

Comprehensive Exam

FAQ

The following should answer most of your questions about the comprehensive exam.

What is a comprehensive exam?

Webster defines comprehensive as "covering completely" or "inclusive." The comprehensive exam includes all course work taken for the graduate degree (800 and 900 courses). By reviewing all coursework, you are prepared to discuss food and nutrition topics and make connections between the concepts covered throughout your curriculum. It is expected that students are able to participate in a conversation or discussion with the faculty examination committee about a variety of topics.

Who takes the comprehensive exam?

All masters degree students take an oral comprehensive examination as the culminating experience.

Who are the faculty on the Examination Committee?

The graduate advisor is the Chair of the Examination Committee. Since Dr. Crosier teaches many of the core courses, he is also automatically a member of the exam committee. You may select one other faculty from whom you have taken a graduate level course. Graduate level courses have either an 800 or 900 number; you should review your coursework to determine who is most appropriate for your committee.

You must ask the faculty if they are willing to participate in your Exam.

How do I set up the time of my exam?

The comprehensive examination must be taken no later than the semester following the last semester of coursework. Once the faculty has agreed to be on your exam committee, please submit the month and approximate timeframe that you are interested in taking the exam to Dr. Neubauer. An

exam date will be confirmed with you approximately one month in advance. Most exams take place at 4:30 P.M. or later in Hemenway Hall 105.

What must I do to schedule the exam?

Prior approval, in writing, is required by the Associate Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education and by the members of the Examination Committee. Applications for comprehensive examinations are based on the intended date of graduation.

The dates are as follows:

- August 15 for December graduation
- October 15 for January graduation
- January 15 for May graduation
- April 15 for August graduation

What if I have not confirmed an exam date by the deadline?

You must apply according to the deadline; any delay may prohibit you from graduating on time. If your date has not been confirmed, you may note TBA on the application.

How do I prepare for the comprehensive exam?

The comprehensive exam includes all course work taken for your graduate degree (800 and 900 courses). **The core courses are always included.** The majority of the questions, however, will come from the areas of study which your committee represents.

You need to demonstrate an understanding of broad concepts and be able to participate in a conversation about those concepts with your soon to be colleagues. We especially look for students to make connections between courses and often begin with one question but link other questions to the same general topic. Your ability to discuss topics will require thorough review of your course material.

Two graduates have provided [advice](#) on how to be successful.

What is a typical question on the comprehensive exam?

You may be asked to design a study around a specific disease state. Your response should demonstrate an understanding of the disease state as well as the principles of research design and evaluation. For example, you would

not suggest Hgb_{A1C} as an outcome measure if your study of persons with diabetes is only 3 weeks in length.

What should I bring to the comprehensive exam?

You are not required to bring anything to the comprehensive exam. However, you may wish to come with paper and pen to write down a question and water to quench a dry mouth.

I am ready to graduate! What should I do?

There are four graduation dates per year during which diplomas are issued: December, January, May and August. Commencement exercises are held in February and in May. **In order to participate in Commencement, graduate students must have completed all degree requirements.** If you completed all degree requirements in the preceding August, December, or January, you are invited to participate in the February Commencement. If you completed all degree requirements in May, you are invited to participate in the May Commencement. Application deadlines are based on the intended graduation date. The corresponding application deadlines are:

- September 1st for the December 31st graduation date
- October 1st for the January 31st graduation date
- February 1st for the May graduation date
- May 1st for the August 31st graduation date