During the 2015-2016 academic year, the faculty in the PhD Program in Educational Psychology reviewed existing procedures for the second-level examination. As a result of this assessment (described below), the second-level examination has been modified for one of our sub-programs (Learning, Development & Instruction), and will be modified for the other (Quantitative Methods & Policy). Our third subprogram, School Psychology, is being phased out and has only one student left to complete the second-level examination. Therefore, this subprogram was not included in the review.

1) Learning Goals for Second Examination
   - The primary objective of the second examination is to ensure that students have acquired sufficient professional skills and knowledge before advancing to candidacy. Specifically, to ensure that student understand research and theory relevant to the field of Educational Psychology.
   - A second objective was to provide students with an opportunity for experiences that will increase their competitiveness in the academic job market.

2) Sources of Data for Review
   Data sources for the review included:
   - A review of current protocols for second-level exams and students’ past results.
   - A review of second-level examinations in similar programs both at the Graduate Center and at peer institutions.
   - Meetings held with students to discuss the current and potential revised procedures for the second-level examination.

3) Findings
   Based on our interviews with students, our review of prior exams, and review of other programs’ second-level examinations, it was determined that the current format of our second level exams was not meeting our assessment goals. Specifically:
   - The second examinations were not found to be well aligned with our learning objectives.
   - The format and content of the second level examination was considered to be too similar to the first examinations.
   - Students were spending considerable time reviewing for the exam, which reduced the amount of time they had to work on professional development (e.g., engaging in research and/or publishing).
   - Peer institutions/programs tended to write and/or present original research.
• It also emerged that our two subprograms, Learning Development & Instruction and Quantitative & Policy, had somewhat different objectives for the second examination. For Learning Development & Instruction and Quantitative the primary goal was to ensure that the students had well developed research skills; for Quantitative & Policy, the goal was to ensure the students had a deep understanding of the foundational statistics and methods. Therefore, it was decided that the two subprograms would develop separated proposals for revising the second level examination.

3) Proposed Changes
• The Learning Development & Instruction subprogram decided to have students present and defend their pre-dissertation pilot study as a second level examination. A set of protocols was drafted, vetted by faculty and students, modified based on feedback, and ultimately approved by the Educational Psychology executive committee. (See Appendix A.)
• The Quantitative and Policy subprogram decided to switch from the existing 3-hour sit-down exam to a two-part exam that involved a take-home portion and an oral examination. A draft of the new protocols for Quantitative and Policy has been Drafted (see Appendix B), and has been reviewed by the faculty.

4) Next Steps
• Based on feedback, the Quantitative and Policy subprogram will revise their proposal for the second level examination in the fall. Feedback will be obtained from students on the revised proposal, which will be revised again and then submitted for approval to the Educational Psychology Executive Committee.
• We will continue to monitor the Learning Development & Instruction subprogram’s protocols for the second level, soliciting feedback from students and faculty on their experiences, and making any modifications that seem necessary.

APPENDIX A
April 15, 2016 Revision

PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETING THE LDI LEVEL 2 EXAM REQUIREMENT

- The LDI student enrolls in EPSY 89000 with a member of the Educ. Psych. LDI faculty to design and conduct the pilot study. The student receives 3 credits for the course upon completion of the pilot study. The student may take the course for one additional semester without credit if the pilot study is not completed.

- The pilot study will consist of an empirical study with data collection, a meta-analysis, or secondary analyses of a significant data set, such as the Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES); or the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early
Child Care and Youth Development (NICHD-SECCYD). The study will be designed with the potential to be published or to be presented at a scholarly conference. The study will be evaluated on its quality, not on the significance of its results. In the case of a meta-analysis, a preliminary analysis is acceptable.

- The student prepares a written report of the pilot study and its findings following APA guidelines unless these conflict with the guidelines of a targeted journal. The report is prepared in consultation with the student’s adviser. The paper will target a specific relevant peer reviewed journal and will be written to conform to the guidelines of that journal in terms of conceptual framing, theoretical treatment, discussion of results, length, spacing, font, etc. The report will include a section at the end of the discussion identifying how the study might be extended as a dissertation. Students are encouraged to submit completed pilot studies for publication or conference presentation.

