

CAPSTONE REQUIREMENTS (CAPSTONE, COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS, PORTFOLIO, THESIS)

Comprehensive Examinations

Comprehensive Examinations are required in most graduate degree programs. They are intended to assess and evaluate a student's knowledge of the major components of his/her graduate study. Candidates for the MEd in Technology in Education will complete a multimedia portfolio in lieu of a comprehensive examination. For the MEd, MA, and MAT ESL degrees, a student must have successfully completed 24 credit hours in the graduate program to be eligible for the examination. For the MS in Counseling and Psychological Services approximately seventy percent of course work must be completed to be eligible. Candidates for the MA in History have the option of comprehensive examinations for their capstone event (see below). After a review of their academic records, students are notified if they are eligible to sit for the examination. Each student must then file an application form with the Graduate School for the specific examination date desired and receive approval. The deadline for filing is published in the brochure of the appropriate semester in which the examination is given. Comprehensive examinations are given in November, March, and July, of each year. A student is allowed two attempts to pass the comprehensive examinations.

Master of Arts in History Comprehensive Examinations, Thesis or Portfolio

MA in History candidates have the option to select a thesis, comprehensive examination or portfolio as their capstone experience in the program. The fourth option consists of taking an additional six credits (two courses of elective history coursework) creating the option of a 39-credit MA.

As a rigorous demonstration of a graduate candidate's research and writing skills, the MA in History thesis is valued at six (6) credits. The Chairperson of the History Department, the Graduate Committee and the Dean of the Graduate School must approve a thesis request. Candidates who seek approval to write an MA thesis are required to demonstrate a minimum grade point average of 3.5 in graduate courses. The topic, resources and format of the thesis, as well as composition of a thesis committee, will be determined jointly by the candidate and a thesis director (selected by the candidate and approved by the Graduate Committee). The project will culminate in a written paper (75 page minimum) and an oral defense before the thesis committee. Candidates may take only one directed study in the program if they intend to undertake a thesis.

The MA in History comprehensive examinations serve as an extensive demonstration of a graduate candidate's historical knowledge and historiographical insight. The graduate candidate who selects this capstone option is required to pass written examinations in two areas of historical study. The areas for comprehensive examination will vary from student to student and will be jointly determined by the student and a comprehensive advisor. Candidates must have their choice of fields approved by the Graduate Committee at least one semester prior to the taking of the comprehensive exam. A student is allowed a maximum of two attempts to pass these tests. The two parts of the comprehensive shall be taken on two designated days within an eight-day period, as designated by the Graduate School.

The MA in History portfolio serves as a comprehensive demonstration of a candidate's growth in historical knowledge and historiographical insight through the course of the graduate program. The graduate candidate who selects this capstone option will work with a portfolio advisor to determine its specific contents. Upon completion, the candidate will submit the portfolio to a portfolio committee, selected jointly by the candidate and the Graduate Committee. The portfolio committee will review the project, and determine whether to pass the portfolio or return it for further work. It shall consist of 1) a number of formal writings from the student's graduate work, including revised drafts of these assignments, and 2) a personal statement that will serve as the introduction, summary and rationale for the portfolio. The portfolio may also include documentation of professional historical activities, such as exhibit curation or archival work.

For more specific information and regulations on theses, comprehensives and portfolios, graduate candidates should see the current edition of the Department of History's Graduate Student Handbook.