



Master of Arts in Theology (MAT) Written Comprehensive Examinations Guide

Candidates for the Master of Arts in Theology degree are required to undertake Written Comprehensive Examinations in each of the following areas of their study: (a) Sacred Scripture, (b) Systematic Theology: Dogmatic/Sacramental/Liturgical Theology, (c) Moral/Spiritual Theology, and (d) Church History.

Candidates must prepare **four questions in one field of study**, whether it be Sacred Scripture, Systematic Theology, or Moral Theology. This field, given emphasis by the record of one's course selection, is understood to be comprised of at least twelve credits. Candidates may, within this field of examination, be required to prepare questions on topics not covered in courses taken.

Candidates will, in addition, **prepare two questions in each of the remaining three fields of study**. The choice of questions will be limited to topics covered in courses taken. (Note the section "Question Selection Sheet" below.) A "Question Selection Sheet," found with these general instructions, should be completed with your choice of questions and submitted to the Academic Dean who will, at the time of each area examination, present you with one of the questions you have prepared. Area examinations (Scripture, Historical Studies, etc.) are scheduled on separate days.

The accompanying list of questions revises and updates previous versions of the Written Comprehensive Examination. The questions have been prepared by the members of the various departments of theological studies and are designed to test whether or not the student possesses a comprehensive or overall grasp of the subject chosen for examination. In principle, they reflect key topics or issues covered in Seminary courses. They are intended to allow the student to demonstrate his or her competence in the use of academic theological data in each area tested. In answering the questions, the student is expected to deal adequately with the basic ideas and information relevant to the subject. Answers will be evaluated according to the following criteria: whether the response (a) contains the basic and essential elements belonging to the issue; (b) is presented with pertinent references; and (c) is developed and expressed with logic and coherence.

Students are encouraged to consult with members of the Faculty for clarification of questions, but outlines of answers or prepared answers cannot be critiqued.

Each area examination lasts two hours and is administered by the Academic Office. Exams are written in "blue books" supplied on the date of testing and coded with identification numbers unknown to those who will evaluate the responses.

Students take Written Comprehensives after completing 36 hours of course work and arrange for their testing by consulting directly with the Academic Dean.

MARKING

1. The Academic Dean records all results of the Comprehensive Examination process.
2. The Academic Dean announces examination results in writing to individual students and Faculty after the exam period and prior to any retakes. The grades are: P-(Pass), F-(Fail), and HP-(Pass with honors).
3. The reader submits, in writing, the rationale for a failing grade and is available for consultation by the student involved. To preserve the impartiality of further readers, all readers of an exam will refrain from writing their remarks on the "blue book" in question.
4. An exam graded *Failure* by a first reader is given to a second reader for evaluation. If that reader assigns the grade of *Pass*, the exam is then given to a third reader. Should that reader assign the grade of *Failure*, the exam has been failed. There is no other recourse.
5. To maintain anonymity, Faculty may not, prior to publication of exam results by the Academic Dean, engage in any consultation or inquiry concerning the results of the marking or the possible identity of students.
6. When an exam is graded *Failure*, two retakes are possible: (a) the question for the first retake will be chosen by the Academic Dean from the remaining questions in the pertinent selection set; (b) the second retake will be on the first retake question.
7. The first written exam retake is given after an interval of three weeks. The second retake exam is given after an interval of two weeks or at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

EXAMINATION RESOURCES

1. **Sacred Scripture**: Students may use a "clean" (i.e., without written notes) copy of the Bible and a copy of The Gospel Parallels, as well as a list of pertinent Scripture passages prepared in advance of the examination.
2. **Dogmatic/Sacramental/Liturgical Theology**: A "clean" copy of the Bible; W.M. Abbott and J. Gallagher, eds., The Documents of Vatican II (Piscataway: New Century, 1966); J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, eds., The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church (rev. ed.; New York: Alba House, 1982), or comparable collections. No notations pertinent to the examination may appear in these texts.

Answers should indicate **precisely** the primary sources (e.g., Scripture passages, Church teaching, etc.) for all major positions taken. Wherever appropriate, secondary sources (including author and title) should also be employed.

QUESTION SELECTION SHEET

Candidates must prepare **four questions in one field on study**, whether it be Sacred Scripture, Systematic Theology, or Moral Theology. Two questions are prepared in each of the remaining areas, including Church History.

1. If **Sacred Scripture** is the major area of comprehensive examination preparation, choose one question from each of four different areas -- *at least one in each Testament*. If it is **not** the major area, choose two questions, *each from a different area*.
2. If **Systematic Theology** (Dogmatic/Sacramental/Liturgical) is the major area of comprehensive examination preparation, *choose one question from each of the four sections: 1-7; 8-15; 16-21; 22-29*. If it is **not** the major area, choose two questions, *each from a different section*.
3. If **Moral Theology** is the major area of comprehensive examination preparation, *choose questions from each of the following sections: Fundamental Moral Theology; Contemporary Problems in Moral Theology; Sexuality and Marriage*. If it is **not** the major area, choose two questions, *each from a different area*.
4. **Historical Studies**: *Choose two questions from the list provided*.

*MAT Written Comp Exam Directions
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