

MSIA MS Student Comprehensive Exam Policy

*This policy does not apply to students in the subplans: **Oral Biology**. Please contact the MSIA Interdisciplinary Coordinator for specific comprehensive guidelines for these subplans.

MSIA students who are preparing for their comprehensive exam should review the Comprehensive exam guidelines in the Graduate Studies Catalog. These guidelines are available here: <https://catalog.unmc.edu/graduate-studies/requirements-degrees/>

1) Comprehensive Exam Format: Grant Proposal

Students who are completing a review article in place of a Grant Proposal please review *APPENDIX A: Review Article Instructions*

- a. MSIA CRBR; CTRMSP; HPMER; POR Thesis; or BDHS sub-plans
 - i. The student will write a **grant**, the format of which will be determined by committee, or write a **review article** (see Appendix A).
 - ii. Before the student writes the complete proposal, the supervisory committee will meet to provide feedback and approve a completed specific aim page or review article topic outline. This is a formative process to ensure the project is feasible, of appropriate scope, and is an original idea, not a replica of their advisor's work.
 - iii. For students writing a grant: If the student has not proposed their thesis project to the committee, the comprehensive exam can be a grant proposal which outlines the thesis project. If the student has initiated the thesis project, the grant topic can be related to the student's area of study but should not be the student's thesis project. The goal of the comprehensive exam is to evaluate the student's knowledge in their discipline and ability to design a research study to answer a research question/test a hypothesis.
- b. MSIA POR Non-Thesis
 - i. Option 1: The student will write a review article in the style of the health-related journals (See Appendix A). The student can seek for guidance from the advisor on the selection of journals' style. The advisor must approve the topic of this review article. (See Appendix A) OR
 - ii. Option 2: The student will present and defend curricular components including development of a course outline, e-learning module or formal lecture covering approximately 2 contact hours of material, an active learning exercise, a student assignment with grading rubric and exam questions on the module material. The advisor must approve the topic of the curriculum.
- c. Students will provide the comprehensive exam document to the exam committee members a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the exam date.

2) Presentation Structure

- a. The comprehensive exam is not a public event and will be attended only by the student's examination committee.
- b. Student should prepare a 25-30 minutes PowerPoint presentation (15-20 slides). For students who wrote a review paper, the presentation should include the search strategy, interpretation and/or quality assessment of included studies, and conclusion. For students who wrote a grant, the presentation should include a brief background and significance, statement of hypothesis, aims, research plan, limitations and expected results.
- c. Student should dress business casual.
- d. Following the presentation, the committee will ask questions for approximately 30-45 minutes. Questions will be related to concept areas, coursework, research proposal, and general knowledge of the student's chosen field, and discipline.
- e. Following the question and answer section, the student will leave, and the committee will privately confer to make a decision regarding the outcome of the exam.
- f. The student will re-enter the exam room and be apprised of the result.
- g. The student will upload the grant proposal or review paper into Seguidor to serve as meeting minutes for the advisory/supervisory committee meeting. If a student fails the comprehensive exam, the minutes should also include committee feedback on the proposal/paper. If the student is required to make revisions, the revised version should also be uploaded.

3) Graduate Studies Comprehensive Examination Rubric

- a. For Students
 - i. The Graduate Studies COMP Exam Rubric is used for student learning outcome assessment (link below). The rubric outlines areas in which your graduate committee will provide feedback on your performance. There are no specific criteria for grading on the rubric. The rubric does not define what is required for a PASS or FAIL result.
- b. For Faculty/Advisory Committees
 - i. The purpose of completion of the [Graduate Studies COMP exam rubric](#) is twofold. First: Graduate Studies and the MSIA graduate program use data entered into AEFIS to assess student learning outcomes at the college and program level. Second: It provides the student the opportunity to receive structured feedback on their performance during the comprehensive exam. There are no specific criteria for scoring on the rubric to identify what is required for a PASS or FAIL result. The COMP exam committee should collectively assess the student's performance as per the criteria of the rubric which reflect the Graduate Studies learning outcomes. Upon the completion of the exam, committee Chair will submit the rubric results into the [AEFIS system](#).

See Graduate Studies [rubric guiding document](#) for detailed information regarding inputting feedback into AEFIS.

c. MSIA additional instructions for Completion of Graduate Studies rubric:

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

the Graduate Studies learning outcomes are available at the following link:

<https://www.unmc.edu/gradstudies/education/learning-outcomes.html>

APPENDIX A

Requirements for writing a Review Article for the Comprehensive Exam

- The student must identify the topic of the review and the appropriate publication outlet.
- The review paper must be an extended, integrated, and critical review (e.g., covers experimental control, measurement, practicality) of a basic, applied, or conceptual literature relevant to the student's area of research. It must conform to the Author guidelines of the chosen journal/publication.
 - The review article must be helpful in conducting, analyzing, or interpreting research in the student's area of research and can be on a topic that has not been reviewed in the literature previously or extend on a topic of a previous review.
 - If there is a recent review article on a topic, then the student must state explicitly how her/his paper extends it.
 - Update to a previous review: To the extent possible, the student should maintain the same structure and type of analysis as the previous review or also do a separate analysis or include additional features to extend the previous review.
 - Different focus than previous review: The student should review the same literature but with a different focus.
- The review article must clearly outline the strengths and limitations of our current status of knowledge on the topic.

- The review article must relate research to practice.
- The review article must be comprehensive and clearly state inclusion and exclusion criteria for manuscript inclusion and have a good rationale to back up the chosen criteria.
- The defense of the review article will involve a student presentation of the main content of the review article followed by the student's responses to questions from committee members derived from the content of the review article and its oral presentation.
- Students are required to submit the completed review article to committee members at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral presentation.