

LANGUAGE, READING AND CULTURE

Comprehensive Examination

Per the policy of the Graduate College, the student must pass a Doctoral Comprehensive Examination before admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. This examination is intended to test the student's comprehensive knowledge of the major and minor subjects of study, both in breadth across the general field of study and in depth within the area of specialization. The Comprehensive Examination is considered a single examination, although it consists of written and oral parts.

Comprehensive Examination Committee

The examining committee must consist of a minimum of four members. The major advisor and two additional members must be tenured, or tenure track. The fourth member may be tenured or tenure-track, or a special approved member. Special members must be pre-approved by the Dean of the Graduate College. Any members beyond the fourth can also be tenured or tenure-track. The composition of the committee may vary. If the minor department requires two members, then the student can have two or three LRC faculty members on the committee. If the minor department requires only one member, then the student must find at least three faculty members from LRC. If the major and minor are both within LRC, the distribution can be 2-2 or 3-1, with the possibility of an outside member.

ALL EXAMINATIONS FOR THE LRC MAJOR AND THE LRC MINOR REQUIRE THE FOLLOWING:

1. The student will meet with the advisor and with members of the committee the semester prior to taking the examination or early in the semester. The student will submit a 2-3 page proposal to the committee outlining the areas of the examination. This proposal will include at least 15 bibliographic references and a statement that synthesizes the importance and relevance of the proposed topics. It will also include a timeline. Individual advisors may request further details as to how the student will approach the Comprehensive Examination.
2. The committee will approve the proposal.
3. A "Request to Schedule Written Comprehensive Examination" form is filled out and submitted to the LRC office at least three weeks prior to the examination.
4. The student will turn in the appropriate number of copies of the examination to the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will distribute copies of the examination to all committee members along with a ballot. Each committee member must receive a written copy of the examination by the end of the examination period.
5. Students majoring AND minoring in LRC will follow the above guidelines for both the major and the minor.

WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OPTIONS

It is appropriate for doctoral students, in conjunction with their advisors, to determine the nature of their examination. This decision is subject to the approval of the student's committee. The

following options are examples of the examinations possible. The choice of examination options pertains to students minoring in LRC as well as to majors. Students outside of the Department of Language, Reading and Culture must follow LRC minor guidelines. All written examinations must include a comprehensive theoretical research framework and a review of a substantial body of relevant research literature. Examinations must also be double-spaced and follow APA conventions, except as approved by the advisor.

There are three options for written examinations:

- a) Standard Timed Examination
- b) Take Home Examination
- c) Scholarly Paper

OPTION A: STANDARD TIMED EXAMINATION

The student will be given two questions on the date of the exam to answer within a specified period of time. The standard time allocated will be eight hours for the major and four hours for the minor. Questions will be written by the major/minor comprehensive committee. The examination will be monitored by the advisor. The student may have access to their personal computer, notes and books. The examination will be held in a COE room scheduled in conjunction with the advisor and the Graduate Coordinator.

OPTION B: TAKE HOME EXAM

The student will be given three weeks to answer two questions relating to the approved proposal for the major and ten days to answer one question for the minor. Questions are written by the major/minor committee. The major/minor advisor will consult with other committee members in order to formulate questions and the format for the exam. Students will write a minimum of forty (40) pages, excluding references for the major, and a minimum of twenty (20) pages for the minor.

OPTION C: SCHOLARLY PAPER

The student, with the approval of the advisor and with the supervision of the committee, may write a scholarly paper based on the approved proposal. The length of the paper and due date will be determined by the committee. The paper may be a scholarly theoretical essay or an integrative literature review.

PASSING THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION: The student will demonstrate a depth of knowledge related to the topic that provides clear evidence of the ability to synthesize, analyze and write in a scholarly manner. Students must demonstrate their understanding of theoretical underpinnings of their topic. The Comprehensive Examination Committee is considered a committee of the whole. If two members of the committee do not pass the student, the student fails the written examination.

The student will be informed by the major/minor advisor if the examination has been passed. Upon successful completion of the written portion of the exam, the student is encouraged to meet with individual members of the committee prior to the Oral Comprehensive Examination in order to further discuss the questions.

RETAKE THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION:

If a student does not pass the written examination, it is up to the discretion of the committee as to whether a student will be allowed to retake the exam in its entirety, or a portion of the exam. If a reexamination is recommended, the committee should not be changed.

ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Upon successful completion of the written examinations in the major and minor(s), the Oral Comprehensive Examination is conducted before the examining committee of the faculty. This is the occasion when faculty committee members have both the opportunity and obligation to require the student to display a broad knowledge of the chosen field of study and sufficient depth of understanding in areas of specialization. The committee may ask questions that are outside of the scope and specific topic of the written examination. Discussion of proposed dissertation research may be included, but should not be the focus of the examination. The examining committee must attest that the student has demonstrated the professional level of knowledge expected of a junior academic colleague.

Students must submit the Application for Comprehensive Oral Examination Form signed by all committee members and the department head (required by the Graduate College) to the department office three weeks prior to the scheduled oral examination in order to meet the required seven working day Graduate College deadline.

Per the Graduate College, the minimum time for the Oral Comprehensive Examination is one hour and the maximum time is three hours.

All examiners must be present for the entire Oral Comprehensive Examination.

The examination is conducted in closed session. It is not open to the public.

Advancement to Candidacy

When the student has an approved doctoral Plan of Study on file, has satisfied all course work, and residence requirements, and passed the written and oral portions of the Comprehensive Examination, they must file an Application to Advance to Candidacy. This application must be submitted to the Graduate Degree Certification Office as soon as requirements are met but no later than six months before the Final Oral Defense Examination is scheduled. The student must meet with the Graduate Coordinator to fulfill this requirement.

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