

Guidelines for PhD comprehensive exam

May 2019

Our revised regulations indicate the following:

- One comprehensive exam on International Development Theory, Policies, and Practice (DVM9995).
 - Students need to have completed coursework to register for their comprehensive exam.
 - Registration for the comp exam should be in the third semester (i.e., summer of first year).
 - The exam will have a written and an oral component.
 - Grading will be on a pass/fail basis.
 - The exam can be retaken once; a second failure results in withdrawal from the program.
 - Evaluation will be done by a committee of three professors, at least two of whom are regular faculty of the School of International Development and Global Studies.
1. The learning objective of the exam is to achieve mastery of the fields and their key literatures.
 2. The written component will require the student to answer two questions chosen from a longer list of questions that have theoretical and policy/practice dimensions. To the extent possible, similar questions will be offered to students enrolled in the French and English programs. However, because of differences in the literatures and debates in the two languages, there may be differences in the questions for the two language groups. Where there are differences, the examiners and the PhD coordinator will assess them to ensure that the exam is as comparable as possible, in terms of comprehensiveness and difficulty. All students in each language group will be given the same list of questions.
 3. The comprehensive exam questions will be provided to the students 3 days prior to the due date of the comprehensive exam. In advance of each exam period, instructions will be provided to students on the exact timing of when the questions will be transmitted and the answers are required. Transmission of both questions and answers will be electronic. The written exam submission (both questions combined) must be no more than 8,000 words, exclusive of references (approx. 15 pages. Times New Roman, 11 font, single spaced, 2.54 cm margins on all sides).
 4. Before the oral exam, the student will be given written feedback on his/her performance on the written exam. This will not be a formal grading but will provide a general assessment, including identification of areas of the exam where the student could improve.
 5. The oral component will occur after the written component has been evaluated by the Examination Committee. The coverage of the oral exam will be the same as the written exam: development theory and policy & practice. The oral exam will be an opportunity for the Committee to get additional appreciation of the student's mastery of the relevant literature; for the Committee and the student to clarify questions that may have emerged in the written component; and for the

student to demonstrate his/her competence in terms of oral communication of scholarly material. Up to two hours will be allocated for the oral component.

6. As per Graduate Studies regulations, official university grading of the comprehensive exam will be Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory. However, for internal purposes, the School will assign one of three grades to the comprehensive exam: Pass with Distinction/Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. The grade for the exam will be based on a weighting of 70/30 for the written and oral components, respectively. Students will receive a written summary assessment with their grade.
7. The Examination Committee for all students will include three professors. This will normally include the two professors who have taught the core course in the language of the student and one of the two professors who taught the course in the other language (DVM8111/8511). If any of these is unavailable or ineligible (as supervisor of the student), the fourth professor teaching the core course will be invited on the Committee. If this professor cannot serve or if more than one replacement is needed, the PhD coordinator, in consultation with the professors who taught the course, will nominate Committee members selected from regular faculty members with extensive knowledge of development theory and policy & practice. In accordance with the program regulations, at least two members of the Examination Committee will be regular faculty members of the School of International Development and Global Studies.
8. The professors who taught the core course will be responsible for the following for the students in their language: preparing the required reading list for the comp, preparing the exam questions, evaluating the written component, participating in the oral component, and grading the students. The responsibilities of the third member will be to evaluate the written component, participate in the oral component, and contribute to the Committee's final assessment of the students. At least three months before the written exam, students will be given the required reading list for preparing for the exam. There may be differences in the English- and French-language lists.
9. The PhD Program Coordinator is available to provide recommendations to faculty members to facilitate greater consistency in reading list page lengths and comprehensive exam questions.
10. Each year, there will be three exam periods. In the first, the written exam will be held in the second half of August or early in September, with the oral component approximately two weeks later. In the second, the written component will be held in the second half of November or early in December, with the oral component approximately two weeks later. In the third, the written component will be held in the second half of March or early in April, with the oral component approximately two weeks later. The exact dates will be finalized at the beginning of the semester when the exam will occur. Normally, students will take the exam in the first period. Students who are retaking an exam or undertaking a deferred exam can do so in any of the three periods.