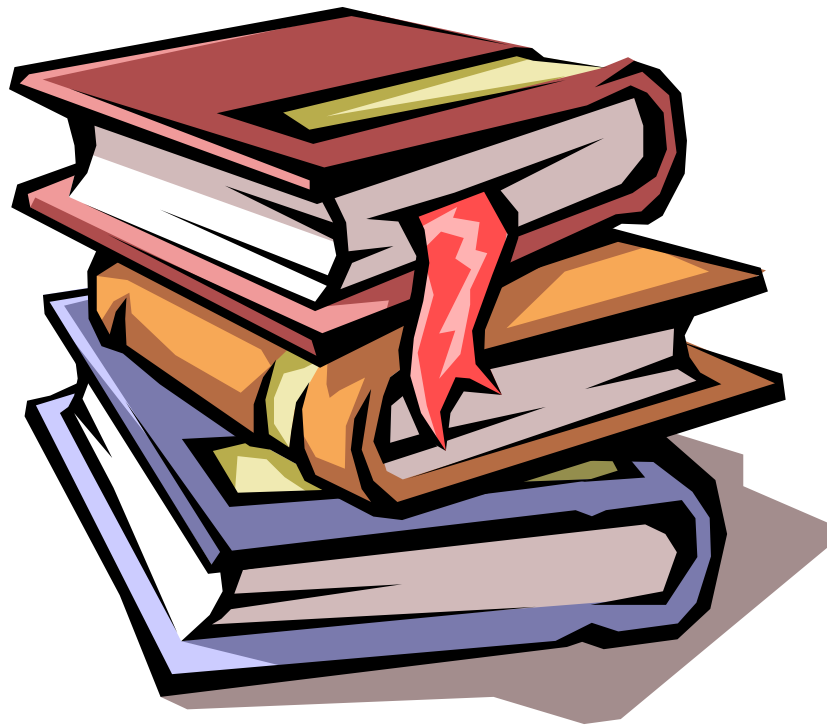


Marketing Doctoral Program Handbook

Moore School of Business

University of South Carolina



Approved and adopted by the faculty of the department of marketing on August 19, 2005.

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Marketing Doctoral Program Mission Statement

The purpose of the doctoral program in marketing is to develop students, who aspire to careers in research and teaching, into marketing scholars with high ethical and professional standards. Our objective is to place these developing scholars in tenure-track positions at peer or better research institutions. Consonant with this goal we expect our doctoral students to leave the program fully capable of conducting marketing and consumer research of the highest quality that is publishable in the top journals in the marketing discipline.

Marketing Doctoral Program Important Dates and Deadlines

The following schedule is provided as a guide to doctoral students and graduate faculty. While the marketing department intends that each student will adhere to the program guidelines, unanticipated events may occasionally cause adjustments to the schedule. The doctoral program director, in consultation with the department chair, will evaluate such contingencies on a case-by-case basis. It is expected that few adjustments will be necessary. Students who elect not to enter the market at the end of their third year (i.e., those who decide to stay in the program a fifth year) will adhere to the same schedule as those completing the program in four years with the exception of the dissertation proposal defense deadline. In any case, the dissertation proposal needs to be defended by the 15th of May of the year the student goes on the market. Faculty will not write letters of recommendation for students who have not defended their dissertation proposal as per the schedule. All dates and deadlines are extendable to the first business day following the target date if it falls on a weekend or holiday.

Year 1

mid-August (prior to start of classes)	Required graduate school & departmental orientation
April 15	Formation of qualifying exam committee
May 15	Qualifying paper proposal due
August 1	Qualifying paper due
August 22	Qualifying paper results provided; 1 st year annual review

Year 2

April 15	Formation of comprehensive exam committee
July 15	Comprehensive exam paper proposal deadline
August 1	Earliest date for submission of comprehensive exam paper
August 22	2 nd year annual review

Year 3

December 1	Last day to submit comprehensive exam paper.
April 1	Formation of dissertation committee
May 15	Dissertation proposal defense deadline for students entering job market in August of 3 rd year
June 30	Deadline for sending recommendation letters to prospective employers for students entering market in August of 3 rd year
August 22	3 rd year annual review

Year 4

September-December	Complete dissertation data collection
January-April	Analyze data and complete write-up
May-June	Defend dissertation

First Year Qualifying Exam

Introduction

The marketing department has adopted a conceptual paper format for the qualifying exam. This qualifying paper replaces the traditional closed-book quantitative and conceptual exam based on first-year course work.

