

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENT COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION & VO-TECH ADMINISTRATION

There are two stages to the final examination process. Stage 1 is the "written exam" and Stage 2 is the "oral exam".

STAGE ONE:

During the last semester you are enrolled and after you file for graduation, you will be notified that a date has been set for your written exam. This date is published in the College Catalog each year. Usually the date can be moved forward or backward by two or three days to find a time that fits the needs of all the students. No one with less than a "B" average shall be allowed to take the exam. The written and oral exam may include all course work. However, electives are not usually included. There will be specific questions (2-5) from courses that you have completed as a part of your graduate program, unless told otherwise by your advisor. The exam will usually take place in the College of Agriculture conference room on a day which will be set up for this purpose and will last about four hours (8-12 noon). We suggest that you start preparing by reviewing course outlines, looking at the objectives, assignments, and recommended reading, etc. You need to start this about four weeks ahead of the exam date. To prepare for the written exam we suggest that you review course notes and handouts, old tests, old assignments or activities, and texts used in each course (if any). Waiting to the last minute, cramming, not studying at all usually results in poor performance on the exam. You will need to bring your own pencil/pens and a dictionary is allowable. In the last couple of semesters we have allowed students to take the exam by computer. That is you are allowed to type your responses directly to the computer, save to disk and then submit the disk. We do recommend that you also print a hard copy, just in case something happens.

The questions will be grouped according to content/courses and each will be given a grade of 1 to 5. A "1" is the lowest and 5 is the highest. If your average drops below "3" you will not be allowed to take the oral exam. You may retake the written exam at the next regularly scheduled exam period (see graduate catalog for information). This will require that the graduation date be postponed by one or more semesters, except for the occasion when the exam is during first term of summer. In this case the exam could be taken during the second term.

STAGE TWO:

If you pass the written test, the oral exam will be conducted as scheduled within a week after the written exam. The university will contact you to setup the oral exam time and location, before the written test. If the student does not do a satisfactory job (passing) on the written exam the oral will be postponed. Students should prepare by reviewing questions from the written exam and by reviewing the same materials used for the written exam. There will be three faculty members present for the oral exam. Some questions will related to the answers that you provided on the written exam and courses you have taken, however anything related to your program is fair game. The first question asked is usually about your background and experience. Your response should last no more than five minutes. The committee chairman will introduce all committee members present. Any weaknesses that the written exam exposed should be the focus of student review and preparation for this exam.

The oral exam will last between one and two hours. The committee chair will excuse the candidate from the room after all questions have been addressed. The chair will then ask the committee for comments regarding concerns, answers to questions, etc. and then vote. After a discussion and vote you will be asked to return to the room and if you pass, you may sign the appropriate paperwork. After paperwork is signed and forwarded to the graduate office you will graduate at the scheduled time. If the candidate does not pass the student and advisor will meet to discuss the weaknesses and then plan for a second oral exam. This will require that the graduation date be postponed by one or more semesters, except in the summer months as stated earlier.