

Comprehensive Exams

Requirements & Scheduling

Form a Committee

Committee must be approved by Director of the program. Graduate Faculty of Trent University and Carleton University, plus Adjuncts of the PhD in Canadian Studies program, are eligible to sit on comprehensive committees.

Develop a List

The final list must be approved by the Director of the program. Please ask for access to the electronic listing of previously approved Frost Centre comprehensive lists. The requirements for the list are included in the cover sheet that should be included for each list.

[Comprehensive Reading List Cover Sheet](#)

Complete your readings

It is at the discretion of the committee to determine how the student should prepare for their exams (i.e. how often meetings and discussions should take place, if the student should prepare and submit notes or responses, etc.)

Complete the Exams

The two components of the comprehensive examination are the written and the oral. Committees will decide if the oral is to go forward as scheduled based on their assessment of the written answers. For more complete details about the Guidelines for Comprehensive Exams, please see trentu.ca > CAST PhD > Program > Guidelines > III. Comp Exams

1. Committee agrees that student is ready to proceed to written examination
2. Student submits a request for examination to the Frost Centre Office.

[Comprehensive Exam Request Form](#)

3. Frost Centre Office will contact the Committee members to schedule the exam. The student must choose between the “take-home” written exam (student has 7 days in which to prepare three written submissions) and the “sit-down” written exam (student has 4 hours in which to prepare three written submissions). Both types of exam require each committee member to submit two questions from their area of specialization from the reading list. We try to structure the schedule so that faculty have some time for adjudication, but also that the student is notified no less than 24 hours ahead of the scheduled oral.

Based on the student’s exam option, the FC Office will want to schedule the following:

- a. Due date for the questions (the exam needs to be approved by the Director of the program) to be submitted to the FC Office
- b. Date(s) for the written exam
- c. Response to student date (approval of written responses)
- d. Date for the oral exam

4. Exam is approved by the Director of the program.
5. Exam is distributed to the student by the FC Office
6. Exam is returned to the FC Office by the Student
7. The FC Office distributes the exam to the committee
8. Committee assesses the written exam, and communicates results to the Field Supervisor
9. Field Supervisor informs the Director of the program
10. Director of the program informs the student of the results of the written portion
 - A. IF the written exam is not approved to proceed to the oral please see trentu.ca > [CAST PhD > Program > Guidelines > III. Comp Exams](#)
 - B. IF the written exam is approved to proceed to the oral, please refer to the next step
11. Oral Exam takes place

The oral exam is normally a 2 hour session. We do not normally assign a separate faculty member as chair (leaving those duties to the field supervisor) unless the committee expresses a desire to have one. The Frost Centre Office must be notified early in the process if the committee wishes there to be a chair.

Grading options include:

 - Pass with Distinction
 - Satisfactory
 - Unsatisfactory
 - A. IF the comprehensive exam is deemed Unsatisfactory please see trentu.ca > [CAST PhD > Program > Guidelines > III. Comp Exams](#)
 - B. IF the comprehensive exam is Satisfactory, or Pass with Distinction, please refer to the next step.
12. Field Supervisor notifies the Frost Centre Office of the results of the comprehensive exam.
13. The Frost Centre Office will communicate the results to the Graduate Studies Office.
14. The Graduate Studies Office will record the grade on the student's academic record.