**Nutrition and Family Sciences Department**

**Comprehensive Examination, Graduate Portfolio, & Exit Survey Policy**

***Please read this document in its entirety.***

***All aspects of the comprehensive examination, graduate portfolio,***

***and exit surveys are essential and are explained in detail.***

All students enrolled in the M.S. degree program in FCS or NUTR must take comprehensive exams. Students electing to complete the thesis will defend their thesis as the oral comprehensive exam. Students selecting the non-thesis option will complete a written comprehensive examination as outlined below. All students enrolled in the M.S. degree program in FCS or NUTR must submit a portfolio, conduct an exit survey, and provide information regarding employers for an employer survey.

***Purpose***

Comprehensive examinations require students to demonstrate comprehension in their chosen major, analyze and synthesize appropriate literature, and synthesize and apply knowledge learned during the graduate program. Additionally, students are required to provide well-organized, compelling, logical, and grammatically correct responses.

Portfolios allow students to organize their graduate work in one electronic space that can be used when applying for a new position or promotion.

Exit surveys allow students to anonymously give feedback to the program for program improvement. Employer surveys allow those who employ our graduates to provide input to the program.

***Eligibility and Time Frame***

Comprehensive examinations will generally be held *between the 12-15th week of the semester* (see timeframe on the calendar of events; summer dates vary). 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 must 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 the thesis committee for an oral examination, including a thesis defense. 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 the defense. If approval is denied, the candidate will not be recommended for graduation and revise the thesis according to committee instructions.

***Non-Thesis Option Only: Written Comprehensive Examination Format***

The comprehensive examination is to be completed during seven hours, 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 comprehensive examination coordinator will make the examination available via Blackboard Community at 8:30 am 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*.

Suppose a student does not have access to a personal computer or computer that can be used for the exam duration. In that case, 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. Students must use Respondus Lockdown Browser and a webcam at all times during the comprehensive final exam.

Academic integrity is strictly enforced, including academic dishonesty, plagiarism (including reference citations), and sharing or taking others’ works. Any suspicion of or noted violation of academic integrity would result in immediate dismissal from the program. Students must be in Lockdown Browser, and a webcam must be used to record and monitor the student while taking the exam.

***Examination Content***

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

* Advanced Knowledge in Family and Consumer Sciences/Nutrition and Foods - Students will respond to a question based on leadership development and professionalism.
* 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 – Students will answer questions about applying content covered in the FACS 6350, Statistics in FACS, course, or equivalent substitution.
* Elective – Each student will select one graduate course to be tested upon.

***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. After completing the written exams, graders have 24 hours to review and grade. All constructed 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 “Low Pass”/oral examination grade. Affected students will be notified via email of specific Low Pass responses when receiving their comprehensive examination results. They will also be told of their assigned appointment time for the oral examination. The oral examination will be given virtually using a web camera to capture the conversation. The camera will need to be positioned so that the faculty member can see the entire work area to ensure that the student is not using additional references or supporting materials during the exam. Faculty present for the oral examination will include the Comprehensive Examination Coordinator and the faculty or authors(s) of the question(s) for which the student has received a Low Pass. At the end of the oral examination, the faculty will discuss students' responses, and the student will be immediately notified of the result. Should a student fail the oral test, 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 to rewrite the single failed question within five calendar days of the initial exam. 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. In the absence of compelling extenuating circumstances, a student who fails the comprehensive exam on the second attempt will be dismissed from the program.

***Remedial Coursework***

The graduate faculty may recommend remedial coursework in the area(s) of deficiency 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 comprehensive exam areas. Students have the right to review the examination report form and take notes about any written comments from the graders.

***Summary of Grading***

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| **Examination Results Category** | **Actions** |
| 3-Pass with Distinction | Comprehensive examination degree requirement fulfilled |
| 2-Pass | Comprehensive examination degree requirement fulfilled |
| 1-Low Pass | The oral examination will be scheduled within one day. |
| 0-Fail one area | Rewrite failed questions within five calendar days of the initial exam date. |
| 0-Fail two or more areas | Rewrite exam, including all failed areas and low-pass areas. Remedial coursework may be recommended before the student is scheduled to rewrite the exam. |
| 0-Fail one or more areas on the 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:

# 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.

# The student may appeal the dismissal to the Department Chair within ten business days of receiving the notification.

# 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.”

# The Line of Authority for these appeals is as follows:

# Department Chair

# Dean of the college

# 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. As presented in the example below, these dates differ from one semester to another. These dates are for the weeks in the semester the student will graduate.

