

Assessment Report for the Certificate in Qualitative Research
Year 2014-2015

Program Mission and Student Learning Goals

The mission of the Certificate in Qualitative Research is to benefit society by improving the student's ability to use qualitative research methodology; thus likely leading to the existence of better qualitative research studies; and 2) to benefit individual students by providing another area of expertise for students as they pursue their careers.

The Certificate in Qualitative Research is housed and administered in the Department of Educational Policy Studies. The Goal of the Certificate in Qualitative Research is the following: Students who obtain a Certificate in Qualitative Research will have expertise in the area of critiquing qualitative research and conducting high quality qualitative research studies. To accomplish this goal, the Certificate requires seven courses and a dissertation which employs qualitative research methods.

The Department is situated within the University and the College of Education and Human Development. The Goal of the Certificate is related to the goals of Georgia State University, the College of Education and Human Development, and the Department of Educational Policy Studies. These particular goals, at the three levels (i.e., University, College, and Department), are listed below and designated as GSU, CEHD, and EPS. In the documents which present these goals, the goals are followed by initiatives which provide specification and particular areas of focus. In particular, the enhancement of qualitative research methodology abilities of students obtaining this Certificate is related to the following goals: GSU goal 2, initiative 1; CEHD goal 1, initiative 3; CEHD goal 2, initiatives 2 and 3; CEHD goal 3, initiatives 1 and 3; CEHD goal 4, initiative 3; CEHD goal 4, initiative 3; EPS goal 1, initiative 3; EPS goal 2; and EPS goal 3, initiative 7.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

For each of the objectives listed below, the linking to Goal of the Certificate is stated and the linking to Indicators is specified.

1. The student will be able to present critiques of qualitative research studies across a variety of qualitative traditions. In particular, the student will be able to present critiques of 1. the methodological choices used, including the following: Qualitative inquiry, epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology)ies, methods of data generation, and methods of making meaning. 2. the appropriateness of the discussion based on the methodology and findings of the study. [Goal: Students will have expertise in the area of critiquing qualitative research and conducting high quality qualitative research studies. Primary linking is to items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 on assessment instrument.]
2. The student will be able to conduct a qualitative research study with state-of-the-art research methodology.

In particular, the student will be able to: 1. select an appropriate theoretical perspective and philosophical research tradition for addressing the research query; 2. select appropriate macro and micro theories for answering the research question, 3. select appropriate methodology, participation selection criteria, methods of generating data, methods of making meaning of data, and method of representing data; 4. appropriately manage all ethical issues, and 3. write a professional-level manuscript of the research conducted, including each of the above mentioned components. [Goal: Students will have expertise in the area of critiquing qualitative research and conducting high quality qualitative research studies. Primary linking is to items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 on assessment instrument.]

Program Learning Opportunities

A Graduate Certificate in Qualitative Research in Education is available from the College of Education and Human Development to eligible students enrolled in a doctoral program at Georgia State University. To earn the certificate, students must complete a minimum of seven 3-credit-hour doctoral-level qualitative research methods courses with a collective GPA of 3.5 or higher in those courses, with no grade lower than a B in any course to be counted toward the certificate.

Four of the seven courses must be the following:

- EPRS 8500 Qualitative/Interpretive Research in Education I (3)
- EPRS 8510 Qualitative Research in Education II (3)
- EPRS 8520 Qualitative Research in Education III (3)
- EPSF 9260 Epistemology and Learning

The remaining three courses must be doctoral-level qualitative method courses, bearing a call number of 8000 or higher, from the approved list of certificate courses. The list is updated yearly and available in the Department of Educational Policy Studies. A current list of these courses is provided below:

- EPRS 8450 Popular Culture as Qualitative Text (3)
- EPRS 8640 Case Study Methods (3)
- EPRS 8700 Visual Research Methods (3)
- EPRS 9120 Poststructural Inquiry (3)
- EPRS 9380 / ECE 9380 Discourse Analysis (3)
- EPRS 9400 Writing Qualitative Research Manuscripts (3)
- EPRS 9920 Special Topics in Qualitative Research (3)
- ANTH 8010 Qualitative Methods in Anthropology (3)
- EPSF 9850 Historical Research in Twentieth Century American Education (3)
- EPSF 9930 Philosophical Analysis and Method (3)
- SOCI 8342 Qualitative Methods in Sociology (3)
- COMM 8160 Style and Narrative Analysis (3)
- COMM 8410 Qualitative Methods (3)
- Other Qualitative Methods courses as approved by the Certificate Coordinator and the Department Chair.

