

Reference Number: S79-042

Senate Approval Date: Monday, January 01, 1979

MASTER'S COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY S79-42

At its meeting of March 13, 1979, the Academic Senate approved the following recommendation for master's comprehensive examinations by its Academic Policies Committee and the Graduate Council:

Graduate programs at San Francisco State University require a culminating element which may vary considerably from program to program. It may be a thesis, creative work, internship or field experience, comprehensive examination, or other approved activity. In those graduate programs where a comprehensive examination is required, the general purpose of the examination is to provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate analytical ability, insight and competence in the major field.

The type and scope of the master's comprehensive examination are determined by the department or program area involved. The examination may be written or oral; sometimes both are required in a given graduate program.

The University has established minimal guidelines for the administration of written and oral comprehensive examinations. Schools and departments may adopt additional requirements.

General Requirements

1. Upon being admitted to a program which requires the master's comprehensive examination, the candidate should discuss with graduate major advisor or coordinator the purpose, scope, and characteristics of the examination. At a time specified by the major department, the candidate should confer with the graduate major advisor about scheduling and other arrangements for the examination.

2. The graduate major advisor or other graduate faculty (as defined in the Graduate Bulletin) designee of the department is responsible for scheduling the

examination and securing the participation of other appropriate members of the faculty in the process.

3. The examining committees for both written and oral comprehensive examinations must consist of a minimum of two members of the graduate faculty from the major department.

4. The major department is responsible for notifying the candidate of the results of an examination, passed or failed, within a reasonable period of time, typically no longer than two weeks.

5. The graduate major advisor is responsible for obtaining the signatures of the Chair of the Examining Committee and at least one additional member of the examining committee on the "Report of Examinations" form for both passes and failures, and for forwarding it to the Graduate Division Office by the deadline date indicated in the University calendar.

6. The department should provide an opportunity for a candidate who fails a comprehensive examination the first time to take it at least one more time. Conditions for repeating an examination (e.g., number of times, elapse of time necessary) should be stated in printed information describing the graduate program, including the Graduate Division Bulletin.

Written Comprehensive Examinations

A written examination should be thorough and searching within the discipline. It should be administered at a time specified well in advance. Careful attention should be given to constructing, proctoring and reading the examination. The graduate major advisor is responsible for providing timely notification within the department.

Oral Comprehensive Examinations

An oral examination should be scheduled to allow ample time for the candidate to demonstrate the extent of competence in the discipline. The graduate major advisor is responsible for notifying colleagues and students of the time and place of the examination, the name of the student to be examined, the members of the examining committee, the general areas to be covered, and whether or not specified non-faculty observers may attend. This should be done at least a week in advance of the examination date.

Only official members of the student's examination committee may participate in the proceedings, but other faculty members of the department may be present as observers.

****APPROVED BY PRESIDENT ROMBERG, MARCH 19, 1979****
