



## M.S. Final Certifying Examination Policy

Department of Kinesiology • Michigan State University • East Lansing MI 48824 • <http://www.education.msu.edu/kin>

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### Purpose

The final certifying examination provides an opportunity for students to synthesize the knowledge and understanding gained from coursework and related experiences during their master's degree program. The examination is designed so that students are required to amalgamate their learning experiences by demonstrating their understanding of significant phenomena, issues and problems through clearly communicated oral and/or written responses to questions.

### Composition of the Final Certifying Examination Committee

The Final Certifying Examination Committee for a student in Plan A (thesis) must include at least three regular faculty members<sup>1</sup>. The Final Certifying Examination Committee for a student in Plan B (project, internship, or course work only) must include at least two regular faculty members<sup>1</sup>. The student's academic advisor shall serve as chair of the committee, with administrative responsibilities for scheduling the examination, coordinating the content to be included in the examination, soliciting questions from the committee members, notifying the student of the examination's results and recording the results of the examination with the Department Chair. The student's Guidance Committee shall serve as the Final Certifying Examination Committee and shall have collective responsibility for defining the content of the examination and evaluating the results. In the event that a student's Guidance Committee does not contain at least three regular faculty members (Plan A) or two regular faculty members (Plan B), the Graduate Studies Coordinator shall appoint sufficient regular faculty to the Guidance Committee for the final certifying examination.

### Content, Scope and Format of the Examination

Consistent with requirements for Master's of Arts and Science degrees at Michigan State University, the final certifying examination is required of all students who choose either Plan A (thesis) or Plan B (project, internship or coursework). For each plan, the student must be registered during the semester in which the examination is taken the first time. The examination may be taken when 80% of the student's coursework (excluding thesis, project and/or internship credits) has been completed. Students who wish to take the examination should make a formal application to their Guidance Committee Chair during the registration period of the semester in which they intend to take the examination.

**Plan A.** Students in Plan A are required to pass an oral examination in defense of the thesis. At the discretion of the Guidance Committee, the examination may also include questions on the student's coursework. The thesis and the student's performance on the oral examination must be accepted by a majority vote of the examining committee. The length of the oral examination shall not exceed two hours.

<sup>1</sup> "The 'regular faculty' of Michigan State University shall consist of all persons appointed under the rules of tenure and holding the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor or instructor and persons appointed as librarians. In addition, the principal administrative officer of each major educational and research unit of the University shall be a member of the 'regular faculty'." (Source: Graduate Studies, Michigan State University, 1990-91, p.31.)

**Plan B.** Students in Plan B may elect to fulfill their graduate requirements by completing a project, an internship or the required number of course credits.

- **The Project.** Students who elect the project option of Plan B are required to defend their project via an oral examination. At the discretion of the Guidance Committee, the examination may also include questions on the student's coursework. The length of the oral examination shall not exceed two hours. (For additional information refer to the M.S. Plan B Project Option Policy.)
- **The Internship.** Students who select the internship option of Plan B are required to defend their internship experience via an oral examination. At the discretion of the Guidance Committee, the examination may also include questions on the student's coursework. The length of the oral examination shall not exceed two hours. (For additional information refer to the M.S. Plan B Internship Option Policy.)
- **Coursework.** Students who elect to meet their requirements for a Master of Science degree through a minimum of 30 semester hours of course credits are required to demonstrate their ability to clearly communicate their understanding of events, issues and resolutions to problems in Kinesiology via a written examination. The examination shall (1) probe for sufficient breadth in the student's program by inclusion of two questions from the core of required courses and (2) include one question that examines the student's depth of understanding in his/her area of emphasis. The written examination shall be no longer than three hours, with approximately one hour devoted to each question. Oral examinations also may be requested by the Guidance Committee. The length of the oral examination shall not exceed two hours.

Each Guidance Committee member who provides a question for the written examination shall be responsible for evaluating the student's response to that question and for notifying the Guidance Committee Chair regarding the results of the evaluation. Such notification ordinarily should be made within one week following completion of the examination. Questions shall be graded on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the maximum score. A minimum score of 7 is required to pass each question. The Guidance Committee Chair should notify the student about the results of the written examination within two weeks following completion of the examination.

If the student fails one or more questions:

- It is the student's responsibility to request a second written examination and to schedule that examination at a time that is mutually acceptable to the student and the Guidance Committee Chair.
- If the student fails any question(s), the Guidance Committee shall determine the remedial process that must take place before the examination(s) may be attempted a second time.
- The second written examination should cover subject matter and/or competencies relevant to the failed question(s).
- The conditions for the conduct and evaluation of the second written examination shall be the same as those for the initial examination.
- If the student fails the written examination a second time, the student is terminated from the program.
- The results of the student's performance(s) on the written examination(s) must be filed in his/her permanent folder. Both questions and answers for the written examination must be kept on file by the student's major advisor for a minimum of three years after the student has graduated.

If the student's performance on the oral examination is not acceptable to the Guidance Committee, the Committee shall determine the appropriate action.

**Appeal Procedure**

Students who wish to appeal the procedure or the Guidance Committee's decision must do so within four weeks of the date they were notified of the results, by contacting the Graduate Faculty Chairperson in writing. Deviations from this policy may be adjudicated by approval of the Graduate Faculty Committee.