

Context for Faculty Senate

1. We currently have a policy that the comprehensive exam is valid for five years for doctoral students.
https://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_doctoral.html#degreq_doc_comp
2. We do not currently have a policy on when students should take and pass the comprehensive exams, i.e. how soon after the student starts their doctorate
3. The proposal is to make both timeframes be 4 years.
4. One goal is to encourage continuously enrolled students to complete their degree in a timely manner.
5. Balancing the time limits is to make it as easy as possible for students to appeal for one-year extensions to the age-of-courses, especially if they need to step away from their program for health, family obligations, arrival of child, military service, etc.
6. The policy also clarifies that comprehensive exams are required for research doctorates. DNP students aren't required to pass a comp exam.
7. It is envisaged that students who are a semester away from the time limit for passing the comp will be sent an email reminding them of the time limit. A second email will be sent to students once they exceed the timeline, but they will be allowed to register for credits to take the comp. The following semester a registration hold will be placed on students.

5.4 Doctoral Requirements

FILING DEADLINES — The program of study must be submitted on an official [Program of Study & Committee](#) form to The Graduate School by the end of the student's third (3rd) semester of graduate attendance.

Comprehensive Examination



The comprehensive examination is the major academic examination during the doctoral study that assures that the student has attained sufficient mastery of their discipline. Some departments use the passing of the comprehensive examination as the examination that admits the doctoral student to candidacy. The comprehensive exam must be passed by the end of the 8th academic semester (fall and spring semesters) of starting the doctorate. The comprehensive examination is valid for four (4) years from the term of successful completion.

In the event of the birth or adoption of a child, military service, or medical leave of absence, a student can request an extension up to one year by submitting a letter providing dates of e.g. birth/adoption or military service and claiming the exception.

WRITTEN AND ORAL — The comprehensive examination requirements are department specific, but are required for all research doctorates. A student must have an approved [Graduate Program of Study & Committee](#) form on file with The Graduate School prior to sitting for any portion of the comprehensive examination or dissertation defense. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all committee members, including the graduate representative if applicable, are available when scheduling the comprehensive examination. See [Optional Graduate Representative](#).

Defense of [Dissertation](#)

AGE OF DEFENSE — The dissertation defense must be conducted no later than five (5) years from the term of successful completion of the comprehensive examination.

Commented [CL1]: Will be removed from policy if the above time frame is approved.