

Rules for Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Department of Political Science

Name: _____ is scheduled to take the Ph.D. Comprehensive

Examination this **FALL** _____ **SPRING** _____ **20** _____ **semester**

Our records indicate that the members of this student's PhD committee include:

_____	Chair	_____	Co-Chair
_____	Member	_____	Member
_____	Member	_____	Member

The student's fields are: Major: _____

Minor: _____

Minor 2 (Optional): _____

This document provides a summary of the procedures for the Ph.D. exam. If you need additional information, please consult the Department's set of rules in "The Graduate Program: Department of Political Science," the Graduate College Website, or ask the Graduate Director or the Graduate Coordinator.

1. Students must register and submit this form to take an exam by December 15 for Spring semester to the Graduate Coordinator. Students will not be allowed to take an exam unless they have submitted this form to do so.
2. The Department will conduct all written comprehensive examinations no later than the 4th week of the spring semester of 2nd year (for students entering with a MA degree) or no later than the 4th week of spring semester of 3rd year (for students entering without a MA). Oral examinations will be conducted no later than the third week following written exams.
3. It is the responsibility of the student to contact all faculty on the examination committee to discuss the writing of exam questions. The chair of the examination committee is responsible for compiling the exam questions gathered from the other committee members. The chair of the examination committee must give the entire set of questions to the Graduate Coordinator one week prior to the scheduled start of the take home exam. The Ph.D. examination will be canceled if a full set of questions is not available in the Department office by Tuesday of the week prior to the exam.
4. The comprehensive examination consists of two components: a written examination and an oral examination. Written comprehensive examinations are given in the student's major and minor fields of concentration. The written portion of the Ph.D. exam will be given in a take-home format. Students will have one week to complete both their major and minor portions of this exam. Exams will be distributed at 9:00 am Monday and will be due at 3:00 pm on Friday. Students who miss the 3:00 pm deadline will have to petition the Graduate Studies Committee for acceptance of their written exam.

5. Though the Department has no official rules for length of this written exam nor for distribution of time between major and minor fields, a typical student might be expected to spend three days on the major and two days on the minor field. A typical student may average up to 10 pages a day. Of course, the student and faculty advising committee should discuss expectations prior to undertaking the exam. Students with two minors, for example, may wish to distribute their time 50% for the major field and 50% for the two minor fields. A student should have some choice among the questions, e.g., answering two out of three questions listed in a section.
6. Oral examinations will be conducted no later than the third week following written exams. The examination is conducted by the student's Guidance Committee and will be based on the written examination or other matters deemed suitable by the Committee members. The oral examination will last at least two hours and will not exceed three hours. The department is unable to assume the financial costs (e.g. conference calls, travel) for participation of outside members (or out of town U of A faculty) in oral exam procedures.
7. The comprehensive examination is considered to be a single examination, although it consists of written and oral parts. Because students are not permitted to undertake the oral examination until they have performed satisfactorily on the written examination, there will be an initial evaluation of the written examinations followed by a final evaluation of the entire comprehensive examination.
8. It is the responsibility of the chair to canvass all members of the committee as to the student's performance on the written examination. This preliminary evaluation of the written portion of the examination must be completed no later than one and one-half weeks after the written examination has been completed. The chair of the committee must report the result of this canvass to the Graduate Coordinator one full week prior to the scheduled oral examination. When questions arise about possible failure of some portion of the written examination, consult the Department's official documents for further instructions.
9. Following the oral examination, the Committee will evaluate the student's performance for the Department on the entire examination using the categories High Pass, Pass, or Fail. (The Graduate College recognizes only pass or fail.) The initial evaluation of the written examination will not prejudice the final evaluation in any way. The evaluation category will be determined by majority vote except in the case of Fail, which is determined by two votes.
10. In the case of a failed first attempt at the preliminary examination, the Guidance Committee will recommend one of the following options:
 1. If the student is clearly so unqualified that the prospect of passing a second examination is remote, then the student may be advised not to undertake a second attempt. However, a student may repeat a failed examination one time if he or she chooses to do so.
 2. If the student has a reasonable chance at succeeding in a later examination, then a reexamination will be recommended. At the discretion of the committee, a second attempt may require repeating all or part of the written examination or only the oral examination.
 3. In the case of a second examination, the entire membership of the first examination committee must remain intact and serve as members of the committee for the second examination.
 4. In the case of a failed second attempt at the preliminary examination, the student is dismissed from the degree program.