

SKHS PhD (Socio-Cultural) Comprehensive Examination Timeline Form and General Instructions

Candidate Name _____ ID Number _____ Email: _____

Committee Chair Name _____ Email: _____

Question 1

Examiner Name _____ Email _____ Topic Area _____

Question 2

Examiner Name _____ Email _____ Topic Area _____

Question 3

Examiner Name _____ Email _____ Topic Area _____

Deadline to submit questions to Chair (must be 10 working days prior to start of exam): _____

Dates (dd-mmm-yy) (dd-mmm-yy)

Question 1
Reading Start Date _____
Question Start Date _____ Q End Date _____

Question 2
Reading Start Date _____
Question Start Date _____ Q End Date _____

Question 3
Reading Start Date _____
Question Start Date _____ Q End Date _____

Proposed Oral examination Date _____ Time _____ Location: _____

Signatures – Part 1 – Examination Details Confirmed And Exam May Begin:

1. Candidate has received a copy of the procedures governing comprehensive examinations in the School.
2. Timing of the examination falls within the time frame set out in the SKHS Doctoral Student Handbook.

Candidate (signature) Date

Comprehensive Exam Chair (signature) Date

Graduate Assistant (signature) Date

Chair to return completed Form (page 1 only) with all signatures to the SKHS Graduate Assistant, KHS 206. Graduate Assistant to provide PDF copy to Committee, Candidate and SGS. The original to be placed in the Candidate's comp exam file.

Signatures – Part 2 – Approval to Proceed to Oral Examination (following completion of questions/answers):

Admin Assistant initial that all 3 Qs/As sent to Exam Committee 5 working days prior to oral exam: _____

Signature of Chair (Candidate has permission to proceed to oral exam): _____

PhD (Socio-Cultural) Comprehensive Examination Timeline Form and General Instructions

PURPOSE

The comprehensive examination serves as a learning opportunity, and is a key milestone in determining whether the Candidate has developed the background, knowledge and academic competencies required to successfully continue their studies.

TIMING

The comprehensive examination process normally begins during the Candidate's third term of study. The written examination will normally take six months (i.e., 7 weeks per question). The oral examination is to occur within two weeks of submission of the third answer. Candidates normally complete their comprehensive examination within the first 20 months of study in the doctoral program.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Chair

- Attend all meetings of the Examination Committee
- Submit signed Timeline Form to Graduate Assistant immediately following initial meeting
- Ensure Examiners' questions are submitted on time and that they follow stipulated criteria
- Confer with the Supervisor to ensure that exam questions do not overlap
- Moderate queries while the Candidate is writing the exam
- Chair oral examination, ensuring the exam follows the stipulated process
- Secure required signatures at the end of the oral examination
- Arrange a subsequent meeting of the Examination Committee, in whole or in part, to adjudicate remedial work as required
- Submit completed and signed Report of the Examining Committee and Decision to the SKHS Graduate Assistant following the oral examination

Supervisor

- Attend all meetings of the Examination Committee
- Invite Examiners and a Chair to sit on the Committee
- Arrange the time and location of initial meeting
- Ensure the Candidate has adequate time to write the comprehensive exam
- Confer with the Chair to ensure that exam questions do not overlap
- Adhere to the responsibilities of Examiners laid out below
- Read all 3 questions and all 3 answers

Examiners

- Attend all meetings of the Examination Committee
- Create questions and reading lists in consultation with Supervisor and the Candidate; and submit them in accordance with established deadlines
- Read all 3 questions and all 3 answers but need only to prepare comments/questions about their own question for the oral exam
- Submit a written report on the candidate's response to the Examiner's own question at least five (5) working days prior to the oral examination.
- Participate in the oral examination including: 1) asking the Candidate questions primarily about the written response to the Examiner's own question; and 2) reaching consensus or voting on verdict for each question
- Assess any follow up work as required

Candidates

- Attend all meetings of the Examination Committee
- Consult with Supervisor and Examiners about questions where applicable
- Submit all written responses on time and in accordance with criteria laid out in Section B
- Answer questions in the oral examination
- Complete follow-up work where applicable

Graduate Assistant

- Assist Chair in overseeing examination timeframe
- Send reminder email to Examiners five (5) working days before their questions are due
- Distribute questions to Candidate
- Adjudicate written answers to ensure they meet formatting criteria
- Distribute each written answer to all Examiners, and copy Chair, as received, complete with report instructions and due date
- Distribute all 3 questions and 3 answers to all Examiners five working days prior to the oral exam
- Oversee paperwork and signatures
- Submit final results to School of Graduate Studies
- File copies in Candidate's SKHS graduate file

Graduate Coordinator

- Support and advise Chair, Supervisor, Candidate and Graduate Assistant when necessary
- Adjudicate appeals where applicable

PROCESS

Part 1 Pre-Exam Comprehensive Examination Proposal

One week prior to the examination meeting, the Candidate will submit a 1-2-page description of their research interests to the members of the Examination Committee. The description may be quite specific, noting potential reading list topics and references, or more general if the Candidate is using the comprehensive exam process to narrow their focus.

