

Procedures for PhD Comprehensive Examinations in Operations and Information Systems (effective as of May 2017)

Notes

- A. The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) has only a general policy regarding procedures for PhD comprehensive examinations.
- B. The comprehensive examination regulations are a departmental responsibility. However, they are subject to the School general policy, which is outlined in the document entitled “Procedures for Comprehensive Examinations” (revised 4 December 2014).
- C. According to the Procedures for Comprehensive Examinations, “Students must pass the exam within a maximum of two attempts. Students who do not pass in two attempts are required to withdraw from the program. Unless an extension is approved by the student’s supervisor and the Associate Dean of the PhD program, the second attempt must be made within 2 months of the original exam.”

Purpose

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to assess whether the student is adequately prepared to proceed to the candidacy stage of the PhD program. The student must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the examining committee that s/he possesses: (a) an adequate knowledge of the disciplines and the subject matters relevant to the examinations; and (b) the ability to pursue and complete original research at an advanced level.

Procedures

The examination will cover 3 or 4 of the student’s major area courses, typically from the set OM 701, OM 702, MIS 701, MIS 702, and Mgtsc 705. The set of courses to be covered will be documented in a memo to the student that is to be sent at least 3 months prior to the examination. The examination has 3 components:

- 1) A 4-hour written exam.
- 2) A 24-hour take-home exam that includes computational problems and/or writing a review of an unpublished or published paper.
- 3) An oral exam.

During the written and take-home exams, the student should not communicate with anyone regarding the exam, except to ask the faculty members who wrote the questions for clarification. Unless otherwise specified for individual courses, the student may use any books or notes s/he wishes during the written and take-home exams and the student may use a computer.

The written exam will have 3-6 problems. The student may be given a choice about which problems to complete.

The instructors for the courses that are covered by the examination will be invited to prepare problems for the written and take-home exams. The student is encouraged to communicate with the instructors before the written exam about what kinds of problems to expect. The student is also encouraged to communicate with the instructors after the written and take-home exams and before the oral exam.

In the oral exam, the student will be expected to give a brief presentation on a topic that the student has done or plans to do research on. The student will be evaluated on presentation of research results and on knowledge of the related literature, but not on the amount of progress made in the research. The presentation will be judged on clarity and on the student's ability to answer questions about the research topic. In addition, the examining committee will ask the student questions about topics related to the courses covered by their comprehensive examination. The questions may follow up on problems from the written and take-home exams, particularly ones that the student did poorly on—to give the student a second chance to demonstrate their knowledge.

Students will be provided access to past written and take-home exams.

The comprehensive examination will normally take place in June and Components 1)-3) will normally be scheduled within a 2-week period.