

UNL Special Education Master's Exit Exam Grading Rubric

Directions for Students

Students should carefully read the [Exit Exam Instructions](#) and following grading rubric prior to the writing of their exit exam. Students should use this grading rubric as a “checklist” to ensure all required components are included in their exit exam paper. Students can ask their advisors questions related to their paper, but advisors are not permitted to review any written work by the student.

Scoring: For *each category* listed below (except the AI Statement), papers will be scored based on the following definitions:

- **Satisfactory (2):** All required components of the category were present and accurate, though some information may have been implied or suggested and/or not explicitly stated, defined or explained.
- **Emerging (1):** Most of the required components of the category were present and/or accurate, though some were missing and/or writing was difficult to follow at times.
- **Unsatisfactory (0):** Many required components of the category were missing and/or inaccurate; and/or writing was difficult to follow in many sections of the paper.

Student Revisions & Responses (**REQUIRED FOR ALL REVISED PAPERS**)

If a student receives a grading decision of “Revise”, the student will receive feedback on what they need to address/edit in their paper in the “Reviewer Feedback” column. Students are expected to clearly state where in the revised paper they addressed the reviewer feedback in the “Student Revisions & Response” column (e.g., On p. 2, second paragraph, I explicitly stated what the purpose of the paper was and the target population it will address.) **Failure to submit the rubric with student responses to reviewer feedback will result in a No Pass.**

AI Statement (**REQUIRED FOR ALL PAPERS**)

Students are discouraged from using AI to assist in writing their exit exam paper. Regardless, all students must include an AI statement in their paper. (Please review the article [Using AI ethically in writing assignments.](#)) **Failure to include an AI Statement at the beginning of your paper will result in a No Pass.**

Category	Required Components	Score	Reviewer Feedback
AI Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The AI statement should be on its own page between the title page and abstract entitled with a centered, bolded heading and include the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If you did NOT use AI to complete your exit exam paper, include the following statement: <i>I attest that I did not use AI to help me complete any part of this paper.</i>○ If you DID use AI to help complete your exit exam paper in any way, report the following in your AI statement:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- the name(s) of the AI platform(s) you used (e.g., ChatGPT, CoPilot, Claude)- the prompt(s) you used to ask your AI platform(s) for support- a brief reflection of your overall sense of how AI helped or hindered your writing as you completed this paper.	Included	
		Not Included	

Category	Required Components	Score	Reviewer Feedback	Student Revisions & Responses
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes an abstract of no more than 250 words AND The abstract clearly identifies all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Topic/focus of the paper - Target population of children/students with exceptionalities of interest - Practitioner base who could use the proposed or adapted practice/intervention/policy - Statement of the problem/area of need - Proposed or adapted practice/intervention/policy - Research supporting recommendation(s) 	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		
Research-to-Practice Focus*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic/focus of paper is easily identifiable AND Describes a clear practice/intervention/policy for/focused on a specific target population of children/students with exceptionalities AND Articulates a strong and convincing link from the research to their recommendations for practice 	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		
Direct focus on students with exceptionalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper is focused on children/students with exceptionalities with identified delays, disabilities, or differences AND The student clearly defines the specific population and/or subpopulations the paper is focused on, including criteria for verification/identification (e.g., IDEA, DSM-V) 	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		
Introduction and presentation of problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduces paper topic and provides relevant background information AND Describes the target population and practitioner base who could use the proposed practice/intervention/policy AND Defines all key terms related to the topic AND Provides a clear statement of the problem/area of need AND Provides a strong rationale for the need for the proposed practice/intervention/policy (i.e., convinces audience why this topic is relevant/important) AND Concludes with a clear purpose statement that relates to the presented problem and practice/intervention/policy (e.g., "The purpose of this paper is...") 	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		

Category	Required Components	Score	Reviewer Feedback	Student Revisions & Responses
Cite and Synthesize Current Research*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A majority of the cited research comes from empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals. (Additional information can come from other sources, such as textbooks, websites, organizations, and/or research-to-practice journals, but given the research to practice focus, the student needs to cite research) AND A majority of the cited research reflects work published within the past decade. (Older references to seminal research or that demonstrate an extensive research history can be included but should be used sparingly. If recent research is unavailable, student should provide justification for using older research.) AND Information from research studies is briefly summarized and/or synthesized (i.e., combined to demonstrate the student's own understanding or "big picture" of the studies). Lengthy descriptions of individual studies should not be include. (The exception is if a particular study needs to be expanded upon to provide relevant background) AND At least 3-6 peer-reviewed research studies are cited to summarize/synthesize the research supporting the practice/intervention/policy proposed 	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		
Implementation guidelines*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies a specific practice/intervention/policy AND The practice/intervention/policy addresses the identified problem/need AND Provides clear and specific guidance, with examples, on how to implement the proposed practice/intervention/policy for the targeted audience in a way that can be easily understood by a lay audience and used by practitioners with the pre-requisite knowledge and training AND Has a clear connection to the cited and synthesized research AND Clearly articulates the practitioners who might use this intervention 	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		

Category	Required Components	Score	Reviewer Feedback	Student Revisions & Responses
Graphic elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one table, figure or graphic element is included in paper to summarize and/or visually represent information that would be useful for practitioners serving the target population (e.g., a table or visuals that briefly summarizes the proposed practice/intervention/policy, including guidance on how to implement and an example of what this may look like in practice) 	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		
Original work*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed practice/intervention/policy and/or graphic element are presented/applied in a <i>new</i> way (e.g., modifying a fidelity checklist or adapting an intervention for a new population) AND Tables and figures that have been published elsewhere are not included AND Tables or figures that are adapted from previous studies cite the original source AND Copyrighted materials have written permission from the copyright holder that is included as an appendix If AI is used, it is explained explicitly and described 	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper ends with a conclusion that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restates the topic/focus of paper AND - Restates the proposed practice/intervention/policy AND - Briefly summarizes or highlights research (with citations) supporting their recommendation AND - Identifies possible limitations or challenges of their proposed practice/intervention/policy AND/OR suggestions for next research steps to evaluate the proposed practice/intervention/policy 	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		
APA style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper uses formal, academic language AND Presents data-based information, not emotionally charged position statements AND Considers perspective (e.g., acknowledges and/or integrates diverse viewpoints/backgrounds) AND Maintains consistent voice AND Uses quotes sparingly, if at all AND Employs “economy of expression” (i.e., conveys ideas clearly and concisely) AND Avoids bias in language 	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		

Category	Required Components	Score	Reviewer Feedback	Student Revisions & Responses
APA format and elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adheres to basic APA formatting conventions, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Double spaced- 1-inch margins- 12-point Times New Roman font- Page Numbers- Headings/subheadings (as appropriate)- APA formatted tables/figures, in-text citations and reference page ANDPaper includes the following APA elements/sections:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Title page- Abstract- Introduction- Body (with headings/subheadings as appropriate)- Conclusion- References ANDTitle is concise and includes key terminology ANDMinimal grammatical errors (Use editor check!)	Satisfactory (2)		
		Emerging (1)		
		Unsatisfactory (0)		
Total Score			General Reviewer Feedback	
Attempt	1 st Attempt			
	1 st Attempt Revision			
	2 nd Attempt			
	2 nd Attempt Revision			
Grading Decision	PASS			
	REVISE			
	NO PASS			

***Students must receive a score of Emerging (1) or Satisfactory (2) in these categories in order to receive a REVISE or PASS.**