PROCEDURES FOR PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS IN MARKETING
(effective as of November 30 2025 for students who began the program Fall 2025 and later)

NOTES

A. The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) has only a general policy regarding procedures for PhD comprehensive examinations.

B. The comprehensive examination regulations are a departmental responsibility. However, they are subject to the School's general policy, which is outlined in the document entitled *Procedures for PhD Comprehensive Examinations Written in The Faculty of Business* (revised 2023-12-19).

C. According to *Procedures for PhD Comprehensive Examinations Written in The Faculty of Business*, "Students must pass the examination within a maximum of two attempts. In exceptional circumstances, a third attempt will be permitted with the consent of the student's supervisor, the Department Chair, and the Associate Dean of the PhD program."

PURPOSE

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to assess if students are adequately prepared to proceed to the candidacy stage of the PhD program. Students must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the examining committee that they possess: (a) an adequate knowledge of the disciplines and the subject matters relevant to the examinations; and (b) the ability to pursue and complete original research at an advanced level.

PROCEDURES

For the comprehensive exam, PhD students will lead a research project as first author, with support from their advisor(s) (and/or other coauthors), throughout their first year in the program. PhD students will be provided a budget of $2,000 from the MBEL department to use for research-related expenses relevant to the comprehensive exam project (e.g., experiments). This funding is to be used in consultation with their advisor(s) (and/or other coauthors).

In leading the project, the student should contribute to idea generation and be the primary driver of conceptualization and empirics (e.g., stimuli development, study design, programming, analysis). It is acceptable for the comprehensive exam to be based on a prior term paper. While it is being worked on, the comprehensive exam project should not be presented at the Research Roundtable or in other venues where faculty or student feedback would be expected (e.g., Business Research Conference, other conferences).

The student will present the project to the marketing faculty by the second Friday in September of their second year. The presentation should include an introduction (telling the audience what the project is investigating and why it is interesting and important to explore), a literature review and conceptual framework, methodology and findings, and a discussion of the results and next steps. For behavioural projects, presentations can include studies that were not successful, and there is no specific number of studies that must be included. The presentation should include sufficient information about experimental design, stimuli, measures, and analysis, in the

presentation or in backup slides.

The presentation should be 45 minutes in length, followed by a 75-minute question and answer period (total exam time = 2.0 hrs). The presentation and Q&A will form the basis of the comprehensive exam evaluation (see below). Students are expected to have a firm grasp of the relevant literature and methodology for the project, and be able to independently answer questions about these. Advisor(s)/coauthor(s) will not ask questions.

While the research project itself should be a collaboration between student and advisor(s)/coauthor(s), the presentation and Q&A should be produced and delivered independently. That is, students cannot ask their advisor/coauthors(s) or other faculty for assistance in the creation or preparation of the exam presentation (verbal or slide content).

Evaluation

A committee consisting of all Marketing faculty members will evaluate the quality of the exam (the student's supervisor[s]/coauthor[s] on the project will not vote). For a student to pass the exam, two thirds of the faculty members must vote for a "pass".

Evaluation will be based on:

- The quality of the presentation's content and delivery
- Performance during the Q&A (ability to understand and answer questions)

The advisor/coauthors' perspective on the student's contributions to the project and progress as a scholar will also be taken into consideration.

Outcomes

The committee may judge the exam as acceptable ("Pass") or not ("Defer"). An outcome of "Defer" means that the student can redo the exam. In the case of a deferral, specific feedback will be provided on the key concerns and shortcomings of the first exam. If new data or other expenses are required by the committee as part of the deferral, the MBEL department will provide additional funding of up to $2,000.

The deadline for resubmission is usually within **three months** of the committee decision, though alternate timelines can be specified. Following resubmission of the exam after a deferral, the committee will judge the revised exam as acceptable ("Pass") or not ("Fail"); a failure at this stage implies termination from the program.

Last updated November 8, 2026

Evaluation Form for University of Alberta Marketing Comprehensive

Exam Student Name: _____

Please rate the exam based on the following criteria.
Scale for questions: 1 = Poor, to 5 = Excellent.

Presentation
Comprehension and content: 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___

- Provided clear motivation, background, and significance of the research
- Clearly described the research strategy/design and the results/findings
- Clearly described the conclusions, outcomes, and impact of the research

Engagement and communication: 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___

- The oration was delivered clearly and within the time limit
- The slides were well-defined and enhanced the presentation
- The presenter conveyed enthusiasm and captured and maintained the audience's attention

Q&A: 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___

- The questions were understood accurately, and clarification was requested when needed.
- The questions were answered appropriately (accurately and concisely)

Overall Recommendation

____ Pass

____ Defer

The following option is only for the second round of the exam.

____ Fail (this implies that the student will be terminated from the program)

Reviewer Comments (these comments will be provided to the student after the exam):