

**The Comprehensive Exam
Department of Philosophy**

Student Information Sheet

Timing

You should expect your comprehensive exam to take place during the twelfth week of the semester. You may, however, take it at another time if the faculty agrees that your circumstances warrant this.

Format

Your exam will consist of three equally-weighted questions. Two will address your areas of competence/specialization—ideally those relevant to your upcoming thesis—and one will address an area of weakness in your philosophical knowledge.

All questions focus on analysis and not on exposition. You should supply exposition only as needed to develop and present your arguments, perspectives, etc. None of your answers may exceed 1,200 words.

You will have one working day (but no more than eight hours) to write your exam. You will write it in the department library (or some other location designated by the faculty) on a designated computer. You will have access to your notes and books but not the internet. You may not take your phone(s) or computer(s), etc. into the exam room. You should bring your own lunch. The faculty will arrange for proctoring.

Pre-Exam Mechanics

The faculty will determine your areas of competence/specialization and weakness. They will consider, but aren't bound by, areas of weakness that you wish to strengthen.

You will receive reading lists for each area of competence/specialization and weakness. Your exam questions will cover material from those readings. But again, the exam will test your ability to think philosophically and only secondarily your philosophical knowledge.

You should notify the director of graduate studies if your philosophical interests/plans shift while preparing for the exam. The faculty may, at its discretion, change your exam (timing and/or content) if this happens. The faculty will notify you of any such changes.

Grading

You will receive a grade out of 10 on each question. A grade of 5/10 counts as a pass and a grade of 7/10 counts as a high pass. You will pass the exam only if you earn a grade of 5/10 or better on each of the three questions.

Retaking the Exam

If you must retake the exam, the new exam may, at the faculty's discretion, cover the same or different areas (or some mix thereof), but in no case will it include any of the same questions.