

FAQs: Oral Comprehensive Exam and Doctoral Dissertation Defense

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FAQs: Oral Comprehensive Exam and Doctoral Dissertation Defense

Is other terminology used?

Yes, Oral Comprehensive Exams are commonly referred to as Oral Comps or your Proposal (some programs use the term dissertation prospectus). A dissertation defense is also referred to as a Final Defense or a Final Oral Examination.

When should I plan on taking?

Oral Comprehensive Exams must be passed by the end of Year 4; it is strongly recommended that they are taken in the Fall semester of Year 4. Doctoral Dissertation Defenses are typically taken in final Spring semester, Year 5.

Who schedules Oral Comprehensive Exams or Dissertation Defenses?

The department's COGA Advisor.

How much advanced notice is necessary?

Four to six weeks in advance is ideal, 2.5 weeks prior is the shortest notice possible due to paperwork and the required approval process of the College Office of Graduate Studies.

Why is scheduling important?

Never underestimate the power of deadlines: Having a date set allows students to focus. In addition, finding a time when all 5 committee members can meet is often challenging and the further ahead we can schedule the better.

Where can I find templates and resources to help me properly format my dissertation?

It is essential and a graduation requirement that you submit a properly formatted dissertation. Here is KU's formatting guide: https://guides.lib.ku.edu/etd/ETD_Home (click on blue tabs for details)

How soon should I send my proposal or dissertation to my committee?

Two week prior to your exam/defense. If you miss this deadline, immediately communicate with your committee on when you expect to send the document. Committee members have the right to request rescheduling the exam if they do not receive the document two weeks prior.

Can I see examples of other completed dissertations?

Yes, see <https://search.proquest.com/pqdtlocal1005839?accountid=14556>

Click on "Advanced Search" and search either by author or by advisor to see examples from our department.

How long will the meeting be?

This is up to your Chair. Typically, one hour is reserved for Oral Comprehensive Exams (however, they often run long), 1.5 hours is scheduled for a Doctoral Dissertation Defense.

What information does the COGA Advisor need in order to schedule this?

- All five committee members' names. Please include who will serve as Chair and as your Graduate Studies Representative.
- Your targeted dates. Please give your COGA Advisor 5 dates where you'll be ready to go in front of your committee. These dates should be given 3-4 weeks prior.

What does the Advisor take care of?

- Ensures that committee members meet the University's Graduate Faculty appointment requirements.
- Submits paperwork and tracks approval process
- Creates scheduling poll to find a time in which all 5 committee members can meet
- Reserves the conference room
- Sends student and committee a calendar invite once a date is decided
- Post exam notice outside of main office
- Sends reminder the day prior
- Gives committee chair the Exam Outcome Form
- Receives the completed Exam Outcome Form and submits final paperwork

Can I attend other's students Oral Comps or Final Defenses?

Yes, they are open to the public. It is recommended you go to a few so you know what to expect.

What criteria will I be judged on?

To help you write your dissertation, review the [grading rubric](#) and [an article](#) by Barbara Lovitts, the author on which the rubric was based.

How do I know that the outcome is recorded by the University?

You can check my.ku.edu > Academics > My Progress. On the Academics tab, under the header “Milestones” you should see: Comprehensive Oral Exam [your outcome and the date taken]

The screenshot shows a web interface with a navigation bar at the top containing 'Info', 'Academics', 'Courses', and 'Progress'. The 'Academics' tab is highlighted. Below the navigation bar, there is a section titled 'Applications For Degree' with two entries: 'CLASG ECONGA-MA Spring 2017' and 'CLASU ECONA-BA Fall 2013'. Below this, there is a section titled 'Milestones' with a sub-section 'CLASG'. Under 'CLASG', there are two entries: 'Master's Degree General Exam Satisfactory 1/30/17' and 'Comprehensive Oral Exam Satisfactory 11/20/18'.

Can you explain what is “18 hours post-comp enrollment”?

Once you have completed 18 credit hours after your Oral Comprehensive Exam, you are allowed to drop down to 1 hour and still be considered a full-time student. This is most helpful for students that do not have a GTA/GRA position, or will soon be without funding, as it allows them to pay less tuition while they finish their dissertation. However, it is also relevant to those with a GTA position, as it will save you approximately \$250 each semester that you hold a GTA appointment and only need to enroll in 1 hour due to not needing to pay campus fees on 3 credit hours. The count begins in the semester you take your Oral Comprehensive Exam. Therefore, it is recommended that you take 9 hours for the semester in which you take Oral Comps and 9 hours the following semester.

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Please Note: For those defending their final doctoral dissertation, please consult the Doctoral Degree Checklist to ensure that you have completed the appropriate steps toward graduation:

<https://coga.ku.edu/graduation/doctoral-degree-checklist>