In order to progress to 2nd year status, the students are expected to identify a research topic that they find interesting and immerse themselves into the academic literature that is relevant to the selected research topic. The development of a series of potentially researchable propositions or questions constitutes the most important outcome of the conceptualization process. A proposition in its simplest form is a relationship statement that links one theoretical construct with another. In more complex terms propositions represent an abstract version of hypotheses. Whereas hypotheses are stated in directly testable form and consist of relations between specifically operationalizable variables, propositions contain construct terms that need not be tied to empirical operations. In other words, propositions are, in theory, testable in varied ways. Students who choose to develop a consumer culture theory paper or who elect to approach a problem using quantitative methods will be expected to demonstrate the same kinds of conceptual skills required of students following a traditional experimental psychology paradigm. That is, regardless of the types of research questions proposed, each student must be able to confront a related body of literature, justify why their research question is relevant and important, and demonstrate mastery of the most relevant literature and theory.

Acceptable research topics may vary widely and include, but are not limited to: (1) theories and concepts in consumer, marketer, or organizational behavior, (2) development of new predictive or normative models of marketing phenomena, or (3) justification for and development of new marketing research methods and data analysis techniques. Sources for theory and model development may include prior research, logic and introspection, and induction from exploratory work, among others.

The qualifying exams for all students in a given year will be graded by a common committee consisting of five (5) or more faculty members appointed by the doctoral program director in consultation with the department chair.

Objectives

- (1) To familiarize the student with the conceptualization of one research issue.
- (2) To provide insight into research questions that would be considered interesting and feasible to investigate.
- (3) To reinforce the student's conceptual and marketing content area course work.
- (4) To help the student develop a deep understanding of one researchable topic.

- (5) To strengthen the student's model- and theory-development skills.
- (6) To provide a capstone experience to the first-year curriculum and a bridge to the completion of an empirical research project.
- (7) To identify students whose conceptualization skills are adequate for advancement in the doctoral program.

Specific Requirements

Students may begin preparing the qualifying paper the day they enter the doctoral program. At a minimum, each student will have a five-person qualifying exam committee in place by April 15. The doctoral program director, in concert with the department chair, will consider student and faculty preferences, interests, skills and availability in appointing members to these committees.

The student and qualifying exam committee will agree on a research area or topic to be the focus of the qualifying paper. Students should investigate a topic of strong intrinsic interest. The faculty committee may provide feedback regarding interest in the proposed topic, but the research topic must originate with the student. A one-page proposal summarizing the research topic must be submitted to the doctoral program committee chair (typically the doctoral program director) no later than May 15 (earlier is better).

The student will be responsible for all aspects of the qualifying exam paper. A letter attesting to the student's ownership must be addressed to the doctoral program director, signed, and submitted at the time the qualifying exam paper is due.

The results of the conceptual project will be summarized in a paper to be written by the student and due by August 1 or the first business day thereafter if August 1 should fall on a weekend. The paper will adhere to JM or JCR style sheet, but length and structure will vary depending on the type of research issue.

The five qualifying exam committee members will evaluate the paper and present pass/fail evaluations to the doctoral program director. *Students must earn no fewer than 3 "pass" votes from the 5-person committee in order to be advanced to second-year status. Failure to obtain the required 3 passing votes will lead to immediate expulsion from the doctoral program in marketing. No remedial work will be permitted. Students who fail the qualifying exam will be given the option of completing a master of science degree in marketing by completing a field project during the fall semester of their 2nd year or simply withdrawing from the program.*

A copy of the finished qualifying exam will become part of the student's official program record. *Students who pass the qualifying exam will be required to present their papers to the faculty and fellow doctoral students during a seminar in the fall semester of their 2nd year.*

The student should note the potential for synergy between this summer conceptual project, the completion of a comprehensive exam paper during the summer and fall of the third year, and the development of a dissertation proposal. Ideally, the qualifying exam paper would provide a solid conceptual basis for further theory development and proposed empirical work in the same or a related topical area. The efficiencies (and potentially greater depth of expertise in a topic) to be gained by the student are obvious. However, this is not a requirement. The project must be completed on time and to the satisfaction of the faculty evaluation committee. *Please note that extensions of the deadline will be granted only in the most clear-cut cases of unavoidable impediment to timely completion. It is expected that such cases will rarely occur, if ever.* Synergies with future program requirements are desirable but should not be the primary objective. Do not let such concerns obstruct the timely completion of the paper. This is not a dissertation project.

