

Nutritional Sciences Doctoral Program
Comprehensive Exam Guidelines
Approved August 18, 2014

These guidelines are intended to supplement the information provided in the “Nutritional Sciences Doctoral Degree Requirements,” which is included in italics below.

Timing. The student must substantially complete the course work outlined in the plan of study to the satisfaction of the doctoral advisory committee and the Graduate School before being declared ready for the comprehensive examination.

Process. The comprehensive examination is the most advanced posed by MU. It consists of written and oral sections. It must be completed at least seven months before the final defense of the dissertation. The two sections of the examination must be completed within one month.

The student must be enrolled to take this examination. It is to be administered only when MU is officially in session. The written section may be arranged and supervised by the major adviser, in which case questions are prepared and graded by the doctoral advisory committee. For the comprehensive examination to be completed successfully, the doctoral advisory committee must vote to pass the student on the entire examination, both written and oral sections, with no more than one dissenting or abstaining vote. A report of this decision, the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Results form (D3), with the signatures of all committee members, must be sent to the Graduate School and the student no later than two weeks after the comprehensive examination is completed.

Failure. A failure of either the written or oral section of the exam constitutes failure of the comprehensive exam. If a failure is reported, the committee also must include in the report an outline of the general weaknesses or deficiencies of the student's work. The student and the committee members are encouraged to work together to identify steps the student might take to become fully prepared for the next examination. A student who fails may not take a second comprehensive examination for at least 12 weeks. Failure to pass two comprehensive examinations automatically prevents candidacy.

Exam content

The comprehensive exam is intended to cover a breadth of topics/issues within nutritional sciences; questions should require higher levels of the cognitive domain including application, analysis, and evaluation. Each doctoral committee member will be responsible for contributing one (preferably multi-part) question. The committee will submit their questions to the doctoral committee chair at least one week prior to the scheduled exam date. The doctoral committee chair will be responsible for ensuring that the questions submitted by the committee cover distinct areas within nutritional sciences. The oral portion of the comprehensive exam will be held within one month after completion of the written portion of the exam per the University of Missouri Graduate Studies' rules (<http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/academics/process/doctoral-process/comprehensive-exam.php>).

Exam administration

The student will be given up to 4 hours to complete the written portion of the exam; the exam may be typed. The student may use paper (i.e., non-electronic) resources provided by their committee members. No online resources will be permitted in the room where the exam is held, including cell phones, computers or calculators. A computer without internet access is permitted for word processing

or data analysis. The oral exam must be completed within one month of the written exam. Typically, the oral exam is expected to last 2 hours.

Exam evaluation

Each member of the doctoral committee will be responsible for evaluation of the written response to the question the member contributed. The evaluation will be either "pass" or "fail." Evaluation of the written portion of the exam will be completed and submitted to the committee chair prior to the oral portion of the exam. At the conclusion of the oral exam, each committee member will evaluate the student's performance on the oral exam as "pass" or "fail." Per the Graduate Studies rules, for the comprehensive examination to be completed successfully, the doctoral advisory committee must vote to pass the student on the entire examination, both written and oral sections, with no more than one dissenting or abstaining vote. A report of this decision, the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Results form (D3), with the signatures of all committee members, must be sent to the Graduate School and the student no later than two weeks after the comprehensive examination is completed.