Part 2 Exam Process

A. Prior to the Commencement of Written Answers

1. **The Supervisor** must convene a meeting of all members of the Examination Committee, which consists of three Examiners (one of whom must be the Supervisor) and a fourth member who will serve as Chair, **at least two weeks** prior to the submission of examination questions (see Part 2, point 4). Attendance via skype/zoom is permitted.
2. In instances where Candidates are co-supervised, only one Supervisor will be responsible for establishing the Examination Committee and arranging the initial meeting. For the examination itself, Co-supervisors may either a) create a joint question and reading list for the Candidate and share the question period in the oral examination; or b) decide that only one Supervisor will participate in the Examination Committee. In instances where option b) is chosen, the non-active Supervisor may attend the oral examination as an observer but may not participate in the proceedings.
3. At the initial organizing meeting, the Examination Committee and the Candidate must:
 - a) Review the examination process to ensure that the Candidate and Examiners understand the process and their individual responsibilities.

- b) Identify the three topic areas from the following possible areas. No more than one question from a single area may be included in the three distinct questions identified for that Candidate: i) General background (mandatory); ii) Current developments; iii) Current controversies; iv) Methodological issues; v) Theoretical issues.
 - c) Complete the Timeline Form and return it to the SKHS Graduate Assistant.
4. Each Examiner will submit **one question and an initial reading list** in electronic form to the Chair for approval **no less than 10 working days prior** to the commencement of the written examination. The Chair is to confer with the Examiners to ensure that questions do not overlap. The Graduate Assistant is to send an email reminder to the Examiners 5 working days prior to the question are due.
 5. If revisions to any of the questions and/or reading lists are required, **final approved versions** must be submitted to the Chair **no less than 5 working days** prior to the commencement of the first question.
 6. The Chair is to provide the Graduate Assistant with separate electronic versions of the 3 approved reading lists and 3 approved corresponding questions. The 6 documents will be: Reading List 1, Question 1, Reading List 2, Question 2, Reading List 3, Question 3.
 7. Upon receipt of the 3 approved reading lists and questions, Graduate Assistant is to obtain the Chair's signature of approval to begin the examination and distribute a PDF version of the Timeline document to the Chair, all Examiners, the Candidate, and provide a copy to SGS. The Graduate Assistant will use the original Timeline document and the PhD Comprehensive Examination Steps and Checklist to administer the exam.
 8. The initial reading list consists of the equivalent of four 4 books and 20 journal articles. This list is **intended as an excellent starting point** from which the Candidate will develop their answer.
 9. The Candidate may consult with members of the Examination Committee **prior** to the commencement of the written examination to establish the scope of the examination questions.

B. The Written Examination and Timeline

1. The written exam occurs over a six-month period, with a maximum of 7 weeks per question. Note that holidays that fall within the 7-week period will not be used to extend the allotted timeframe. For each question, the Candidate will have 6 weeks for their reading list and 1 week for their written response. They will submit their final answer in MS Word format no later than 9:00 am 7 days after they received their question (e.g., if the question was received on Monday morning, the response is submitted the following Monday morning).
2. Once the written examination has begun, the Candidate will direct any queries regarding an examination question to the Chair. The Chair may confer with the Examiner as required.
3. During the examination, the Candidate **may discuss the comprehensive examination with their peers**. However, they are NOT permitted to have anyone read any part of their answer (e.g., proofread or receive feedback on written answer content).
4. It is expected that the Candidate will work on their Comprehensive Examination answer at least **on a half-time basis during regular working days**.

