

MSCS Comprehensive Exam Policy

Revised: March 16, 2016

Effective: Spring 2016

Purpose of Comprehensive Examination

This document defines the purpose, requirements, and procedure for the comprehensive examination for candidates in the master's program in Computer Science. The examination is intended to test the candidate's comprehensive knowledge on the five core courses in the MS CS curriculum.

General Requirements

Written comprehensive examinations are required for all graduate students in the master's program who elect the Comprehensive Exam Option. Master's students are eligible to take the comprehensive when they have

- obtained classified status;
- earned a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in all courses required in MSCS program
- finished all the core courses – CSE602, CSE610, CSE630, CSE655 and CSE660.

When to Take Comprehensive Examination

The intent to take the Comprehensive Exam option must be communicated via email to the Graduate Coordinator for Advising no later than the quarter in which the candidate is registered for the last core course. This notification allows the Graduate Coordinator for Advising to verify whether requirements for taking the comprehensive examination have been met; and to prepare the paperwork to advance the student to candidacy. Once a student has been Advanced to Candidacy under the Comprehensive Exam option, the student will register for CSE689 for one unit and may not switch to the Project Option nor to the Thesis Option. Please consult the following table as to when to register for CSE689.

Quarter When Last Core Course is Taken and to Declare Intent to Take the Comprehensive Exam	When to Register for CSE689
Fall of current year	Spring of the following year
Winter of current year	Spring of the current year
Spring of current year	Fall of the current year

Written comprehensive examination shall be offered once each Fall and Spring quarter. It is normally scheduled on the 2nd Friday in October and the 4th Friday in April.

Format, Criteria, and Evaluation of Comprehensive Examination

The faculty who last taught the core course will make the questions for that core course section of the comprehensive exam. There will be two questions that the candidate must answer per core course. Each candidate will be allowed to bring one sheet (front and back) of notes for each core course. No computer or electronic device will be allowed. The student examinee will take CSE610, CSE655, and CSE660 in the morning from 8 AM to 12 noon. There will be a one hour lunch break. CSE602 and CSE630 will be taken in the afternoon from 1-4 PM. The written comprehensive examination will be administered by the Graduate Coordinator for Advising and evaluated by the faculty who made the questions.

An examinee who fails the comprehensive examination will earn NC (no credit) grade and is permitted one retake. The student will need to register again for CSE689 for 1 unit for the next scheduled comprehensive exam. If a student fails the exam a second time the student will be dismissed from the program. Honor code violations (academic integrity, cheating) will result in immediate failure and dismissal from the program.

Appealing Results of the Comprehensive Examination

Candidates who appeal must submit a written notification to the Graduate Coordinator for Advising within ten working days after receipt of written notification of failure. The Graduate Coordinator for Advising forwards the appeal to the appropriate faculty and presents the results to the MSCS Graduate Committee who makes the final decision.