

Comprehensive Examination Policy

Per Title 5 (Section 40510) of the California Administrative Code of Regulations, graduate students working towards a master's-level degree in the College of Education must satisfactorily complete a thesis, project, or comprehensive examination as a culminating activity.

The comprehensive examination is "an assessment of the student's ability to integrate the knowledge of the area, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The result of the examination evidences independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis, and accuracy of documentation. A record of the examination questions and responses shall be maintained in accordance with the records retention policy of The California State University (California Administrative Code of Regulations Title 5, Section 40510).

Graduate programs that require comprehensive examinations determine the modality (e.g., online, in-person), duration, and format of the exam.

Please refer to the College of Education [Thesis and Project Guidelines](#) for information related to thesis and project requirements.

Student Procedures for Applying for the Comprehensive Examination

a. Eligibility to Take the Comprehensive Examination

Students are eligible to take the comprehensive examination after they have resolved all incompletes in courses in their degree program plan and have advanced to candidacy. Students must be in good academic standing with a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA to take the comprehensive examination. Additionally, students must be enrolled in order to take the examination in a given semester. In most cases, the comprehensive examination is taken during the final semester of study.

b. Timely Submission of Application to Graduate Studies Office

Students must apply the semester prior to when they plan to take their comprehensive examination by the deadlines published by the Graduate Studies Office.

c. Program Coordinator Approval

The program coordinator will review and approve the list of candidates who have applied for the comprehensive exam. Students who have not resolved all incompletes, have not advanced to candidacy, who are not in good academic standing, or who are not enrolled in the semester when the exam will be administered will not be approved to take the comprehensive exam.

Program Procedures for Administering the Comprehensive Examination

a. Comprehensive Examination Calendar

Comprehensive examination dates are scheduled during the regular academic year by the program faculty in consultation with the department chair. Most programs offer a spring-only exam administration. Comprehensive examinations, including retakes, are not to be administered outside of fall or spring semester exceptions require prior approval from the Associate Dean for Faculty Development, Research and Graduate Studies. Program coordinators share the schedule, modality and format for the exams with students by the start of the semester during which the examination is to be taken.

b. Procedures

- i. Programs determine the modality (e.g., online, in person), duration, and format of the exam.
- ii. Programs establish comprehensive examination timelines in conjunction with the department chair, Technology Integration Specialist, Graduate Studies Office 3 (h)4 (no)3(

accommodations for the comprehensive examination; testing accommodations written for courses (including 695 courses) or for other purposes may not be used for the comprehensive examination.

