

ART EDUCATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

Before admission to candidacy for a doctoral degree, students must pass three comprehensive examinations. The format of the exams may include written, arts-based, and/or oral traditions that investigate core research dimensions of theory, methodology and practice as it relates to your area of study. Your comprehensive exams generally take place in year 3 of the doctoral program and it is expected that your exams will contribute directly to your dissertation proposal and research. Comprehensive exams are flexible in form and content. The purpose is to assess student development in terms of critical thinking skills, breadth and depth of knowledge of the discipline, ability to conduct original research, and ability to communicate knowledge.

Comprehensive exams are expected to be completed over a limited time frame and doctoral students must work independently to complete their comprehensive exams under an embargo and confidentiality agreement. An oral examination of the comprehensive exams follows, according to a format that is appropriate to the presentation of research and with the agreement of the evaluating committee and GPD.

It is expected that doctoral students will work closely with their supervisor in advance of undertaking the exams to demonstrate that the comprehensive exams present an original academic paper or body of work that will be integrated into the proposal and dissertation. However, the submission of comprehensive exams for evaluation must not include work that has been or is currently being submitted for evaluative purposes in a course or exhibition at the University or in the community.

Step for students:

- Work closely with your supervisor, formulate your questions and format options (including proposed model of oral examination) based on your research interests.
- Submit your questions, formats and proposed plan for oral review to the GPD for final approval.
- Send a bibliography for your exam to your supervisor (minimum 3 pages, APA citation style).
- Notify the Department Manager by email, who will coordinate the invigilation of your comprehensive exams, including your confidentiality agreement.

Comprehensive Exam Formats:

- **Written:** Students must use the written form for at least one of the three exams, depending on the format combination they agree upon with their supervisor. Each written exam is expected to be 8 pages in length plus references (based on the use of double spacing and 12-point font) and must include sufficient references in APA citation style. Each written exam is allowed 5 days for completion, for a maximum of 15 days for 3 written exams.
- **Arts-based:** One of three comprehensive exams may be presented as an arts-based inquiry of an artist, researcher or teacher project. Arts-based inquiry includes an exhibition/performance/presentation of work(s) and artist statement of work that is relating to ongoing research, with extensive documentation of techniques and investigation of creative issues. The comprehensive exam requires presentation of this body of creative practice as research, and must be situated in scholarship, followed by deliberation with your committee. All preparation for an arts-based exam option must be arranged in advance with your supervisor and confirmed with the Graduate Program Director (1 month prior to the comp exam).
- **Oral Tradition:** With permission of your supervisor, one of three comprehensive exams may be presented within the parameters of oral traditions, such as storytelling. Oral traditions adhere to the traditions of, for instance, First Peoples and Indigenous peoples worldwide, addressing intellectual,

spiritual, emotional and physical needs of students, and grounded in Indigenous beliefs, values, cultures, traditions, and worldviews. Students wishing to pursue this pathway should discuss this with their supervisor and contact the Graduate Program Director (1 month prior to the comp exam) in advance to discuss appropriate protocols and provide the department time to accommodate their defense.

Exam Committee:

- The comprehensive exam committee is generally composed of two members: Your supervisor and a member of the department who is an expert in your topic area and/or related research interests.
- Both members of the committee receive copies of your exam(s) and attend the oral exam(s), or exhibition, or storytelling session. The committee evaluates your exams and assesses your demonstrated knowledge of the field of art education through critical questions.
- The format of oral exams may be adjusted to reflect the format(s) of the presentation of knowledge, and may take place over more than one occasion if you, your examining committee, and the GPD agree this is appropriate. As a general rule, no single oral exam will take longer than 1–2 hours of examination by your committee.

Comprehensive exams are evaluated on a pass/fail basis, with each format of exam having its own adjudication within the broader whole of the comprehensive exam. A student needs to pass the presentation of knowledge in all formats in order to pass the comprehensive exam. If you fail one or more of your comprehensive exams, you may take the examination(s) again, after a period of three months and within one year of the original exam date with a new comprehensive exam committee. When you pass all three comprehensive exams, and your proposal is approved, you transition from student to become a PhD Candidate.