

**GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT RULES
FOR
Ph.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS**

1. Students must successfully complete their Preliminary Exam of required graduate courses and first year planning meeting before scheduling the Comprehensive Exam. Under normal circumstances, the student must satisfy the language requirement prior to scheduling the Comprehensive Exam. However, the Advisory Committee and student will determine the most appropriate timing for meeting the language requirement for advancement to candidacy.
2. The PhD Comprehensive Exam consists of two separate parts, both of which must be passed. Under normal circumstances, the first part is a "*Subfields Exam*," consisting of a written exam on three distinct subfields of geography followed by an oral exam focusing on the written exam results. The second part of the comprehensive exam involves a "*Dissertation Proposal Defense*."
3. For the first part of the exam, the Subfields are to be agreed upon and specified in writing by the student and the Advisory Committee (see attached list of AAG Specialty Groups for examples). As part of the preparation for the Subfield Exam, the Advisory Committee together with the student will prepare reading lists on the three subfields that will form the core material for the exam. The reading lists will be prepared at least one semester prior to the written exam.
4. The Advisory Committee should tailor expectations for the scope of the three subfields to the agreed upon goals for the individual student. These expectations should be specified well in advance of the written exam (i.e. at the time the reading list is generated). The Chair of the Advisory Committee is responsible for achieving consensus regarding expectations and format of the written exam, and for communicating these to the student.
5. The written exam will cover the three subfields and will take the form of written answers to questions on each of the subfields.
6. The questions for the written exam will be set by at least three members of the Advisory Committee.
7. The number of questions in the written exam are to be agreed upon between the student and the Chair of the Advisory Committee, but the student should have a choice of questions while preparing the exam.
8. The written exam should be given on three separate days within a one-week period. Each day's exam should be completed in an 8 hour period.

9. In all cases the questions in the written exam will be broad enough to ensure that the student's knowledge of each subfield is tested.
10. The oral exam should be scheduled no sooner than two weeks following the distribution of the completed written exam to the Advisory Committee.
11. Oral exams should not be scheduled during the summer or during "break" periods.
12. The oral exam should test the student's knowledge of the three subfields, focusing on the student's written exam. A typical oral exam lasts two hours, but this may vary depending upon the situation.
13. More than one "unsatisfactory" vote on the Subfield Exam will fail the student.
14. The Subfields Exam will be followed by the *Dissertation Proposal Defense*. The Advisory Committee together with the student will determine the appropriate timing between the Subfields Exam and the Dissertation Proposal Defense.
15. The dissertation proposal will be submitted to the Advisory Committee at least two weeks before the scheduled date of the proposal defense.
16. The Dissertation Proposal Defense lasts about 2 hours.
17. More than one "unsatisfactory" vote on the Dissertation Proposal Defense will fail the student.
18. For both the Subfields Exam and the Dissertation Proposal Defense, areas of major weakness must be communicated to the student at least one day prior to the oral exam (for the written exam) and one day prior to the proposal defense (for the dissertation proposal). The student and/or Advisory Committee may decide at that time to cancel the exam and schedule a new examination.
19. In the event of failure (of either portion of the exam), a re-examination may be attempted after three months.
20. Upon passing both parts of the Comprehensive Exam, the student is advanced to candidacy for the PhD degree.

Revised 3 Mar 05 - These rules apply to all graduate students entering the program beginning AY 2005. Students who entered the program earlier have the option of following these rules or the rules applicable in the year they entered the program.

EXAMPLES OF GEOGRAPHY SPECIALTIES

Students should consult with their advisor and committee for other possible specialty areas.

Africa
Aging
Agriculture and Land Use
Arctic
Asia
Biogeography
Cartography
Climatology
Cultural Ecology
Cultural Geography
Economic Development
Energy
Environmental Perception
Environmental Studies
Europe
Forest Geography
Geographic Education
Geographic Information Science
Geographic Perspectives on Women
Geographic Thought
Geomorphology
Hazards
Historical Geography
Hydrology
Industrial Geography
Landscape Ecology
Landscape History and Environmental Design
Latin America
Location Theory
Mathematical Models and Quantitative Methods
Microcomputers
Migration
Mountain Climatology
Mountain Geomorphology

North America
Paleoecology
Plant Ecology
Political Geography
Population
Regional Development and Planning
Remote Sensing
Resource Management
Rural Development
Settlement Geography
Snow and Ice
Social Geography
Soils
Russia
Transportation
Urban Geography
Urban Planning
Water Resources

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