measurements
EPSY 5621	Construction of Evaluation Instruments
EPSY 6621	Program Evaluation
EPSY 6194	Advanced Program Evaluation
EPSY 6636	Measurement Theory and Application
EPSY 6637	Item Response Theory
EPSY 6639	Advanced Item Response Theory
EPSY 6194	Advanced Techniques for Psychometric Research

### **Competency 3: Professional Knowledge. (3 credits or 1 course)**

#### **Required:**

EPSY 5510	Learning: Its Implications for Education**
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*\*\* Students may request to have this requirement waived if they have taken a graduate-level Educational Psychology or Learning course from another university and earned a B or better.*

### **Additional Coursework. (9+ credits)**

*Students must take a combination of elective courses and independent study/practica which total at least 9 credits. At least 3 of these credits must be from coursework and at least 3 of these credits must be from independent study/practica. So, students must complete 3 credits of*

*additional coursework and 6 credits of independent study or practicum OR they must complete 6 credits of coursework and 3 credits of independent study/practicum. We encourage students to pursue additional electives in areas of interest.*

Students must choose at least one of the following elective courses (or an alternative elective course that is approved by your advisory committee):

EPSY 6103	Grant Writing
EPSY 6194	Advanced MEA Seminar (in any topical area)
EPSY 6194	Meta-Analysis
EPSY 6194	Dyadic Analysis
EPSY 6469	Single Subject Research
EDCI 6000	Qualitative Methods of Educational Research
HDFS 5005	Qualitative Research Methods

In addition, at least three credits of independent study, internship or practicum, or pro-seminar are required. We encourage doctoral students to pursue summer internship and academic year internship and practicum opportunities to enhance their professional skills. Students may take any combination of these classes totaling 6 credits.

Courses fulfilling these 6 credits include:

EPSY 5494	Practicum (1-6 credits)
EPSY 6494	Doctoral Practicum (1-6 credits)
EPSY 5199	Independent Study (1-6 credits)

**Dissertation Research Preparation:**

Students must also register for 15 credits of dissertation research (required by the graduate school). The course number for the dissertation credits is GRAD 6950. A student may enroll in up to 9 credits of GRAD 6950 per semester. Therefore, students must complete at least two semesters of GRAD 6950. GRAD 6950 is graded S, I, U. Unsatisfactory progress on the dissertation research may result in a grade of U in GRAD 6950.

**Typical Course Sequence (assuming EPSY 5601, 5605, 5607 need to be completed) for a student who begins the PhD in an even year (e.g.- Fall 2016, Fall 2018)**

<b>YEAR 1</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
EPSY 5605	Introduction to Quantitative Methods I*	EPSY 5607	Introduction to Quantitative Methods II*
EPSY 5601	Introduction to Educational Research*	EPSY 5621	Construction of Evaluation Instruments
EPSY 5602	Educational Tests and Measurements	EPSY 6601	Methods and Techniques of Educational Research
<b>YEAR 2</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
EPSY 6651	Methods of Causal Inference in Educational Research	EPSY 6636	Measurement Theory and Application
EPSY 5610	Applied Regression	EPSY 5613	Multivariate Analysis in Educational Research
EPSY 5510	Learning: Its Implications for Education**	EPSY 6655	Advanced Methods for Causal Inference from Data
		EPSY 6194	Advanced Techniques for Psychometric Research
<b>YEAR 3</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
EPSY 6621	Program Evaluation	EPSY 6194	Advanced Program Evaluation
EPSY 6637	Item Response Theory	EPSY 6638	Advanced Perspectives on Item Response Theory
EPSY 6615	Structural Equation Modeling	EPSY 6194	Advanced Modeling Techniques
EPSY 6611	Hierarchical Linear Models		
<b>YEAR 4</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
	<b>COMPLETE COMPS EXAM</b>	<b>XXX</b>	Elective 1/Independent Study
GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits	GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits
		<b>XXXX</b>	Elective 2/Independent Study
<b>YEAR 5</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits	GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits
<b>XXXX</b>	Elective 3/ Independent Study		

\*Expected – equivalent or competency exam are required to be waived – but does not count towards 24 credits in Competency 1.

\*\* Students may request to have this requirement waived if they have taken a graduate-level Educational Psychology or Learning course from another university and earned a B or better.

