

## Appendix A: Holistic Rubric for Qualifying Exams

To implement the qualifying exams holistic rubric, each committee member first rates each question/paper as *unsatisfactory*, *satisfactory*, or *excellent* based on the five factors within the holistic rating system. Second, each committee member will consider their ratings across questions to make a judgment of whether the overall work is *unsatisfactory*, *satisfactory*, or *excellent*.

| Factor                          | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Knowledge of the literature     | <p>The student's response demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• grounding in the professional literature (e.g., empirical research, policy, theory, case law)</li><li>• accurate description of the professional literature</li><li>• acknowledgement of conflicting findings across studies</li></ul> |
| Innovation                      | <p>The student's response demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understanding of gaps in the literature</li><li>• understanding of how their work or another researcher's work contributes to the field of special education</li><li>• original and novel ideas</li></ul>                              |
| Critical thinking and reasoning | <p>The student's response demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• independent thinking</li><li>• depth and complexity of thinking</li><li>• justification of ideas</li></ul>                                                                                                                             |
| Writing quality                 | <p>The student's response demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• clear explanation of ideas</li><li>• organized and logical sequencing of ideas</li><li>• command of academic language</li></ul>                                                                                                        |
| Use of appropriate APA style    | <p>The student's response demonstrates knowledge and skill in using APA style</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |