

**The Donald R. Watson
School of Education**

University of North Carolina at Wilmington

**Master of Science in Instructional
Technology**

Comprehensive Examination

Guidelines Summary

Comprehensive Examination

Preparing for and Taking the Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to provide students with an experience that requires synthesis and integration across program goals and objectives. Major course learnings and conceptual frameworks from one's program are to be exhibited in the comprehensive exam. Preparation for the exam requires extensive review, careful reflection and purposeful integration of varied learnings. Through the preparation process, students can expect to gain a deeper understanding of, as well as, fuller appreciation and enhanced retention of the major program outcomes.

The comprehensive exam is taken immediately after the completion of or during the last semester of a student's formal coursework. Students must apply to take the comprehensive exam; applications should be completed no later than the first month of the semester in which they intend to take the exam. Exams are given during the fall and spring semesters, typically on the second Saturday of November and April. Applications are available in the office of the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, KI-211.

Students should consult with their academic advisor or the program coordinator before deciding when to take the exam. Students are also asked to select one member of their comprehensive exam committee and should speak with that faculty member to request his or her participation before completing the application.

The comprehensive exam will consist of a written part and an oral part. The written portion of the exam will be comprised of 2 questions, one of which will be prepared as a take-home response. On the day of the exam, students will have 1 1/2 hours to complete an essay question requiring application, analysis, synthesis and/or evaluation. For this part of the exam students will be given a choice between two questions prepared for the exam. On the day of exam, students will also be given one problem solving level, take-home question that is to be completed within 5 days. Students are asked to prepare a written response to the question as well as prepare to discuss their response with their committee.

The oral portion of the exam will occur in conjunction with a student's presentation of the take-home question response. Members of the committee will ask questions during the oral portion of the exam in order to clarify aspects of the take-home exam presentation and also to explore students' depth of understanding. At the conclusion of the presentation and question and answers, the candidate will be excused from the room to allow the committee to deliberate. After considering all aspects of the student's performance, the committee will inform the candidate of its decision. The decision of the committee will be either pass or fail; there is no appeal of the committee's decision. Students may retake the comprehensive exam after a three-month waiting period.