

Scoring Rubric for Written Ph. D Comprehensive Exam (Department of Geological Sciences)

Student _____ Date _____ Committee Member _____

Initial the appropriate boxes in each category. Each student’s performance will be scored in five categories: Critical Thinking, Breadth of Response, Literature Support, Content Organization, and Written English Language Skills. The committee’s ranking will be based upon a five-point scale (5 = Exemplary, 4 = Strong, 3 = Competent, 2 = Marginal, 1 = Unacceptable). The minimum successful score will be “Competent” or better from a majority of the Committee.

	Critical Thinking	Breadth	Literature Support	Organization	Language
5 – Exemplary	Responds with high-level organization of thought and understanding of research topic challenges that have hindered study of it in the past.	Demonstrates a superior breadth of knowledge of the required core fields. Can easily place their research questions within larger field of research.	Provides substantial, well-chosen evidence (research or textual citations) used strategically.	Responses contain appropriate, clear and adequate transitions between sentences and paragraphs.	Apt and precise diction, syntactic variety, clear command of Standard Scientific English, precise expression of thoughts.
4 – Strong	Demonstrates ability to synthesize previous work to explain scientific importance of thesis topic.	Demonstrates a effective breadth of knowledge of the required core fields. Provides examples of how to place their research questions within larger field of research.	Provides sufficient and appropriate evidence and, makes effort to contextualize it.	Responses contain distinct units of thought in paragraphs, coherently arranged; occasional weakness in transitions between sentences, paragraphs or thoughts.	Some mechanical difficulties; occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; occasional grammar errors; some wordiness; problems do not impact The meaning.
3 – Competent	Has demonstrated ability to synthesize previous information and explain it clearly; occasionally responds with unrelated information.	Demonstrates a basic knowledge reflective of the required core fields and how they connect with the specific research area.	Provides some citations but not always relevant, sufficient, or integrated into the response.	Responses are uneven; paragraphs sometimes effective, but others are brief, weakly unified, or undeveloped; some awkward or missing transitions between thoughts.	Occasional major grammar errors (e.g., agreement, tense); frequent minor grammar errors (e.g., prepositions, articles); occasional imprecise diction, awkward syntax; wordiness; problems impede minor portions of the meaning.
2 – Marginal	Confuses some significant concepts in the questions asked and/or fails to recognize scientific importance of topic.	Demonstrates a limited knowledge of the required core fields and how they connect with the specific research area.	Evidence usually only narrative or anecdotal; awkwardly or incorrectly incorporated.	Repetitive, wanders.	Frequent major and minor grammar problems; frequent imprecise diction; wordiness; awkward syntax; problems impede significant portions of the meaning.
1 – Unacceptable	Does not understand questions and/or concepts.	No discernable evidence of science behind core discipline.	Little or no evidence cited to support responses.	Responses are arbitrary or not structured, illogical or not coherent.	Numerous grammatical errors and stylistic problems that obscure the majority of the expressed thoughts; errors in almost every sentence.