

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION POLICY

All students enrolled in the M.S. degree program in FACS are required to take comprehensive exams. Students electing to complete the thesis option will defend their thesis as the oral comprehensive exam. Students electing the non-thesis option will complete a written comprehensive examination as outlined below.

Purpose

Comprehensive examinations require students to:

- demonstrate comprehension in their chosen major
- analyze and synthesize appropriate literature;
- synthesize and apply knowledge learned during the course of study.

Additionally, students are required to provide responses that are well organized, cogent, logical, and grammatically correct.

Eligibility and Time Frame

Comprehensive examinations will be held *between the 12-15th week of the semester* (see timeframe on calendar of events). Students will be deemed eligible to take comprehensive examinations during their final semester of study and are required to complete the exams within one year (12 months) of establishing eligibility. Students should complete and submit the *Comprehensive Examination Request* form to the department chair by the second Monday of the semester of their requested examination date.

Students should also be aware of the Application for Degree and Graduation. According to the Graduate Bulletin, “All candidates are required to make formal application for the graduate degree and graduation by the dates specified in the academic calendar. These dates are approximately September 24 for December graduation, February 4 for May graduation, and the first Friday of the Summer I session for August graduation. Students not meeting this deadline may have their graduation delayed by one semester.”

Thesis Option Only: Oral Comprehensive Examination Format

After the thesis has been read and approved, the candidate will meet with his/her thesis committee for an oral examination, which will consist of a defense of the thesis. Upon successful defense of the thesis, the candidate will be recommended to the Dean of the Graduate School for graduation. A majority (2/3) of the student’s committee must approve the thesis and its defense. If approval is denied, the candidate will not be recommended for graduation and will revise thesis according to committee instruction.

Non-Thesis Option Only: Written Comprehensive Examination Format

The comprehensive examination is to be completed during a seven-hour period, beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 3:30 p.m. When students complete the *Comprehensive Examination Request Form*, they will be entered into a BlackBoard Community. The examination will be made available via BlackBoard Community at 8:30am by the comprehensive examination coordinator and returned via BlackBoard Community within the seven-hour time frame. Students must submit a valid email address and a contact phone number to the comprehensive examination coordinator on the *Comprehensive Examination Request Form*. If a student does not

have access to a personal computer or computer that can be used the duration of the exam, the student will be required to complete the written comprehensive examination in the UCA Testing Center. The exam is closed book and is administered under the provisions of Academic Integrity (<http://uca.edu/gbulletin/general-requirements-for-graduate-study/>). The exam must be typed.

Academic integrity is strictly enforced, including *any* academic dishonesty, plagiarism (including reference citations), and sharing or taking others' works. Any suspicion of or noted violation of academic integrity will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Examination Content

Comprehensive exam questions for the M.S. required core courses will be selected from a pool of questions that has been developed for each class.

- Advanced Knowledge in Family and Consumer Sciences/Nutrition and Foods - Students taking classes as a dietetic intern will receive a question about a specific rotation area. Students taking classes outside the context of the Dietetic Internship will receive a question based on advanced concepts covered in their topical area; for example, the history and profession of FACS.
- Research Area/Evidence Based Practice - Students will respond to research questions based on FACS 6335, Evidenced Based Research, and/or their experience with individual or thesis research.
- Statistics - This question will emphasize application of content covered in the FACS 6350, Statistics in FACS, course or equivalent substitution.
- Elective – Each student will select one particular graduate course upon which she/he will be tested. The course instructor (or a designated faculty substitute) will prepare a question related to the selected course. Selection of a course outside of FACS/NUTR for the comprehensive exam elective is subject to approval by the FACS Graduate Coordinator and agreement by the course instructor to write and grade a question.

Comprehensive Examination Coordinator

The Chair of the Department or other appointed faculty member will serve as the comprehensive examination coordinator. The coordinator will publicize the exam, assemble the examination questions, and administer the exam.

Grading of Examinations

The questions from the core classes will be graded by the faculty members who taught the classes. Following completion of the written exams, graders have three days to review and grade. All completed questions are graded using the following format: "Pass with Distinction," "Pass," "Low Pass"/oral examination indicated, and "Fail."

Oral Examination

In situations where the quality of answers is marginal, graders may assign a grade of "Low Pass"/oral examination indicated. Affected students will be notified via email which specific responses were Low Pass when they receive their comprehensive examination results. They will also be notified of their assigned appointment time for the oral examination. The oral examination will be given virtually with the use of a web camera to capture the conversation.

The camera will need to be positioned such that the entire work area can be seen by the faculty member to assure that the student is not using any additional references or supporting materials during the exam. Faculty present for the oral examination will include the examination coordinator and the faculty or authors(s) of the question(s) for which the student has received Low Pass. At the end of the oral examination, student's responses will be discussed by the faculty present, and the student will be immediately notified of the result. Should a student fail the oral examination, rewrites will be given within five calendar days of the initial exam.

