



Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences – Food Security Program

Guidelines for Comprehensive Examination

The Master of Science in Food Security degree program requires successful completion of a comprehensive examination (FSEC 396) prior to graduation. The comprehensive examination is subject to guidelines of the American University of Beirut (as per the Graduate Catalogue), however these guidelines do not proscribe either the examination structure or provide guidelines for students in preparing their examination. The Food Security Program has accordingly defined the structure and provides appropriate guidelines for current and future students.

Objective:

To assess the student's knowledge readiness to undertake the proposed thesis or project; and to assess the student's level of knowledge of key concepts in food security and her/his achievement of the MS in Food Security program learning outcomes

Structure:

60 minute oral examination featuring student presentation to committee (15 minutes), followed by interactive question-and-answer session (45 minutes)

Committee:

The comprehensive examination will be administered by the student's thesis or project committee, which should adhere to the University Catalogue guidelines and additionally adhere to the following:

- The committee must include the student's thesis or project advisor;
- The committee must include at least two faculty members holding their full-time position within the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences; of which at least one has taught the student a course (core or elective) during the student's enrollment in the MS in Food Security degree program.

Student Guidelines:

Students are suggested to prepare for the comprehensive examination in two ways.

First, the student should prepare a 15-minute presentation on her/his thesis or project proposal to be delivered to the examining committee. The presentation should be oral only (PowerPoint is not permitted). Students should address the following questions:

- What is the topic of the thesis or project?
 - What is your interest in this topic?
 - Is this topic academic or applied? Is the topic theoretical or practical?
- Why is the topic important? What is the significance of this thesis or project?
 - Identify the leading theories to approach the topic.
 - Describe the academic debates on the issue.
 - Describe the current state of knowledge on the topic.
- How are you going to do the thesis or project work?
 - Describe the methodological approach and tools.

Second, the student should prepare for an intensive discussion with the committee, through which s/he should demonstrate achievement of the MS in Food Security program learning outcomes. The student should be prepared to address the key concepts, issues, and topics in food security as presented and studied within the core coursework under the MS in Food Security (FSEC 300/305/310/315/320/325).

Assessment Criteria:

Pass: The student provides clear and compelling justification for the selection of the thesis/project topic; and offers a sufficient grounding of the proposal within the academic literature; and identifies appropriate and feasible methodological approaches to conduct and achieve the research objectives; and demonstrates the MS in Food Security Program learning outcomes:

- Explain the core areas of food security and the relationships between its multi-sectorial dimensions;
- Discuss the linkages between food security and wider socio-economic development in the context of the MENA region;
- Relate food security to political, cultural, gender, and ethical issues;
- Communicate effectively on the issue of food security, from its relevance for social and political stability in developing countries to the interpretation of research findings;
- Demonstrate knowledge or skills to undertake the following: assess food security strategies, policies, programs, and their implementation in developing countries and the MENA region; design evidence-based food security strategies specific to regional or national needs; align food security strategies with government or agency objectives and the external environment; apply appropriate research methodologies, including organizational and multidisciplinary approaches, to examine food security-related issues; formulate implementation and dissemination plans for food security strategies; and utilize sound techniques to monitor and evaluate food security strategies, policies, and programs.

Fail: The student fails to provide clear and compelling justification for the selection of the thesis/project topic; or fails to offer a sufficient grounding of the proposal within the academic literature; or fails to identify appropriate and feasible methodological approaches to conduct and

achieve the research objectives; or fails to demonstrate the MS in Food Security program learning outcomes.

Documentation of Result:

Students are required to obtain written documentation of the result of the comprehensive examination through the completion and submission of Form 2. Form 2 should be prepared by the student in advance of the comprehensive examination and printed in triplicate; provided by the student to the student's thesis or project committee for completion immediately following the examination; and delivered in triplicate by the student to the FAFS Office of Student Services on the same day (or next business day). The student will be provided a copy of the completed Form 2 once the result is registered, and should retain this copy for his/her records.

A copy of Form 2 can be found below, or online at

www.aub.edu.lb/fafs/StudentCareerService/Documents/Comprehensive%20Exam%20Form.doc.

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SCIENCES

FORM 2

REPORT OF SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
ORAL GENERAL EXAMINATION (COMPREHENSIVE)

To be completed in triplicate, all copies to be forwarded to the
Dean's Office within one week after completion of the examination

Name of Student: _____
(First Name) (Family Name) (Student #)

Major: _____

Expected Date of Graduation: _____

Date of Taking Above Examination: _____

Result of Examination: Satisfactory

Unsatisfactory

Supervisory Committee

	Name	Approval Signature
1.	_____ (Advisor)	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____

Date Submitted: _____

Date: _____ _____
Department Chairperson