

PROCEDURE FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

- 1) Some fields within political science have a reading list for the comprehensive examination. When a student decides to take his/her comprehensive examinations, he/she will be given a copy of the reading list (if such reading list exists). The student should be informed that he/she is expected to engage fully the literature on the reading list relevant to the question.
- 2) The student will take a comprehensive examination in a major field, a minor field and a subfield of the major field. The major field should be drawn from the five core subjects in which field seminars are offered: American, comparative, international relations, public policy, and political theory. The minor field may be drawn from any of these five core subjects plus methodology. However, students may choose as his/her subfield any topic on which a course has been taught within the department, as long as the professor agrees to offer the student an exam on this subject. In rare cases, students may petition to base his/her subfield on a course taught outside of the department but must submit strong justification for doing so.
- 3) The exam questions will be set and evaluated by a committee composed of six members of the GFPS; each of the student's three exams will be read by two faculty members with expertise in the field or subfield of the exam. In preparation for their exams, students may consult individually—within the reasonable constraints of a faculty member's availability—with up to all six of his or her examiners, but are not required to do so. After a member of the examination committee has read his/her part of the examination, he/she should email the DGS—and *only the DGS*—as to whether the essays submitted pass, fail, or only partially or marginally meet expected standards. If the DGS receives six "passes," then he/she will inform and congratulate the student that he/she has passed the exam. If the DGS receives results that are other than six passes, then the DGS will inform all examiners of that outcome and, at that point *and that point only*, the examiners may confer by email all together, or in person if they so choose, until a consensus is reached as to whether the student's performance is good enough to warrant an oral exam, or substandard enough to warrant a fail. If the committee decides to fail the exam, then the DGS will inform the student of that decision.
- 4) If the examination committee determines that a student has failed one or more components of the exam, the committee shall then decide on one of the two following options. First, if the committee has decided that the student's performance on the exam is a marginal failure on part or on the whole of the exam, the committee may schedule an oral examination. If the committee decides to schedule an oral examination, then the DGS will inform the student that the purpose of the oral exam is to allow the student the opportunity to provide more complete answers to the questions posed on the written examination and to explore whether his or her knowledge of the fields included is greater than the written answers suggest. The examination committee shall determine in conference immediately following the oral exam, without the student present, whether as a result of the oral, the student should be awarded a pass on the exam or failed. The

DGS, who will preside over the oral exam, will invite the student back into the examination room and inform the student of the committee's decision. Second, if the student's performance on the examination is clearly below the expected standard for a comprehensive exam, the committee shall fail the student without holding an oral.

5) Students who have failed the comprehensive exam with or without an oral being held may re-take the comprehensive examination no sooner than three months but no later than one year from the date of the prior comprehensive examination, during a scheduled examination period. The student will be required to answer questions only in the field (or fields) that were awarded a failing grade. Each field exam will again be evaluated by two faculty members in the field. Faculty will communicate results directly to the DGS, and the DGS to the faculty and ultimately to the student, following the same format above.