

**Comprehensive Exam Policy for students whose catalog is 2020-2021 or afterwards:**

The following discussion elaborates the catalog description of the MS in Mathematics degree program and the university's comprehensive exam policies.

Except for students choosing to do a thesis, candidates for the MS degree in Mathematics must take comprehensive examinations. Students must pass two comprehensive exams:

1. Algebra (Group Theory and Linear Algebra, i.e. the equivalent of Math 4570 and Math 5401)
2. Analysis (Linear Analysis and Analysis, i.e. the equivalent of Math 4650 and Math 5021)

**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 degree program, not counting those being taken in the same semester as the comprehensive exam.

**Registration:** Students must register in Math 5960 in any semester 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 5960 is otherwise subject to the same deadlines and rules as for other classes. Students may attempt one, two or more comprehensive exams in any semester.

**Re-examination:** A student may attempt any number of exams in each of, at most, 3 semesters. (In other words, a student may register for MATH 5960 a maximum of 3 times and take any number of exams each time they register.)

**No Shows:** Any semester in which a student registers in Math 5960 (and does not withdraw within the usual deadline or by the exam date) counts as an attempt at the comprehensive exams - even if the student does not show up for the exams.

**Special cases:** Matriculated students who are not otherwise taking classes must pay the Comprehensive Exam Fee (currently \$10) at the cashier's office before registering for Math 5960. These students do not need to pay any other fees since Math 5960 is a zero unit class. Non-matriculated students (students who haven't taken courses for a prolonged period and cannot enroll in courses) must apply for readmission to the university. This will require meeting the application deadline and paying the application fee. After being readmitted, such students are matriculated and register for Math 5960 as above.

**Frequency:** Comprehensive exams are given in all areas, assuming demand, each Fall and Spring semester. The exams are near the end of the semester. The exact time and date of each exam is set and posted by the graduate advisor.

**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 Graduate Studies Committee 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.

**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 semester(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.

**Recommended Courses:** See below for courses that are recommended as preparation for each of the comprehensive exams. Exam syllabi can be found at the Math Department website.

- Algebra: Math 4570 and Math 5401
- Analysis: Math 4650 and Math 5021

**Records:** The graduate advisor maintains copies of all comprehensive exams in accordance with the record retention policy of Cal State LA.