

PREPARING FOR YOUR COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Note: You must be registered for classes (e.g. spring or fall semester) in the month you take comps (in winter-exam in mid Jan. possible, in summer 1 h registration needed).

- A. Before starting the comps process, you will need to discuss with your PI:
 - *When they expect you to take your comps*
 - Budget 2-3 months to get everything done by that date
 - *Who they would recommend to be in your committee*
 - Review the Tox Handbook for updated info on the composition of your committee
 - Establish your PhD committee early—don't wait until before comps!
- B. After you figure out your timetable, start emailing potential members or schedule a meeting with them to ask whether they are willing to serve on your committee.
- C. Once formed, schedule a meeting with your PhD Committee (individually, or together) to introduce yourself and your research. Let them know when you are planning on taking your comps exam. DO THIS EARLY, because some of your committee members might be busy/traveling/etc.
- D. Next, take however long you need to write your specific aims page and get the final version approved by your PI. Once that is done, send it out to your committee for their edits and approval. You should also schedule a meeting with them individually or as a group to discuss your aims and get feedback. Meeting might be helpful because you will get a feeling of how hard the real comps questions will be. It is important that they are “on board”, *i.e.* agree that the aims make sense and are doable a reasonable time frame. Get their thoughts BEFORE you officially start to write.
- E. Once your aims page is approved, schedule a time (in about 6 weeks) for your comp exam: YOU WILL HAVE 4 WEEKS to write your complete proposal without your PI's/committee's feedback. *The format is clearly spelled out in the guidelines.* Check the Tox Handbook for minimum requirements. You may also want to check with your PI's department to get specifics on how their proposals are formatted.
- F. Once you set the date for the comp exam, contact David Purdy to help guide you through the paperwork. He will need: the comp exam date, a list of the committee members, a grade report , and a Plan of Study. (For the Plan of Study, under “Additional Required Coursework,” list 1 hour for TOX: 7300 Thesis/Dissertation and 1 hour for TOX: 7180 Toxicology Research Seminar. For TOX: 7201 Toxicology Research, multiply the hours you take per semester by the number of semesters you think you'll need before graduating). The Plan of Study needs to be signed by the Program Director and your PI and be approved by the graduate college AT LEAST 2 WEEKS before your scheduled date. Please note that if anyone on your committee is not a primary tenure or tenure track assistant, associate or full professor at the time the committee is formed, permission to serve must be granted by the Graduate College.
- G. The final draft of your proposal should be distributed to your committee AT LEAST 2 WEEKS before the scheduled date of your comps.
- H. Lastly, prepare well for your comprehensive exam and GOOD LUCK! Once you have passed the exam, your committee will sign off on your paperwork and you will officially become a **PhD candidate!**