

OILS Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Guidelines

University of New Mexico

As stated in the UNM Catalog, “A doctoral student must pass a Comprehensive Examination in the major field of study. This examination, which may be written, oral or both, is not limited to the areas of the student’s coursework, but tests the student’s grasp of the field as a whole.”

The student is to meet with the Program of Studies Committee Members to determine the topics of the exam questions.

The written exam is typically administered on three consecutive days, four hours per day (12 hours total). The student is to respond to one question per day and may choose the question they wish to answer on any given day. The Program Coordinator proctors the exam.

The three questions are intended to assess the student’s understanding of his or her emphasis and specialty areas, and the relationship between the minor area of study and the major. Therefore, students will receive one question that covers each of the following:

- The theory that underlies the student’s major emphasis area in OI&LS Program.
- The theory that underlies the student’s specialty within his/her emphasis area.
- The relationship between the minor area of study and the student’s current area of study in the OI&LS Program.

Any of these questions may address aspects of the student’s dissertation area if a topic has been chosen. In addition, any of these questions may have a research methodology focus or component. Students are expected to work with their Program of Studies Committee Members to determine their questions. Students will not be told the exact question, but will know the content area that will be covered. Students are responsible

for tracking the Program Coordinator's receipt of the questions from their Committee Members and all should be received by her no later than one week prior to the first day of the written exam.

Upon the successful completion of the written exam, the Program Coordinator will have all three questions and answers copied for each of the Committee Members to evaluate. An evaluation of the Written Portion of the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam form will be submitted to each Committee Member with the questions and answers. This form has the Committee Members stipulate whether the answers are acceptable, acceptable with stipulation or not acceptable. On this form the date, time and place of the oral is given, as a reminder. Each Committee Member is requested to bring this completed evaluation sheet to the oral exam to be turned in.

Within two weeks of the written exam, the student will participate in the oral portion of the examination process, where the responses to the questions will be discussed. The focus of the oral exam will typically cover the areas of the written answers that need clarification. (It is up to the student to schedule this oral examination with the Committee Members and to contact the Program Coordinator to schedule a room for this event.)

If the oral exam is satisfactorily completed, all Program of Studies Committee Members sign off on the Comprehensive Examination form. The Committee Chair is responsible for delivering the completed forms to the Program Coordinator, who copies the Exam form for the student's file and sends the original to OGS.

If the Outside-of-OILS Committee Member has any questions in regard to this process, please contact the OILS Program Coordinator at 277-4131 or via e-mail at oils.unm.edu.

Thank you for your participation in this process.