Assessment Methods and Targets

The assessment of students who were enrolled in the program, during the 2014 – 2015 academic year, took place at the student’s dissertation defense. The survey instrument provided an opportunity to score and comment on the students’ performance. This assessment instrument, which was completed usually by the chair of the student’s dissertation committee, consisted of six questions that could reveal a student’s knowledge, ability, and judgement.

The Learning Outcome Assessment items on the assessment instrument are the following:

Item 1: Addresses the research question(s) with appropriate methodology(ies).

Item 2: Demonstrates knowledge of previous research and/or literature in the field.

Item 3: Document adheres to the standards of quality writing.

Item 4: Document adheres to the standards of quality writing.

Item 5: Oral presentation communicates research in a manner appropriate for the material and audience.

Item 6: Potential for contribution to the discipline.

Item 7: Demonstrates knowledge in the field of the certificate program (i.e., qualitative or quantitative in the dissertation defense).

The student’s performance was rated on a scale of 1 to 3 (with 3 = Exceeds, 2 = Meets, and 1 = Does Not Meet). There was also a Not Applicable category. An opportunity for comments was also provided. The target for Certificate program is a mean rating of 2.25 on each item. An analytic guide accompanied this rubric.

Assessment Finding

Two students completed the Certificate in Qualitative Research during the 2014-2015 academic year. The scores for these students are shown below in the table.

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item5	Item 6
Student 1	3	2	3	2	3	3
Student 2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mean	3	2.5	3	2.5	3	3

All the means were greater than 2.25; thus, the target performance was met on all items.

Analysis of Assessment Findings

With a very limited sample (n=2), the assessment findings indicate that the Certificate program is functioning well; although the sample size is too small to draw any substantial conclusions and

make generalizations. For the Qualitative Certificate assessment survey, the Research Section Coordinator suggested for item 1 adding “and methods” after the word “methodology(ies).” Also, the Research Section Coordinator suggested that following wording change for item 3 in the assessment survey for use next year: Item 3: Demonstrates knowledge of epistemology, theoretical perspective, micro and macro theories underpinning the methodology(ies) used.

Sharing and Discussion of Assessment Findings

The assessment findings will be shared with the Research Section faculty in the Department of Educational Policy Studies.

Use of Assessment Findings for Program Improvement (Action Plan)

The assessment findings will be discussed with the Research Section faculty to see if they believe that the high ratings are typical of their experiences in this Certificate program.

Supporting Documents

EPS LOA Rubric Guide for Certificates

LOA Instrument - Certificate

EPS LOA Rubric Guide for Certificates

Directions: Please rate each item by placing a check mark in one of the following four categories: Exceeds, Meets, Does Not Met, or N/A. If an item can't be rated, then use Not Applicable which is abbreviated as "N/A" on the rating form. In most cases, the selection of the problem has already occurred in consultation with the advisor; thus, it is not specifically rated. It should be noted that the selection of the problem is in conjunction with the execution of the study, plays a major role in the "Potential for contribution to the discipline." Please use the "Comments / Clarifications" box at the bottom of the form if evaluative information is desired on selection of the problem, clarification is needed regarding the dimension being rated, or other comments are appropriate. The Analytical Rating Guide below helps define the response categories.

