

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Purpose

1. Why do I need to take a comprehensive examination?
The comprehensive examination provides an opportunity for students to show evidence of their learning and accomplishments. Specifically, the comprehensive examination evaluates cumulative knowledge across the curriculum with particular emphasis on demonstrating competency in program learning outcomes, assisting in continuous quality improvement in the academic disciplines at Argosy University.

Eligibility

1. How will I know when I am eligible to take my comprehensive examination?
Students must be in:
 - Their final session/term and
 - Good financial standing with no outstanding balances due or owed.An academic advisor will notify students who are eligible for the comprehensive examination and will advise students of the date, time, and location of the next administration of the comprehensive examination.

Cost

1. How much will it cost me to take the comprehensive examination?
There is no cost to the student for the comprehensive examination.

Registration

1. Do I need to register on-line to take my comprehensive examination?
After students have been in conversation with their academic advisor and been approved to take their comprehensive examination, students must complete the application process as described:
 - a) Obtain a copy of the *Petition for Comprehensive Examination* form (Appendix B) from your campus.
 - b) Obtain approval/signatures on the *Petition for Comprehensive Examination*.
 - c) File *Petition for Comprehensive Examination* form with your campus.
 - d) Obtain access information from the academic or faculty advisor for the *Online Comprehensive Examination Toolbox* and review the self-directed learning and resource area.
 - e) After petitions are approved by the department head and submitted to Student Services for entry into the students' academic folders, they are officially registered for the comprehensive examination.The *Petition for Comprehensive Examination* has several levels of approval and must be submitted, with all approval signatures, at least four (4) weeks prior to a regularly scheduled examination.
The student will be sent an email notification one week prior to the release of the examination reminding him or her of the release date. Access instructions will also be provided to the student at the same time.
2. Specifically, how will I receive the Comprehensive Examination?

The examination is web-based and housed on a learning platform that can be accessed upon notice from the examination administrator to the student.

Timing

1. How often will the on-line comprehensive examinations be offered during the year?
 - The comprehensive examination will be administered six times per year, or one time per session:

Fall I, Fall II, Spring I, Spring II, Summer I, and Summer II.
 - The comprehensive examination will be administered online at the beginning of the third week of each session.
 - A *Calendar of Examination Dates* is published in each academic year and distributed to all students by his or her academic advisor.
2. How long will I have to complete my comprehensive examination?

Students are to submit his or her comprehensive examination to the examination administrator no later than one week after the examination is released with a date/time stamp no later than midnight of the 7th day.
3. What if I sign up to take the comprehensive examination and cannot finish it within the allotted time?
 - Students who do not intend to take the examination at the designated time should contact their academic advisor to withdraw from the examination at that time.
 - Notice of withdrawal must be made, in writing, at least one week prior to the release of the examination and submitted to the academic advisor.
 - In the case of an extreme and unexpected emergency, students must contact the Dean/Chair of the program, as soon as possible, before the release of the examination. Once the examination is released to the student the examination cannot be cancelled.
 - Students will have a maximum of one year to complete and pass the comprehensive examination process, once they are qualified to take it.
4. How long will it take for me to find out whether I passed my comprehensive examination?
 - Students can expect results in approximately four (4) weeks from the date of completing and submitting the examination.
 - Students will be advised of their results, via email, followed by printed notification delivered by postal mail.

Preparation

1. What is the best way for me to prepare for the comprehensive examination?

Important information intended to help students prepare for the comprehensive examination is available on a web-based learning platform. Learning modules will include:

 - (a) sample questions
 - (b) response strategies

- (c) format and style guide
- (d) *Turnitin*® procedures
- (e) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS)
- (f) APA Style.

Students' academic advisors will:

- provide information to access this platform and
- answer any questions the student has regarding the examination.

The Online Comprehensive Examination Toolbox site is a self-directed learning and resources area.

Students are encouraged to:

- be thoroughly familiar with the comprehensive examination protocol and
- read the *Comprehensive Examination Guide* and all ancillary materials with special attention to program-specific information.

Students are advised to:

- develop a study schedule in order to perform well on the comprehensive examination.
- collect and collate all of their course readings, resources, papers, and other work products that will guide the response to the comprehensive examination questions.

Students are expected to:

- Provide carefully articulated and well-reasoned responses to examination questions, based on the theories, constructs, models, and applications presented in the various courses and projects in the doctoral program, and through independent reading and research.
- Create responses that are grounded in history, research, theories, and philosophies.
- Include current references and sources that are related to major works in the research literature.
- Use references that supplement and support the reasoning, presentation, and the position of the student.
- Remember that the comprehensive examination is not a literature review, but an applied exercise requiring methods of scientific inquiry and problem-solving, and integrative synthesis.

The Comprehensive Examination

1. How many questions will there be in the Comprehensive Examination and will there be differences on various Argosy University Campus?

Each of the three Colleges will produce a set of five (5) questions for each of its programs. Each College will have three (3) different versions of the comprehensive examination available, at all times, for each program in the event there are distribution or technical difficulties.

