

ENCS 8501 – Comprehensive Exam Guidelines

Supervisory Committee

A Supervisory Committee needs to be formed for each Ph.D. student, and is composed of:

- Thesis supervisor(s)
- Two internal members from CIISE
- One additional internal member from CIISE or one external member to the candidate's program
- Other members appointed at the discretion of the Supervisory Committee, with the approval of the Graduate Program Director.

The chair of the Supervisory Committee presides over the deliberations of the committee members, and final decisions are taken by majority voting. Thesis co-supervisors share one vote.

Comprehensive Exam

Students must have completed 12 credits of course work before writing the comprehensive exam (ENCS 8501) and be in good academic standing. The comprehensive exam is taken within 12 (24) months after the first registration as a full-time (parttime) student in a PhD program

The objective of the comprehensive exam is to test the research skills and fundamental knowledge of the student. The exam consists of two mandatory parts: **1) written report** and **2) oral examination**.

1) Written Report

Students must read and assimilate the content of at least 3 major research papers in the research area in question. These papers are selected by the thesis supervisor and approved by the Supervisory Committee.

Doctoral students must study the selected papers and conduct an in-depth critical review of the literature in the assigned field of study, write and submit the report to the Supervisory Committee:

- A 20- to 30-page comprehensive summary report, excluding references.
- Using an 11- or 12-point "Times New Roman" font with 1.5 or double line spacing.

Completion Deadline: The written report must be completed within one month of the date when the doctoral student receives his or her written examination assignment.

Submission Deadline: Doctoral students must submit an electronic copy of their written report to the Graduate Program Coordinator (graduate@ciise.concordia.ca) and Supervisory Committee members at least three weeks prior to the oral presentation date.

2) Oral Examination

Doctoral students will then be asked to make a **20-minute oral presentation** to the Supervisory Committee, which is presided by the chair of the committee, followed by a question period. During the question period, the committee may ask students questions about the report, assigned papers, literature review, and any related fundamental knowledge.

At the end of the examination process, the chair of the committee will announce, based on the recommendation of the Supervisory Committee, that the student has passed, passed with conditions (e.g., the student must take one or more courses that are considered necessary by the committee), or failed the comprehensive exam. When students fail, they are permitted to repeat the exam only once at the end of the next term. Students failing for the second time are withdrawn from the program.

It should be noted that the comprehensive exam must be the student's own work. It is the student's responsibility to satisfy all the above requirements without seeking assistance from the supervisor(s) in the preparation of the written report.

Summary of Comprehensive Exam Steps

Step 1: The thesis supervisor(s) assign their doctoral student at least 3 major research papers, which must be sent to the Supervisory Committee for approval.

Step 2: The student must complete a written report within 1 month of the date when receiving his or her written examination assignment.

Step 3: The student must submit an electronic copy of his or her written report to the Graduate Program Coordinator (graduate@ciise.concordia.ca) and Supervisory Committee at least 3 weeks prior to the oral examination date.

Step 4: After receiving the confirmed date/time for the oral presentation from the supervisors(s), the Graduate Program Coordinator prepares the appropriate forms, books a conference room, and sends email reminders to the Supervisory Committee and student on the presentation date/time/room.

Step 5: The student will be asked to make a **20-minute oral presentation** to the Supervisory Committee, which is presided by the chair of the committee, followed by a question period.