The ultimate objective of the doctoral program in marketing is the development of doctoral candidates capable of conducting competent, independent scholarship. Having completed the first year of the doctoral program, students are expected to demonstrate progress toward this objective.

Use the following guidelines to organize your proposal (the paper itself should follow *JM* or *JCR* style depending on whether the topic is consumer behavior or managerial in orientation):

1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH - Here, state the goal(s) of the research in one paragraph.
2. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY - State the reasons why the proposed research ought to be done. For example, you could focus here on pointing out conceptual problems with previous research on the topic or issues which previous research has failed to account for. Or, you might propose a new explanation for a well-defined consumer or marketer behavior or simply pose an extension to existing explanations. Alternatively, you might propose a provocative, counterintuitive effect or explain such an effect in the literature. Another way to motivate the study would be to discuss how two literature streams appear at odds with one another and how this disagreement raises interesting research questions. *This is a very important part of the proposal. Make the reader understand why the research to be done is important.*
3. RELEVANT LITERATURE - Provide the citations of a few key articles that provide the basis for the proposal. Also, include copies of the absolutely essential ones.
4. EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION – Explain as clearly and succinctly as possible the contribution to knowledge you expect your conceptualization to provide.

Comprehensive Examination Policy

Purpose

In accordance with Graduate School policy, every marketing doctoral student must successfully complete a comprehensive examination in order to advance to candidacy for the doctoral degree. This exam will normally be completed between August and December in the student's third year of instruction. The comprehensive exam is intended to test the student's ability to conduct competent, independent scholarship. Toward this end students are expected to demonstrate the ability to pose an interesting research question, mastery of an important body of marketing or consumer research literature and relevant theory, and competence with research methods and data analysis tools appropriate to the research problem. The marketing department believes that a comprehensive research paper and an oral examination of all aspects of research contained therein provide the most useful and valid assessment of the student's progress toward the doctoral degree.

Procedure – Written Comprehensive Exam

- (1) All members of the marketing graduate faculty are eligible to participate in the comprehensive exam committee. At a minimum the exam committee will include the doctoral program director and at least two graduate marketing faculty members. The doctoral program director will serve as committee chair and will appoint the remaining members of the committee in consultation with the department chair. The conjunction of faculty expertise and student interests will be weighed carefully in these appointments. The comprehensive exam committee will be appointed no later than April 15 in the 2nd program year.
- (2) The student must submit a brief proposal outlining the nature of the research to be conducted to the doctoral program director no later than July 15 in the 2nd program year. Earlier submission is supported and even encouraged. The proposal should include:

GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH - Here, state the goal(s) of the research in one paragraph.

RELEVANT LITERATURE - Provide the citations of the key articles that provide the basis for the proposal. Also, include copies of the absolutely essential ones—especially any paper(s) you are replicating.

MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY - State the reasons why the proposed research ought to be done. For example, you could focus here on pointing out methodological problems with previous empirical research on the topic or issues which previous research has failed to account for. Or, you might propose a counterintuitive effect or explain such an effect in the literature. Another way to motivate the study would be to discuss how two literature streams appear at odds with one another and how this disagreement raises interesting research questions. In addition, you might propose a replication of an existing study because of questions about methodology or simply because the research is interesting and important and evidence is currently limited. *This is a very important part of the proposal. Make the reader understand why the research to be done is important.*

PROPOSED RESEARCH METHOD – Specify the method to be used to satisfy your research objectives including types of data to be collected, research design, measures to be taken (if any), required materials, etc.

DATA ANALYSIS PLAN – Describe how you will analyze the data you collect using your proposed research method.

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION – Explain as clearly and succinctly as possible the contribution to knowledge you expect this research to provide.

