UNIVERSITY OF NORTH★TEXAS™

Interdisciplinary Information Science PhD Program

Proficiency Examinations: Student Instructions

Rationale for exams

This document was sent to you because the IIS PhD Office has determined that you may be eligible to take one or both of the IIS PhD proficiency exams. These exams are alternatives for meeting two leveling requirements, as described in the Graduate Catalog:

Research Tool Requirement: Students must demonstrate proficiency in research methods or statistics prior to or shortly after beginning doctoral course work. This requirement can be met by successfully completing EPSY 5210, COMM 5320, DSCI 5180, or SLIS 5080 or an equivalent course or by passing a proficiency exam. A course accepted for this requirement cannot count toward the 60 hours required for the doctoral degree.

Information Organization Tool Requirement: Students must demonstrate proficiency in the organization of information prior to or shortly after beginning doctoral course work. This requirement can be met by successfully completing SLIS 5200 or an equivalent course or by passing a proficiency exam. A course accepted for this requirement cannot count toward the 60 hours required for the doctoral degree.

These requirements must be met no more than five years before the PhD Office submits your degree plan to the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies for approval. If you believe that you have already met these requirements, please contact the IIS PhD Office immediately for a degree plan review.

About the exams

The exams are multiple-choice format. They are accessible online, so you may take them from any location with Internet access. The exams are open book, meaning that you may consult relevant materials in any format. They are graded on a pass/nonpass basis.

Policy agreement

Exam takers are bound by specific exam nondisclosure and academic dishonesty policies (see p. 3 below). Before being given access to an exam, you must sign and return a student policy agreement (p. 4). This form certifies that you have read, understand, and will abide by the policies. The signed form will be placed in your student file.

Scheduling exam

You will have 24 hours to complete an exam, beginning on a day of your choice that is also convenient for the PhD Office. If you take both exams, you may not have access to both simultaneously. Please email the following information for each exam to Malaina.Mobley@unt.edu and Shawne.Miksa@unt.edu:

- Your EUID (alphanumeric code; required for access to exam)
- Which exam (Research Tool or Information Organization Tool)
- Start date and time (Time ends after 24 hours)
- Email(s), phone(s) where you will be available before/during exam

Preparation for exam

Access: Both exams are located in a special Blackboard Vista course site. If you have never used Blackboard, please go to the login page at http://ecampus.unt.edu/webct/ and do the following:

1. Click "Configure your browser settings before using Vista." Configuration may take 20 to 30 minutes.
2. Under "How to . . . in Blackboard Vista," click "Take a Quiz or Exam." This shows how the exam tool works.

Materials: These are introductory-level proficiency exams, so you should already have sufficient knowledge to pass them, and they are open book with ample time allowed for completion. They should require little or no preparation or study, but if you do want to prepare, here are a few suggestions.

- For the Research Tool exam, you may want to have on hand an introductory research methods textbook that covers quantitative and qualitative research design and data analysis techniques. You may also bookmark relevant websites, such as "Research Methods and Statistics Links by Subtopic" (http://www.socialpsychology.org/methods.htm) and "Web Center for Social Research Methods" (http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/).

- For the Information Organization Tool exam, you will have access to SLIS 5200 course materials in the Blackboard site where both proficiency exams reside. You may also want to obtain the SLIS 5200 textbook: Taylor, A. G., & Joudrey, D. N. (2009). *The organization of information* (3rd ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. Other resources are the *Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science* (http://lu.com/odlis/) and another textbook: Rowley, J., & Hartley, R. (2008). *Organizing knowledge: An introduction to managing access to information* (4th ed.). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Taking exam

PhD Office staff will grant access to the Blackboard course site at your requested exam start date and time (given staff availability) after receiving your signed policy agreement. Directions:

1. Go to http://ecampus.unt.edu/webct/ . Login with your EUID and password (same as for MyUNT).

2. Click "IIS PhD Program (Schamber)."

3. On the homepage, explore "Research and Library Resources." If you are taking the Information Organization Tool exam, explore "Online Lectures & Tutorials." The exam itself will open in a new browser window, so you will continue to have access to these resources. The only resources you may NOT use are other people.

