PROCEDURES FOR PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS IN MARKETING
(effective as of November 2024)

NOTES

A. The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) has only a general policy regarding procedures for PhD comprehensive examinations.

B. The comprehensive examination regulations are a departmental responsibility. However, they are subject to the School's general policy, which is outlined in the document entitled *Procedures for PhD Comprehensive Examinations Written in The Faculty of Business* (revised 2023-12-19).

C. According to *Procedures for PhD Comprehensive Examinations Written in The Faculty of Business*, "Students must pass the examination within a maximum of two attempts. In exceptional circumstances, a third attempt will be permitted with the consent of the student's supervisor, the Department Chair, and the Associate Dean of the PhD program."

PURPOSE

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to assess if students are adequately prepared to proceed to the candidacy stage of the PhD program. Students must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the examining committee that they possess: (a) an adequate knowledge of the disciplines and the subject matters relevant to the examinations; and (b) the ability to pursue and complete original research at an advanced level.

PROCEDURES

The comprehensive examination consists of a 2nd-year paper and presentation.

1. The 2nd-year paper should be a novel, unique, and new independent research project.

    The research topic and idea should be <u>novel and unique</u>. The expectation is that the paper will be of appropriate quality for an academic submission to a major (marketing) conference, like an ACR conference paper. If the paper involves empirical work, this standard implies that there will be some reliable results/effects to report (e.g., an experiment with significant effects).

    The paper needs to be a <u>new</u> project and cannot be a paper for which a student previously received a grade (i.e., it cannot be a research paper that is part of a class taken, or part of a student's summer research for which they have received a grade).

    This will be an <u>independent</u> research project and paper, developed and written by the student. A student can receive limited guidance from faculty, but the main idea and theoretical development should come from the student.

    Students should discuss the paper idea with their advisor to ensure the appropriateness of the topic, and to make sure the paper meets the above criteria.

2. Students should consider utilizing the MARK subject pool to conduct experiments (if needed for the paper). They can also use their TEA funds or other sources (e.g., advisor funding). The MBEL department will provide a maximum of $1,500 CDN per student for expenses directly related to the comprehensive exam (e.g., online experiments, data coding). Spending these funds follows the same process as TEA funds; students can simply let the PhD Office know when this funding should be used. Students are expected to keep track of their spending.

3. For most students, the written paper should be submitted for evaluation by the first Monday in June at the end of the student's second year in the program. If students begin the program later (e.g., January), this timeline may be extended.

4. The paper should follow an acceptable formatting style (e.g., APA, JCR) and should be a minimum of 20 (double-spaced) pages, but no more than 35 pages in length, including references. Appendices are not included in this page limit; students are encouraged to include stimuli, measures, or other materials shown to experimental participants in appendices.

5. Within 2-4 weeks after the paper submission, the student will give an oral presentation based on the paper. This is a closed exam and the audience will consist of marketing faculty only.

6. Each student should give a presentation of 15 minutes or less (presentations will be cut off at 15 minutes). Faculty will have read the paper. Therefore, the presentation should cover only the highlights of the paper (approximately 5 minutes), with the remaining time (approximately 10 minutes) focusing on a discussion of the student's experience with the research project (i.e., the "journey"). This will include some details about the studies conducted (and potentially also studies that failed).

7. After the presentation, there will be a question-and-answer session of about 30 minutes. Questions will be asked in an order where those the farthest "removed" from the student will start. The student's advisor(s) will not ask any questions. The question-and-answer session will be followed by a closed faculty meeting, after which the student will be informed of the outcome, described below.

8. A committee consisting of all Marketing faculty members will evaluate the quality of the paper and the presentation. While both components of the exam contribute to the evaluation, the paper is generally weighted more heavily. The evaluation criteria for the paper mirror what is typically used in the review process; the evaluation form for the paper is below. Presentations are judged on clarity and coherence, timing, and the ability to answer questions.

   The committee may judge the exam as acceptable ("Pass") or not ("Defer"). An outcome of "Defer" means that the student can revise the paper and resubmit it for evaluation; a new presentation may or may not be required. In the case of a deferral, specific feedback will be provided on the key concerns and shortcomings of the work, and on whether a new presentation is needed. The deadline for resubmission is usually within **three months** of the committee decision, though alternate timelines can be specified. Following resubmission of the exam after a deferral, the committee will judge the revised exam as acceptable ("Pass") or not ("Fail"); a failure at this stage implies termination from the program.

Evaluation Form for University of Alberta Marketing Comprehensive Exam

Student Name: _____

Please rate the comprehensive paper based on the following criteria.
Scale for questions: 1 = Poor, to 5 = Excellent.

1. Motivation/Importance of Research Question
   1 __   2 __   3 __   4 __   5 __   n/a __

2. Conceptual/Theoretical Rigor
   1 __   2 __   3 __   4 __   5 __   n/a __

3. Novelty
   1 __   2 __   3 __   4 __   5 __   n/a __

4. Literature Review
   1 __   2 __   3 __   4 __   5 __   n/a __

5. Methodology
   1 __   2 __   3 __   4 __   5 __   n/a __

6. Clarity of Exposition (paper is well-written)
   1 __   2 __   3 __   4 __   5 __   n/a __

7. Discussion of Results
   1 __   2 __   3 __   4 __   5 __   n/a __

8. Overall Contribution of Paper
   1 __   2 __   3 __   4 __   5 __   n/a __

Overall Recommendation

_____ Pass

_____ Defer

The following option is only for the second round of the paper.

_____ Fail (this implies that the student will be terminated from the program)

Reviewer Comments (these comments will be provided to the student after the exam):