

MA COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The MA Comprehensive Exam is designed to test the skills and knowledge acquired during the student's coursework, to better prepare the student to write the MA paper (essay or thesis), and to better prepare the student for work in the field as a museum or arts professional or in a Ph.D. program. The MA exam will consist of two essays. Students will write one essay in their selected major field and a shorter essay in a secondary field. Secondary field questions will be more general than questions in the major field. Students will develop, with their essay/thesis advisor in their primary area and a faculty member in the secondary area, three questions in each area, primary and secondary, and will choose one of two from each area on the day of the exam.

The exam should be taken after 24 credits toward the MA degree have been completed (and language requirements have been completed) and must be successfully completed before writing the MA paper.

Questions will be written by the faculty specifically for each individual and the student will discuss with the faculty members in their primary and secondary areas possible essay areas and receive guidance on how to study and prepare. This may include a reasonable list of readings from coursework as well as additional articles or texts. This preparation also should provide a foundation for the student's MA paper in their primary area.

Primary area: In consultation with the faculty member in the primary area, three questions are prepared for this portion of the examination. These questions guide the preparation for the examination over the summer, which, for most students, is the best time to prepare for the exam. One week prior to the examination, the primary area faculty member submits a list of two questions to the Graduate Advisor who approves the questions and administers the exam. The examinee writes an essay in response to one of the two questions posed. The student has 90 minutes to answer the question of choice.

Secondary area: In consultation with the faculty member in the secondary area, three questions are prepared for this portion of the examination. These questions will be more general than those in the primary area. One week prior to the examination, the primary area faculty member submits a list of two questions to the Graduate Advisor who approves the questions and administers the exam. The examinee writes an essay in response to one of the two questions posed. The student has 45 minutes to answer the question of choice.

The examinees may take a fifteen-minute break between the two exam sections. Examinees will have fifteen minutes at the end to review the exam. The total exam time is 2 1/4 hours. The break and review period bring the total time to 2 3/4 hours.

Grading: The faculty member in the primary area will grade that portion of the exam; the faculty member in the secondary area will grade that portion of the exam. The Graduate Advisor in consultation with the primary area and secondary area instructors will determine whether the examinee has passed or failed the exam. Where the Graduate Advisor is also the primary or secondary area advisor, the Area Coordinator or another faculty member may serve as a consultant on the exam.