Administrative Procedures: An EPS staff member will coordinate with a student's major advisor to insure that a rating form is filled out for each EPS student in EPS programs to meet SLOAP requirements. When the completed form is turned in, the top portion will be separated from the ratings so that the file containing the ratings does not have personally identifiable information (PII). Section coordinators should review the SLOAP data each term to insure that the data are complete. This form is not placed in the student's file.

Analytical Rating Guide

1. Addresses the research question(s) with appropriate methodology(ies).

Exceeds (3): The student shows mastery of the methodological approach(es) utilized and supports the approach(es) with evidence that this method is not only appropriate, but the most appropriate on other grounds such as efficiency, the ability to address the questions of proposed hypotheses, and/or preferred to other available methods:

- The work product consistently reflects mastery of the concepts, tools, and methods discussed
- Methodology is appropriate for the study
- The work product explains why this method is appropriate to the study's questions
- The work product further explains why other competing methodologies are less appropriate for the study's questions
- The work product reflects an understanding of unused methodological approaches by appropriately critiquing the limitations of other methodologies that were alternative to the study conducted

Meets (2): The student makes a reasonable case for the methodological approach utilized for the specific research project.

- The work product consistently reflects an understanding of the concepts, tools, and methods discussed
- Methodology is appropriate for the study
- The work product explains why this method is appropriate to the study's questions

Does Not Meet (1): The student does not demonstrate an understanding of the methodological approach(es) that would be most appropriate for addressing the questions and/or proposed hypotheses.

- The work product includes errors which reflect a lack of knowledge or misunderstanding of concepts, tools, or methods
- Methodology is inappropriate for the study
- Other available methods which may do a better job of addressing the study's questions are ignored

2. Demonstrates knowledge of previous research and / or literature in the field.

Exceeds (3): The student shows mastery of the literature appropriate to the dissertation topic and the study's research questions.

- The work product consistently reflects a deep understanding of the relevant literature
- The breath of the literature review is more than sufficient for the topic
- The depth of the literature review demonstrates deep understanding of the papers reviewed
- The synthesis of concepts across papers is superior

Meets (2): The student conducts a literature review that is accurate and relevant to the study's research questions.

- The work product reflects knowledge of the relevant literature
- The breath of the literature review is minimally sufficient for the topic
- The depth of the literature review demonstrates a reasonable understanding of the papers reviewed
- The synthesis of concepts across papers is sufficient

Does Not Meet (1): The student conducts a literature review that is inadequate for the study's research questions.

- The work product misrepresents the findings in previous studies
- The breath of the literature review is insufficient to address the study's questions
- The literature review fails to synthesize across papers and does not tie separate works together into a coherent understanding of the state of the field of research.

3. Document adheres to the standards of quality writing.

Exceeds (3): The student's written product is exceptional.

- The student's writing is publication quality
- The written product has no apparent spelling or grammatical errors
- Organization is excellent throughout the written product
- Writing style is exemplary throughout the written product

Meets (2): The student's written product is adequate.

- The student's writing is adequate for the purposes of the project/dissertation
- There are some spelling or grammatical errors are apparent in the written product
- Organization is logical throughout most of the written product

Does Not Meet (1): The student's written product is inadequate.

- The student's writing is weak and /or severely flawed throughout the written product
- Numerous spelling or grammatical errors are apparent
- Organization is poor throughout most of the written product
- Writing style is not appropriate to the discipline

4. Oral presentation communicates research in a manner appropriate for the material and audience.

Exceeds (3): The student's oral presentation is exceptional.

- The student's presentation is similar to that of an accomplished scholar
- The presentation has no apparent grammatical errors
- Organization is excellent throughout the presentation
- Speaking style is exemplary throughout the presentation
- Approach to presenting the material is appropriate for the audience

Meets (2): The student's oral presentation is adequate.

- The student's writing is adequate for the purpose of the activity being rated
- There may be some minor grammatical mistakes in the presentation
- There are some minor research or scholarly mistakes in the presentation
- Speaking style is appropriate to the discipline
- There is a minor mismatch between the way of addressing the topic being presented and the audience

Does Not Meet (1): The student's oral presentation is inadequate.