**Typical Course Sequence (assuming EPSY 5601 and 5605 are completed) for a student who begins the PhD in an even year (Fall 2016, Fall 2018)**

<b>YEAR 1</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
EPSY 5602	Educational Tests and Measurements	EPSY 5621	Construction of Evaluation Instruments
EPSY 5607	Introduction to Quantitative Methods II*	EPSY 6601	Methods and Techniques of Educational Research
EPSY 5510	Learning: Its Implications for Education**	EPSY 5610	Applied Regression Analysis
<b>YEAR 2</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
EPSY 6611	Hierarchical Linear Models	EPSY 6636	Measurement Theory and Application
EPSY 6651	Methods for Causal Inference for Educational Data	EPSY 6655	Advanced Methods for Causal Inference for Educational Data
EPSY 6615	Structural Equation Modeling	EPSY 6194	Advanced Techniques for Psychometric Research
		EPSY 5613	Multivariate Analysis in Educational Research
<b>YEAR 3</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
EPSY 6637	Elective 1/Independent Study	EPSY 6194	Advanced Modeling Techniques
	Item Response Theory	EPSY 6638	Advanced Perspectives on Item Response Theory
EPSY 6621	Program Evaluation	EPSY 6194	Advanced Program Evaluation
<b>YEAR 4</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits	GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits
	<b>COMPS EXAM</b>		Elective 2/Independent Study
			Elective 3/Independent Study
<b>YEAR 5</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits	GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits

\*Expected – equivalent or competency exam are required to be waived – but does not count towards 24 credits in Competency 1.

\*\* Students may request to have this requirement waived if they have taken a graduate-level Educational Psychology or Learning course from another university and earned a B or better.

**Typical Course Sequence (assuming EPSY 5601, 5605, 5607, and 5602 need to be completed) for a student who begins the PhD in an odd year (Fall 2017, Fall 2019)**

YEAR 1			
Fall		Spring	
EPSY 5605	Introduction to Quantitative Methods I*	EPSY 5607	Introduction to Quantitative Methods II*
EPSY 5510	Learning: Its Implications for Education**	EPSY 5621	Construction of Evaluation Instruments
EPSY 5601	Introduction to Educational Research*	EPSY 6601	Methods and Techniques of Educational Research
EPSY 5602	Educational Tests and Measurements		
YEAR 2			
Fall		Spring	
EPSY 5610	Applied Regression Analysis	EPSY 5613	Multivariate Analysis in Educational Research
EPSY 6637	Item Response Theory	EPSY 6638	Advanced Perspectives on Item Response Theory
EPSY 6621	Program Evaluation	EPSY 6194	Advanced Program Evaluation
YEAR 3			
Fall		Spring	
EPSY 6615	Structural Equation Modeling	EPSY 6655	Advanced Methods for Causal Inference from Data
EPSY 6611	Hierarchical Linear Models	EPSY 6194	Advanced Techniques for Psychometric Research
EPSY 6651	Methods for Causal Inference from Data	EPSY 6636	Measurement Theory and Application
YEAR 4			
Fall		Spring	
GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits	GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits
	<b>COMPLETE COMPS EXAM</b>	EPSY 6619	Advanced Modeling using Latent Variable Techniques
		XXXX	Elective 1/Independent Study
YEAR 5			
Fall		Spring	
GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits	GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits
<b>XXXX</b>	Elective 2/Independent Study	<b>XXXX</b>	Elective 3/Independent Study

\*Expected – equivalent or competency exam are required to be waived – but does not count towards 24 credits in Competency 1.

\*\* Students may request to have this requirement waived if they have taken a graduate-level Educational Psychology or Learning course from another university and earned a B or better.

