



Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

(Revised January 2022)

1. The **objective** of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination is to determine whether the student demonstrates the necessary research skills and academic achievements to be permitted to continue in the Ph.D. Program, including:
 - Knowledge of the discipline (from the point of view of breadth)
 - Understanding of the proposed field of research
 - Ability to conduct independent and original research
 - A thesis proposal
 - Professional skills
2. Candidates for the Ph.D. must successfully pass a written comprehensive examination (POTH 701) by the end of the first academic year of the Ph.D. Program and/or after finishing required core content coursework (and prior to the oral defense of the research proposal.) Students wishing to write the exam later than the end of their second year in the program will require written permission from the Graduate Committee. **At the beginning of the term, students should register in POTH 701 (Ph.D. Comprehensive).**
3. The exam is the last step before thesis research and writing. The exam format consists of two questions answered in essay style and submitted by deadlines set by the School.
4. **Procedure:**
 - Two topics area (from list below-though not exclusively) and related questions are identified by the supervisor and the student. These are submitted to the GPD on the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Form. Only one of the questions can be closely related to the thesis.
 - An internal and external examiner is identified for each question. The supervisor submits to the Graduate Committee a list of examiners for each topic area on the comprehensive examination form. The student's supervisor or co-supervisor **cannot be** an examiner. **Only one member of the student's supervisory committee** (excluding supervisor and co-supervisor) **may be an examiner.** The GPD and Graduate Student Affairs Coordinator contact the examiners directly.
 - The comprehensive examination form should be submitted at least one month in advance of the term during which the student will be writing the exam.
 - The student must also register for the Comprehensive Examination for the current term.
 - Once the two topic areas and questions have been approved, the student will have 2 months to complete the examination and will be given a start and end date.
 - During the comprehensive examination, the student may have a **single, short** meeting (one meeting per topic) with their supervisor to discuss guidelines and general scope of the examination question. Specific answers to the question, or to part of the question, may not be discussed. No paper exchange is to take place.
 - Answers to each question in essay style (limit 10 pages, single spaced; or 20 pages double spaced, excluding references, appendices and tables) are submitted by the student to the GPD, with a cc to graduate.rehabilitation@mcgill.ca, at any time during the examination period, but no later than the end date provided.

5. Evaluation Process:

Each essay is reviewed by 2 examiners (1 inside the School and 1 outside the School) using a scoring grid. Students may elect to prepare their answer in “manuscript style”; submission to a journal and review by peer review process may be considered equivalent to grading by one examiner, if the student desires.

To pass the Comprehensive examination, the student must obtain a Pass from each of the examiners for the two questions. In situations where the internal and external examiners disagree, the question will be sent to a third reviewer. If one question is failed, the student will be given 1 month to rework the question based on the examiners’ feedback. If two questions are failed or if the resubmission of a question is failed, the student will need to redo the comprehensive examination.

Topic Areas: *Note: Other topics can be addressed with permission of GPD.*

- i. Describe the major theoretical models that pertain to your field and how they apply in your area of research.
- ii. Outline the most important measurement challenges in your research area and discuss potential solutions for one or two key challenges.
- iii. Outline the major methodological challenges associated with your research area and discuss potential solutions for one or two key challenges.
- iv. Outline the major statistical challenges in your research area and discuss potential solutions for one or two key challenges.
- v. Describe the underlying theoretical mechanisms that support your research hypothesis.
- vi. Outline the health policy implications of your research area and suggest solutions for translating key findings from this research area into health policy changes.

Right to write in (English or in) French: In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Plagiarism/Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/academicrights/integrity for more information)

Ph.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION
Nomination of Examination Committee Members
 (Revised May 2018)

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

McGill ID: _____ Supervisor(s): _____

Term student registered in POTH-701 Comprehensive Exam: _____

Topic Area 1	
Question 1	
Internal Examiner	Name: Position: Email: Phone:
External Examiner	Name: Position: Email: Phone:

Topic Area 2	
Question 2	
Internal Examiner	Name: Position: Email: Phone:
External Examiner	Name: Position: Email: Phone:

Thesis Title: _____

Brief Description:

Results:

1-Internal	1-External	2-Internal	2-External

Date Grade Submitted to Minerva: _____ GPD Signature: _____