

October 2009
Department of Mathematics, CSULA

Comprehensive Exam Rules

Number of Exams: Except for students choosing to do a thesis, candidates for the MS degree in Mathematics must take comprehensive examinations. Students in Option 1 (General Mathematics), must pass two exams:

- Topology **or** Abstract Algebra, and
- Complex Analysis **or** Real/Functional Analysis.

Students in Option 2 (Applied Mathematics), must pass two exams from the following three choices:

- Applied Linear Analysis, Complex Analysis, Numerical Analysis.

Prerequisites: Students taking comprehensive exams must be advanced to candidacy and have a current GPA of at least 3.0 on their program. A student taking comprehensive exams can have at most one course remaining on his/her program, not counting those being taken in the same quarter as the comprehensive exam.

Registration: Students must register in Math 596 in any quarter they intend to take comprehensive examinations. This course is restricted and authorization must be obtained from the graduate advisor prior to registering. Registering in Math 596 is otherwise subject to the same deadlines and rules as for other classes. Students who are not otherwise taking classes may register for Math 596 only after paying the Comprehensive Exam Fee (currently \$10) at the cashier's office.

Frequency: Comprehensive exams are given in all areas, assuming demand, each Spring and Fall quarter. The exact time and date of each exam is set and posted by the graduate advisor. Exams are near the 8th week of the quarter. Each exam is 3 hours in length.

Exam Committees: The exam committee for each exam is set and posted by the graduate advisor. Each exam committee has at least two, and normally three, members.

Content: The graduate advisor and GSC maintain and review comprehensive exam syllabi. Each provides a list of topics for the given area and a list of reference texts. These syllabi, as well as copies of recent exams, are available on the department web site.

Grading: Each exam is graded A, B, C, D or F by the committee which prepared it. Student names do not appear on examination papers; code numbers are used instead. The committees report their grades by code number to the graduate advisor, who then advises the students of the results in writing.

Re-examination: A student may attempt any number of exams in each of, at most, 3 quarters.

No Shows: (October 2009 – Effective Spring 2010) Any quarter in which a student registers in Math 596 (and does not withdraw within the usual deadline) counts as an attempt at the comprehensive exams - even if the student does not show up for the exams.

Passing: A student has passed the comprehensive exams if he/she achieves a B average in two exams (complying with the subject area restrictions for the option) with at least C in each. The quarter(s), and the order, in which the exams are taken does not matter.

Comprehensive Exams vs. Thesis: Once a student has attempted a comprehensive exam, it is no longer possible to switch to the thesis option.

Records: The graduate advisor maintains copies of all comprehensive exams in accordance with the record retention policy of CSULA.