

## Written Comprehensive Examination Format:

To ensure that all **M.S./Non-Thesis Options #1 and #2** students are examined in a thorough and equitable manner within the 3 **specialty areas**, the following are acceptable exam formats and expectations:

- A) Each written exam will be administered on the date agreed to by the student and their committee members.
- B) Each exam must cover one of the 3 chosen specialty areas (i.e., two committee members cannot cover the same specialty area).
- C) Exams will consist of questions unknown to the student prior to administering the exam.
- D) Question types should require written responses; primarily, of essay and definition format. In addition to expecting a broad knowledge base covered within the 3 specialty areas, assessing written communication skills of these students is also very important.
- E) Exams should be of sufficient rigor and coverage thereby typically requiring significant study efforts by Students (which is why students are required to contact committee members the term prior to the actual exams). Committee members should provide students with reading and supplemental study suggestions upon request.
- F) The assumption will be that closed-book format will be used for the exam. If open-book format is used, such exams should be of sufficient rigor to be comparable to a closed-book exam. In either case, a specific timeframe must be established when the student and committee member initially meet (i.e., term before) to schedule the exam (e.g., 3 hours for a closed-book exam; due in 24 hours for an open-book exam).
- G) Previous or current course work (or associated exams therein) cannot substitute for the Comprehensive Exams.
- H) Research papers cannot substitute for the Comprehensive Exams. Such papers, however, may supplement the written exam, if this is required by a committee member (who must articulate this to the MS Graduate Programs in Biology office when the student schedules the exam).

## Procedures for Scheduling/Completing Comprehensive Exams - M.S./Non-Thesis Option #1 and 2

1) During the term prior (or earlier) to the term in which the exams will be administered, students should contact committee members “individually” to ask for guidance (e.g., references, books) regarding how best to study for the designated subject area to be covered.

2) Student should also schedule a date(s) “individually” with each committee member. It is advised to schedule exams for different weeks, given the comprehensive nature of each exam. **Following are the deadlines for completing all exams for each term:**

<b>Fall term</b>	=	<b>November 15</b>
<b>Spring term</b>	=	<b>April 15</b>
<b>Summer term</b>	=	<b>July 15</b>

3) Once all of the exams are scheduled, and prior to the beginning of the term in which the exams will be given, students are required to send an email to the MS Graduate Programs in Biology office ([rdixon@fau.edu](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu)) with the following information (please copy and paste the form information below into the email message):

**Exam 1 – Content Area 1 = (see list above); Committee member name \_\_\_\_\_;**  
**Exam Date \_\_\_\_\_ Format \_\_\_ closed-book \_\_\_ open-book; Time restrictions \_\_\_\_\_**

**Exam 2 – Content Area 2 = (see list above); Committee member name \_\_\_\_\_;**  
**Exam Date \_\_\_\_\_ Format \_\_\_ closed-book \_\_\_ open-book; Time restrictions \_\_\_\_\_**

**Exam 3 – Content Area 3 = (see list above); Committee member name \_\_\_\_\_;**  
**Exam Date \_\_\_\_\_ Format \_\_\_ closed-book \_\_\_ open-book; Time restrictions \_\_\_\_\_**

**Exam dates cannot be changed without written consent from the professor administering the exam**

4) The MS Graduate Programs in Biology will then review the information for approval. Once approved, students and committee members will be notified. **Students cannot take any comprehensive exam without such prior approval.**

5) **Failure to pass any of the 3 examinations (i.e., each committee member’s exam) will require that the student be re-examined for the failed exam.** A failure to pass the second examination will result in immediate dismissal from the graduate program.

6) **Complete Comprehensive Examination Form** (available at Biology Department SC 136 or on Biology Website (<http://www.science.fau.edu/biology/masters/masters-forms.html>))

7) Committee members must forward scanned copies of both the exam questions and the student’s answers to the MS Graduate Programs in Biology office ([rdixon@fau.edu](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu)) for Graduate College and/or Departmental verification. As with other grades, documentation must be retained for a minimum of 5 years.

## **Comprehensive Examinations For Non-Thesis Options (1 and 2):**

For students in the M.S./Non-Thesis Options #1 and #2, the Comprehensive Examination is a written examination covering three designated areas (Please see MS Graduate Regulations Rules

### **Instructions:**

1. Meet with your Graduate Supervisory Committee the beginning of your third semester.
2. Schedule your examinations (**warning: if the exams are not scheduled the semester before you plan to graduate, you will not be approved to graduate**).
3. Select the **three areas covered in the examination** from the below list,
4. Read the Procedures for Scheduling/Completing Comprehensive Exams
5. Review the Written Comprehensive Examination Format
6. Once exam is complete have each professor complete and sign the 1st page of this document.
7. Scanned copies of the exam questions and answers must be sent to the MS Graduate Program in Biology office ([rdixon@fau.edu](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu)) for Graduate College and/or Departmental Verification.
8. Once form has been signed by all committee member bring to SC 136 (This must be completed before you can graduate)

### **Comprehensive Examinations Areas:**

**Pick three areas within either of the following "specialties" listed below.**

**Microbiology specialty areas:** Bacteriology  
Cell Biology  
Immunology  
Molecular Genetics  
Virology

**Organismal specialty area:** Anatomy and Development  
Behavioral Biology  
Ecology  
Evolutionary Biology  
Neuroscience  
Physiology  
Systematics



Charles E. Schmidt College of Science
Biological Science Program
777 Glades Road
Boca Raton, FL 33431
tel: 561.297-3320
fax: 561.297-2749

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TO: Dr. Ingrid Johanson, Associate Dean

TO: Dr. Robert Charles, Assoc Dean, Graduate Studies, and Science Dean's Office

Through: \_\_\_\_\_
Dr. W. Randy Brooks, Chair of Graduate Committee

From: \_\_\_\_\_
Graduate Student Committee Chair

RE: \_\_\_\_\_
Student's Name Student's Z#

Subject: Comprehensive Exam

Check One:
Non-Thesis Option 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Thesis Option 2 (MST) \_\_\_\_\_

Required course work is complete: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Total credits earned \_\_\_\_\_
If "NO," please indicate required courses in progress: (use additional paper if needed)

For Committee Members Only: Please print your name and sign below indicating the student has passed your portion of the Comprehensive Examination. Copy of graded exam will need to be sent to Chair of the Graduate Committee for review. Please keep hard copies of exam on record, for Graduate College or Departmental verification. As with other grades, documentation must be retained for a minimum of 5 years.

Committee member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
Print Name Signature
Exam Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Committee member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
Print Name Signature
Exam Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Committee signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_
Print Name Signature
Exam Subject \_\_\_\_\_