

B. Comprehensive Examination (Ph.D. Only)

1. The Comprehensive Examination will be scheduled after the Ph.D. candidate completes requirements in the majority of courses. The Comprehensive Exam is administered by the student's graduate committee. It is scheduled by the Graduate School through the Department's Office of Graduate Programs with the Graduate Program Coordinator's approval. **At least four weeks (in advance of the exam) should be allowed** for receiving exam reporting forms from the Graduate School. The student must be registered during the semester the Comprehensive Exam is conducted.
2. The purpose of the Comprehensive Examination is to evaluate whether the doctoral candidate has acquired sufficient knowledge in his/her field, has the ability to design and evaluate significant research, has resourcefulness in formulating and solving problems in his/her field, and has the ability to communicate effectively with both scientists and laypeople. The Comprehensive Examination will probe the student's scientific and general knowledge and ability to do original thinking.
3. The committee should confer prior to the Comprehensive Examination to review the objectives of the candidate's program and the structure of the examination. Questions should examine the candidate's knowledge of his/her major and minor fields of specialization. The examination consists of both written and oral components, with the written component preceding the oral component. A committee member may choose to not require a written component for their portion of the exam. Each set of written questions is not to take more than 3 hours to complete. No more than 2 sets of questions may be assigned a student in any particular day. Each committee may require their written questions be responded to either as an open book or a closed book exam. The oral exam should be scheduled within ten days following the last written exam.
4. The candidate should provide copies of his/her dissertation research proposal prior to the examination. The proposal is to be prepared in accordance with the Agricultural Experiment Station project format (<http://agsci.psu.edu/research/ag-experiment-station/developing/proposal-guidance/proposal-instructions>). During the oral portion of the examination, the candidate should review the proposal and describe his/her progress.
5. A two-thirds favorable vote of the student's committee is required for successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination. The committee Chair notifies the Department's Office of Graduate Programs (the Graduate Program Coordinator) of the results of the examination by completing the forms supplied by Graduate School at the time of scheduling. The Report on Comprehensive Examination is copied for the student's academic file and then the original is forwarded to the Graduate School. In the case where a student does not pass the Comprehensive Examination, the committee is responsible for deciding if a second examination will be permitted.
6. **Students must be registered continuously (SUBJ 601 full-time; SUBJ 611 part-time) each semester (excluding summers) beginning with the semester following the passing of the Comprehensive Examination and continuing each semester until the Final Oral**

Examination (Defense) is passed. International Ph.D. students should contact Global Programs regarding their visa status after passing the Final defense.

C. Final Oral Examination for the M.S. and Ph.D. Degrees

Students and faculty advisers should prepare for the Final Oral Examination months in advance. The semester prior to scheduling the Final Oral Examination, the student and her/his adviser should request a written transcript audit to confirm that the student is on track for the defense, verifying that there are no missing grades and no missing credit requirements, and that there are not too many graded thesis 600-level credits.

The Final Examination is oral and related in large part to the thesis/dissertation, but it may cover the candidate's whole program of study without regard to courses that have been taken either here or elsewhere. It is scheduled after completion of other requirements for the degree.

1. The student meets with the adviser to: 1) ascertain if all of the course requirements for the degree have been met; 2) verify that the thesis/dissertation is complete, and 3) arrange possible date, time, and place of examination. The adviser should have records available at the examination indicating compliance with degree requirements.
2. The adviser contacts the committee members and arranges a convenient time for the examination within specified time limits set by the Graduate School in relation to date of graduation (and Comprehensive Examination for the Ph.D.).
3. **The adviser** contacts the Department's Office of Graduate Programs with the date, time, location, and thesis/dissertation title (and the list of committee members) **at least four weeks before the scheduled date for a Ph.D. and at least three weeks before the scheduled date for the M.S.** An updated copy of the Graduate Academic Plan, signed by the student and the adviser, is taken to the Department's Office of Graduate Programs at this time.
4. The Graduate Coordinator in the Department's Office of Graduate Programs, with the Director of Graduate Studies approval, schedules the examination for Ph.D. candidates via a letter through the Graduate School. The adviser may request that the Graduate Coordinator in the Department's Office of Graduate Programs announce the thesis/dissertation defense to the Department's various listserves (faculty, grad students, associates, and staff) by way of e-mail transmittal (in writing) at least 10 days prior to the scheduled date, or the adviser may do this himself/herself with a copy to the Graduate Coordinator in the Department's Office of Graduate Studies. The presentation part of the Ph.D. Final Oral Examination is open to the public. Master's thesis exams are to be similarly announced, but students and the general public may be excluded at the discretion of the adviser.
5. The student delivers the thesis/dissertation in final format approved by the adviser, and in compliance with the "Thesis Information Bulletin," to the committee **members at least two weeks prior** to the Final Oral Examination.
6. The thesis/dissertation should be reviewed by members of the student's committee prior to the examination. At the time of the Final Oral Examination major revisions should not be