5. At 9:00 am on the morning of the start date for Question 1, the Candidate will email the Graduate Assistant at skhs.grad@queensu.ca to **request their first reading list**. The reading list is provided via email in PDF format and the Candidate then has 6 weeks to familiarize themselves with the literature.
6. After 6 weeks of reading, the Candidate will email the Graduate Assistant to **request their first question**. The Graduate Assistant will provide the first question in PDF format via email at 9:00 am. The Candidate has 7 days to complete their written response.
7. The Candidate submits their completed response in MS Word format via email to the Graduate Assistant **before 9:00 am on the day the question is due**. The process is repeated for Questions 2 and 3. Given the 7-week window per question, the Candidate is expected to request their new reading list the day after they submit their response to the previous question.
8. The written answer for a question **may not exceed 20 pages, 1.5 spaced (approx. 7,000 words)** excluding figures, tables, and references. All writing exceeding the limit will be removed from the Candidate's response by the Graduate Assistant before being forwarded to the Examiner for grading. There is no process for resubmitting an answer that exceeds the limit. Figure captions are intended to match guidelines for a typical journal article in that discipline area and will not count towards the 20-page limit, or approx. 7,000 word total. Figures and tables should appear following the reference list, not within the answer text. The document should be formatted with 1.5 line spacing, 12-point font, 1 inch/2.54 cm margins.
9. **Within 1 week of having received the written response**, the Graduate Assistant will verify that the response meets formatting criteria and forward the answer, along with the question, in PDF format for marking, to all 3 Examiners, with a note indicating that only the Examiner for that question is required to perform marking, but all 3 Examiners are required to read the answer.
10. If the Candidate wishes to attend a conference, experiences a significant illness that prevents them from working, or has some other event scheduled during their examination period that requires them to discontinue work on a question, they may request, in writing, an **extension of time** equivalent to the time lost to complete that question. The Chair will confer with the Supervisor and Examiners to confirm permission for the time extension. The Examination Committee will confer with the Candidate to **reschedule the remaining questions and/or oral examination** as required. New dates will be provided to the Graduate Assistant who will update the Timeline Form accordingly.

C. The Oral Examination

1. **The oral examination** typically takes place **within two weeks following submission of the final written response**. However, Candidates may request that the oral examination take place in the third week, but no later, following submission of their final question.
2. **No less than 1 week prior to the oral examination**, each Examiner must send a brief e-mail report similar in format to a thesis examination report to the Chair indicating whether the written response to that Examiner's question is satisfactory or unsatisfactory, and briefly summarize its strengths and weaknesses.
3. Evaluation **will not include judgment of whether a particular reference or references are used**, but will be based on the quality and depth of the written response.
4. Candidates will always proceed to the oral examination following evaluation of their 3 written answers, regardless of the quality of those written responses.
5. The Candidate will bring printed copies of their written responses to the oral examination.

6. The Graduate Assistant will distribute copies, in PDF format (the Chair will also receive the hard copy of each question and answer) of all 3 Examiners' questions and all 3 Candidate's written responses that form the comprehensive examination to all members of the **Examination Committee no less than 5 working days prior to the oral examination.**
7. Before questioning commences, the Chair will excuse the Candidate and the Committee will discuss any questions or problems related to the answers. This is especially important if one Examiner has rated a question unsatisfactory.
8. The oral examination consists of **2 rounds of 20 minutes per Examiner** and will **usually take no more than 2 hours.** If any written answer is considered unsatisfactory, the Examiner responsible may take more time to question the Candidate. The Chair will not examine Candidates directly, but will moderate the questioning and record the nature of the questions asked by the Examiners.
9. Normally, the order of questioning **will begin with the background question** unless the Candidate chooses to start with a different question.
10. **Examiner's questions must concern the Candidate's written answer.** Any ideas expressed in the written answer, or ideas that could be expected to have been included in the written answer, may be explored during questioning.
12. Following the 2 rounds of questions, the Chair will excuse the Candidate so the Examination Committee may confer on the results.

D. Decision

1. All decisions of the Examination Committee are to be made by consensus where possible. If consensus is not achieved in a reasonable time, a vote may be taken. The Chair does not vote.
2. Following the oral examination, a verdict of "Pass with no revisions required"; "Pass with revisions required"; "Pass with satisfactory completion of remedial work"; or "Redo Question with a mandatory oral defense to be attended by the entire Examination Committee" is provided for each question. All Examiners and the Chair must sign the PhD Comprehensive Examination Report of the Examining Committee. The Examining Committee identifies who will oversee and approve any remedial or revisions required.

If a Candidate obtains a "Pass with no revisions required" verdict for all 3 questions, they have successfully completed the Comprehensive Examination process. The Chair and the Examiners then sign the PhD Comprehensive Examination Decision Sheet and submit it, and all other comprehensive examination documentation, to the SKHS Graduate Assistant for recording and filing.

2. **For questions where the verdict is "Pass with revisions required"** the Examination Committee will identify revisions required to improve the Candidate to a "Pass with no revisions required" level. These revisions will be listed on pages 1 and 2 of the PhD Comprehensive Examination Report of the Examining Committee. The Committee will identify who will review and provide final authorization on approval of the revisions required and the submission date.
3. **For questions where the verdict is "Pass with satisfactory completion of remedial work"** the Examination Committee will identify supplemental work designed to improve weaknesses of the Candidate to a "Pass with no revisions required" level. These requirements will be listed on pages 1 and 2 of the PhD Comprehensive Examination Report of the Examining Committee. The Committee will identify who will review and provide final authorization on approval of the remedial work and the

accompanying submission date. Remedial work may include taking a course, presenting a lecture, or other tasks or combined tasks as assigned by the Examining Committee. An additional oral examination on a Pass with satisfactory completion of remedial work is at the discretion of the Examining Committee.

