

**American University of Beirut
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Department of Education**

**New M.A. Comprehensive Examination Process and Policies
Fall 2007**

A new MA comprehensive exam will be put into effect starting fall 2007. The following paragraphs will provide information on its purpose, components, and processes involved.

Purpose

The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to evaluate the students' ability to synthesize and reflect on literature they have encountered during the MA program and communicate the results of the synthesis and reflection in writing and orally.

Components

The comprehensive exam will include the following two components:

- a. A take-home written examination
- b. An oral examination.

Processes

1. Questions

- a. The written examination will include two questions, one of which is compulsory while the other one is selected from two or more options.
- b. The SubCommittees will devise examination questions in accordance with guidelines to be disseminated by the Curriculum and Examination Committee.
- c. Questions should cover core areas and areas of specialization and should be in line with approved rubrics to be shared with students.

2. Examination Process

- a. Written examination. The first part of the exam will be take home given at end of week 12 as follows:
 - i. Students will be given the questions at 12:00 noon on Friday afternoon by the chair of the Curriculum and Examination Committee (CEC).
 - ii. Answers will be due by 12:00 noon on Monday, the week after (10 days later) to the chair of the CEC.
- b. Oral examination. Students will sit for an oral examination around week 15-16 of the semester. The purpose of the oral exam is for students to defend the arguments made in the written responses and to demonstrate knowledge of content of the cited literature. Each candidate must be orally examined with all SubCommittee members in attendance.

3. Evaluation of the Comprehensive: Evaluation of the written and oral parts of the comprehensive will be based on rubrics that will be shared with students. In addition, subcommittees will agree on question specific guidelines for evaluating student answers.

- a. Each member of the faculty subcommittee will report a single number as an overall evaluation i.e. 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 based on the rubric to the chair of the Curriculum and Examination Committee.
- b. Results of the comprehensive examination will be reported as follows:

- i. **Pass with Distinction**: Cumulative total score of 11-12.
- ii. **Pass**: Cumulative score of 8 – 10 inclusive.
- iii. **Re-read and review**: If there is difference of more than 1 point between the scores of any two committee members OR automatically for a cumulative score of 7.
- iv. **Fail**: If the candidate gets a total of less than 7.

Comprehensive Timeframe

The attached timeframe provides a listing of steps involved in the implementation of the MA comprehensive exam with their respective deadlines.

MA Comprehensive Student Implementation Time Frame

Week	Activity
I. Preliminary Steps: Announcement, Registration, Subcommittees Formation	
Two	a. Dep't announces date of written and oral comprehensive exam and other relevant dates.
Three	b. Students who want to sit for comprehensives need to register. c. Sub-committees are formed and announced.
II. Preparation of Exams and Rubrics	
Mid-week 12	Submission of questions by sub-committees to Chair of the CEC
III. Administering Comprehensive Exam	
End of week 12	a. Take home b. Students have to answer 2 questions. c. Students given questions 12 noon Friday. d. Answers due Monday week after 12 noon (10 days later).
IV. Evaluation of Exam	
End of Week 15	Subcommittees to review exam responses
V. Oral examination	
Week 16	Oral examination
VI. Issuing of Results	