



Comprehensive Examinations Master of Divinity Degree Programs

Comprehensive examinations are required of all students enrolled in a course of studies leading to the Master of Divinity degree (both M.Div.I and M.Div.II). Both the Comprehensive Theological Reflection Paper (CIRP) and comprehensive examinations provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate his or her ability to integrate scholarship in the theological disciplines within the context of pastoral and liturgical situations. The comprehensive examinations have two separate components: (1) an oral examination based on a pastoral case study, and (2) a demonstration of liturgical and homiletical skills appropriate to the student's intended ministry.

Part One: Oral Examination Based on a Pastoral Case Chosen by Faculty

The Nature of the Examination

Part one of the M.Div. comprehensive examinations will be an oral examination which will directly address a pastoral case.

1. The Academic Dean appoints a board of three faculty persons to evaluate a student's response to a pastoral case. The chair of the board (appointed by Academic Dean) convenes the board. The chair is responsible for the following tasks:
 - a. a to establish times and location(s) for the exams;
 - b. b. to schedule each student for the examination;
 - c. c. to facilitate the preparation of a case study for each student. The case study is to be pastoral in nature.
2. After the board meets and proposes cases, the cases are to be submitted to the Academic Dean for approval. The Dean is to ensure that there be equity with regard to the material which the various cases present to the student.
3. Each student is given one case study to prepare one month prior to the scheduled date of his/her examination date. The oral comprehensive examination evaluates the student's ability to reflect theologically on a concrete pastoral incident (or case). The exam tests the pastoral integration of

the various biblical, theological, moral, canonical (for M.Div. Track I students), and historical perspectives relevant to the situation described in the case.

4. One week prior to the scheduled examination date, the student is required to submit a brief (1-2 page) outline of her/his proposed presentation together with a list of sources that the student consulted, or would consult, if confronted by a pastoral case of this nature in the parish.
5. The examination commences with a brief presentation (15-20 minutes) of his/her response to the case, followed by a discussion of the case and the student's approach to it. The examination will be centered on the case itself, but it may also address related perspectives which may arise in the course of the discussion.

Scheduling

6. Comprehensive Examinations are scheduled within the Spring Semester. The dates established for the comprehensive exams are published in the official seminary calendar. The exam is one hour in duration.
7. Each chairperson and his or her board are responsible for scheduling the individual exam times within the period established in the official seminary calendar. Examinations should be scheduled as early within the stipulated dates as possible to facilitate re-takes as necessary.

Grading

1. The chair of each board submits grade results to the Academic Dean on the forms provided to the board. The Academic Dean communicates the results in writing to the respective students and faculty after all oral comprehensive exams have been completed and before any retakes. The grades are P (pass), F (Fail) and H (pass with Honors). Only the grade H (pass with Honors) is posted, and only after this has first been communicated with the student(s) and agreed upon by the person(s) in question.
2. The chair submits to the Academic Dean in writing the rationale for a Failure. The student may confer with the chair to better understand why the oral examination has been graded a failure.
2. Retakes are arranged by the Academic Dean who constitutes another board. The chair establishes a date and time.
3. In the event of a re-take, the student will prepare a new presentation based on a new case and present it to a different board. Re-takes will be scheduled during the period designated in the official seminary calendar.

Part Two: Examination of Presidency/Public Leadership in Worship

The Nature of the Examination

Part two of the M.Div. comprehensive examinations will address the student's ability to preside at public prayer and to effectively communicate biblical and theological themes through the homily (or a similar faith sharing address by a lay person).

- A. Candidates for Roman Catholic Priesthood (M.Div. I) undertake a practice celebration of the Eucharist which includes an examination of both homiletic and presidential skills.
 1. A board comprised of the liturgy and homiletics faculty as well as any others designated by the Academic Dean will evaluate the homily and presidential performance of the student.
 2. The student will deliver a full homily within the practice Eucharist based on lectionary texts for a Sunday or Weekday Mass, assigned by the examination board.
 3. The homily will be submitted in written form one week prior to the examination, together with an explication of the exegetical assumptions supporting the homiletical focus and the sources consulted in creating the homily.
 4. The student's presidential skills within the practice Eucharist are evaluated in light of the following criteria:
 - a. presidential style;
 - b. evidence of an understanding of the Eucharist as a whole and of its various liturgical components;
 - c. the student's understanding of priesthood expressed in his presidency;
 - d. the ability to render simple chants within the liturgy.
 5. Ordinarily, the student will prepare the practice Eucharist and homily in conjunction with the course requirements of PS 820 Liturgical Practicum III.
- B. **All Other Students** undertake an examination of an alternate exercise of prayer leadership, appropriate to their respective ministerial goals. They may submit a video tape of their presidency/leadership from the setting of their ministry which includes an appropriate expression of leadership at public prayer and a reflection on the life of faith in light of particular scriptural readings.
 1. A board comprised of the liturgy and homiletics faculty as well as any others designated by the Academic Dean will evaluate the homily and presidential performance of the student. In the case of those seeking ordination in other faith traditions, a representative from the student's denomination with competency to evaluate worship presidency within that tradition may be invited to participate in the examination board.
 2. The student will deliver a full homily/sermon/reflection based on texts assigned or approved by the examination board.
 3. The homily/sermon/reflection will be submitted in written form one week prior to the examination, together with an explication of the exegetical assumptions supporting the

homiletical focus and the sources consulted in creating the homily.

4. The student's worship leadership skills will be evaluated in light of the particular ministerial setting appropriate to each person's intended ministry.
5. The student may present a video of their actual leadership at public worship or of a practice worship service prepared exclusively for the purpose of the comprehensive examination.
6. Students who are not preparing for Roman Catholic priesthood will enter into a wide variety of ministries. Worship leadership within these ministries will vary according to many factors. In order that this component of the comprehensive examination reflect the professional demands which could reasonably be anticipated for an M.Div. graduate, the particular form of this examination will be negotiated between the chair of the examination board and the student, subject to the approval of the Academic Dean.

Scheduling

1. Comprehensive Examinations are scheduled within the Spring Semester. For those students preparing for Roman Catholic priesthood, the dates established for the worship leadership component of the comprehensive exam will be determined by the faculty teaching PS 820. The date for all other students will be determined in consultation with the worship presidency examination board chair and approved by the Academic Dean.
2. Examinations should be scheduled so that re-takes, if necessary, may be administered and graded before the last day to submit degree requirements as listed in the Seminary Catalog.

Grading

1. The chair of each board submits grade results to the Academic Dean on the forms provided to the board. The Academic Dean communicates the results in writing to the respective students and faculty after all worship presidency comprehensive exams have been completed and before any retakes. The grades are P (pass), F (Fail) and H (pass with Honors). Only the grade H (pass with Honors) is posted, and only after this has first been communicated with the student(s) and agreed upon by the person(s) in question.
2. The chair submits to the Academic Dean in writing the rationale for a Failure. The student may confer with the chair to better understand why the worship presidency examination has been graded a failure.
3. Retakes are arranged by the Academic Dean in consultation with the chair of the worship presidency examination board. The chair establishes a date by which the new presentation of worship leadership must be received by the examination board. This date is to be set so that the re-take may be reviewed and graded prior to the date established for the last day to submit degree requirements for graduation.

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