2. Will all Argosy University campuses/colleges administer the same Comprehensive Examination questions?

All campuses will administer the same set of program examination questions during the session. After each examination is administered, the used examination questions will go back into the Comprehensive Examination Administration Bank and will only be used again, after an amount of time determined by each College

Appendix E provides sample examination questions for each College.

Expectations

1. How important is correct grammar and spelling in my comprehensive examination?
Extremely important! As a minimum, students should run spell check and grammar check programs from their word processes, as well as proofreading all responses before submittal.
2. Are the readers of my comprehensive examination expecting me to know all of the theories associated with my concentration?
Readers will expect students to integrate relevant theories in your responses to the Comprehensive Examination.
3. Will there be anyone available while I am taking my comprehensive examination to answer any questions that I might have?
Students will be guided through the comprehensive examination process by their faculty advisor and should seek counsel and assistance from their advisor as needed.

Formatting

1. Do I have to use APA format in my comprehensive examination?
Yes. The comprehensive examination must follow all of the standards of the *American Psychological Association Publication Manual, 5th edition* (APA). Study and tab the American Psychological Association Publication Manual for rules and guidelines. Some basic rules of APA are listed in Appendix D. These are offered as a guide and should not substitute for the use of the manual.

Academic Honesty

1. Will I be required to submit my Comprehensive Examination to Turnitin prior to returning my exam at the end of the 7 day time limit?
Yes. All examinations will be subjected to review by the software, *Turnitin®*. Instructions for submission are available at the *Online Comprehensive Examination Toolbox*, from the student's academic advisor, and from the person designated as the program comprehensive examination coordinator.
Readers will have access to the originality report from *Turnitin®* and use the report to help them grade the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination must reflect the student's original work and must be produced exclusively by that student. Any source used by the student must be documented, using standard citations from scholarly references and citations consistent with the style guide of the *American Psychological Association Publication Manual 5th edition* (APA, and the extent to which any source has been used must be apparent to the reader. A student committing an act of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the University, as stated in the Argosy University Academic Catalog. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty will fail the comprehensive examination.

Evaluation

1. Who will evaluate my comprehensive examination?
The comprehensive examination is evaluated by two approved and trained faculty members who serve as readers and are appointed by the College Dean or campus Dean/Program Chair. All readers are trained under the direction of the College Dean or Program Chair. Readers represent diverse educational disciplines and expertise and may

include faculty from various Argosy University campuses. Examination review is confidential and no student-identifying information is provided to the reader. In addition, the identity of the readers is not provided to the student.

2. Will the two readers use a consistent method to evaluate my Comprehensive Examination?

Yes, all readers will use an evaluation rubric to evaluate Comprehensive Examination questions.

3. Will I receive a grade for my comprehensive examination?

The Comprehensive Examination is evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis, therefore my grades are given.

There are three categories that may be assigned to comprehensive examinations by readers: Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail.

Pass

When students earn a *Pass* on the examination they are eligible to proceed to dissertation study and petition to register for dissertation credit. In the case of the Ed.S. degree, the Petition for Graduation may be submitted.

Conditional Pass

When students earn a *Conditional Pass* on their examination, students may rewrite the portions of the examination that are deficient. If the student elects to resubmit these question(s), they must be resubmitted to the Program Dean/Chair, who forwards them to the reviewers for re-evaluation within two weeks from the date on which the examination results are sent to the student.

Students have one opportunity to rewrite the deficient portions of the examination for re-evaluation. If the resubmitted examination does not earn a passing score, the student will fail and be required to retake the examination.

Students should meet with their academic advisor to discuss the difficulties they had with the examination, and to develop an individualized plan of action for completing the requirement.

Students will be provided specific feedback including:

- a copy of the examination, with written comments that provide explicit feedback regarding deficits and improvements needed in order to pass the examination and
- the evaluation rubric and scores.

Fail

Students who earn a Fail on their examination will have one additional opportunity to retake the examination. Students should meet with their academic or faculty advisor to discuss the difficulties they had with the examination, and to develop an individualized plan of action for completing the requirement.

The student will be provided specific feedback including:

- a copy of the examination with written comments that provide explicit feedback regarding deficits and improvements needed in order to pass the examination and

- the evaluation rubric and scores.

Students will also be required to submit a plan of study and a study schedule to the academic or faculty advisor.

4. If I don't pass my comprehensive examination, what are my options and will I receive any assistance from Argosy University?

Students who do not pass the Comprehensive Examination on the first attempt will be given one additional attempt to pass the examination.

Remediation and tutorial assistance for retake examinations will be provided by the campus. Students who fail to pass the comprehensive examination on the second attempt will be dismissed from the program.

Students may appeal dismissal results to the campus by following the Student Right to Appeal process stated in the Argosy University Academic Catalog.

Relationship to Block I

1. If I have to complete a revision of my Comprehensive Examination, can I begin Block I of my dissertation?

Each doctoral student must complete and pass their Comprehensive Examination prior to being eligible to begin Block I of their dissertation. Any revisions must be completed and a "Pass" received prior to beginning Block I.