The Candidate normally has 3 months from the time of the oral exam to complete remedial work.

The relevant Examiner will provide their verdict for that question after this process. The verdict is either “Pass with no Revisions Required” or “Fail”.

Where an Examiner has participated via telephone or other electronic method, they may confer their signing authority to the Chair via email to the Graduate Assistant.

Upon completion of the remedial work, the Chair and the Examiners then sign the PhD Comprehensive Examination Decision Sheet and submit it to the SKHS Graduate Assistant for recording and filing.

4. **For questions where the verdict is “Redo Question with a mandatory oral defense to be attended by the entire Examining Committee”**, the Examination Committee will provide feedback to the Candidate. The Candidate has 3 months from the time of the oral examination to prepare a new answer to the original question(s). The work is evaluated by all members of the Examination Committee, and a mandatory oral defense for the question(s) is held with the entire Examination Committee. After this process, the Examination Committee provides a verdict for the question(s) of either “Pass with no revisions required” or “Fail, required to withdraw from program” on a consensus basis or, failing that, a voting decision of 2 out of 3 Examiners is required.

Where an Examiner has participated via telephone or other electronic method, they may confer their signing authority to the Chair via email to the Graduate Assistant.

Upon completion of the “Redo Question with a mandatory oral defense to be attended by the entire Examining Committee”, the Chair and the Examiners then sign the PhD Comprehensive Examination Decision Sheet and submit it to the SKHS Graduate Assistant for recording and filing.

5. Where a final decision on a “Redo Question with a mandatory oral defense to be attended by the entire Examination Committee” cannot be agreed upon, an External Expert may be engaged to review the material and assist the Committee in rendering a final decision on the question(s). To identify an External Expert, the Examination Committee must submit the names of 3 arms-length researchers to the SKHS Graduate Coordinator who will pick 1 and arrange for them to join the Examination Committee’s deliberations.
6. A Candidate must receive a “Pass with no revisions required” verdict on all 3 questions to continue in the program. If all 3 questions do not have a “Pass with no revisions required” verdict after Steps 1-5 above, the Candidate will be required to withdraw from the program immediately.
7. The Chair will execute the Decision Sheet after it has been signed by all Examiners (and the External Expert where required).
8. The Graduate Assistant to file a copy of the PhD Comprehensive Examination Decision Sheet in the Candidate’s file and forward the original to SGS for recording.

E. Appeals

1. If the Candidate wishes to appeal the outcome of the examination on procedural and/or academic grounds, the appeal must be lodged formally with the Graduate Coordinator. In instances where the

Graduate Coordinator served on the Examination Committee, the SKHS Director shall hear the first appeal. In instances where both the Director and Graduate Coordinator served on the Examination Committee, a member of the Graduate Subcommittee will hear the first appeal.

2. The Candidate must provide in writing the reasons why they believe the academic decision was undeserved and/or identify where proper procedures were not followed. This should be done as early as possible after the decision is announced and normally no more than 10 working days thereafter.
3. If the matter is not resolved by the Graduate Coordinator or their substitute, and the Candidate continues to believe that the decision was undeserved, a formal request may be lodged for a review of the appeal by the SKHS Graduate Subcommittee (faculty members only), less any faculty members who were among the 3 examiners on the Examination Committee. Substitutions may be made in this instance to ensure that the committee includes 3 faculty members.
4. After reviewing the appeal, including interviewing the Candidate and the members of the Examination Committee and the External Expert when applicable, the Graduate Subcommittee may find that:
 - (i) The decision is academically and procedurally sound (a procedural review should be conducted even in cases where the appeal is on academic grounds).
 - (ii) An error in procedure or academic judgment has been made. In this case the Graduate Committee will proceed to find a solution.
5. If the Director and Graduate Subcommittee find that the decision of the Examination Committee was academically and procedurally sound and recommend to the appropriate Arts and Science Graduate Council that the Candidate be required to withdraw, the Candidate may appeal the recommendation for withdrawal by following the procedures outlined in Section 8.9(c) of the Graduate School Calendar.
6. The appeal may be based not on academic or procedural matters, but on a Grievance. In this case, the Director will recommend to the Candidate that they directly address the Senate Statement on Grievance, Discipline and Related Matters and the University's Grievance and Appeal Procedures.

This Form to be read in conjunction with the SKHS PhD Comprehensive Examination Report of the Examining Committee and the SKHS PhD Comprehensive Examination Decision Sheet.