

Comprehensive Examination Policies for the Special Education Masters Degree

The purpose of the two-part Special Education Comprehensive Examination is to assess the student's ability to demonstrate exit knowledge of special education and to integrate and apply information from across the student's graduate program of study.

PART 1: ETS PRAXIS II MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST – 1 HOUR

The multiple-choice general knowledge test is now being administered through ETS. You must register online at www.ets.org for the PRAXIS II Exam #0353: Education of Exceptional Students: Core Content Knowledge. Indicate on the registration that the scores are to be submitted to UNL using the UNL test score recipient code of 0173. You may take the portion of the exam at UNL's testing site or any other ETS testing site. Students must check the ETS website for other testing locations. It takes approximately 6-8 weeks for the scores to be reported back to UNL, so plan accordingly in order that all graduation deadlines are met. All registration, testing, confirmation, and coordination information for this portion of the test is handled by ETS.

PART 2: ESSAY EXAM – 3 HOURS

The Exam:

1. The Special Education Graduate Governance Committee will organize and implement the masters degree comprehensive examination, with assistance of the department Graduate Secretary, in accordance with policy as described in the UNL Graduate Studies Bulletin for masters degrees.
2. Comprehensive exams will be scheduled for three hours, three times each year on the Saturday nearest October 15th (fall), March 15th (spring), and June 15th (summer). Masters comprehensive examinations must be taken within ten months prior to the planned graduation and after all major specialization coursework is completed, or consent of the advisor.
3. The three-hour written exam will consist of two sections:
 - 1) applied essay question(s) addressing the student's area of specialization/endorsement; and
 - 2) essay question(s) addressing an integrative support area or minor.
Option II candidates may have the minor exam waived by the minor advisor if all grades in the minor department are at least B or Pass.

Application:

4. Students interested in taking comprehensive examinations must submit to their advisor an *Application for Masters Comprehensive Examination Form* no later than September 1st (fall), February 1st (spring) or May 1st (summer).
5. Requests for an off-campus Proctor require submission of a *Proctor Authorization Form* along with the *Application for Masters Comprehensive Examination Form*. Advisors are responsible for identifying other accommodations for special circumstances on the application.
6. The Advisors are responsible for securing all necessary signatures on the *Application for Masters Comprehensive Examination Form* and *Proctor Authorization Form* before the application is submitted to the Graduate Secretary, in room 318 Barkley.
7. Applications must reach the Graduate Secretary no later than September 15th (fall), February 15th (spring) or May 15th (summer). No late applications will be accepted. *There are no exceptions!* Incomplete applications will be returned to the student's advisor.
8. Advisors have the discretion to postpone comprehensive exams if they are off duty or on leave during a given term. If the postponement delays graduation for the student, reasonable accommodations may be considered.

Preparation:

9. Approximately two weeks prior to the scheduled exam, the student will receive a letter confirming registration for the essay exam, the date, time and location of the exam as well as a ticket for admission to the exam room and information about the use of computers, practice tests, etc.
10. Advisors must assure that all exam questions are submitted to the Graduate Secretary by October 1st (fall), March 1st (spring), and June 1st (summer). Advisors are responsible for submitting both the Specialization and Integrative Support Area (or Minor) questions.
11. No individual faculty member will write the entire exam for one student. The advisor will take responsibility for authoring the specialization area exam question(s) and for collaborating on the authoring of the supporting area question(s) with a graduate faculty member from the University of Nebraska System. A minor area advisor will author questions for Option II candidates.
12. The student's faculty advisor will provide guidance on how to best prepare for all sections of the exam. This will include direction as to the nature and parameters of the exam questions and how to study for each section.

Grading:

14. Graduate faculty members who are responsible for writing essay questions will also read and grade the specialization and supporting sections as PASS or NO PASS.

15. The faculty members responsible for grading each section have the discretion to seek additional information from other faculty members, readers, or the student before assigning a final grade on the exam.

16. Each essay question will have two readers: 1) the author of the question(s); and 2) another graduate faculty member from the University of Nebraska System (UNL, UNO, UNK, UNMC). However, essay questions written by a minor advisor for Option II candidates will be read only by the minor advisor.

17. Faculty members reading the essays will mark the grade on each essay section, and sign, date, and submit the graded exam to the Graduate Secretary by November 1st (fall), April 1st (spring), or July 1st (summer).

18. If two faculty members disagree on the grade for an essay section, a third reader will be sought by the student's advisor from the Graduate Faculty in the UNL Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders.

Reporting:

19. Students will receive written notice of exam results no sooner than three weeks following each scheduled exam. Students should not contact the advisor or the Graduate Secretary prior to that time.

20. Advisors, department graduate faculty members, and the Office of Graduate Studies will be informed in writing by the Graduate Secretary of the student's exam performance within three weeks of the examination date.

21. The Office of Graduate Studies will be notified of failed exam results and application for graduation will be denied until the exam is successfully passed.

Failures:

22. If a student fails one or more sections of the comprehensive examination, he/she must retake and pass the failed section(s) before a passing grade will be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies.

23. Students who fail one or more sections may apply to retake the failed section(s) at the next regularly scheduled exam offering. The student must meet with the advisor prior to submitting a new application. The advisor will document in writing the student's plan for preparing for the re-take examination and the format of the subsequent exam.

24. There is a limit of three attempts to pass all sections of the comprehensive exams. In addition, a degree cannot be conferred upon a student that does not complete all sections of the exam.

25. Students may appeal in writing, the grading of the examination within 30 days of receipt of the results. Students should follow the procedure outlined in the UNL Graduate Studies Bulletin for appealing outcomes of comprehensive examinations.

Special Education Master's Degree Comprehensive Examination Sequence, Responsibilities and Dates

Sequence of Steps	Person Responsible			Key Dates Related to Special Education Comprehensive Exam*		
	Student	Advisor and/or Faculty reader	Graduate Secretary	Fall	Spring	Summer
These are the procedures & steps in order to complete the Special Education Master's degree comprehensive exam:						
Register for PRAXIS II with ETS	X			Visit www.ets.org for all deadline dates		
Planning with advisor prior to application deadline	X	X		Prior to September 1	Prior to February 1	Prior to May 1
Application for Comps due to advisor	X			By September 1	By February 1	By May 1
Application for Comps due to Graduate Secretary with all signatures		X		By September 15	By February 15	By May 15
Guidance provided by advisor on what and how to study for exam.		X		By September 15	By February 15	By May 15
Exam questions due to Graduate Secretary		X		By October 1	By March 1	By June 1
Exam taken by student, typically 1:00 – 4:00 PM on the testing date	X			Saturday closest to October 15	Saturday closest to March 15	Saturday closest to June 15
Grading of completed exam by faculty		X		By November 1	By April 1	By July 1
Results of exam mailed to student & Final Examination Report filed			X	Approx November 7	Approx April 7	Approx July 7
Appeals (if applicable) filed by students	X			30 days after receipt of results	30 days after receipt of results	30 days after receipt of results

*Please note that approximate dates depend on the workdays available, and may be affected by weekends, holidays or UNL breaks.