

## **WOLC MA Comprehensive Exam Policy—Effective Fall 2014 Semester**

Beginning this semester, the comprehensive exam process will be conducted as follows. Students will select three (3) professors of their choice to form an examination board. Only these three professors will examine the student. Each professor will represent one (1) field of examination (even if there are other faculty with whom students have studied in related classes). Each of the three professors will create a choice of questions (not more than two (2) each) from which the student will be able to choose to answer. The questions will be derived from synthesizing information from the existing WOLC comps study guide, in order that students having begun preparations under that manual will not be penalized. Each question will be broadly thematic of the field under consideration and will be answered by a written essay not to exceed two (2) hours (or approximately 2200-2500 words) in execution. Thus, the total testing period will not exceed six (6) hours or 7500 written words. Students may arrange to take exams in separate sittings, within the ability of the department to provide proctoring. Students may also opt to take all three (3) exams on one day with a maximum of two (2) breaks of one (1) hour each allowed during the testing period. All arrangements must be made in advance with the WOLC department. I have cc'd Jennifer Arthur, the Administrative Associate, on this message.

When a student has completed her written exams, the faculty members of the panel will report a grade outcome within one (1) calendar week. Faculty members must provide specific comments of evaluation for each exam and specific instructions of correction for any failed exam. Passage of any two (2) of the three (3) chosen fields will constitute passage of the written examination exercise as a whole.

Upon passage of the written examination exercise, students can arrange to have an oral examination. If the student has not passed at least two (2) of the three (3) written exams, she cannot proceed to the oral examination until she has done so. Students in need of re-examination must wait at least one (1) week to retake any portion of the exam and in doing so must respond to the specific directions for correction issued by the examining faculty members. Faculty members administering a retaken examination will have three (3) business days to report the results of the re-examination. If a student fails a re-examination, the process will be immediately halted and the student will meet with the WOLC Graduate Director to file petition for subsequent examination or alternative assignment for completion of the degree program.

For the oral examination, students will sit before the same three (3) person panel that conducted the written examinations. Panel members will have the right to request elaboration, clarification, or correction of materials from the written exam. Panel members may not introduce new material at this stage of the exam. The purpose of the oral examination is solely to gain clarification/closure on the submitted written exams. The oral exam period may last up to but no longer than two (2) hours. At the end of the oral examination, panel members will ask the student to leave the examination room. Members will then consult on the oral exam grade. Two (2) of three (3) panel members agreeing to pass the student will constitute passage of the oral exam exercise as a whole. In any case, panel members will immediately report the oral examination results to the student at that time. If the student does not achieve a minimum of two (2) votes in favor of passage, the examination committee will immediately inform her of those results and then adjourn to deliberate in consultation with the WOLC Graduate Director what remedial actions will be requested of the student to secure closure of the oral examination requirement. Prescribed remedies will vary on a case-by-case basis.

Completion of the oral exam will complete the comprehensive examination. All components of the examination must be completed prior to the scheduled last day to submit comps results, per the CHSS and University regulation deadlines.