



Retrospective comprehensive exams

Preamble

- Comprehensive exams are a mandatory component of doctoral programs at McGill. There can be no more than two comprehensive exams (a retrospective and/or a prospective comprehensive exam).
- The purpose of a retrospective comprehensive exam must be to test the students' foundational knowledge of the discipline.
- The retrospective comprehensive must not reexamine content acquired through graduate courses taken during the PhD degree.
- Retrospective comps should be completed by the end of PhD2.
- Retrospective (by consensus or vote). The supervisor and the co-

supervisor must not participate in the evaluation. If there is an oral component, the supervisor and the co-supervisor may attend but must not participate in the question period. The supervisor and the co-supervisor may attend deliberations to provide context, but they do not have voting privileges.

2. **Prior exams should be publicly posted** on the comprehensive exam section of the program website for students to review prior to the exam. Students must be informed of this online resource prior to the exams. Students should not be required to request copies of prior exams.
3. A **comprehensive exam guideline document** should be publicly posted. This document should encourage students to **review prior exams** and provide a link to their permanent online location. The document should also clearly indicate **typical exam protocols** (e.g., timing, location, question format, grading procedure, threshold required for a pass decision, when/how results are distributed, post-failure options/debriefing) and suggest **effective strategies for preparing** for the exams (e.g., reviewing prior exams, strategies for how to review prior course content, test-taking strategies).
6n6kin62ratke6.1dk62inking s32.rrate6.1 (g)2.6 Ta22in2timest0.00240 03 Tw

4. Detailed written feedback