

UNL Special Education Master’s Exit Exam Grading Rubric

Directions for Students

Students should carefully read the [Exit Exam Instructions](#) and the following grading rubric prior to beginning 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 talk to their advisors about questions related to their paper, but advisors are not permitted to review any written work by the student.

Grading Categories

- Exemplary (3): All required components. The section was very well-written, easy to follow, and strong model as to what the section should look like .
- Satisfactory (2): All required components were present and accurate, though some of the information was implied or suggested, and/or not explicitly stated, defined or explained.
- Unsatisfactory (1): All required components were not present and/or accurate, and/or writing was not clear enough to follow the students’ writing and identify the required components.

Revisions

If a student receives a grading decision of “Revise”, students 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.)

AI Statement Requirement

Students are discouraged from using AI to assist in writing their exit exam paper. Regardless, all students must include a statement about the use of AI in their paper. **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 their recommendation(s) 	Exemplary (3)		
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 	Exemplary (3)		
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 	Exemplary (3)		
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 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 (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 	Exemplary (3)		

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 (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 is from peer-reviewed journals 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 synthesized rather and does not give lengthy descriptions of individual studies (the exception is if a particular study needs to be expanded upon to provide relevant background) AND • It is expected that at least 3-6 peer-reviewed research studies should be cited to synthesize the research supporting the practice/intervention/policy proposed 	Exemplary (3)		
		Satisfactory (2)		
		Unsatisfactory (1)		
Implementation guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies a specific practice/intervention AND • The practice/intervention/policy addresses the identified problem/need AND • Provides guidelines for how to implement that 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 	Exemplary (3)		
		Satisfactory (2)		
		Unsatisfactory (1)		

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 	Exemplary (3)		
		Satisfactory (2)		
		Unsatisfactory (1)		
Original work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed practice/intervention/policy reflects original ideas and writing (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 	Exemplary (3)		
		Satisfactory (2)		
		Unsatisfactory (1)		
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper ends with a conclusion that restates the topic/focus of paper AND • The proposed practice/intervention AND • Briefly summarizes or highlights research supporting their recommendation AND • Identifies possible limitations or challenges of their proposed practice/intervention AND/OR suggestions for next research steps to evaluate the proposed practice/intervention 	Exemplary (3)		
		Satisfactory (2)		
		Unsatisfactory (1)		
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 AND • Maintains consistent voice AND • Uses quotes sparingly, if at all AND • Employs “economy of expression” AND • Avoids bias in language 	Exemplary (3)		
		Satisfactory (2)		
		Unsatisfactory (1)		

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 (e.g., double spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, headings, running heads, page numbers, tables, figures, in-text citations, and reference page) AND • Paper includes the following APA elements/sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Title page - Abstract - Introduction - Body (with subheadings as appropriate) - Conclusion - References AND • Title is concise and includes key terminology AND • Paper includes appropriate APA level headings/subheadings that organize the content of the paper and provide guidance to the reader AND • Tables/figures are formatted correctly AND • Minimal errors (e.g., in grammar) 	Exemplary (3)		
		Satisfactory (2)		
		Unsatisfactory (1)		
	Total Score			
	Attempt	1 st Attempt		
		1 st Attempt Revision		
		2 nd Attempt		
		2 nd Attempt Revision		
	Grading Decision	Pass		
		Revision		
		No Pass		