TITLE: FORMAL EXAMINATIONS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

POLICY: All graduate students will be required to pass an Oral Comprehensive Examination and an Oral Thesis/Project Defense.

RATIONALE: The University requires that graduate students pass a substantive comprehensive examination covering content included in the program. A defense of the thesis/project is an additional requirement which may be part of the comprehensive examination, or may be separate.

PROCEDURE: Oral Comprehensive Examination

The primary purpose of the oral comprehensive examination is to provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate ability in analysis and synthesis of theoretical and conceptual material across the graduate curriculum with stated relevance to advanced nursing practice. The student and the Committee are encouraged to view the examination as a positive experience; it is an opportunity for reflection, integration, review and affirmation of the learning process. **The Oral Comprehensive Examination is a closed session, that is, only the student, Committee and Associate Dean (when possible) are in attendance.

A. The comprehensive exam may be taken with, or separately from, the thesis/project defense. The student and Chairperson make this determination together.

B. Both the comprehensive exam and the defense must be scheduled by the student a minimum of 28 days before the end of the term in which the student completes graduate work.

C. The student, in concert with the Committee chairperson, schedules the date of the exam and defense with the Associate Dean one month prior to the exam date.

4. The student must be registered for a minimum of three credits in the term in which the exam/defense will take place.

E. The Associate Dean posts a written announcement of the time, date and location of the examination/defense on each campus.

F. The Committee develops five questions reflecting each of the terminal objectives of the program and the student’s area of interest. General criteria for determining adequacy of responses should also be developed and outlined by the Committee.

G. Two weeks prior to the examination date, the student will be given the five questions.

H. On the day of the examination, the Committee poses three of the five questions to the student. The student will be given 15-20 minutes to discuss each of the three questions. A maximum of one hour is allotted to the oral comprehensive examination.
I. Students may use notes and other aids created in the preparation process.

J. A record of the questions posed, brief notes capturing the essence of the student’s response and a record of the committee vote will be prepared and forwarded by the Chair to the Associate Dean’s office within one week of the examination.

K. The student is excused from the room while the committee determines adequacy of the student’s responses to each of the posed questions. Two of the three committee members must deem the response to be adequate for each question for a judgment of “pass” on the examination.

L. Students receiving a “do not pass” may repeat the examination once with a different set of questions after two months have elapsed.

M. Failure to pass a second examination will result in termination from graduate study.

Defense of Thesis/Project

The primary purpose of the defense of thesis/project is the demonstration of scholarship by the graduate student. A formal presentation of the scholarly endeavor is valued by the faculty of the College of Nursing and enhances professional collegial exchanges. **The Defense of the Thesis/Project is an open session, that is, all faculty and graduate students are invited and encouraged to attend.

A. The comprehensive exam may be taken with, or separately from, the thesis/project defense. The student and Chairperson make this determination together.

B. Both the comprehensive exam and the defense must be scheduled by the student a minimum of 28 days before the end of the term in which the student completes graduate work.

C. The student, in concert with the Committee Chairperson, schedules the date of the exam and defense with the Associate Dean one month prior to the exam date.

D. The student must be registered for a minimum of three credits in the term in which the exam/defense will take place.

E. The Associate Dean posts a written announcement of the time, date and location of the examination/defense on each campus.

F. The defense will be conducted only when the final draft copy of the thesis/project, in its entirety, is complete.

G. A formal presentation is made by the student, describing key components of the thesis/project. Consultation with the Chairperson is encouraged in determining format and stylistic issues of the presentation. The use of audio-visual aids is encouraged. The time allotted for the presentation is 20-30 minutes, reserving an additional 30 minutes for Committee and audience questions. The Committee may determine specific questions to be asked of the student, or the Committee may choose a more spontaneous format in arriving at questions for the student.

H. A record of the questions posed, brief notes capturing the essence of the student’s response and a record of the committee vote will be prepared and forwarded by the Chair to the Associate Dean’s office within one week of the examination.
I. The student is excused from the room while the Committee determines adequacy of the student’s presentation and responses to posed questions. Two of the three committee members must deem the presentation and responses to be adequate for a judgment of “pass”.

J. Students receiving a “do not pass” may repeat the defense once with a different set of questions after two months have elapsed.

K. Failure to pass a second defense will result in termination from graduate study.

Approved by:

Committee: GAAC; 6/12/91; 2/17/94; Revisions approved by GAAC 10/17/95
Faculty: 6/13/91; 3/21/94; Revisions approved 11/13/95
Dean: 7/19/91; 4/5/94; 1/2/96 (LA)

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