- (3) The written portion of the comprehensive exam will consist of a comprehensive research paper. In this paper the students must pose an interesting marketing or consumer research question. This question must be supported by a thorough review of relevant literature and the development of a theoretical framework to explain or conceptualize the consumer or marketing phenomenon of interest in the research. Testable hypotheses drawn from the literature and relevant theory (this section may be omitted for some research questions; for example, those requiring inductive methods or analytical models) must be proposed. The appropriate method for investigating the research question (including data collection and data analysis) must be described in detail. Finally, the results and research contributions must be clearly reported. Performance feedback from the exam committee will be provided prior to the oral defense. Of course, an oral defense will not be conducted if the committee deems that the student has failed the written portion of the exam.
- (4) The comprehensive exam will normally be written between August and December of the student's third year in the doctoral program. *The comprehensive paper may be submitted as early as August 1 or as late as December 1. The student is not permitted to discuss any aspect of his/her comprehensive exam paper with members of the faculty. The comprehensive exam paper must be the student's work alone. A letter attesting to the student's ownership of the paper must be signed and given to the doctoral program director at the time the comprehensive paper is submitted.* The USC Honor Code as described in the Student Handbook applies. Violations of the Code will be considered academic misconduct and will lead to strong sanctions including potential dismissal from the program.
- (5) The written exam will be graded on a pass/fail basis by members of the exam committee. *Students receiving 2 or more failing votes from the committee will be deemed to have failed the exam.* In accordance with Graduate School policy, the student will be notified in writing of the committee's evaluation and of any deficiencies. The student may request a meeting with the doctoral program director in order to discuss formally the results of the written examination. This meeting, if requested, must take place no later than 72 hours prior to the scheduling of the oral defense. Students failing the written examination may be permitted to submit one revision of the comprehensive paper. The revised comprehensive paper will be re-evaluated by the exam committee on a pass-fail basis. The written examination may not be taken more than twice. Failure on the second attempt will lead to dismissal from the doctoral program.

Procedure – Oral Comprehensive Examination

- (1) The oral comprehensive exam committee will consist of the written comprehensive exam committee and one graduate faculty member from outside the marketing department. The doctoral program director will serve as committee chair.
- (2) In accordance with the Policy Statement for the Ph.D. in Business Administration, the oral defense must be completed no later than three weeks following the successful completion of the written exam. The oral portion will consist of a defense before the comprehensive exam committee. Students should expect to defend any aspect of the conceptualization and investigation of the research problem they pose in the comprehensive paper. This oral examination may include, but is not limited to, questions regarding the contribution of the research, the student's grasp of relevant literature, focal constructs and theoretical models, measurement, data collection procedures, and data analysis. Any deficiencies noted in the written component of the exam will be especially targeted for follow-up questions.

- (3) Any full-time faculty member is permitted to attend the oral defense. After questioning, the student will leave the room, and all committee members and non-committee members will be allowed to discuss the student's performance before a vote is taken. Following this discussion, all non-committee members will leave the room, and committee members will vote by secret ballot to either pass or fail the student. The decision to pass must be made with no more than one negative vote by a committee member.
- (4) If the student fails the oral part of the comprehensive examination (i.e., receives 2 or more negative votes), the doctoral program director will discuss formally with the student those parts of the exam which were failed. This information will be transmitted in writing by the marketing doctoral program director to the Managing Director of Ph.D. Programs for the Moore School of Business with a copy sent to the Graduate School. The student may retake the oral exam after receiving approval from the marketing doctoral program director. Such approval may be granted depending on a vote of the exam committee with no more than one dissenting vote. Should the oral part of the comprehensive exam be failed twice, the student will have failed the comprehensive examination and will be dismissed from the doctoral program.
- (5) The chairperson of the exam committee (i.e., the marketing doctoral program director), in consultation with the marketing department chair, is responsible for making decisions concerning any issues that may arise during the course of the comprehensive exam that are not explicitly covered by this policy statement or relevant Graduate School policies.

Annual Performance Review

All marketing doctoral students will have their performance reviewed annually during the month of August for the first three years in the program. The first-year review will be conducted by the qualifying-exam committee (consisting of 5 members of the marketing graduate faculty). The second-year review will be conducted by the comprehensive-exam committee (consisting of at least 3 members of the marketing graduate faculty). The third year review will be conducted by the dissertation committee (consisting of at least 3 members of the graduate marketing faculty and one outside graduate faculty member).

All aspects of student performance will be evaluated including class performance, research performance, teaching and research assistantship duties, and departmental citizenship. In order to facilitate the review process, each student must submit a current *vita* no later than August 1 of each program year to the doctoral program coordinator. Copies of papers and teaching evaluations may also be submitted for committee review. Students will be provided with a written assessment of their performance based on feedback received from the review committee. This evaluation will become a permanent part of the student's academic record.

Students will also be given the opportunity to provide feedback to the faculty regarding concerns about the doctoral program structure and experience or suggestions for improving our program.