- The student's speaking ability does not lend itself to presenting the research or scholarship
- There are some obvious grammatical mistakes in the presentation
- Organization is poor throughout most of the presentation
- Speaking style is not appropriate to the discipline
- There is a mismatch between the way of addressing the topics being presented and the audience

5. Potential for contribution to the discipline.

Exceeds (3): The student's dissertation prospectus demonstrates exceptional potential for making an important contribution to the discipline.

- The proposed topic Research demonstrates exceptional potential for discovery/contribution to the discipline
- The proposed topic/research greatly extends previous work
- The proposed topic/research has exceptional theoretical and/or applied significance for the field
- The proposed topic/research has exceptional publication potential

Meets (2): The student's dissertation prospectus has the potential to make a contribution to the discipline.

- The proposed topic/research has some potential for discovery/contribution to the discipline
- The proposed topic/research builds upon previous work
- The proposed topic/research has reasonable theoretical and applied significance for the field
- The proposed topic/research has some publication potential

Does Not Meet (1): The student's dissertation prospectus is unlikely to make a contribution to the discipline.

- The proposed topic/research demonstrates limited potential for discovery/contribution to the discipline
- The proposed topic/research provides limited extension of previously published work in the field
- The proposed topic/research has limited theoretical and or applied significance for the field
- The proposed topic/research has limited publication potential.

6. Demonstrates knowledge in the field of the certificate program (i.e., qualitative or quantitative in the dissertation defense).

Exceeds (3): The student shows mastery of the literature appropriate to the certification area and the study's research questions.

- The work product consistently reflects a deep understanding of the relevant literature for the methods in the study
- The breath of the literature review is more than sufficient for the methods in the study
- The depth of the literature review demonstrates deep understanding of the papers reviewed regarding methods from the certification area

- The synthesis of concepts across papers is superior

Meets (2): The student conducts a literature review that is accurate and relevant to the study's methods.

- The work product reflects knowledge of the relevant literature for the methods in the study
- The breath of the literature review is minimally sufficient for the methods in the study
- The depth of the literature review demonstrates a reasonable understanding of the papers reviewed
- The synthesis of concepts across papers is sufficient

Does Not Meet (1): The student conducts a literature review that is inadequate for the study's research questions.

- The work product misrepresents the methods employed in previous studies
- The breath of the literature review is insufficient to address the study's methods
- The literature review fails to synthesize across papers and does not tie separate works together into a coherent understanding of the state of the methodology employed in the study.

**Learning Outcome Assessment for WEAVE Online
Certificate Programs in the Department of Educational Policy Studies**

Student's Name: _____

Research ID: 00011

Committee Member Completing Form: _____

-----Detach-----

**Learning Outcome Assessment for WEAVE Online
Certificate Programs in the Department of Educational Policy Studies**

Research ID: 00011

Certificate: _____ Qualitative Certificate _____ Quantitative Certificate

COE Department: _____ CPS _____ ECE _____ EPS _____ ESC _____ KH _____ MSE

Program within Department: _____ (specify)

Which one of the following activities is the basis of this LOA rating?

- _____ Prospectus Presentation
 _____ Dissertation Defense
 _____ Other: _____ (specify)

In which year and term did this activity occur?

Calendar Year: _____ Term: _____ Spring _____ Summer _____ Fall

Rate the activity above on the following items by placing a check mark in a category for each item.
 Directions are in the EPS LOA Guide.

	Exceeds	Meets	Does Not Meet	N/A
1. Addresses the research question(s) with appropriate methodology (ies).	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Demonstrates knowledge of previous research and / or literature in the field.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Document adheres to the standards of quality writing.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Oral presentation communicates research in a manner appropriate for the material and audience.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Potential for contribution to the discipline.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Demonstrates knowledge in the field of the certificate program (i.e. qualitative or quantitative) in the dissertation defense.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments / Clarifications

Return Form to EPS Administrative Coordinator