The subject matter of the Specialization Examination will be focused on the candidate's area of specialization and the history and philosophy of American Higher Education. It is a three-hour examination prepared by the advisor and usually administered to students on Tuesday of the scheduled examination week. This examination poses questions for students that call on them to demonstrate their ability to write in area(s) of specialization and history of colleges and universities. This requires that students integrate content from various courses as well as requiring them to relate the area of concentration and/or specialization to other aspects of the students' preparation (course work and experiential base). Students are expected to demonstrate an in-depth body of concentrated knowledge that reflects unique preparation.

Part I: Specialization

The candidate will submit a two-page abstract which describes the area of specialization and some of the methodological challenges in the study of it. The abstract will be given to the faculty member in advance of the examination (at least 4 weeks prior to the scheduled examination). Add to this brief description a list of the 4-5 most salient scholars, articles or books addressing your specialization.

The faculty member may provide a brief reading list covering any areas considered important.

The candidate must be prepared to answer questions on any suggested topics and any reading recommended. Questions may not be limited to the Specialization area.

One of the goals of the examination is to probe the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the general concepts in the area of specialization at the level expected of a doctoral candidate. For example, the candidate may be asked to write an essay on his or her specialization emphasizing the representative works of this scholarly literature including the historical background to a problem within this area or topic. The answer should include references to the important trends, legislation, leaders as well as important critical scholarship and debates on the topic within the context of American Higher Education.

Another goal is to evaluate the students' breadth and depth of knowledge in the field(s) of specialization, their ability to place higher education in broader historical contexts, and their capacity to synthesize the defining and most relevant elements of the issues surrounding the selected specialization, including some methodological dilemmas.

Some of the methodological challenges should describe and justify why a research question is best addressed by the chosen method or methods as mentioned in the scholarly literature.

In general, the student will be required to show evidence of active inquiry, competence in interpreting, analyzing and synthesizing information, and the ability to develop clear and coherent arguments.

The candidate must meet with the faculty member at least several weeks before the scheduled examination in order to discuss the issues above mentioned.

The Research and Statistics Examination (competency certification) is completed as part of the research and statistics sequence of courses. Students are required to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and skill in the area of research and statistics. (See the Office for Student Services for Research Competency Certification form.)

Part II. History and Philosophy of American Higher Education

The goal is to evaluate the students' breadth and depth of the enduring enigmas faced by contemporary colleges and universities based on the historical scholarship on American higher education.