

Comprehensive Exam

Operational Rules for the Comprehensive Exam Procedures

Unified Law Organizing the Graduate Studies in Saudi Universities [Item (XXVI)]

Student's enrolment in the graduate program will be terminated by a decision of the Graduate Studies Deanship Council in the following cases:

8. If failing the comprehensive exam (where applicable) twice.

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3. In programs that require a comprehensive exam on the master's level, the student should sit for the exam after completion of all required courses. An oral exam prepared by a specialized committee should follow. Both oral and written exams are governed by rules approved by the University Council on the recommendation of the Department Council and the approval of both College and Graduate Studies Deanship Councils. Exam is supposed to cover student's main and sub-specialization. Student shall be nominated for degree granting on passing the test at first sitting, but on failing it, or part of it, a second chance will be granted to be used in the span of one or two semesters; on failing again, student will be terminated from program.

First Rule:

The comprehensive exam is mandatory for all PhD students and optional for master students as approved in the acknowledged program.

Second Rule: Objective of the Exam

The comprehensive exam aims at measuring the ability of the students in two main respects:

a) Knowledge Acquisition:

The exam measures the depth and comprehensiveness of student's understanding of the main topics of his/her specialization and sub-specialization (if any).

b) Analytical Ability:

The exam aims at measuring the student's analytical ability to think and analyze, to infer and assess concepts and suggest appropriate solutions to given questions.

Third Rule: Components of the Comprehensive Exam

- a) The comprehensive exam consists of two parts: written and oral.
- b) The written and oral exams consist of two parts:
 - The first is in the main specialization.
 - The second is sub-specialization/s (if any).
- c) The components of the exam should achieve the required goals.
- d) The exam questions should cover everything in the main and sub-specialization (if any).

Fourth Rule: Exam Committee

- a) Related department council forms a committee of at least three teaching staff members of professors and associate professors, with competence in the student's main specialization and sub- specialization (if any).
- b) The Committee is fully responsible for the exam including determining its fields, preparing its questions, determining the result and evaluating the student.
- c) The committee members should not have direct relation with the student.
- d) If the program requirements include a specialization or sub-specialization from other departments, a specialist from the relevant department should participate in the exam committee according to the criterion in point (a).
- e) The committee for the written and the oral exam should be the same.

Fifth Rule: Exam Parts and Procedures

1. The exam should take place during the semester that directly follows the end of the curriculums. However, the procedure can be postponed to the second semester depending on the approval of the department.
2. The department's council set a date for the exam at least one month before its actual date.
3. The head of the department should inform the student about the exam date in written form at least 20 days before the exam. The report should contain the following:

Date:..... **Time:**..... **Place:**..... **Duration:**.....

This applies to both exams (oral and written)

4. The oral exam should take place after the written one (they could take place at the same time). However the period between the two should not exceed 15 days.
5. The duration of the written exam should be at least 3 hours and does not exceed 5 hours.
6. The duration of the oral exam should be one hour and does not exceed 2 hours.

Sixth Rule: General Terms

1. A student is deemed a doctorate candidate after passing the exam.
2. The passing grade in the exam (both oral and written) is 70%.
3. Those who do not pass the exam (written or oral or both) can be granted one chance during the following semester. If they fail, they will be excluded.
4. The general GPA policy should be applied by the committee if possible.
5. The department's council can form another exam committee for the student who failed in the first time other than the committee which supervised the first exam.
6. The head of the department notifies the Deanship of the Graduate Studies about the result of the comprehensive exam (written and oral) within two weeks (maximum) from its date by the committee.
7. The committee declares its decision in a period not more than one week from the date of the oral exam. And the decision will be final and non-negotiable.