- The adviser and student will select a second member from the faculty in Educational Psychology to serve on the student’s pilot study review committee. This individual will review the report and recommend revisions. Once the revisions are completed, the written report will be evaluated by the two-member committee as acceptable or unacceptable.

Criteria to evaluate whether the report is acceptable:
- The research questions or hypotheses were well defined.
- The design was appropriate for addressing the hypotheses or questions.
- Sufficient data were collected to address hypotheses or questions.
- Appropriate statistical analyses were applied to the data.
- The written report conformed to APA or other journal-specific guidelines and standards for a potentially publishable journal article.

- Once the report has been judged acceptable, the student will consult with the faculty committee to select an acceptable date and time for the oral presentation. The presentation may be scheduled at any time that is acceptable to the committee.

- The student will then register for the second level oral presentation with the Program Officer. This can occur at any time during the semester but at least two weeks prior to the date selected for the presentation. The student will provide a title and abstract. The Program Officer will reserve a room for one hour and will email an announcement inviting all faculty and students in the Educational Psychology program to the presentation. Notification must occur at least two weeks ahead of the target date. The announcement will include the title, an abstract, the date, time, and location of the presentation. The student will post an announcement in the student room.

- The student will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of the study consisting of no more than 30 slides and lasting 30 minutes with an additional 20-30 minutes for questions and discussion.

- The student’s pilot study faculty committee will attend the presentation and then meet and evaluate the work to decide whether the student passes or fails the second level requirement. Evaluation of the oral defense will be based on presentation of sufficient background and
rationale for the study, accurate and appropriate analyses and interpretation of the results, and meaningful discussion of the study’s contribution to the literature and to a dissertation. The committee will complete and sign the attached record form reporting their evaluation. If during the oral presentation, suggestions arise necessitating further revision of the pilot study written report, the committee will identify these and ask the student to make the revisions.

At the conclusion of the oral presentation, the committee will determine whether the student has:

a.) Fulfilled the Level 2 requirement with no further revisions of the pilot study report needed.
b.) Fulfilled the Level 2 requirement upon completion of minor revisions to be reviewed by the faculty adviser.
c.) Fulfilled the Level 2 requirement upon completion of revisions to be reviewed by the faculty committee.
d.) Not fulfilled the Level 2 requirement.

- If the student has not fulfilled the Level 2 requirement, the committee will decide and convey to the student what steps are needed to satisfy the requirement (e.g., redo the study, rewrite the report, conduct a new pilot study). The necessary steps must be taken within a year following the oral presentation.

- If the two-member faculty committee disagrees in their pass/fail judgment, a third member of the Educ. Psych. Faculty will be asked to review and evaluate the case.

- Once all the requirements are completed, the student gives the adviser the completed LDI Level 2 Record of Steps form and the final hard copy of the pilot study report. The adviser notifies the Program Officer, records a grade of pass for the EPSY 89000 course, signs the Record of Steps form, and submits the form and the report to the Program Officer.

- If the pilot study is successful, it may provide the basis for the dissertation proposal. This is not always the case however. Students may choose a different study for the dissertation if results of the pilot study do not meet expectations, are not promising, or are unlikely to lead to a successful dissertation. The pilot study differs from the dissertation in that the dissertation typically includes a more complete review of the literature, more participants, additional measures, modified procedures to address problems uncovered in the pilot study, and so forth. Also three members will advise the student on the dissertation whereas only two faculty members will advise the student on the pilot study. The dissertation may involve either the collection of additional data that build on and extend the pilot study or a newly planned study.

- Once the student completes the Level 2 exam requirements as well as all coursework, the student will move to Level 3 at the beginning of the following semester and will select a faculty member in LDI to direct the dissertation. This may or may not be the individual who served as the adviser of the pilot study.