4. Click the exam link. First read "Instructions and Troubleshooting." Then click "Begin Assessment" to open the exam. The clock runs from this time until 24 hours later, regardless of whether you have clicked "Finish." Remember to save each answer as you proceed.

Exam results

You will be notified of the results as soon as possible. The only grades are pass or fail; you will not be told your score. If you do not pass an exam on your first (and only) attempt, you must successfully complete an appropriate course.

Proficiency Examinations: Policies

IIS PhD Proficiency Exam Policy

The purpose of the Research Tool and Information Organization Tool exams is to fulfill requirements of the IIS PhD program. Before being granted online access to an exam, you must sign and return this form. This certifies that you have read, understand, and will abide by the exam and academic dishonesty policies below. The signed form will be placed in your student file in the IIS PhD Office.

- **Constraints:** Students are each allowed one attempt at completing an exam. They have 24 hours to complete an exam. They may consult relevant print materials in any format, but may not communicate about an exam with anyone except PhD Office staff.

- **Grading:** Students receive a grade of pass or no pass on an exam. Students who do not pass an exam must successfully complete an appropriate course. The course will not count toward the 60 credit hours required for the PhD.

- **Nondisclosure:** Students must not save or disclose the contents of an exam because the exams
    o   are the intellectual property of UNT and/or any entity from which it was obtained by UNT;
    o   were costly to develop and/or obtain and will continue to be costly to update and maintain;
    o   must be kept confidential in order to effectively perform their function; and
    o   must be kept confidential in order to be reusable in the future.

    Students also must not save or disclose the contents of related course materials if available.

UNT Student Standards of Academic Integrity Policy

UNT Policy 18.1.16 defines six categories of academic dishonesty, of which two apply here:

- **Cheating.** The use of unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise, including but not limited to: (1) Use of any unauthorized assistance to take exams, tests, quizzes or other assessments; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems or carrying out other assignments; (3) acquisition, without permission, of tests, notes or other academic materials belonging to a faculty or staff member of the University; (4) dual submission of a paper or project, or re-submission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor; (5) any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage on an academic assignment.

- **Plagiarism.** Use of another's thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student's intent, including but not limited to: (1) the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement or citation. (2) the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in selling term papers or other academic materials.

The policy explains penalties and procedures in detail (http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf).

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Proficiency Examinations: Student Agreement to Abide by Policies

By signing below, I agree and promise that

1. I have read, understand, and will abide by IIS PhD proficiency exam and UNT academic dishonesty policies.

2. I understand that I will have one attempt at completing an exam and that if I do not pass an exam, I must successfully complete an appropriate course.

3. I will not communicate in any way (phone, email, texting, etc., or in person) with anyone about exam questions or how to find information to answer them.

4. I will not save or disclose information about an exam or any part of it (including the subject, wording, format, or number of exam questions and answers) to anyone through downloading, copying, discussion, dissemination, publication, sale or other means.

5. If I have access to online course materials in the exam course site, I will not save or disclose information about them to anyone through downloading, copying, discussion, dissemination, publication, sale or other means.

6. I understand the definitions of cheating and plagiarism in the UNT academic dishonesty policy and will not engage in these activities.

Name _____
                (Please print)

Signature _____ Date_____

I plan to take the following proficiency exam(s):   ___Research Tool   ___Information Organization Tool

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Please return the signed form (this page only) to the **IIS PhD Office:**

    Delivery: Discovery Park, 3940 N. Elm St., Room E290, Denton, TX 76207
    Mail: 1155 Union Circle #311068, Denton, TX 76203-5017
    Email: Shawne.Miksa@unt.edu and Malaina.Mobley@unt.edu
        (send scanned or electronically signed version to both addresses at the same time)
    Fax: 940-891-6773

Questions? Call 940-891-6795 or email the addresses above.