General (i.e., Comprehensive) Examination for the
Ed.D. in Educational Leadership: Tips for Writing Your Answer

Because the Ed.L. program's current format for the General Examination is a "take home" literature review in response to an assigned question within a firm page limit, the faculty offer the following recommendations in line with our assessment criteria:

- Keep the introduction, if any, very brief because the assigned question already provides the scope and sequence for your answer.

- Answer the specified parts in the same sequence that they appear in the assigned question, each with its own short subheading.

- Be direct in your answer to each part, avoiding material that is tangential or even irrelevant to the assigned boundaries and focus.

- Do not waste words; the premium is on being precise and concise.

- Similarly, practice the other conventions of academic writing rather than colloquial expression, such as active rather than passive voice; parallel construction; proper punctuation; careful organization; and clear transitions.

- Make sure the content reflects the norms for a scholarly literature review, including the need to be integrated, thoughtful, and—in terms of significant research design limitations—evaluative.

- Double check the references to assure compliance with the latest edition of the APA Manual—e.g., citation style for electronic sources and selective specification of issue (as compared with volume) numbers for journals.

- Other than in your communication of the answer to the program secretary, avoid in your answer any indirect as well as direct identification to yourself; the faculty needs to be able to assess each paper without knowing the identity of the doctoral student who authored it.

- The expectation is for you to answer the question based on a combination of your intellectual acumen, cumulative coursework, and research diligence; do not communicate with program faculty in relation to the exam, except for any administrative questions for the program coordinator.

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