

**Industrial/Organizational Psychology
Graduate Program
Comprehensive Examination Policy
Revised: May 2018**

General Information Regarding the Comprehensive Examination

Students who have completed their Master's Thesis and most of the course work required for the doctoral degree are expected to take their comprehensive examination. Consult your faculty advisor regarding the best time to take the examination. The examination consists of the two components detailed below that can be completed in **any order**. One component is that of a take home essay exam. For the second component the student can choose between writing a research proposal or writing up a research project (typically the thesis) for publication and submission.

The research proposal/article component can be completed anytime after completion of the thesis. The essay portion must be completed during a faculty determined timeline in the early part of the fall semester. It is expected that students will take their examination in their fourth year. Both parts of the comprehensive exams must be completed in a specified time period (details below). Passing the comprehensive examination is one of the requirements for establishing Candidacy for the Doctorate in Psychology.

Content and Evaluation Standards for Each Component of the Comprehensive Examination.

I. Research Proposal Component

This portion of the examination will assess students' competency in researching and writing a research proposal. Students choose the topic for their research proposal and it often reflects some aspect of a research area that students might want to pursue in their dissertation research. However, though this comprehensive examination and the dissertation proposal may have some overlap, the two should be different. In addition, students must submit to the I/O psychology area director, a two-to three-page prospectus briefly outlining what their research proposal will cover. The director will distribute the prospectus to three faculty for feedback and approval. This review may take up to two weeks. We expect students to address the feedback provide when writing the full paper. Following faculty approval, students may begin their research and writing.

The proposal should be 25-35 double-spaced pages in length, exclusive of references, and typed according to the guidelines of the Publication Manual of the APA (6th edition). The first page should include a title and name, with text starting on the second page. An abstract is not required.

II. Article Submission

The article submission component is offered as an alternative to the research proposal option. Students are required to use a research project that occurred while they were at UNO, typically their thesis, but may be another project, such as research other than thesis, where the student was the main contributor. The student will submit a letter of intent to the faculty, stating which project should be written for publication and a possible outlet, accompanied by the instructions to the author from that journal. This will then be approved by the I/O area committee. Following faculty approval, students may begin their writing.

Students are required to work independently on the manuscript that will be given to the faculty for review. After faculty feedback and grades have been provided, faculty may be involved in the preparation of the manuscript for submission to any extent that they wish. Passing comps requires both passing grades AND the submission of the paper to a journal. Confirmation of the submission (such as e-mail acknowledgement) needs to be submitted to the director.

III. Timeline and submission of research paper or article

While the prospectus or letter of intent can be submitted anytime during the Fall or Spring semester, the paper will be due April 15 or three months after the prospectus/letter was approved, whichever is first. Since comps II cannot be masked, it is easier to have your name on the title page. Students are required to turn in a soft copy of the proposal or article submission to the area director. If submitting an article, please also include a copy of the guidelines to authors. NO hard copies are needed. Three faculty members will evaluate the proposal on the criteria of knowledge, analysis, and writing on a scale of A, B, C or Fail. The criteria are explained in the last section of the document. All faculty must agree that the student has passed (A or B) on each of the criteria of knowledge, analysis, and writing to be considered passing this component of the examination successfully. If the student has received a grade of C or Fail, the faculty may require remedial work in that area.

IV. Essay Questions Component

This portion of the examination will consist of students answering four questions in order to assess their competency in knowing and critically analyzing the industrial/organizational psychology literature and research. Students will be required to provide up to a ten-page response to each of four questions in approximately a two-week period. The content for the questions will be chosen from the I/O psychology literature and research.

Each answer should be 10 double-spaced pages in length, exclusive of references, and typed according

to the guidelines of the Publication Manual of the APA (6th edition). The first page should include a title or short version of the question followed immediately by the text; an abstract is not required. Do not write your name on any answer but include it instead on a separate page entitled “Answers to Essay Questions”. Page numbers for each question should start at 1. Students are required to turn in 3 copies of the answers (each answer should start on a new page and include the relevant references) as well as a soft copy to the area director. Hard copies should be printed on one side only.

Students will be given 17 days to complete their answers to the four essay questions (two weeks plus an extra weekend). Questions will be distributed at noon on the first Friday of September and answers will be due in the director’s UNO mailbox by noon on the appropriate Monday. (Alternative scheduling for late August, with a completion date of the first day of the Fall semester is possible. All students competing comps must agree and request the change of date from the I/O faculty by March 31).

Each question will be evaluated by at two to three faculty members. The criteria of knowledge, analysis, and writing will be used to evaluate all questions. Each of the criteria will be evaluated on a scale of A, B, C, or Fail. Scores of A and/or B by all faculty members are required for a passing grade. Scores of C or Fail on some of the dimensions may require remedial work.

Timeline

The two parts of comps can be taken in any order but must be completed in the timeline specified.

- 1) If you take part I of comps (essays) first, you must turn in your paper or article for grading by April 15 of the same academic year
- 2) If you take part II of comps first (paper or article), you must take comps I at the next time it is administered.
- 3) If part II of comps is an article submission, once grades are provided, you may proceed with the submission based on a timeline determined by your advisor
- 4) Comps II **cannot** be submitted between April 16 and Sept. 1

Criteria

Knowledge: Breadth, appropriateness, and understanding of the literature.

Analysis: Critical analysis, integration, and conclusions. Using your own voice and drawing your own conclusions.

Writing: Organization, transitions, clarity, grammar, spelling, punctuation, APA style, use of primary vs. secondary sources.