

## **COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION POLICY**

**College of Criminal Justice  
Sam Houston State University**

**Adopted Spring 2003**

### **Examination Oversight**

A standing Ph.D. Committee of three graduate faculty has the following functions: (a) review the academic record of Ph.D. students after completion of their first 15 credit hours; (b) serve as the Comprehensives Committee that addresses issues related to the comprehensives, and (c) perform other functions related to the Ph.D. program, other than admissions (which is done by the Graduate Committee).

The graduate faculty shall be assigned to four standing Comprehensives Concentration Committees: Research Methods and Statistics, Criminological Theory, Criminal Justice Administration, and Law And Judicial Process. The Comprehensives Concentration Committees shall compose and grade examinations. Each Comprehensives Concentration Committee shall elect a chair to be responsible for coordination.

### **Scope of Doctoral Comprehensive Examinations**

Format: One day of testing, composed of two sections, four hours each.

Section 1—Morning: Research Methods and Statistics

Section 2—Afternoon: Concentration Area, Student Selects Either  
Criminological Theory, or  
Criminal Justice Administration, or  
Law and Judicial Process

Fall Exam Administration: To be announced by the appropriate Dean the Spring semester of the preceding academic year.

Spring Exam Administration: To be announced by the appropriate Dean the Spring semester of the preceding academic year.

## **Procedures**

Students must take both sections of the examination the first time they are attempted. Each section is graded independently, and may be passed independently. The section(s) failed must be retaken. Students failing both sections will be required to retake both sections concurrently.

## **Format of Responses**

All students will have the option of taking the comprehensive examination on computer or hand-written.

## **Construction**

Choose two of three questions in the morning and two of three questions in the afternoon, for a total of four questions.

## **Grading**

Each question will be graded by a minimum of two faculty members from the respective concentration area. Potential grades are High Pass, Pass, and Fail. To pass each section, students must receive at least a grade of "Pass" on both questions by two of the three graders. Grades are certified by the Comprehensives Concentration Committee in each area.

Students who fail any sections of the examination after a second attempt will be required to appear for consultation with the faculty Ph.D. Committee. During the consultation the student may choose to either retake failed sections a third time, or to take an oral examination. If an oral examination is chosen, the Ph.D. Committee will appoint an oral examination committee. After the oral examination, the oral examination committee will recommend to the Ph.D. Committee one of three options: Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. The Ph.D. Committee will make a final determination. A Conditional Pass means that specified coursework, completed with a grade of an A or B, will be required. In conditional pass cases, a student will not be judged to have passed the comprehensive examination until the conditions are met, as certified by the appropriate Dean. Certification of failure of the oral examination by the Ph.D. Committee will result in the student's termination from the program, subject to appeal to the Dean.

## **Eligibility**

Students become eligible to take comprehensive exams during the long semester following the completion of all "required substantive courses" included in the doctoral curriculum. Formal application to take the exams must be made in writing to the Office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Programs at least 60-calendar days prior to the scheduled examination. Formal approval will depend upon the completion of all required

substantive coursework, the maintenance of at least 3.0 overall graduate point average for all doctoral courses that have been completed, and certification that the student has conferred with his/her faculty mentor regarding preparedness to take the examination. Once students have received formal approval to take their exams, they may withdraw from the process by formally notifying the Graduate Office.

### **Funding**

All University support for a student will be suspended at the close of the semester if any section of comprehensive examinations is failed a second time. Funding shall not be restored until the student is certified to have passed the comprehensive examination by the appropriate associate Dean. Exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the Dean.

Approved:

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Dr. Richard Ward  
Dean, College of Criminal Justice

Date

### **Special Note**

At its meeting on 05/06/03 the faculty of the College of Criminal Justice passed a concurrent motion with the adoption of this policy. The concurrent motion provides that the faculty in each of the four Comprehensive Examination Concentration Committees designate two courses from its respective area to be required of students completing Comprehensive Examinations under this policy. It is anticipated that the requirement will be incorporated in the next Sam Houston State University catalogue, but will be effective for students entering the program in the Fall semester 2003.