**Typical Course Sequence (assuming EPSY 5601, 5605 are completed) for a student who begins the PhD in an odd year (Fall 2017, Fall 2019)**

<b>YEAR 1</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
EPSY 5607	Introduction to Quantitative Methods II*	EPSY 6636	Measurement Theory and Application
EPSY 5510	Learning: Its Implications for Education**	EPSY 5621	Construction of Evaluation Instruments
EPSY 5602	Educational Tests and Measurements	EPSY 5610	Applied Regression Analysis
<b>YEAR 2</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
EPSY 6615	Structural Equation Modeling	EPSY 6619	Advanced Modeling using Latent Variable Techniques
EPSY 6611	Hierarchical Linear Models	EPSY 6601	Methods and Techniques of Educational Research
EPSY 6637	Item Response Theory	EPSY 6638	Advanced Perspectives on Item Response Theory
EPSY 6621	Program Evaluation	EPSY 6194	Advanced Program Evaluation
<b>YEAR 3</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
EPSY 6651	Methods for Causal Inference from Data	EPSY 6655	Advanced Methods for Causal Inference from Data
<b>XXXX</b>	Elective /Independent Study 1	EPSY 6194	Advanced Techniques for Psychometric Research
<b>XXXX</b>	Elective /Independent Study 2	EPSY 5613	Multivariate Analysis in Educational Research
<b>YEAR 4</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits	GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits
	<b>COMPLETE COMPS EXAM</b>	<b>XXXX</b>	Elective /Independent Study 3
<b>YEAR 5</b>			
<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits	GRAD 6950	Dissertation Credits

\*Expected – equivalent or competency exam are required to be waived – but does not count towards 24 credits in Competency 1.

\*\* Students may request to have this requirement waived if they have taken a graduate-level Educational Psychology or Learning course from another university and earned a B or better.

## Required Courses for the M.A. Program

Students enrolled in the master's program will be expected to complete 30 credits. This generally includes 27 credits of structured coursework and 3 credits of independent study or practicum. Course requirements are included below.

### **Competency 1: Research Methodology and Quantitative Expertise. (9 credits or 3 courses)**

EPSY 5605 Quantitative Methods in Research I  
EPSY 5607 Quantitative Methods in Research II  
EPSY 5601 or 6601 Educational Research Methods/Design course

### **Competency 2: MEA: Theories, Methods and Models. (9 credits or 3 courses)**

EPSY 5602 Educational Tests and Measurements  
EPSY 5621 Construction of Evaluation Instruments  
EPSY 6621 Program Evaluation

### **Competency 3: Professional Knowledge. (3 credits or 1 course)**

EPSY 5510 Learning: Its Implications for Education

### **Required Additional Coursework. (6 credits)**

Students must choose six credits from the following courses (or an alternative course that is approved by your advisory committee):

EPSY 5195 Introduction to SPSS (1 credit)  
EPSY 5195 Introduction to R (1 credit)  
EPSY 5610 Applied Regression Analysis  
EPSY 6194 Advanced Program Evaluation  
EPSY 6469 Single Subject Research  
EPSY 6601 Methods and Techniques of Educational Research (if 5601 is taken)  
EDCI 6000 Qualitative Methods of Educational Research

In addition, three credits of independent study or practicum are strongly recommended. The independent study may be used to prepare to take the masters' level comprehensive exam. The program evaluation practicum may be used to fulfill this requirement as well. The courses fulfilling these three credits include:

EPSY 5199 Independent Study (3 credits)  
EPSY 5494 Practicum (3 credits)

**Typical course sequence for a student who begins the M.A. in an even year (Fall 2016, Fall 2018)**

YEAR 1			
Fall		Spring	
EPSY 5601	Introduction to Educational Research	EPSY 5607	Introduction to Quantitative Methods II
EPSY 5605	Introduction to Quantitative Methods I	EPSY 5621	Construction of Evaluation Instruments
EPSY 5602	Educational Tests and Measurements	EPSY 6621	Program Evaluation (online)
EPSY 5510	Learning: Its Implications for Education		
YEAR 2			
Fall		Spring	
XXXX	Elective 1		
XXXX	Elective 2/Practicum		
EPSY 5199	Independent Study		

**Typical course sequence for a student who begins the M.A. in an odd year (Fall 2015, Fall 2017, Fall 2019)**

YEAR 1			
Fall		Spring	
EPSY 5601	Introduction to Educational Research	EPSY 5607	Introduction to Quantitative Methods II
EPSY 5605	Introduction to Quantitative Methods I	EPSY 5621	Construction of Evaluation Instruments
EPSY 5602	Educational Tests and Measurements	XXXX	Elective 1
EPSY 5510	Learning: Its Implications for Education		
YEAR 2			
Fall		Spring	
EPSY 6621	Program Evaluation (face-to-face)		
XXXX	Elective 2		
EPSY 5199	Independent Study/Practicum		

## **Degree Requirements for M.A.**

Students enrolled in the master's program will be expected to complete 30 credits. Successful completion of a comprehensive master's exam is required. The Master's Degree comprehensive exam contains questions related to content covered in EPSY 5601 and/or 6601, EPSY 5602, EPSY 5605, EPSY 5607, EPSY 5621, and EPSY 6621. The student's advisory committee may recommend oral defense of the exam.