- LDI students who enrolled in the Educ. Psych. Ph.D. program prior to fall of 2016 may choose whether they will satisfy the Level 2 exam requirement by completing the above pilot study option or the previous option of completing two comprehensive written exams. Once an option is
selected and pursued to the point of preparing a pilot study written report or sitting for the written exams, students may not change to the other option.
Scheduling: A student's second exam will be scheduled between 90 and 180 days from when they register with the Program Officer to take the exam. The student may withdraw his or her name and re-register at a later date.

Students need to submit a list of quantitative and policy courses taken at the time of registration.

Format: The exam combines two take-home sections (General and Specific) with an oral exam. Students will have three full days (72 hours) to complete the General portion of the exam. They must submit a PDF of their completed exam at the indicated time to the examination committee. For instance, if the exam is handed out on a Monday at noon, they will need to hand in their final copies using email to the examination committee by Thursday at noon.

The oral exam will be held no later than fourteen days after the written due date, to ensure the examination committee has an opportunity to read the written component.

Examination Committee: The examination committee will be made up of two program faculty members. In the event of a disagreement about whether a student passes, a third examiner will be employed.

Coverage: Exam coverage will include General and Specific Exams.

General Exam: The purpose of the general exam is to ensure that the student has broad competence in topics that are essential for any student who is finishing with a quantitative or policy degree. These topics include:

- Research Design
- Exploratory Data Analysis
- General Linear Model/Regression
- Categorical Data Analysis
- Structural Equation Modeling and Factor Analysis
- Multilevel Modeling/HLM
- Psychometrics
- Evaluation

Reading lists will be created and maintained by the faculty. These readings will make up the basis for the General portion of the exam. Changes in the reading list will not impact examinations until 90 days after the date of the change. After an update, prior versions of the reading list will remain available for at least 90 days.
Students will be given six questions and must answer four. The questions will require some mixture of data analysis, article critique, a small simulation study, interpretation, or mathematical derivation.

Students will write a short answer (in APA format) to each chosen question using a maximum of two figures, two tables, and 5 pages of double spaced text in 12 point font, for a maximum total of 20 pages, eight figures, and eight tables. Computer syntax (e.g., SPSS, R, SAS, or Stata) must be included as an appendix, but this does not count towards the page total. Students are strongly encouraged to use the statcheck package in R to check their PDF file before turning in their examination paper.

**Specific Exam:**

In addition to the General Exam, the student will prepare a fifteen page review article (in APA format, with appropriate citations, references and title do not count towards the page total) on a method or issue of their choosing, after receiving approval of the topic from the examination committee. This topic may be the one they intend to use in their dissertation. The student is expected to work on this review in advance of taking the General Exam (e.g., in the summer while studying for the General exam). This should include a discussion of:

i. What the method is intended to do,

ii. A description and explanation of the method, including relevant equations.

iii. An example of its application, including parameter interpretation,

iv. Comparison with other methods used,

v. Software (including advantages/disadvantages of particular packages).

**Assessment:** The examination committee will read the written components of the exam and assign a provisional grade (0 to 3 points) to each question answered on the General Exam.

The scoring is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No answer was attempted or there are serious, fundamental misunderstandings of the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The answer is reasonable but there are some notable mistakes or omitted information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A reasonable answer that covers everything in an adequate and professional manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A superior answer that demonstrates clear and insightful understanding of the material.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The oral component will cover the content of the questions the student answered, as well as the Specific Exam. The committee will inquire about parts of the questions that were incomplete or unclear, or can have the student elaborate on a point made in the exam. Grades will be revised accordingly.

**Decision Rule**
i. To receive a Pass on the General Exam, the student must receive a total score of 7 or higher and no 0 grades on any of the questions.

ii. The Specific Section is graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

To pass the Second Level Examination, both the General and Specific Exam must be passed.

In the event that a student fails the exam, the failed section must be retaken within 180 days. Any further delay requires the permission of the Executive Committee. A second failure results in termination from the program.