

Department of Communication Studies
Comprehensive Exam
Policies and Procedures

Pre-Planning

(Semester before Comps, if not before)

Talk with Your Faculty Advisors

- Determine who your 3 comps committee members will be.
- Committee members outside of CMS are not typical and must be approved by the Graduate Office and the student's other committee members.
- Discuss norms for your area (what kinds of questions to expect, how to prepare, etc).

Workplan Forms

The semester prior to comps, you are required to gather all 3 signatures of your comps committee members on your form.

Department Rules

- You must complete all questions within 8 weeks (60 days) from start to finish.
- Your defense may be outside those 8 weeks, but should take place before the official end of the semester (defenses during final exam weeks are fine).
- Committees must be given at least 2 weeks to review your responses before the defense.
- Sit-down, timed questions can start no earlier than 8:30 am and no later than 1 pm, Monday-Friday.
- Email – All comps questions will be sent to your UTexas email account. We will **not** send to gmail, yahoo, etc.

Jenn's Role

- Jenn (along with the committee) should receive a copy of your comps schedule as soon as its determined (dates, times, whose question, etc).
- Faculty send their questions directly to Jenn.
- Jenn delivers questions to you (both take-home and sit-down) on the appointed day/time via email. Take-home questions can be expected the morning of the desired date.
- You will send your responses via email directly back to Jenn when they are due.
- Jenn will deliver all of your responses to your committee members when you are done with ALL of the responses.
- Jenn will schedule a room for your defense once you and your committee determine a date and time.

Comps Structure by Area

Rhetoric and Language

Three Questions Total:

- Three take-home questions
- Two weeks to complete each (unless a shorter or longer deadline is requested by the faculty member)

Org Comm and Technology

Three Questions Total:

- One sit-down question (timed, 4 hours)
- Two take-home questions completed in 7-14 days (faculty determine the deadline)

Interpersonal

Four Questions Total:

- Three sit-down questions (timed, 4 hours)
- One take-home question completed in one week.

Rules and Regulations for Sit-Down Exams

- Please bring your own laptop to type up your response. We use the honor system and trust that you are not accessing the internet during your testing and only using the materials given to you with the question (if any) to respond. **NOTES ARE NOT ALLOWED.**
- Feel free to arrive early to get settled before your start time (although, fair warning if you have an earlyish start time: the office doesn't open until 8:30 am).
- You may want to bring headphones since the testing room is near the staff/faculty break room and sometimes there can be some ambient noise. If you need absolute silence while testing, headphones will help.
- You are welcome to bring water, snacks, etc. to help you get through the four hours.
- Once you are done, please email your response directly to Jenn at the appointed stop time.

Tells me what
kind of question

Sample Schedule (Rhetoric)

First Question (take-home):

February 6th – February 20th (due at midnight), Dailey

Second Question (take-home):

February 27th – March 7th (due at midnight), Gu

Start Date

End Date

Who is writing
the question

Third Question (take-home):

March 20th-April 3rd (due at midnight), Stroud

Tells me what
kind of question

Sample Schedule (Org Comm)

First Question (Sit-Down):

February 8th from 9 am to 1 pm, Stephens

Second Question (take-home):

February 27th – March 7th (due at midnight), Ba

Start and Stop Time

Who is writing
the question

Third Question (take-home):

March 20th-April 3rd (due at midnight), Dailey

Tells me what
kind of question

Sample Schedule (Interpersonal)

First Question (Sit-Down):

February 8th from 9 am to 1 pm, Vangelisti

Second Question (Sit-Down):

February 27th from 9 am to 1 pm, Dailey

Start and Stop Time

Who is writing
the question

Third Question (Sit-Down):

March 2nd from 9 am to 1 pm, Donovan

Fourth Question (Take-Home):

March 15th – March 23rd (due at midnight), Vangelisti

When Testing is Done

- Jenn will upload all of your responses to UTBox and share them with your committee for their review.
- Some committee members may request printed copies of your responses. If they ask Jenn first, she will take care of it. If they ask you directly, feel free to print them out for them.

Scheduling the Defense

- You can begin to schedule your oral defense when you've received your final question.
- Doodle polls or When to Meet are the best/easiest way to do this.
- Pro-Tip: Before sending out a Doodle poll, make sure to avoid any dates/times that conflict with faculty classes or office hours – those dates/times are automatic no-gos.

What to Bring to the Defense

- You can obtain the Comps Defense Signature page from Jenn prior to your defense meeting, however this form will be emailed to your advisor the day of your defense.
- Two usual outcomes: “Pass” or “Rewrites.”
- If you are asked to do a rewrite, a deadline for the new response will be given and a new form will be distributed. Jenn will follow-up on that date for the final committee decision.

You've Passed! Now What?

- You should start the discussion with your faculty advisor about entering doctoral candidacy the semester after you are done with comps.
- We expect everyone to be officially in doctoral candidacy by the end the next long semester.
- Your adviser will need to fill out the comprehensive form stating that you passed. Your committee will all receive an assessment report to fill out about your defense.

Preparing for Doctoral Candidacy

- You will need to select at least 4 committee members (3 in CMS, 1 outside). More are allowed if you wish and your outside member can be someone from off-campus. Any off-campus members are required to submit a C.V. certifying their experience and degrees.
- You will need to have a short dissertation abstract ready to upload. This abstract is used for the application only and will disappear after you are accepted into candidacy.
- Your doctoral candidacy application will be routed electronically to your faculty advisor, the Graduate Advisor, and then finally to the Graduate School for final approvals.
- Once approved, you will be cleared to register for dissertation hours.

Do not Hesitate to Ask Questions!

Jenn is your guide through ALL of these processes, and she will be happy to answer any and all questions as you navigate this complex process.