Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education
Comprehensive Exam Part Two Policies and Procedures Change

The Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education Faculty engaged in a year-long conversation and review of the PhD Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures, which has resulted in changes to these Policies and Procedures (Revised October 2013 and August 2014). The first change modified when Part One of the exam was administered and the length of time given to complete each section of Part One (each question is now given 3 days over 2 long weekends, for a total of 6 days, instead of the previous 5 days for both questions). The faculty made their decision based on the following: In the past, students took the exam the third week of classes, which often prevented them from focusing on their currently enrolled courses; those students who were working full-time needed to take longer vacation or personal leave time from work; and finally, students had more time to complete the Exam, which would hopefully result in as high of a pass rate as possible.

The second change being implemented by the HALE faculty is to Part Two of the exam. The “old” Part Two of the Comprehensive Exam consisted of a successful dissertation proposal defense.

As of August 2014, the HALE faculty have implemented the following changes to Part Two of the Comprehensive Exam:

**Part Two** is successful completion of EAD 995 (“Research Practicum”). In order to enroll in EAD 995 students must pass both sections of the written Exam (Part One) and have the approval of their advisor. The Research Practicum, required of all doctoral students in the College of Education, is the final course in the research sequence. The purposes of the Research Practicum are: (a) to guide students toward preparation of a dissertation proposal and (b) to enable students to engage in a research experience within a community of scholars. Considered as part of the HALE Comprehensive Exam, EAD 995 is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to complete the HALE PhD Program. Students typically enroll in EAD 995 near or at the end of their course work, which is usually Year Three for full-time students but may be later for those enrolled part-time. EAD 995 is also offered twice annually, every fall and spring semester. Approval to enroll in EAD 995 requires that the student provide evidence to the advisor of sufficient preparation for the course and the opportunity to make significant progress on a dissertation proposal. More about Part Two of the Comprehensive Exam can be found on the HALE website.

Upon successful completion of Parts One and Two, students will have completed the HALE PhD Comprehensive Exam and advanced to candidacy for the PhD.

Questions and Answers:
**Why am I receiving this email?**
You are a current doctoral student who matriculated to MSU before Fall 2014 and have the option of choosing the version of the Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures to which you will be accountable for your degree.

**Why did the HALE faculty change the Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures?**
In a review of several program requirements, the HALE faculty determined that the “old” Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures often delayed a student’s entry into candidacy, which had implications for EAD 999 credits, financial aid, and progress to degree. Students who successfully complete the second part of the Comprehensive Exam need only enroll in one-credit to be considered a full-time student by the University. Tying the second part of the Comprehensive Exam to EAD 995 has the potential to move students along more directly and
coherently into dissertation proposal preparation. Finally, we believe that these new policies and procedures will make the process a bit easier on students.

**Do all HALE PhD students have the option of choosing either the “old” Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures format (pre-August 2014) or the new Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures format (August 2014)?**

No, only students who have not completed EAD 995 AND matriculated to MSU before Fall 2014 have the option to choose the policy to which they will be accountable. If you have completed or have an incomplete in EAD 995, you must follow the “old” Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures (pre-August 2014). Those students matriculating to MSU in Fall 2014 will need to meet the Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures (August 2014) requirements.

**I have already taken EAD 995, may I be grandfathered into the Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures (August 2014)?**

No, if you have taken EAD 995, you must complete the dissertation proposal defense to satisfy the “old” Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures (pre-August 2014) format.

**If I meet the criteria for choosing the new format, when do I need to decide on the format I want?**

You must make a decision about which format you will choose and inform your advisor AND Karla Bellingar (bellinga@msu.edu) before September 30, 2014. If you do not make a decision and inform your advisor and Karla Bellingar, then you are indicating that you are opting out of the new Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures (August 2014) and being accountable to the Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures (pre-August 2014).

**If I am matriculating to MSU in Fall 2014, may I adopt the pre-August 2014 Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures?**

No, you must follow the Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures (August 2014).

August 27, 2014