During the first year, the M.A. students should complete the M.A. Plan of Study form. His/her advisor can provide guidance and approval of his/her committee is required. Copies are to be placed in both Department and Graduate School files.

Master's students must maintain registration continuously each semester (except summer/winter sessions) until all requirements for the degree have been completed. Failure to maintain continuous registration will automatically result in the student being discontinued from the academic program. For information regarding the continuous registration requirements, refer to the "Registration" section of the Graduate School Catalog. If you have further questions, please contact [gradschool@uconn.edu](mailto:gradschool@uconn.edu).

## **Degree Requirements for Ph.D.**

As mentioned earlier in this document, the anticipated total number of credits for the Ph.D. is 75. This includes a minimum of 54 credits of coursework, 3 credits of independent study, internship practicum credits, and 15 credits of dissertation preparation (required by the graduate school).

At the end of the first year, per graduate school requirements, the Ph.D. plan of study should be completed, signed by the student and advisory committee members, and submitted to The Graduate School for approval. More information can be found in the Graduate Catalog (<http://gradcatalog.uconn.edu/guidelines-for-grad-study/standards-degree-requirements/-DocPhil>).

### **Comprehensive Exams**

Two comprehensive exams are administered to students in the program. Each is described below.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Year Comprehensive Exam.**

The 2nd year exam is taken after completing the sequence of "master's level" courses within the MEA program, typically either at the end of year one or sometime within year 2. This 2<sup>nd</sup> year comprehensive exam must be taken **no later** than the summer after the second year of full-time coursework. The questions on this exam are related to content covered in EPSY 5601, EPSY 5602, EPSY 5605, EPSY 5607, EPSY 5621, and 6601. All students expected to answer questions on the content of these 6 core courses, regardless of whether or not they completed the coursework in our program. Please note that these 6 courses are also required for the Master's Degree in MEA. Therefore, the second year comprehensive exam can take the place of the masters comprehensive exam for students who wish to earn a master's degree en route to the PhD.

This exam ensures that students demonstrate mastery of foundational MEA content. If a student fails a section of the exam, he or she will be asked to retake that section during the following administration of the exam. A student who fails a section of the exam twice will not be permitted to continue in the Ph.D. program.

### **MEA Program General/Comprehensive Exam Procedures.**

The MEA program comprehensive examination is the final step before the student begins to work on his/her dissertation research. It is anticipated that by the time the student sits for this exam, she/he will have acquired considerable knowledge in MEA. It is also the time when she/he should be able to make connections between content covered across courses, and develop their own perspective on the knowledge they have acquired. Finally, by this point, the student should have formed their own opinions on varying perspectives found in the field. The focus, then, is on knowledge integration, critical appraisal of key ideas, and the ability to communicate verbally and orally.

Students must complete the following courses prior to taking the comprehensive exam: **EPSY 6601, EPSY6651, EPSY5602, EPSY 5621, EPSY 6621, EPSY 6636, EPSY 6637, EPSY 6611, EPSY 6615, EPSY 5610, and EPSY 5613.** The MEA program comprehensive examination must be taken within 1 calendar year of completing all of the required coursework. However, students may elect to take the exam sooner (i.e., immediately after finishing all required coursework). Further, the comprehensive examination must be passed within five years of the beginning of the student's matriculation in the degree program. Failure to complete the work within the periods specified or failure to maintain continuous registration will require reevaluation of the student's entire program and may result in a notice of dismissal from the degree program. In any event, the student may not take the general examination before the plan of study has been filed with the graduate school. In addition, students should have **no incomplete coursework** on their transcripts when they sit for the comprehensive exam. (Please note: this requirement includes both coursework in the courses that are required for the comprehensive exam as well as coursework in any other courses within the MEA program.)

