Oral Comprehensive Session

Master of Science in Science Education

An oral comprehensive session with your advisors is held in the hour after your symposium presentation. This session (or oral comprehensive exam as it is commonly called) will be arranged immediately following your Capstone Project Oral Presentation delivered at the Symposium in Science Education.

All comprehensive sessions will be scheduled to meet the Graduate School deadline for summer semester graduation.

The comprehensive session will begin with discussion of and questions about your particular capstone project. The implication of this is that the capstone presentation (which will be attended by enrolled MSSE students and other interested persons) will precede the comprehensive session. The comprehensive session is open only to the student, the graduate committee members, and others specifically invited by the graduate committee. The comprehensive session can then extend into other areas that seem appropriate based upon the course of study of a particular student. Two hours is scheduled for each comprehensive session. The first hour is the one-hour symposium presentation and the second hour is a private session with your committee. The second hour will be scheduled in the session room – see session room assignments posted at the symposium.

The emphasis of sessions will not be facts, but rather using information, grasp of concepts, and integration of concepts and information. The best preparation for this session is comfort with your data, reflection about what you studied in your graduate courses, and a good night’s sleep. Your major advisor facilitates the oral session. He/she is the best person to speak with about any specific content, policy or process concerns.

At the close of your comprehensive session, you will be asked to sign off that your project is original and authentic and that you have properly cited and referenced any other person’s work or ideas used in your paper. You will also be asked to give permission for MSSE to use your paper for program instructional purposes. In addition, you will complete the form associated with the archival of your paper in the MSU Library.

The MSSE comprehensive sessions have been designed to meet the comprehensive session requirements of the Graduate School shown below.

From MSU Graduate Bulletin:

The major department may administer a comprehensive examination to assure that the student has attained sufficient mastery of their program of study, including sufficient knowledge of pertinent literature, academic background, training, and ability to conduct research….
A student must be registered for a minimum of three (3) credits at Montana State University during the term in which an examination is taken.

The comprehensive examination is graded with either a passing or failing grade determined by a majority committee vote. The student officially passes the examination when all concerns and deficiencies have been met and are deemed satisfactory by all Committee members.

The Committee and department head are responsible for submitting written notice of the results of the comprehensive examination to the student and to The Graduate School no later than one (1) week after the examination is held or after each section is administered...

See the Graduate School website (www.montana.edu/wwwdg/) for additional details.

**Graduate Committee Role**

Your MSSE Graduate Committee continues to be your approving and guiding body. Regular contact with your committee members prior to summer semester is critical. If you were an “on-campus” student, you would schedule appointments for advising with your committee. *Graduate committee members expect you to take the initiative for contact.*

Be certain your committee understands and supports your capstone project. Report progress to your committee and seek their advice when you have questions or concerns about aspects of your project. *Allow sufficient time for committee members to read and respond to drafts of your capstone professional paper.* Share any concerns you may have about oral comprehensive session with your major advisor.

The only MSSE students who encounter difficulties in the final semester are those students who have not worked closely with their major advisor and/or failed to provide draft capstone professional paper by the end of spring semester. You should be finalizing and editing drafts of your paper in this month. By June your committee should approve your paper for presentation at the symposium. Your committee may require edits/modifications after the presentation and comprehensive session if needed.