

# INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES FOR WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS MASTERS DEGREES

This document is provided to answer questions that typically surround the comprehensive examination and is intended to serve as a procedural guide. The student should consult [The Graduate Bulletin](#), published by The Graduate School, for specific details.

Any questions relating to the examination procedures should be discussed with the Director of Graduate Studies well in advance of the exam date. Exam content questions should be directed to the advisory committee.

## SCHEDULING

- 1) The student must complete the [Request for Appointment of Graduate Committee form](#) and submit to Director of Graduate Studies. Please speak in advance with the faculty that you would like to have on your committee. Guidelines for committee membership are on the request form.
- 2) Students should submit the [Request for Appointment of Graduate Committee form](#) to the Director of Graduate Studies no later than the beginning of the final semester of study. The specific exam date should be set at least one month in advance of the anticipated date of graduation, with time added to compensate for breaks and holidays, as University faculty are not considered available to grade exams when classes are not in session.
- 3) Examinations are not administered on weekends or University holidays. Under special circumstances and with advance arrangements with the Director of Graduate Studies in Music, exams may be administered when the University offices are open but classes are not in session.
- 4) Examinations will be scheduled no later than one month prior to the end of classes during the spring or fall semester.

Examinations will **NOT** be scheduled during the following periods:

1. Less than 30 days from the date of submission of the "Request for Graduate Committee Appointment"
  2. Two weeks before the first day of semester exams
  3. During a semester final exam week
  4. After October 31 (Fall semester) or after March 31 (Spring semester)
- 5) Students are encouraged to consult with committee members for examination study guidance well in advance of the day of administration.

## EXAM CONTENT

1. The advisory committee will formulate examination questions and serve in an advisory capacity for the student's exam preparation. The chair of the advisory committee will assemble the questions from the committee and submit final examination along with the [Comprehensive Exam Approval form](#) to Director of Graduate Study.
2. Examination questions may cover any phase of the course work taken by the student during the period of this graduate study or any subject logically related and basic to an understanding of the subject matter of areas of music listed below.
  - a. History
  - b. Theory
  - c. Literature
  - d. Pedagogy
  - e. Acoustical/technical characteristics of the major, if applicable
  - f. Performance

- g. Other questions may be drawn from areas related to the course work and major
  - h. Performance practice
  - i. Philosophy
  - j. Aesthetics
  - k. Psychology
3. Examinations are comprehensive in nature, i.e., answers generally should be written in essay form so that the item content is thoroughly covered. Areas such as theory and analysis, however, often lend themselves to objective responses. Short answers or one-word response questions may be included, but this type of question will not be common for the entire examination. When writing the exam, it is important to include, for example, names of authors, composers, researchers, pedagogues, titles of studies and compositions, important dates, chronological order of events, socio-cultural ramifications, technological developments, and other specific information as well as broad concepts surrounding item content. Careful consideration must be given to the fine line separating comprehensiveness and “padding.”

## ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES

- 1) On examination day, the student will report to the Director of Graduate Studies (or designee) at 8:15 a.m. (or a pre-arranged time) to receive instructions, room assignment, the examination, and flash drive upon which exam will be saved. Items permitted in the examination room are as follows:
  - a. Writing instruments (pens, pencils, erasers, etc.)
  - b. Paper/writing pad
  - c. Standard dictionary (no music references or dictionaries unless informed otherwise before the exam)
  - d. Seat cushion, lunch, water bottle, etc. A lunch break outside The School of Music may be taken (must leave exam and flash drive with Director of Graduate Studies or designee until you have returned to building). Otherwise, exam materials must remain in the testing location at all times. Short breaks at fatigue points are important.
  - e. The computer lab only offers Macs, no PCs.
- 2) Conversations with anyone other than the Director of Graduate Studies (or designee), advisory committee members, or School of Music faculty/staff during the examination day are prohibited. If item interpretation is necessary, instructions and/or permission should be obtained from the Director or designee.
- 3) The UNCG Academic Honor Code is in effect for the examination.
- 4) The examination will be constructed so that the material can be covered in 6 – 7 hours. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to extend any section of the examination to a second day after having seen the prepared questions. If extenuating circumstances occur, e.g., sickness, the committee will decide on appropriate conditions for completion of the examination.
- 5) At the conclusion of the exam day, save exam on the flash drive provided and return to the Director of Graduate Studies by 5:00 p.m.

## EVALUATION

Upon completion of the examination, it will be circulated among the advisory committee for a [Blind Evaluation](#) by each member. This procedure takes an unpredictable amount of time, depending on the time of year and personal commitment of committee members. Students will be notified of the result in writing by the Director of Graduate Studies when the evaluation is completed. No more than one reexamination will be permitted.