

Experimental Psychology M.A. Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive examination is a requirement of the program and students are eligible to take it when they have registered for their 24th credit. The primary goal of the comprehensive exam is to determine whether the student has mastered relevant research literature and acquired the research skills needed for proceeding towards thesis research or seeking non-academic jobs.

It takes the format of an oral presentation and a written document. Specifically the students are required to:

- (1) write a research proposal, comparable to an effective grant proposal, on a special topic in psychology;
- (2) give a PowerPoint presentation/defense on their proposed research;
- (3) demonstrate advanced professional communication by using clear and professional language in oral and written communications.

Methods of assessment:

- 1) The proposal needs to be 15-page long (not including the title page, abstract, tables/figures, or references);
- 2) The presentation needs to be 10-minute long (not including Q&A);
- 3) The proposal must make an original contribution to a specific area within psychology; Describe a phenomenon in psychology that has not previously been studied or that would benefit from additional research; Review relevant literature, design an experiment or experiments to test hypotheses, predict results, and discuss the implications of the proposed research.

Methods of evaluation:

All students are required to present their proposal idea to peers and faculty members at the end of the capstone course (PSYC 7782G). The written document must be submitted to the committee during the first week of December. A faculty panel, composed of 3 or more faculty or other department members, evaluates the presentation and proposal. They may pose questions or critiques after the presentation. A pass or fail grade will be given. If the student receives a failing grade, the student is allowed to revise portions of the comprehensive exam (oral or written or both) and resubmit it for reassessment, or the student may be required to retake the course and submit another capstone project.

*Students are strongly recommended to complete the work under the supervision of a faculty member. This faculty member guides the student through the process and provides feedback on a regular basis.

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