Failure

Students who fail one of the comprehensive examination areas will be given one opportunity within five calendar days of the initial exam to rewrite the single failed question. If the rewritten answer is low pass, an oral examination may be scheduled again. If the student fails the rewrite, they may be dismissed from the program.

Students who fail two or more areas of their comprehensive examination will write on the sections they fail and any other sections graded as "low pass," within five calendar days of the initial exam. A student, who fails the comprehensive exam on the second attempt, in the absence of compelling extenuating circumstances, will be dismissed from the program.

Remedial Coursework

Remedial coursework in the area(s) of deficiency may be recommended by the graduate faculty if the student fails two or more comprehensive examination questions on the first examination attempt.

Student Access to Examinations

Completed examinations are retained in the Department until the student passes all areas of the comprehensive exam. Students have the right to review the examination report form and take notes about any written comments from the graders.

Summary of Grading

Examination Results	Actions
Pass with Distinction	Comprehensive examination degree requirement fulfilled
Pass	Comprehensive examination degree requirement fulfilled
Low Pass	Oral examination will be scheduled within one day
Fail one area	Rewrite failed question within 5 calendar days of initial exam date
Fail two or more areas	Rewrite exam, including all failed areas and low-pass areas. Remedial coursework may be recommended before student is scheduled to rewrite exam.
Fail one or more areas on second exam attempt (Exam rewrite)	Dismissed from program

Program Dismissal Due to Failure

If a student does not pass the comprehensive examination after all re-attempts have been

exhausted:

1. The student will be notified in writing that they are being dismissed at the end of the current semester due to failure to pass the comprehensive examination. Notification of dismissal should occur as soon as possible.
2. The student may appeal the dismissal to the Department Chair within 10 business days of receiving the notification.
3. As noted in the UCA Student Handbook, “At each stage of the appeal, the student must provide a written justification for the appeal and an explanation of the desired resolution; reviewers at any stage of the appeal may request appropriate additional documentation from any party to the appeal.”
4. The Line of Authority for these appeals is as follows:
 - a. Department Chair
 - b. Dean of the college
 - c. Provost

Calendar of Events (all dates subject to change)

Conducting the comprehensive examination follows a process that allows the Department Chair or designated faculty member and students enough time to prepare using the set exam dates. These dates differ from one semester to another as presented in the example below. These dates are for the weeks in the semester the student will graduate.

Timeframe	
Second Monday of the semester	Deadline for students to submit Comprehensive Exam Request Form
By midterm of the semester	Students contacting instructors for guidance must do so prior to midterm of the semester in which they are writing comps.
Approximately 4 weeks prior to the end of the semester or equivalent if summer term	Examination given
3 days later	Grader results due to Graduate Coordinator by 5:00pm
4 days later	Comprehensive exam grade report disseminated to each student
Same week as dissemination of comprehensive exam grade report	Students earning low pass or fail contact Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Faculty writing questions for guidance regarding preparing for oral exam
Finals Week	Oral examinations held

APPENDIX A: MS Comprehensive Exam Request Form

Submit this form to the department office by the established submission deadline for the semester you plan to take the comprehensive exam. (See Comps Policy document for timeline)

Full Name:	
Student ID Number:	
Home Address:	
Telephone Number:	
E-Mail Address:	
<p>Which option have you selected for your MS additional requirements?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Thesis (oral comprehensive exam, stop here and submit)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-thesis (written comprehensive exam, complete entire form)</p>	
<p>What is your advanced knowledge question preference?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dietetic Intern, Management</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dietetic Intern, Clinical</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dietetic Intern, Community</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Interior Design</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> General Family and Consumer Sciences</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition</p>	
<p>Please identify the course you are selecting for your elective question on the comprehensive exam and the instructor under whom you took the course (see Comps Policy for more information). Example: NUTR 6335, Nutrition Counseling, Dr. Roofe.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> FACS _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NUTR _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____</p>	
<p>A computer is required to take this exam. Are you able to complete this exam on a computer?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If you are not able to complete the exam on a personal computer, you will be required to complete the exam at the UCA Testing Center in Torreyson West.</p>	
<p>Please identify any special needs that pertain to your ability to take the exam (add an extra sheet if you need more room):</p>	

Checklist and Timeline

- Identify semester of graduation
- Apply for comprehensive examinations by the SECOND MONDAY of the semester in which you graduate
- Apply for graduation
- Receive response from Department Chair about date for comprehensive examination
- By midterm, request information from faculty, if needed
- Submit Graduate Portfolio for review to Department Chair at a minimum 3 weeks prior to graduation
- Test Blackboard Community on personal computer to ensure function
- Take comprehensive examination
- Receive feedback within three business days
- Schedule orals or re-write exam as needed
- Department Chair submits results along with Graduate Portfolio results to Graduate School