

## Mexican American Studies – Instruction for the Comprehensive Exam

Before admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree, the student must pass a written and an oral Doctoral Comprehensive Examination (comp exam). This examination is intended to assess the student's comprehensive knowledge of the major and minor subjects of study, both in breadth across the general field of Mexican American Studies (MAS) and in depth within the area of specialization.

The Comprehensive Examination is considered a single examination although it consists of a written and an oral part.

### What you need to do to prepare for the exam:

- Connect with your advisor to decide which semester/date you would like to have your comp exam administered and that they are on the same page as you. (Start this conversation at least one semester before the desired semester/date).
- You will need to identify faculty to serve on your committee. You should consult with your advisor on the appropriate faculty to invite to participate.
- After confirming with the members, you will need to meet with them individually to develop the reading list – needs a minimum of at least 20 bibliographic references relevant to MAS or your research topic.
- Finalized both test dates – one for the written portion and one for the oral portion. **Keep in mind:** You need three weeks (business days) between the written exam and the oral exam dates.

### Comprehensive Exam – Written and Oral Exam

The [comprehensive exam](#) consists of a written and oral portion in both the major and minor fields.

The *written exam* consists of prompts provided by each Committee member that have been identified to participate. The committee will present prompts that may address methodology or theories related to the research interest.

At least one prompt must address the student's understanding of the Mexican American Studies discipline and if applicable, one prompt will be presented from the minor. The prompts will be in relation to the student's particular field of study, and even potential research, but the comprehensive exam is an evaluation of the research interest.

Once a *PASS* result is given, the date of the oral comprehensive exam must be announced in [GradPath](#) by submitting the "Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam" with the date, time, and room.

The *oral exam* consists of committee members asking questions and following up and evaluating the students' broad knowledge of MAS and sufficient depth of understanding in areas of specialization. Discussion of proposed dissertation research may be included. The examining committee must attest that the student has demonstrated the professional level of knowledge expected of a junior academic colleague.

### Test Date

On the day and time of the written exam, the student will receive an email from the MAS program coordinator with the prompts from the committee members, a rubric that will be used to evaluate the responses and a timeline of when the responses will be due and when the student should expect to receive the exam results.

**In of an emergency**, the student needs to contact the Advisor and/or Program Coordinator as soon as possible.

**The student has 24 hours starting at the agreed start time to contact the committee chair with any questions and/or need of clarification in regard to the exam questions.**

Once finished answering the prompts, the student will need to forward the responses to the Program Coordinator as a .doc or .PDF file. The student will need to submit responses before or at the specific time agreed.

***Example of timeline that will be in the email from the Program Coordinator:***

**August 30: 12:00pm** Student will receive the finalized questions for the Comprehensive Written Portion from the Program Coordinator. The clock starts.

**September 20: 12:00pm** The written portion of the comprehensive examination **is due**. Submit responses to the questions to the Program Coordinator.

**October 4:** Faculty are to return the ballots to the Program Coordinator by this day. If the consensus is that the student has passed, then the committee and student will proceed to the oral examination

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For any questions, please connect first with your advisor and/or reach out the MAS program coordinator.

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