Comprehensive Exam Policies

Qualifying to Sit for the Examination
In order to qualify to sit for the Comprehensive Examination, which includes written and oral components, a student must fulfill the following requirements:

1) Complete 42 hours of coursework, to include 12 hours of core coursework, 12 hours of coursework in a Major Field, 9 hours of coursework in a Minor Field and 9 hours of electives. NOTE: a student can sit for the comprehensive exams before completing all of the above coursework, so long as s/he is enrolled in the remaining hours needed during the semester s/he sits for the comprehensive exams and meets the remaining requirements. It is recommended that the student speak with the IDV Program Director or designated person before choosing this option.

2) Compile an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on coursework.

3) Earn grades of “B-” or higher on all core courses and all courses in the student’s Major and Minor Fields.

4) Be enrolled in at least 3 hours of classes the semester the student take the comprehensive exams. If a student is not enrolled in at least 3 semester hours, they will not be allowed to sit for the comprehensive exams.

Notification of Program Director
A student must inform the IDV Program Director or designated person in writing (e-mail included) of their intention to sit for the comprehensive exams by the end of the first In-Person Session during the semester s/he will take the exam.

Attendance at Comprehensive Examination Workshop
If a student is enrolled in coursework that requires attendance at the first In-Person Session during the semester, s/he must attend the Comprehensive Examination Workshop offered during that session in order to sit for the exam.

Composition of Comprehensive Examination
Comprehensive exams are comprised of a written component and an oral component. Together these two components comprise the comprehensive exams. All students must sit for both the written and oral portions of both exams.

The Comprehensive Examinations consist of the following two sections:

1) Major Field
2) Minor Field

Administration of Written Comprehensive Examination
The written portion of the Comprehensive Exams is administered on campus and is proctored by an IDV faculty or staff member. All students must take the exam on campus. The dates and times for the exam will be provided by the IDV Program Director or designated person and will be posted on-line.
The rules for the examination are as follows:

1) Students must bring nothing other than a writing implement with them into the room. Scratch paper will be provided. If students have notes, books, purses, cell phones, PDAs or any other items, they must leave them in a secure area provided by the program. Students may have a drink or food with them at the computer. A secured, non-Internet connected computer will be provided with a word processing program for use in answering the questions.

2) Each student will be provided with a laptop computer. The will be told at the start of the day to create a folder with their last name and to save their work frequently. Students will save each exam as a separate file – one each for the Major Field and one for the Minor Field. Students will not be allowed to take any copy of exams with them upon departure.

3) Students will have 6 hours for the Major Field exam on day 1 and 4 hours for the Minor Field on day 2. Students may not start early or stay after the examination time ends. Students may leave early if they finish before the allotted time expires. Students may leave the examination room to use the bathroom or get a drink, but will not be permitted to check their cell phones, PDAs or notes during these breaks.

A typical day-by-day format for the administration of the exams is as follows:

Day 1 – Major Field – 6 hours
8 a.m. – 12 noon – Testing (4 hours)
12 noon – 1 p.m. – Lunch
1 p.m. – 3 p.m. – Finish testing (2 hours)

Day 2 – Minor Field – 4 hours
8 a.m. – 12 noon – Testing (4 hours)
12 noon – 1 p.m. – Lunch

Grading
Students will be provided with the results on the written sections of the exam within two weeks of the last day of the week that they took those sections. Students may earn one of three grades on each of the sections of the exam: (a) High Pass, (b) Pass, or (c) Fail. If a student earns a grade of High Pass on any one or more sections of the exam, s/he does not have to sit for the oral portion of that/those section(s). Students will sit for the orals of any section of the exam on which they earn grades of Pass or Fail on the written exams.

Only those faculty members leading a student’s Major Field and Minor Field will grade those respective sections of the written exam unless there is a split vote. In the case of a split vote, an additional core faculty member will grade the written portion of the section in question and cast the tie-breaking vote.
Administration of Oral Comprehensive Examination
The oral portion of both sections of the exam will be administered on the day before the start of the final In-Person Session each fall and spring semester. Only those faculty members leading a student’s Major Field and Minor Field will grade those respective sections of the oral exam (but others may participate), unless there is a split vote. In the case of a split vote, an additional core faculty member will vote. Each student is allotted up to 90 minutes for the oral component of the comprehensive exam.

The written and oral portions are separate components of the same exam and the exam may be taken only twice. If a student does not pass the exam on either the first or second attempt, that student will not be allowed to continue in the IDV Doctoral Program.

Retakes
- If a student passes the written exams, but fails the oral exams on one or more sections, that student must retake the written and oral exams on those sections.
- If a student fails one or more sections of the written exams, but passes the oral exams, then the student passes those sections.
- Retake of the written and oral exams will constitute the second attempt in the comprehensive exams.