

## **Nutrition and Exercise Science Master's Program Final Comprehensive Exam Guidelines**

The Master's Final Comprehensive Exam (Exam) is **only** taken by graduate students who choose to complete a non-thesis paper. The Exam is designed to test the graduate student's knowledge regarding the academic specialty, research methods and related topics. The courses completed by the student form the basis for the exam. It is essential that all notes and significant texts be kept during the process of completing coursework. Successful completion of the Exam is **required** for graduation.

1. Upon completion of all course work, completion and approval of the non-thesis paper and submission of the MASTER'S FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM ACCEPTANCE SHEET to the Graduate School, you must enroll in the Master's Final Comprehensive Exam **GR 698**.
2. A date, time and place for the Exam must be scheduled by the graduate advisor and the graduate student. The Department Chair must be informed regarding the scheduling of the Exam. Deadlines for the Master's Final Comprehensive Exam are posted in the University Semester Schedule of Classes. These deadlines are not flexible. You may consider allowing time to retake the Exam if necessary.
3. The graduate advisor will select from among the completed courses, those courses to be used as a basis in developing the Exam questions. Typically, all of the courses that are in the major or specialized area will be included. Faculty who have taught the classes will be contacted to compose questions appropriate for the Exam. The questions are then assembled by the graduate advisor and formatted for the Exam.
4. The graduate advisor will then meet with you to give you general suggestions for Exam preparation. Specific Exam questions will not be given to you. The graduate advisor may indicate courses that will be included in the construction of the Exam.
5. The Exam will be submitted to the Department Chair by the graduate advisor for final approval.
6. The Exam will be monitored by the graduate advisor or a designee. Typically, the Exam will take from 2 to 4 hours. A computer will be made available for the Exam or the Exam can be handwritten. A dictionary is allowed in the room for your use. No other books, notes or aids of any type will be allowed in the exam room.

7. In preparation for the Exam, you should spend a lot of time organizing notes from your classes and reviewing texts or other reading materials. It is suggested that you memorize authors, text titles, and research studies that are important in your area of study so that you can refer to them specifically in your responses to the Exam questions.
8. It is expected that a **minimum** of two pages handwritten and one page printed will be devoted to answering each of the questions. The minimum in some cases may not have acceptable detail to adequately answer the question. All questions should be answered thoroughly, indicating depth and breadth of your knowledge and understanding. Citing references is expected. Grammar and spelling are included in the grading rubric. Quality writing skills are necessary to pass the Exam.
9. Grading of the Exam will be based upon a holistic rating system. The quality and depth of the answer along with citations referencing the basis for the answer will be used to award points. Each of the faculty who composed a question will grade that question. A scale of 1-5 will be used to assign a rating.
  1. Almost no details or information presented. Grammar and spelling are poor. No clarity in thought or did not understand the question. No citations or inaccurate citations. Inaccurate answers
  2. Some details and information presented but are at a superficial level. Grammar and spelling are fair but not acceptable. Clarity and accuracy are inconsistent. No citations or inaccurate citations. Some inaccurate answers.
  3. Details and information are adequate for most answers but inadequate for others. Grammar and spelling errors are acceptable with a few errors. Clarity regarding most questions. Minimum number of citations. Accurate answers.
  4. Details and information are accurate and adequate to answer the question. Spelling and grammar reflect minor errors. High level of clarity and relevant examples. Most questions have at least one citation. Some references to literature and research.
  5. Details and information are found in every answer that are accurate and substantial. Virtually no grammar or spelling errors. Very succinct answers with meaningful examples supported by the literature and research. More than one citation for most answers.

**A minimum average score of 3.75 will be required to pass the Exam.** After each of the answers is rated by the faculty, the ratings along with comments are given to the graduate advisor to determine the average rating.

10. The graduate advisor will submit the results of the Exam to the Department Chair for final approval. You will be notified by the graduate advisor of the results. If you have successfully passed the Exam, your graduate advisor will submit the results to the Graduate School on the MASTER'S FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM ACCEPTANCE FORM. If you have not been successful, another date and time will be set for you to retake the Exam within the next two weeks or during the next semester. You may retake the Exam a total of two times.
11. All students choosing to write a non-thesis paper will take the Master's Final Comprehensive Exam without exception.
12. Accommodations will be made for students with special needs. Please inform your thesis advisor prior to the Exam.