

MA in ENGLISH & WRITING STUDIES COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PROCEDURES 2026-2027

A. Examination Components

The comprehensive examination has two required components. Students must pass both components in order to pass the comprehensive examination. In preparation for the examination, students should also thoroughly review the 2026-2027

Comprehensive Examination Preparation Booklet, available on the M.A. program website.

B. Examination Dates

The comprehensive examination is offered twice a year, in Fall and Spring semesters. The dates of the Fall examination will be announced no later than the end of the preceding Spring semester; and those of the Spring examination no later than the beginning of the preceding Fall semester. Students must complete a "Declaration of Intent" form with their graduate coordinator by Census Day of the semester *before* the semester that they intend to take the exam (e.g., by Census Day in Summer 2026 for the Fall 2026 examination and by Census Day in Fall 2026 for the Spring 2027 examination). Census Day is usually the end of the fifth week of the semester. *If students do not complete the Declaration of Intent form by this day, they will not be able to take the examination the following semester.*

C. Procedures

1. Days

Students will complete the exams during a two-week period near the end of the semester. Students whose religious observance necessitates accommodation may request an alternative two-week time period. Such students must notify the graduate coordinator of their concentration upon registering for ENG 6980 about their need for this alternative time period. Students will receive both exam questions at the same time. One exam (the student's choice) should be completed and submitted after one week. The other exam should be completed and submitted one week later.

2. Examination Distribution

Examination questions will be made available on Canvas beginning at the designated start time on the designated start day. The Graduate Coordinator will email the comprehensive exam students with the start time. Students who wish instead to pick up a hard copy of the question(s) from the English Department office (UH 334) must inform the coordinator of their concentration at least two weeks in advance of the exam.

3. Examination Return

Students must turn in the exam response by the designated end time on the return day. Examination responses must be turned in as an email attachment (.docx or .pdf) sent to all three graduate coordinators.

No late responses will be accepted. Students are responsible for confirming receipt of their component response. Students are responsible for allowing sufficient time to assure receipt of their component response by the deadline. If students do not receive an e-mail confirming receipt of their component response within 24 hours, they should immediately contact the coordinator of their concentration.

4. Open-Book Format

The exams are open-book. Students may use readings, notes, internet resources, and other materials for completing the exam. However, students are not permitted to consult with *anyone* about the examination questions or responses to them. Such consultation will constitute a violation of the Student Discipline Code and will be subject to established sanctions.

5. Incorporating Source Materials

Students should integrate source materials within their responses. However, they should avoid quoting or paraphrasing large segments of others' texts without accompanying analysis, interpretation, and/or explanation. In addition, students are advised to read the section on "Plagiarism and Cheating" in the CSUSB *Bulletin of Courses*. Please make note that "plagiarism" does not simply refer to the act of representing somebody else's words or ideas as one's own, but also to the act of paraphrasing an author's idea or quoting even limited portions of their text without proper citation. Plagiarism constitutes a violation of the Student Discipline Code and will be subject to established sanctions.

6. Length and Form of Response

Each exam response has a maximum of 3500 words. It must be typed, double-spaced, and formatted in 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins and numbered pages. Composition and Rhetoric and Literature Concentration students must attach an MLA-style Works Cited page (not included in the 3500-word limit), and Applied Linguistics & TESL Concentration students an APA-style References page (not included in the 3500-word limit). Within students' examination responses themselves, in-text citations should also follow MLA style for Composition and Rhetoric and Literature exams, and APA style for Applied Linguistics & TESL exams. For Pedagogy and Public & Professional Writing exams, students may use either MLA or APA style for in-text citations and references.

D. Honor Policy Statements

Students will be required to read and sign Honor Policy statements before taking the comprehensive examination. These statements will be distributed via the Canvas site for ENG 6980 and can be signed and returned digitally via that class site.

E. Grading of the Examination

Both the exams will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Students must pass both components in order to pass the comprehensive examination. Students who pass the examination will receive a grade of CR (Credit) for ENG 6980. Those who fail will receive a grade of NC (No Credit). Each examination will be read by a committee consisting of at least two English faculty members. Approximately 2-3 weeks after the exams are submitted, students will be notified by email of their grade on both exams by the Graduate Coordinator of their concentration.

F. Revision Opportunity

Students who do not pass one or more of the exams will initially be given a grade of No Credit (NC) in ENG 6980 (Comprehensive Exam). They will be provided written feedback and given one opportunity to turn in a revised response to the failed exam(s). They will be given one week to turn in a revised response to the failed exam(s). This re-write will be evaluated by the faculty readers. At that point, if the student passes, the NC grade will be changed to a CR (Credit) grade and the student will receive their degree. If they do not pass the exam(s), they will sign up for 6980 again and respond to new questions.

G. Repeat of the Examination

The examination cannot be taken more than twice, and a retake of the examination must be done within one calendar year of the original taking of the examination (for example, if the examination is first taken in Fall, it must be repeated no later than the subsequent Fall). If students fail one component of the examination and pass one component, they need only to retake the component that they failed.

In *rare* circumstances, a student may petition the Dean of Graduate Studies for a third attempt at the examination if the student experienced an accident or illness (physical or mental), serious personal or family problems, or military transfer. Documentation is required for all such petitions.

H. Rescheduling the Examination

In case of a documented emergency, students may petition to reschedule their examination.

I. Dual Concentrator Requirements

Students pursuing a dual concentration still need only to take two exams. They may choose to prepare questions from either discipline, and will be asked to

declare their exam choices by Week 6. The only stipulation is that **one question must involve breadth knowledge and the other depth knowledge**. (These designations are marked in the exam preparation materials and in the exam questions themselves.) For example, a student concentrating in Composition and Rhetoric and Literature could choose to take both exams in Composition/Rhetoric OR both exams in Literature, OR they could choose to do one exam in Composition/Rhetoric and one in Literature, as long as one exam involved breadth knowledge and the other depth knowledge in the field.