

Guidelines for Comprehensive Examinations

Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences

New Mexico Highlands University

Introduction

Students in the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences may choose one of several options, as their capstone experience for their graduate coursework. These options may include the field project, thesis, comprehensive examination, and/or professional paper. Only graduate students in the following disciplines may choose the comprehensive examination option:

- Human Performance and Sport
- Human Performance and Sport with an Emphasis in:
 - Teacher Education
 - Sports Administration

Students wishing to take the comprehensive examination must notify the chair of their committee at the beginning of the semester that they intend to graduate.

Also, students selecting the comprehensive examination must complete an additional 6 hours of coursework. This coursework must be completed in the approved program and may not include hours in Thesis or Field Project. Students should see their faculty advisor for a list of appropriate courses. Students must be enrolled during the semester in which they take the comprehensive examination (both written and oral portions). If a student has finished their program of study coursework, then they may enroll in any NMHU academic course to meet this requirement.

What is the purpose of the Comprehensive Examination?

The purpose of this examination is to evaluate the student's ability to integrate knowledge in their coursework. This examination includes an extensive, systematic review of the coursework listed on each student's program of study. Because this option is rigorous, students should begin to prepare to take this examination at least 3 - 6 months prior to the test date.

The examination includes two components:

- a. Written Examination. Students must pass the 8 hour written examination with a minimum score of 70% in order to qualify for the oral examination. **Each section of the test must be passed with a minimum score of 70%.** The written examination may not be scheduled until after midterms of the last semester of coursework.
- b. Oral Examination. Students must pass the oral examination in order to fulfill the capstone requirement for graduation.

The Committee for the Comprehensive Examination:

Students must select 3 members for the comprehensive examination committee. All members of the committee must be graduate faculty members from the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences. For a list of eligible faculty, please visit the ESS Department Chair secretary or call 505-454-3287.

Chair of the Committee: a graduate faculty member from the discipline

2nd Member: a graduate faculty member from the discipline

3rd Member: a graduate faculty member from outside the discipline. This member may be another faculty member from the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences

The Written Examination

The written portion of the examination will be divided as follows and must be completed on the assigned day:

1 hour HPS 620 Research Methods

1 hour HPS 670 Assessment and Evaluation

6 hours coursework agreed upon in consultation with committee chair from ESS graduate program- this will represent 6 courses at 1 hour per course

8 hours Total Written Exam Time

For information regarding the content area of each graduate program, students should see their committee chair at least 3 - 6 months prior to taking the comprehensive examination. This should allow adequate preparation time for the examination.

- a. Evaluation Criteria for the Written Examination: Students must score 70% or more for a passing grade on each test within the written examination. Students who do not make a passing grade will be allowed to re-take the written examination the following semester. Students may only re-take the written examination one time. Students who pass the written portion of the exam must then successfully complete the oral portion of this examination in order to meet the requirements for the M.A. degree.

The Oral Examination

The oral portion of the examination may not take place until after successful completion of the written portion of the examination. For guidelines on the oral examination, students should see the chair of their committee.

- a. Evaluation Criteria for the Oral Examination: Each committee member will rate the student's oral examination using a 5 point Likert Score. The student must receive an overall average score of 3.0 or better to pass.

Steps for the Comprehensive Examination Process:

1. Students must complete the Program of Study for their graduate degree. The program of study should include 6 additional hours of coursework.
2. Selection of the comprehensive chairperson and committee. Your chairperson should be someone knowledgeable about your area of interest. It is your responsibility to contact the tentative chairperson and ascertain whether the person is willing and able to serve as the chairperson for your comprehensive examination. Three graduate faculty members should be chosen to serve on your committee. The following points will help you to select committee members:
 - a. All committee members must be graduate faculty. Only discipline graduate faculty can serve as chairpersons or the 2nd committee members.
3. Once the committee has been selected, students must complete the comprehensive examination committee member identification form and have the form approved by the Chair of the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences.
4. In the beginning of the semester in which students wish to take the comprehensive examination, the Comprehensive Examination Application form must be completed and returned to the committee chair within 3 weeks from the beginning of the semester. Students may not take the examination before the last semester of coursework.
5. At least 2 weeks prior to the written examination, the committee chair and student must submit the Request for Graduate Comprehensive Written Examination form. This document may only be submitted after the Program of Study has been approved and a final degree check has been performed by the student. Students must pass this examination prior to being approved to take the oral examination.
6. At least 2 weeks prior to the oral examination, the committee chair and student must submit the Request for Graduate Oral Examination form. This document may only be submitted upon successful completion of the written examination.