

BMI Comprehensive Examination Policy for Ph.D. Students

(Applies to individuals who enrolled as degree-seeking students fall 2018 and thereafter)

BMI students who are preparing for their comprehensive exam should be familiar with and follow the comprehensive exam guidelines in the Graduate Studies Catalog. These guidelines are available here: <http://catalog.unmc.edu/graduate-studies/requirements-degrees/>

BMI Comprehensive Exam Background:

The Comprehensive Examination serves several purposes. First, in virtually every phase of your career after earning the Ph.D., you will be required to submit research proposals for grants (or their equivalent) for support of a research project. As an introduction to this task, Biomedical Informatics students are required to write and defend a research proposal. This exercise helps the student learn to focus a research project and present it cogently to an audience generally less familiar with the specific issues. The examination provides the Committee a structured venue through which to evaluate the student's understanding of the scientific method and how to employ the scientific method to address a new problem. Through questions/answers related to experimental design, the Committee can evaluate the depth of technical knowledge and understanding, as well as the student's ability to design adequate controls and provide appropriate interpretation of anticipated results. And, by questioning the student in areas of his/her coursework, research training, and general knowledge of their chosen field and discipline, the Committee can evaluate the student's preparedness for an independent future in a research/science career.

1. Comprehensive Exam Guidelines

- BMI follows the Graduate Studies comprehensive exam timeline and procedures. The specific requirements are available in the Graduate Studies Catalog. These guidelines are available here: <http://catalog.unmc.edu/graduate-studies/requirements-degrees/>

2. BMI Comprehensive Examination

- Students will write a grant proposal relevant to their area of emphasis followed by an oral defense. The student must meet with their committee to finalize the specific aims prior to writing the proposal no less than 4 months prior to the comprehensive. At least 2 months prior to the comprehensive exam the supervisory committee must approve the study hypothesis and specific aims. The final proposal must be submitted to the supervisory committee at least two (2) weeks prior to the comprehensive exam.
- Timeline



3. Comprehensive Evaluation.

- Students presentation over 20-30 minutes to present their proposed research (e.g. 10-20 slides, demonstration, etc.)
- Supervisory committee members review and critique proposal to give to student after comprehensive
- Supervisory faculty prepare questions in advance over the proposal and general domain knowledge.
- The student mentor is not a voting member of the exam committee

4. Exceptions & Extensions.

Under extraordinary circumstances, the Dean of Graduate Studies may grant exceptions or extensions to items 2 or 3 (above) on a student-by-student basis. Requests for an exception must be submitted in writing by the Program Director (on behalf of the Program Graduate Committee). Any request to extend a deadline must be made no later than one month prior to the deadline for which the extension is requested.

PhD Comprehensive Examination Feedback Form and Rubric

The advisory exam committee will evaluate the comprehensive exam using the Graduate Studies examination rubric. This rubric is a scoring guide used to evaluate student performance. You can view the document: Graduate Studies Examination Rubric for student evaluation and feedback. This can be found on the graduate studies website here:

https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/_documents/examination-rubric1.pdf

NOTE: A student must receive a minimum assessment of LEVEL 2 in the categories of “Knowledge of the Discipline” and “Critical Thinking” to receive a PASS on the Comprehensive exam.

Exam Committee/Reviewer Instructions:

Please add written comments for any scores of **1** or **2**.

Please review the Graduate Studies Learning outcomes for reference:

https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/_documents/graduate-studies-institutional-learning-outcomes.pdf