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| **General Timeframe** | **Spring 2022 Dates** | **Action** |
| Third week of the semester | February 3 | Deadline for students to submit Comprehensive Exam Request Form |
| Apply for Graduation | February 4 | Complete graduation application online: <https://uca.edu/graduateschool/graduation/> |
| By midterm of the semester | March 3 | Students contacting instructors for guidance must do so before the semester’s midterm in which they are writing comps. |
| Graduate portfolio due to Department Chair | April 7 | Instructions are on the NFS website: <https://uca.edu/nfs> under the Programs tab. |
| Approximately four weeks before the end of the semester or equivalent of the summer term. | April 11 | The examination is given on Blackboard; the exam is open 8:30 am – 3:30 pm. |
| 24 hours later | April 12 | Grader results due to Graduate Coordinator by 3:30 pm |
| One day from the exam | April 12 | Comprehensive exam grade report disseminated to each student |
| One day from the exam | April 12 | Students earning low pass or fail contact Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Faculty are writing questions for guidance regarding preparing for an oral exam. |
| The week before final exams week | April 25 | Oral examinations held if needed  Exit survey for students |

# APPENDIX A: MS Comprehensive Exam Request Form & Employer Information

**Submit this form to the department office by the established submission deadline for the semester you plan to take the comprehensive exam.**

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| --- | --- |
| Full Name: | Employer: |
| Student ID Number: | Direct Supervisor Name: |
| Home Address: | Supervisor Address: |
| Telephone Number: | Supervisor Phone: |
| E-Mail Address: | Supervisor Email: |
| Are you part of the KADDI program?  [ ] Yes—if so, do not complete the rest of this form; turn in the top portion only  [ ] No—If no, complete the rest of this form and turn in the entire form | |
| Which option have you selected for your MS additional requirements?  [ ] Thesis (oral comprehensive exam, stop here and submit)  [ ] Non-thesis (written comprehensive exam, entire, complete form) | |
| What is your *advanced knowledge* question preference?  [ ] Dietetic Intern, Management  [ ] Dietetic Intern, Clinical  [ ] Dietetic Intern, Community  [ ] Family and Consumer Sciences  [ ] Nutrition | |
| Please identify the course you selected 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.  [ ] FACS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  [ ] NUTR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  [ ] OTHER \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| A computer is required to take this exam. Are you able to complete this exam on a computer?  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.    [ ] Yes  [ ] No | |
| Please identify any special needs that pertain to your ability to take the exam (add an extra sheet if you need more room): | |

# APPENDIX B: Graduate Student Exit Survey

**Students will receive this Qualtrics survey in their UCA email the week before final exams in the semester they plan to graduate. Please be thinking about these questions and give us your honest feedback. Do not fill this out—wait for the emailed survey.**

Graduate Student Exit Survey

Start of Block: Student Satisfaction

Q1   
Thank you for participating in this student satisfaction survey. Your answers will be used to improve the student experience.   
  
How helpful or unhelpful is your academic advisor?

* Extremely helpful (1)
* Moderately helpful (2)
* Slightly helpful (3)
* Neither helpful nor unhelpful (4)
* Slightly unhelpful (5)
* Moderately unhelpful (6)
* Extremely unhelpful (7)

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| Page Break |  |

Q2 How easy or difficult is it to obtain the resources that you need from the university library system?

* Extremely easy (1)
* Moderately easy (2)
* Slightly easy (3)
* Neither easy nor difficult (4)
* Slightly difficult (5)
* Moderately difficult (6)
* Extremely difficult (7)

Q3 How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the university-sponsored extracurricular activities at this university?

* Very Dissatisfied (1)
* Dissatisfied (2)
* Somewhat Dissatisfied (3)
* Neutral (4)
* Somewhat Satisfied (5)
* Satisfied (6)
* Very Satisfied (7)

Q4 Overall, how well do the professors at this university teach?

* Extremely well (1)
* Very well (2)
* Moderately well (3)
* Slightly well (4)
* Not well at all (5)

Q5 How easy or difficult is registering for courses at this university?

* Extremely easy (1)
* Moderately easy (2)
* Slightly easy (3)
* Neither easy nor difficult (4)
* Slightly difficult (5)
* Moderately difficult (6)
* Extremely difficult (7)

Q6 How reasonable or unreasonable is the cost of courses/tuition at this university?

* Extremely reasonable (1)
* Moderately reasonable (2)
* Slightly reasonable (3)
* Neither reasonable nor unreasonable (4)
* Slightly unreasonable (5)
* Moderately unreasonable (6)
* Extremely unreasonable (7)

Q7 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your experience at this university?

* Very Dissatisfied (1)
* Dissatisfied (2)
* Somewhat Dissatisfied (3)
* Neutral (4)
* Somewhat Satisfied (5)
* Satisfied (6)
* Very Satisfied (7)

Q8 How likely are you to recommend this university to friends or colleagues?

* 0 (0)
* 1 (1)
* 2 (2)
* 3 (3)
* 4 (4)
* 5 (5)
* 6 (6)
* 7 (7)
* 8 (8)
* 9 (9)
* 10 (10)

Q9 What are the strengths of this program?

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Q10 What are areas for improvement for this program?

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End of Block: Student Satisfaction

**Appendix C: Checklist**

* Identify semester of graduation
* Submit Comprehensive Exam Request and Employer Information
* Apply for graduation
* Reach out to faculty for guidance on exam questions
* Submit Graduate Portfolio to Department Chair
* Take Comprehensive Exams
* Receive feedback within 24 hours
* Schedule orals or re-write exam as needed
* Department Chair submits results of Comprehensive Exam, and Portfolio completion to Graduate School and the student is copied
* Complete exit survey