

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Advancement to Candidacy (PhD)

Since 2011, students admitted into PhD programmes at KNUST are expected to write the comprehensive examination. A pass in the comprehensive examination is required before a student is admitted to candidacy for the degree. However, this has not seen full implementation across the campus. The objectives of administering the comprehensive examination include the following:

1. Evaluate the students ability to carry out critical thinking and analysis to generate new knowledge;
2. Provide an opportunity to the candidate to demonstrate the capacity to integrate knowledge, independent cognitive skills and broad mastery of his/her selected field of specialization; and
3. Evaluate the candidate's preparedness to begin the Thesis process.

Suggested Guidelines

1. Students who qualify for the comprehensive examination must have passed all required courses and earned a cumulative weighted average of at least 55.00 percent.
2. Thesis committee administers the examination; supervised by the Head of department.
3. Written examination followed by oral examination at the discretion of the examining committee. Written and oral are components of the same examination. Failure in one component will require the student to retake the entire examination within eight (8) weeks.
4. Series of colloquia, long essays on selected topics, etc., the grading of which represents a proportion of the overall pass mark.
5. Departments must block periods for the comprehensive examination bearing in mind that the student must have a minimum of two years full time residency or three years part-time enrolment before submission of Thesis for examination committee evaluation.
6. Publish specific time frames for the information of students (and committee members).
7. Evidence of registration for the semester within which examination is to be taken is essential.
8. Give students the option of selecting a number (3-4) of courses from Department's pool of examinable courses for the comprehensive

- examinations. Courses should be relevant to the student's area of specialization and thesis research.
9. In all cases, a list of assigned readings from the examining committee should be made available to the students at least two months before the examination.
 10. Examining committee will grade the examination and submit the results within two weeks of the test date to the Head of Department.
 11. Minimum pass mark should be 50 percent for each course or examination and an overall average pass mark of 55 percent.
 12. No student must be allowed more than two attempts of the PhD comprehensive examination. If a student fails after the second attempt, the option of he/she being offered a terminal MPhil degree upon completion of the 2nd year or 3rd year for full-time and part-time enrollments, respectively may be explored.
 13. Department files the examination report forms with the Graduate School, through the various Boards.
 14. Following the successful completion of the comprehensive examination and the filing of the appropriate forms by the Department, Graduate School writes to inform students of his/her admission to PhD candidacy.