

Doctoral Qualifying Examination (DQE)

The DQE is a literature review of a particular topic in the field of psychology. The DQE is typically related directly to the topic of interest that the student intends to investigate in his or her dissertation project. After the student has passed the DQE, he or she becomes a "doctoral candidate" and begins formal work on the dissertation.

When to Write the DQE

Most students will begin work on doctoral requirements in the third or fourth year. Doctoral work is initiated with the DQE. Students begin their DQE after they have completed their master's degree.

For students to apply for internship in the following Fall semester, they must submit to their DQE committee members the final draft of the DQE by May 15.

DQE Committee

The DQE process is overseen by a committee of at least three faculty members, including the advisor. The DQE committee will normally also be the dissertation committee.

While there can be more than three committee members, at least three must be full-time faculty members of the Department of Psychology at Marquette University. Full-time faculty members in other departments at Marquette and psychologists at local institutions may serve as additional committee members. Any reader not associated with Marquette University must be formally approved by the Graduate School; to be specific, the Department must submit a recent curriculum vitae for that member to the Graduate School for approval

Proposal

Work on the DQE is initiated by writing the proposal. In consultation with the DQE chairperson, students shall prepare and submit to the DQE committee a formal proposal for the DQE. The proposal should include:

- A problem statement or abstract (250 words maximum)
- A proposed methodology or approach for identifying the literature (250 words maximum)
- A one-page outline (preliminary) of the DQE
- A bibliography is not needed

The DQE committee typically meets with the student to modify or revise the proposal as needed, but this is not required.

After reading the DQE or after the proposal review meeting (if there is one), all committee members complete the *DQE Proposal Feedback Form*, which indicates either (1) approval of the DQE proposal as submitted, (2) approval with changes that were discussed, or (3) lack of approval. The forms and the DQE proposal should be put into the student's file. (However, they do not need to be forwarded to the Graduate School.)

Writing

The DQE should not exceed 50 pages text (not including references, appendices, tables or figures). The student is expected to take a maximum of 6 months to complete the DQE. If the DQE is not completed within 6 months of the proposal meeting, the first attempt will be declared a "failure."

While writing the DQE, it is permitted that the student consult with the DQE chairperson and/or committee members; however, the student is responsible for the actual writing.

Evaluation

The DQE submission to all committee members should include the *DQE Rating Form*, which will be completed by all committee members. Students should expect examiners will require 2-4 weeks to read the DQE. Examiners will rate the DQE in terms of:

- organization and presentation
- readability/writing fluency
- quality of the methodology used to conduct the literature review
- integration/synthesis of literature
- critique of literature
- scholarship/contribution to literature

Please see the qualitative descriptions for each below.

Readers will rate the DQE as follows as “Pass (No revisions necessary)”, “Pass pending revisions” (and the manuscript will need to be revised and resubmitted either to the chairperson only or to the entire DQE committee), and “Fail”.

The First Attempt

If the DQE passes pending revisions, the student will be allowed 3 months to resubmit it.

If the essay is not passed unanimously, the student has failed the first attempt. If the first attempt fails, the student has two options.

(1) The student can maintain the same committee and topic. The chairperson will consult with the examiners to determine whether the committee should reconvene to discuss the second attempt, including needed revisions to the DQE.

The student will have 6 months to revise and resubmit the DQE, otherwise the second attempt will be declared a “failure.”

(2) Under extraordinary circumstances, if the student feels that the DQE was not evaluated fairly, the student can formally request of the DCT that a new committee be formed and a new topic be proposed. The DCT will consult with the chairperson and perhaps the committee to determine whether this request should be approved.

If this is approved, the student will be allowed to construct a new committee and gain approval of a new topic. The student shall follow the same procedure as the first attempt and will be allowed the same amount of time as the first attempt. The first attempt of the DQE is still considered a failure, however.

The Second Attempt (if necessary)

If the DQE is not passed unanimously, the student has failed the second attempt. According to the Graduate School, the student will not be given another opportunity to pass it.

Paperwork

If the DQE passes, the student must submit to the Graduate School and to the DCT (for their file) the Graduate School forms entitled *Doctoral Qualifying Examination Evaluation* (completed by all examiners, including the chairperson) and the *Doctoral Qualifying Examination Committee Chairperson’s Summary*. These can be downloaded from the Graduate School website.

Qualitative Descriptions

Organization and presentation

1	Expert	Ideas are arranged logically and are clearly linked to each other.
3	Proficient	Most ideas are arranged logically and are usually clearly linked to each other.
5	Unacceptable	Ideas are not logically organized and often fail to make sense together.

Readability/writing fluency

1	Expert	Sentences are well-phrased, vary in length and structure, and flow smoothly from one to another.
3	Proficient	Sentences are well-phrased, and most vary in length and structure. The flow from sentence to sentence is generally smooth.
5	Unacceptable	Sentences are difficult to follow and do not flow smoothly from one to another. Errors in sentence structure are frequent.

Quality of methodology used to conduct the literature review

1	Expert	Methodology used is clearly stated and is comprehensive, thorough, and objective.
3	Proficient	Methodology used is clearly stated. Most relevant databases were identified. Search terms used capture the focus of the review.
5	Unacceptable	The description of the methodology is unclear. Relevant databases and key search terms were not used.

Integration/synthesis of literature

1	Expert	Concepts are fully integrated and include student's own insights. Conclusions show analysis and synthesis of ideas.
3	Proficient	Most concepts are fully integrated and include student's own insights. Conclusions show some analysis and synthesis of ideas.
5	Unacceptable	Little, to no, integration of concepts and student's own insights. Conclusions do not show analysis or synthesis of ideas.

Critique of literature

1	Expert	Issues related to and specific limitations of the literature are identified, clearly articulated, and organized around major themes.
3	Proficient	A summary and synopsis of the literature is provided with most issues and limitations being identified and articulated.
5	Unacceptable	Issues and limitations of the literature are not identified or clearly articulated.

Scholarship/contribution to literature

1	Expert	The review makes a timely and rather unique contribution to the literature and is likely to have a major impact on the field.
3	Proficient	The review contributes to the literature and is likely to have some impact on the field.
5	Unacceptable	The review does not contribute to the literature and is unlikely to impact the field.

Please note that a student must achieve a 3 (proficient) or better in every category to pass, but revisions may still be required.