

Guidelines for Oral Exam Committee Members

Political Science 5397 Applied Research Project

**Texas State University
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Oral Exam: The one-hour oral examination focuses on the student's Applied Research Project.

Role and Responsibilities: The practitioner is a valued member of the oral exam committee because they are a link to the world of public administration.

- The committee member will be asked to read the applied research project and to ask questions of the student about the paper during the exam.
- The committee member will be asked to sign a form indicating in their judgment whether the student passed or failed the oral portion of the exam. This decision is generally made in consultation with the two other members of the committee. Most of the time the decision is unanimous.
- At the most basic level, the committee member is there to keep the process honest. Did the student do the work? If the student performance on the exam suggests that they did not write the paper, the student should fail the exam.
- If in the judgment of the committee member, the student successfully defended the paper, the student should pass the oral exam. Note that the applied research project is graded independently of the oral exam.
- The committee member should receive the paper at least one week before the examination. This ensures there is enough time to read the paper.
- The committee member should hear from the student (e-mail or telephone) prior

to receiving the paper.

- **Aside from the role as “judge,” committee members are encouraged to take a mentoring role with the student. The student and committee member may get together while the student is writing the paper. The meeting could be in person or over the telephone.**
- **The student is defending a draft of the Applied Research Project. The paper not expected to be perfect rather very close to completion. The committee member is therefore encouraged to provide comments (editorial and substantive) on the paper.**
- **The committee member will be asked to complete a questionnaire about the oral experience. The results are part of a larger effort to assess the MPA Program**

A Member of the Texas State University System

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