Sam Houston State University

A Member of the Texas State University System

COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Doctoral Candidacy Portfolio Qualifying Examination
POLICY

Candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Criminal Justice are required to demonstrate competence to proceed to a dissertation. Approval to proceed to completion of a dissertation is formally termed "Admission to Candidacy." Admission to Candidacy is granted upon successful completion of stipulated coursework, followed by defense of a ***Research Assessment Portfolio (hereafter Portfolio)***. The ***Portfolio*** is governed by the Policy delineated below.

1. A ***Portfolio*** must include material developed by the student demonstrating their:

    Sophisticated understanding of the research literature in an area of study (identified by the ***Portfolio Committee***), including focus on the important theoretical and research questions about that topic that remain unanswered and need to be addressed;

    Ability to critically evaluate and integrate knowledge across the significant domains of interest within their specified area of concentration; and

    Proficiency as writers with expert working knowledge of the research and analytical tools necessary to contribute to the scholarly literature in their research areas.

2. A ***Portfolio*** may include requirements that the student complete written examinations, directed literature reviews, annotated bibliographies, publishable length manuscripts, review essays, or other products common to their field of scholarship.

    a. *Prima facie* evidence that a student should be admitted to candidacy shall exist if the ***Portfolio*** consists of at least two manuscripts that in the ***Portfolio Committee's*** view are suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed

academic journal. The manuscripts may be co-authored, but the student must be first author on at least one of the manuscripts and at least first or second author on the other manuscript. Students will submit their manuscripts to their *Portfolio Committee*, who will be the sole evaluators of the student's proficiency on its substantive knowledge, application of relevant theory, use of appropriate data and research methods (if applicable), and clarity of communication.

Obviously, it is even more desirable to have already achieved publication or acceptance for publication of submitted manuscripts. The same authorship criteria would apply.

b. All work completed for the *Portfolio* is expected to be of the student's independent construction developed under the facilitative guidance and oversight of the *Portfolio Committee*. If any work being included involves any form of collaborative activity the student is responsible for openly acknowledging and formally citing all such activity in all manuscripts or documents produced for the project as well as providing the *Portfolio Committee* with a written description of their individual contribution to each product. Any material submitted for inclusion in the *Portfolio* that was the product of previous class assignments (or revisions thereof) may not be included without written permission from the faculty member who taught the class. Such permission (1) must be included in the *Portfolio* and (2) must certify that the student's contribution to the product was sufficiently independent to allow for its inclusion. Failure to acknowledge collaborative efforts shall be considered a violation of the University's Academic Honesty Policy and shall result in the dismissal of the student from the program.

c. Disagreements between *Portfolio Committee* members concerning what is and is not acceptable for inclusion in the *Portfolio* shall be resolved through a consensus process. At the discretion of the *Portfolio Committee Chair*, the decision can be made through a majority vote.

d. Exactly what is required and/or accepted in any given *Portfolio* will vary from one student to another but all *Portfolio Committees* must agree that the work being completed for inclusion in the *Portfolio* is substantially the work of the student and/or that all collaborative projects have been reviewed and accepted. There is no "boilerplate" or "template" for a - *Portfolio*. Each one completed may include considerably different contents depending on the requirements established by the *Portfolio Committee*.

3. Students must form a *Portfolio Committee* after completion of eighteen credits applicable to their doctoral coursework. Students are eligible to defend their

Portfolio during the semester they are enrolled for completion of all required coursework.

4. The final step in the process involves a public review/defense of the *Portfolio* during which time all members of the faculty in attendance shall have an opportunity to question the student about the *Portfolio* and provide feedback to the three-member *Portfolio Committee* concerning their assessment of the project's strengths and weaknesses.

   a. The *Portfolio Committee* shall determine when the student's *Portfolio* is ready for public review/defense and notify the Doctoral Program Director. The Doctoral Program Director will schedule and announce the time and location of the defense at least two weeks in advance.

   b. All faculty members are encouraged to attend and provide feedback to the *Portfolio Committee* for all public reviews being presented by students concentrating in their area.

5. Upon conclusion of the public review/defense, the *Portfolio Committee* shall formally certify that the student has either "High Passed," "Passed," "Needs to be Revised and Resubmitted" or "Failed" the *Portfolio*.

   a. *Portfolios* that need to be "Revised and Resubmitted" must be subject to another public review/defense within a period of time specified by the *Portfolio Committee* at the time of the initial review.

   b. *Portfolios* that are "Failed" will be discontinued, the Portfolio *Committee* disbanded, and the student will not be admitted to Candidacy.

   c. Petitions for a second attempt to complete a *Portfolio* can be directed to the Doctoral Program Director. Failure to successfully complete a second *Portfolio* shall result in termination from the doctoral program.

   d. Successful completion of one's *Portfolio* shall result in the student's admission to candidacy, making them eligible to formally initiate their doctoral dissertation project.

6. Members of *Portfolio Committees* will be appointed by the Doctoral Program Director. Students can initiate the composition of their *Portfolio Committee* by submitting a request including the name of the faculty member(s) they nominate to serve as the *Chair* of their *Portfolio Committee*. All members must be a member of the graduate faculty. The Doctoral Program Director shall appoint two additional members to the *Portfolio Committee*. All members of the *Portfolio Committee* will have equal responsibility for involvement in the assessment.

a. *Portfolio Committees* are formally constructed by the Doctoral Program Director who also has authority to authorize subsequent modifications of the *Committee's* composition. From time to time it may become necessary to modify a student's *Portfolio Committee* due to a variety of reasons. Any request for modifications must be accompanied with a letter describing the nature and reasons for the modifications. All changes must be approved by the Doctoral Program Director.

b. Upon appointment, the Chair of the *Portfolio Committee* assumes all responsibilities for the *Portfolio* Project previously being managed by the Doctoral Program Director and becomes responsible for organizing and managing the remaining activities of the *Portfolio* Project.

c. All members of the Portfolio *Committee* carry equal weight in the assessment process and are required to participate fully in the assessment review. The Committee is collectively responsible for determining what documents and other materials will be accepted for inclusion in the student's *Portfolio*.

d. The *Chair* of the respective student's Portfolio *Committee* is responsible for assuring that the review moves along in a timely manner and that each member of the Committee is given full and equal opportunity for input and oversight of the student's Portfolio.

e. *Portfolios* are expected to require no longer than two semesters (or one semester and two summer semesters) to complete. While there are no time constraints placed on the completion of these projects, students should be mindful of the University's requirement that they complete graduate work within a six-year period, starting from the date of initial enrollment for graduate credit in their particular degree program. This requires leaving adequate time between successful completion of the *Portfolio* to complete the doctoral dissertation within this six-year period.