Exam questions relate to the six core areas in our Ph.D. plan of study:

1. Educational Statistics (including regression and multivariate statistics)
2. Educational Measurement and Assessment (including instrument design and measurement theory)
3. Item Response Theory
4. Program Evaluation
5. Modeling (including multilevel modeling and structural equation modeling)
6. Research Design (including general techniques of educational research and techniques for making causal inferences from educational data)

The comprehensive exam will consist of a series of questions that span these six areas of study. The questions will be given in a take home format, and the student will have one

week to complete each question. Although the six core areas span several key classes that student's take as part of the MEA program, the questions that are asked in the comprehensive exam may not have been directly covered in the course. However, the knowledge and skills that students developed in the courses should allow them to be able to successfully answer the questions. Questions may require students to discuss theoretical issues in MEA, discuss current issues or controversies within MEA, design or critique a study, carry out data analyses, interpret research results, or integrate and synthesize research in a particular area. Students may use online materials or books, but may not consult any other people, including professors, current or former students, or any other experts, in the preparation of their responses. The comprehensive examination is turned into the exam committee, which consists of at least 5 core MEA faculty. The exam committee shall have at least two weeks to read and evaluate the exam questions. The committee will schedule an oral comprehensive exam defense, which shall, in general, be the 15-20 days after the written exam is submitted. At the oral defense, the student will be asked to clarify or elaborate on responses to his or her exam questions and could be asked additional questions from one or more of the six core areas. Typically, the oral exam lasts 90 minutes. The comprehensive exams will be administered twice a year – the first exam period begins at the start of the fall semester and the second exam period begins in January, at the start of the spring semester. Given the schedule of the comprehensive exam, we recommend that students take no other courses during the semester that they are completing the comprehensive exam. Students may enroll in an independent study course to receive academic credit for the completion of the comprehensive exam. However, independent study credits for the comprehensive exam do not count toward the nine credit requirement outlined on pages 17-18 of this document.

Generally speaking, factors that are considered when assessing a student's written and oral responses include:

1. The student's grasp of knowledge and in-depth understanding of theories, methods aligned with the seven core areas of the MEA program. Although the emphasis is not on rote memorization, it is assumed that students will have committed to memory a significant amount of knowledge in these core areas.
2. The student's ability to integrate accumulated knowledge, draw connections between content, and relate knowledge to concepts, theories, and historical and current trends.
3. The student's ability to use existing knowledge and apply it to new content or scenarios. The ability for students to engage in critical thought will be key here.
4. The student's ability to critically examine information and express their own view on key ideas, including controversies, in the six core areas.
5. The student's ability to write and speak with clarity and confidence. Students should communicate clearly what they know and do not know.

There are three potential outcomes for each of the six exam questions. A student can "pass" the question, which means that no additional revisions are required. A student may be asked to "revise" the question. In such a scenario, the student will be asked to

revise his/her response to the original question, and will be given a deadline for completion of the revised response. If the revisions is not received by the deadline, then the student fails that section of the comprehensive exam and must sit for that section during the next exam period. Finally, a student may “fail” the section. If a student fails a question, he or she must complete a new question on that section of the comprehensive exam during the next administration period. A student who fails one or more sections of the exam twice will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program.

Although this exam is likely to be stressful for students, we would like to reinforce that the faculty have a stake in students’ success. As such, they will conduct fair proceedings and try to provide every opportunity available for students to demonstrate their level of competence.

### **Obtaining a Master’s Degree en route to a Ph.D.**

Students admitted to study for the degree of Ph.D. may earn a M.A. by completing traditional M.A. degree requirements (see degree requirements and required, recommended, and optional courses for the M.A. program sections of this document). They also may apply for this degree if they have on file a fully approved doctoral plan of study including at least twenty-four completed credits of suitable content course work taken at this University and have passed a master’s final examination (or completed a Master’s thesis). They also may apply for this degree if they have completed at least 24 credits on an approved Ph.D. plan of study, have passed the masters or doctoral general examination, and have been recommended by their major advisor or by the Dean of the Graduate School for award of the M.A. degree. A student who would like to earn a M.A. Degree as a part of the Ph.D. program can do so, and should inform his/her major advisor early on in the program of this desire.

### **Advisory Committee Formation**

Each Ph.D. student is assigned a major advisor upon admission to the Ph.D. program. During the first year of the program, the major advisor works with the student to choose appropriate coursework, helps the student to develop and pursue research interests, and generally helps the student to navigate graduate study. At the end of the first year, students must complete and file their Ph.D. plan of study with The Graduate School. In doing so, students will need to choose an initial advisory committee of three MEA members.

