Comprehensive Examinations Explanation

The Teaching and Learning Doctoral Comprehensive Exams (comps) are an extensive examination of student knowledge in their field of study. All T&L doctoral students are required to take 2 comps, which differ depending on being in the PhD or EdD program:

- **PhD = 2 exams**
  - T&L area of emphasis (Teacher Ed, Higher Ed, or IDT)
  - EFR research

- **EdD = 2 exams**
  - T&L area of emphasis (Teacher Ed, Higher Ed, or IDT)
  - EFR foundations

To take the comps, students must have their committee chair and members approved, and have their Program of Study approved by the School of Graduate Studies. Students must also have completed all the core courses, area of emphasis, scholarly tools coursework, and the coursework in foundations. When these qualifications are met, students should discuss the best time to take their comps with their committee chair (also known as advisor).

To initiate the comps, students must first complete the “Doctoral Comprehensive Examination” form from the School of Graduate Studies. The form requires signatures from students’ committee chair, as well as the T&L doctoral program director (Dr. Margaret Zidon) and department chair (Dr. Gail Ingwalson). Once the School of Graduate Studies has given approval (2-3 weeks), the form will be returned to the department and the student will be notified that he/she can proceed with taking comps. The two exams do not need to be taken at the same time, but students must notify the department in advance when they intend to take each exam.

**Comp One: Teaching & Learning Comp: Department of Teaching & Learning**

All processes involving T&L Comps can be found at the T&L website: [http://education.und.edu/teaching-and-learning/doctoral-degrees/index.cfm](http://education.und.edu/teaching-and-learning/doctoral-degrees/index.cfm)

The student writes the T&L comp, based on the area of emphasis:
- T&L Teacher Ed = 4 week take home, or 4 hour sit-down in the department
- T&L Higher Ed = 4 week take home
- T&L IDT = 4 week take home, or 4 hour sit-down in the department

**Comp Two: Research or Foundations Comp: Department of Education Foundations & Research**

The student in the Ph.D. degree will write a Research Comp.
The Ed.D. student will write a Foundations Comp.

All processes involving EFR Foundations and Research Comprehensive Exams can be found at the EFR website: [http://education.und.edu/educational-foundations-and-research/comprehensive-exam.cfm](http://education.und.edu/educational-foundations-and-research/comprehensive-exam.cfm)
Comprehensive exams are rated according to the student meeting the following objectives:

- Student demonstrates the ability to integrate and synthesize ideas.
- Student demonstrates the ability to think critically
- Student demonstrates scholarship
- Student demonstrates effective writing skills

To receive the T&L area of emphasis comps, the student contacts Helen Elden, T&L administrative secretary at least 3 weeks prior to the intended start date. 701-777-3143, (helen.elden@und.edu). The comprehensive exam will be emailed to the student on the day the exam period is set to begin.

Students must submit their answers in PDF to their advisor via email and cc the administrative secretary (helen.elden@und.edu). At that time, a papercopy is also required to be delivered to Helen Elden (T&L administrative secretary) in Room 238 in the Education Building. The T&L comp will be forwarded to two readers. One of the readers is the student’s advisor. The other reader is a T&L faculty member from the student’s area of emphasis. Faculty members have 4 weeks to mark the exam.

The comps are pass or fail. The final results, along with any additional feedback provided by the readers, will be sent to the student’s advisor who will pass the information to the student.

If a student does not pass his/her comprehensive exam or submit the comp response (also considered a Fail), the following procedures are followed. The Failed comp is recorded on the School of Graduate Studies comprehensive exam form and sent to the School of Graduate Studies. In order to be allowed a second attempt, the student must petition the SGS using the Graduate School Petition form. The department must indicate approval of a second attempt. Failure to pass a second attempt will end the student’s good standing as a doctoral student in the college.

If both T&L and EFR comps are passed, the committee chair completes the Comprehensive Exam form, acquires signatures from the T&L doctoral director and chair, and returns the form to the School of Graduate Studies for final approval. With the approvals, the student advances to “Candidacy” The anonymous evaluation results will also be sent to the Bureau of Educational Services & Applied Research (BESAR) for analysis.

Students cannot advance to candidacy and graduate in the same semester. Students must complete their comps at least one semester before they graduate (e.g., students who wish to graduate in the summer must have their passing comp grade submitted to the School of Graduate Studies before the end of spring semester). Students should consider these timelines in order to ensure graduation in a timely manner.

If a student is subject to problematic circumstances, their advisory committee may agree to an exception to these guidelines; however, the above represents the standard processes for T&L PhD and EdD student comprehensive exams and deviations require the approval the T&L doctoral director.

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