

**Program Policies for the Comprehensive Examination**

*Effective September 2014*

(Approved by the Community and Regional Planning Graduate Committee, September 2014)

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These policies pertain to the Comprehensive Examination completion track (UNL Graduate Studies “Option III”) for the Master of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP) degree at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln.

**I. Purpose of the Comprehensive Examination**

The purpose of the Comprehensive Examination is to test the student’s knowledge and understanding of specified core courses and to assess whether the student is academically prepared to pursue a career as a professional planner. The Comprehensive Examination requires the student to demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge gained from courses in the MCRP degree program and to apply it to planning problems.

**II. Components of the Comprehensive Examination**

The Comprehensive Examination consists of two components: (A) a proctored written component; and (B) a take-home capstone exam question, which includes both written and oral presentations of the response. These two components are further explained as follows:

- A. The proctored written component of the Comprehensive Examination consists of separate questions pertaining to the following core courses:
  - CRPL 800 Introduction to Planning
  - CRPL 802 Planning Theory
  - CRPL 804 Legal Aspects of Planning
  - CRPL 810 Qualitative Techniques for Planners
  - CRPL 900 Professional Planning Practice
  
- B. For the take-home capstone question, the student must demonstrate and communicate knowledge, skills, and abilities to independently analyze a planning problem, develop a justifiable response, and effectively present the findings and recommendations in a written document and in an oral presentation to the examining committee. It is expected that the response to the capstone question will incorporate knowledge, skills, and abilities obtained from courses in the MCRP curriculum, and particularly from the following core courses:

- CRPL 830 Planning With GIS
- CRPL 840 Planning Methods and Analysis
- CRPL 990 Planning Studio

### III. Examination Procedures

#### A. Registration for the Comprehensive Examination

The student must submit the “Registration for the Comprehensive Examination” form (available each semester from the Community and Regional Planning Program) no later than the deadline specified on the registration form. Submission of the signed “Registration for the Comprehensive Examination” form is considered a formal commitment and the first step in completing the Comprehensive Examination to be offered on the dates specified on the form.

#### B. Submission of “Final Examination Report for Masters Degree”

The Office of Graduate Studies requires that the “Final Examination Report for the Master’s Degree” ( this form is available on the UNL Office of Graduate Studies website) be submitted no later than four weeks before the oral examination; however, for the Comprehensive Examination in the MCRP program, the “Final Examination Report for the Master’s Degree” must be submitted to the MCRP program office no later than the deadline for submitting the Community and Regional Planning program’s “Registration for the Comprehensive Examination” form (see item III.A above).

#### C. Schedule of Examination Components

##### 1. Proctored Written Component

The written examination will be conducted in Architecture Hall on the first Fridays of November and April each year.

##### 2. Capstone Component

###### a. Written Part

On a day specified by the MCRP program—after the registration deadline, but no later than 4 weeks prior to the proctored written component of the Comprehensive Examination—the capstone question will be given to students who have applied to take the exam.

Three complete copies of the student's written response to the capstone question shall be submitted to the proctor at the beginning of the proctored written component of the Comprehensive Examination.

b. Oral Part

The oral part of the capstone question, which includes a verbal presentation by the student of the capstone question response, will be scheduled and conducted subsequent to the proctored examination. The oral part of the capstone question will include questions from the examining committee regarding the student's capstone question response and may include questions related to the proctored written component of the Comprehensive Examination and other aspects of the student's program of study.

D. Proctored Written Examination Protocol

Students are allowed to answer only the assigned question of the proctored written examination during the assigned time period for that question and must deliver their answer to the proctor at the end of the assigned time period.

E. Comprehensive Examination Grading

The faculty Comprehensive Examination committee grades the student responses to the written exam questions and the written and oral parts of the capstone question. The student is required to achieve a grade of "pass" on all questions in the written and oral parts of the comprehensive examination. Failure to achieve a "pass" on the proctored written question(s) pertaining to any one or more of the core courses or area of concentration, or the written or oral parts of the capstone question, will count as a "fail" in the respective question(s) or part(s) of the examination.

F. Opportunity to Retake Examination Components

Students have only two opportunities to successfully "pass" all written and oral parts of the Comprehensive Examination. In their first time taking the examination, students must take all written and oral parts in their entirety. Filing of the application form by the student is considered a commitment to take the exam and counts as one opportunity. Students must retake only the question(s) or part(s) of the examination for which they did not receive a grade of "pass." The earliest that a student may retake failed questions or parts of the examination is in the subsequent semester on the days scheduled for the proctored exam and capstone question.