

Comprehensive exams for the MS in Nutrition and Dietetics degree

As a degree requirement, each student must complete the comprehensive exams (comps). The comprehensive exams test students' ability to readily access knowledge on topics that were covered in their graduate program. Your writing and verbal communication skills will be assessed as well as your competence in the subject matter. If you are writing a thesis, then, your comprehensive exam will be the deposit of your thesis (written component) and the thesis defense (oral component).

1. When do we take our comps?

The comprehensive exams are scheduled after the student has completed 27 hours or is in his/her last semester in the program. If you are set to complete your program in the summer, then, you will take the written exam in the spring semester. Oral comprehensive exams are scheduled individually with the student's committee – no earlier than two weeks after the written exam and generally not during the summer months. Your DI site director is aware of this exam and its process, so time away from the medical center is not a problem.

2. What topics will the comps cover?

The comprehensive exams can cover anything that you have learned in the program, including the Dietetic Internship curriculum. Your committee members will each submit one question to your advisor for you to answer. During the written exam component, you will answer two of the three submitted questions.

3. How are my responses assessed?

Rubrics are used to determine if the student has passed each part of the comprehensive exam (written and oral) – the rubrics are available to the students.

4. What happens if I don't pass?

Every student is given one additional chance to pass their comprehensive exams if they do not pass after the first attempt. If the student does not pass after two attempts, there is an appeal process in place that a student can pursue if they desire.

5. How does the written component of the comprehensive exam work?

*The MSND Graduate Coordinator schedules a two-hour time period during the fall and spring semesters for everyone to take the written portion of the exam together in a computer lab. Remember, if you are set to complete your program in the summer, you will take the written part in the spring semester. **YOU MUST BRING A BLANK FLASH DRIVE TO THE WRITTEN COMPONENT OF THE EXAM. YOU WILL GET YOUR FLASH DRIVE BACK UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF YOUR ORAL EXAM.***

6. What is the oral comprehensive exam process like?

You will schedule a two-hour time period with your committee to answer the one question that you did not answer on the written comprehensive exams (you answer two of the three questions in written format during the written comprehensive exam), and to provide any additional follow up to the questions that you did answer in written format. The student and the graduate committee members will sit around a table for this discussion.

7. How do I study for the comps?

Generally, faculty advise students to study class notes...reviewing the larger concepts within the program. Students can also borrow any textbooks that they used in their classes from Textbook Rental with a note from their advisor.