

GRADING CRITERIA FOR CANDIDACY EXAMS

CRITERIA	PASS	COMMENTS
Audience Awareness	Each response shows you are not just writing to demonstrate your knowledge. You consider your readers and make your responses reader-friendly. Your writing should anticipate the reader's need for information, explanation, and context.	
Introduction	<p>Your introduction begins by addressing the question/prompt explicitly—acknowledging the question, showing how you understand it, and framing the issues before you move ahead into the discussion.</p> <p>Your introduction explains how you interpret the question and explains the significance /relevance of the question.</p> <p>You provide a brief overview of the rest of your response, discussing what resources—conceptual, methodological—you are bringing to the question. You also state how you will proceed.</p> <p>You state your thesis clearly and before you state your overview. You effectively identify your position and state how you will back up your claim, effectively situating your ideas in the professional intellectual context of existing discourse.</p>	

Handling of Key Terms	You define all key terms before you begin a discourse about them. Even if you think your committee members share an understanding of the definition of these terms, they want to see how you define them before moving ahead. If a definition is contested—different writers define the term in different ways—make sure you acknowledge these differences and explain why you favor one definition over the others.	
Citing Works in the Discussion	You cite works effectively and exhibit familiarity with relevant theoretic and analytic perspectives. When citing the works on your list, you do not assume your readers understand the whole framework of these texts. You provide an overview before proceeding. You treat the material dialectically, showing the reader how a branch of knowledge or school of thought relates to other branches or schools, how the branch you are treating is divided, and how the parts relate to each other. You are systematic.	
Quality of the Argument	You provide well-developed supporting arguments, demonstrating strong critical thinking skills and providing details, examples, facts, and quotes from the reading. Your ideas are original, often insightful, going beyond ideas discussed in the exam reading lists. If there are obvious counter-arguments to your claim, you present them clearly and refute them systematically and with evidence and	

	<p>clear reasoning. You do not dismiss them out of hand without first engaging them.</p> <p>In your writing, you effectively alternate between the conceptual and the concrete. If you discuss a concept, you show the reader how it applies to a particular case. If you discuss a case, you explain which concepts help the reader make sense of it.</p> <p>You effectively explain the warrants—the logical connections—between your claims. You make sure your readers can follow your connections.</p>	
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>You provide an effective conclusion to each response.</p>	
<p>Writing Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prose style ● Organization ● Mechanics ● Grammar 	<p><u>Prose style</u>: You use a prose style appropriate to your discipline. You avoid common stylistic errors such as the use of vague pronouns (“it” and “this” are the usual suspects here), and passive voice sentences that hide agency. All paragraphs have clear topic sentences, are well constructed, and include appropriate, clear, and smooth transitions. Your response should make use of sophisticated sentences, appropriate word choices, and professional conventions of written English.</p> <p><u>Organization</u>: You arrange your supporting ideas in an effective and logical order.</p> <p><u>Mechanics</u>: You avoid common punctuation problems (for example, with commas and quotation marks),</p>	

	<p>and avoid errors in capitalization and spelling.</p> <p><u>Grammar</u>: You avoid sentence errors such as comma splices or run-on sentences, subject/verb agreement, pronoun case.</p>	
Length	<p>Each response demonstrates sufficient depth and breadth, and your response meets the minimum page length of 6 double-spaced pages for each question responded to on the five-hour exam or 12 double-spaced pages for each question responded to on the forty-eight hour exam.</p>	
Documentation Style and Page Format	<p>Each response provides the correct page format and documentation style for your discipline for the take-home exam (for example, APA or MLA). For the timed exam, you may provide the author's last name only in parentheses where appropriate.</p>	
Overall score of pass or fail		