

MSIA PhD Student Comprehensive Exam Policy

*This policy does not apply to students in the sub-plan **Applied Behavior Analysis**. Please contact the MSIA Interdisciplinary Coordinator for ABA specific guidelines.

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: <http://catalog.unmc.edu/graduate-studies/requirements-degrees/>

In addition to the office of Graduate Studies requirements, MSIA has specific requirements for the comprehensive exam format, structure, and submission:

1) Comprehensive Exam Format: Grant Proposal

- a. 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. The student will write a NIH R-Mechanism award or grant of similar scope. The MSIA graduate committee rationale for this policy is that designing a study of this magnitude and writing the accompanying project proposal is an important formative experience.
- c. The student can choose any topic for their project. This proposal may or may not be related to the student's dissertation project. If the student has not yet formally proposed their dissertation project to their supervisory committee, they can present a grant proposal in support of their dissertation project as their Comprehensive Exam. However, if the student has already proposed their dissertation project to their supervisory committee, they must come up with a different topic for their Comprehensive Exam grant proposal (it can be a related, but distinct, topic).
- d. Before the student writes the complete grant, the student will meet with their supervisory committee to discuss, provide feedback, and approve a completed specific aim page. 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. The student and committee should also agree which grant components are required, if any, in addition to the specific aims and research strategy.
- e. The student's Supervisory Committee can serve as the examination committee.

2) Presentation Structure

- a. Student should prepare a 25–30-minute PowerPoint presentation (15-20 slides) that provides a brief background and significance, research

- question and/or statement of hypothesis, and summarizes the research plan to accomplish the aims.
- b. Student should dress business casual.
 - c. Student should schedule a two (2) hour meeting for their comprehensive exam.
 - d. The comprehensive exam is not a public event and will be attended only by the student's examination committee.
 - e. Following the presentation, the committee will ask questions for approximately 30-60minutes. Questions will be related to concept areas, coursework, research proposal, and general knowledge of the student's chosen field, and discipline.
 - f. 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.
 - g. The student will re-enter the exam room and be apprised of the result.
 - h. The **student** will upload the grant proposal 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. If a student is required to make revisions to the grant proposal, 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 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 receive instructions from the Office of Graduate studies on how to complete the rubric

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in Microsoft forms. See Graduate Studies [Rubric Guiding Document](#) for detailed information regarding inputting feedback.

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>