As the student begins to hone his or her research interests, it is not uncommon for him or her to want to modify advisory committee members to help with the design and preparation of the dissertation proposal and dissertation. If this is the case, the MEA program strongly supports students choosing the most appropriate advisory committee members for their research interests and modifying their advisory committee accordingly. The faculty sees the ideal time for such changes occurring at the completion of doctoral coursework, just prior to the completion of the doctoral comprehensive exams.

The advisory committee consists of the major advisor and at least two other advisory committee members. Regardless of how many advisory members are on a student’s dissertation, the majority must be comprised of MEA faculty. (So a three person committee must contain at least 2 MEA faculty and a five person committee must contain at least 3 MEA faculty.) Occasionally,

it may be desirable or appropriate for a student's degree program to be directed by co-major advisors (not more than two). Each co-major advisor must hold an appropriate appointment to the graduate faculty in the student's field of study and area of concentration (if applicable). In addition, regardless of the number of advisory committee members, at least two external readers must read and evaluate the dissertation proposal. External readers need not be outside the MEA program. Alternatively, they may be outside the university.

For the final defense of the dissertation, at least 5 committee members must participate in the event as advisory committee members, readers, or external participants in the oral defense. It is fairly common practice for MEA faculty members who serve as external readers for the dissertation proposal to become advisory committee members prior to the final defense of the dissertation. Again, regardless of how many advisors are on the PhD committee, the majority must be comprised of MEA faculty.

### **Additional Advisory Committee Policies (from the graduate school catalog)**

The advisory committee of a doctoral degree student is formed after consultation between the student and the major advisor and shall include at least two associate advisors with suitable academic or scientific credentials. The major advisor and at least one associate advisor shall be members of the graduate faculty appointed to advise doctoral students in the student's field of study and area of concentration, if applicable. In addition to the three or more members chosen in the usual way, another member, ordinarily a member of the graduate faculty outside the student's field of study but in a related field, may be appointed by the Dean. If the committee consists of three members, committee decisions must be unanimous. If the committee consists of four or more members, committee decisions are considered adopted if there are no more than one negative vote, although the major advisor must always vote in the affirmative. Committee decisions involving the outcome of the General Examination, approval of the dissertation proposal, oral defense of the dissertation, or approval of the dissertation itself, however, must be a unanimous vote.

If a major advisor decides that it is not possible to continue as a student's major advisor and wishes to resign, the Graduate School must be notified in writing as soon as possible. The student is then provided with a reasonable opportunity to arrange for a new major advisor. If a new major advisor is not identified within six weeks of the resignation of the former major advisor, the student's graduate degree program status is terminated. A student whose status has been terminated may request a hearing before the Associate Dean by filing a written request within 30 days of receipt of the letter of termination.

### **Continuous Registration**

Ph.D. students must maintain registration continuously each semester (except summer/winter sessions) until all requirements for the degree have been completed. Registration may be maintained either by taking course work for credit or by registering for one of the four non-credit Continuing Registration courses. These include Special Readings at the master's (GRAD 5998) or doctoral (GRAD 6998) level, Master's Thesis Preparation (GRAD 5999), and Doctoral Dissertation Preparation (GRAD 6999). Other zero-credit courses may be substituted, if appropriate. Failure to maintain continuous registration will automatically result in the student being discontinued from their academic program. For information regarding the continuous

registration requirements, refer to the "Registration" section of the Graduate School Catalog. If you have further questions, please contact [gradschool@uconn.edu](mailto:gradschool@uconn.edu).

### **Focus of the Dissertation Study**

While students occasionally have a secondary focus of their dissertation research (e.g., STEM, equity and social justice, educator preparation), the *primary* focus of the dissertation should be an empirical study designed to contribute to the knowledge base associated with measurement, evaluation, assessment, or quantitative methods. Dissertations may also contribute to more than one area of these areas. The major advisor works with the student to help craft a study that fulfills this requirement. Students should begin conversations about the scope, content, and context of the dissertation study as early as possible to ensure that the students' dissertation ideas and interests will serve to fulfill the dissertation requirement within MEA.