

PhD Comprehensive Examination Procedures
(Provisional protocol regarding extensions under the COVID-19 pandemic circumstances)¹

(Submitted to EDST's Head Advisory Committee [HAC] on Monday, April 6th, 2020)
(Approved by EDST's HAC on Tuesday, April 7th, 2020)
(Submitted to EDST's GPACC on Tuesday, April 7th, 2020)
(Approved by EDST's GPACC on Tuesday, April 7th, 2020)
(Approved by EDST Plenary on Friday, April 10th, 2020)

The present Protocol provisionally empowers PhD Supervisory Committees in EDST, upon a student's written request, to extend the period allocated for the completion and submission of the Comprehensive Examination beyond the established 90 days period assigned to that end. The Protocol aims to assist PhD Supervisory Committees to support their students under the current COVID-19 pandemic given the challenging lock-down conditions which continue to affect UBC's administrative, teaching, library and research services, preventing face-to-face meetings by students, staff, and faculty.

WHEREAS UBC guidelines stipulate that the graduate department in which the doctoral student studies must "specify timing of the comprehensive examination, including the earliest and latest dates by which the comprehensive examination must be completed";²

WHEREAS UBC's Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies called on graduate departments to "be **flexible** whenever possible" given the COVID-19 pandemic, actively "encourage[ing] graduate programs and supervisors to adopt a similar posture in areas where they have primary responsibility...";³

EDST's Head Advisory Committee and GPACC have approved the following Protocol as a provisional support measure:

1. Supervisory Committees are hereby empowered to extend the period granted to PhD students to complete and submit their Comprehensive Examination by *up to 45 days*, beyond the established 90 days allocated to that end.
2. A request to extend the Comprehensive Examination submission deadline should be processed as follows:

¹ EDST is grateful for the input, feedback, and support provided by Max Read, Associate Director, Student Academic Services, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, UBC.

² Refer to: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/comprehensive-examination>

³ Assistant Dean Brendan Morey, Student Administration and Awards, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Email to Graduate Program Advisors, March 13, 2020, 3:53:14 PM, Subject: Update to graduate students and programs re: COVID-19 situation (Bold in the original).

- (a) A PhD student is entitled to request – by emailing the Supervisory Committee – an extension that would allow the completion and submission of the Comprehensive Examination beyond the established 90 days originally allocated to that end.
 - (b) The Supervisory Committee considers the student’s request and determines the length of the extension by no more than 45 days beyond the established 90 days originally allocated to that end. The Committee identifies a firm deadline by which the student must submit their Comprehensive Examination to the Supervisory Committee.
 - (c) The Research Supervisor communicates the firm deadline for the submission of the Comprehensive Examination to EDST’s Graduate Program Assistant in order to enter it on record in the student’s file.
 - (d) Any request to extend the submission deadline of the Comprehensive Examination beyond 45 days requires the written approval of EDST’s Graduate Advisor, as is customary for any such extensions. An extension beyond the additional 45 days must be submitted in writing by the Research Supervisor. It must outline the extraordinary circumstances experienced by the student and under which the extension request is deemed warranted by the Supervisory Committee.
 - (e) EDST’s Graduate Program Assistant records the firm deadline in the student’s file and notifies the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in order to extend the deadline for Candidacy by a full term, with no justification needed, as applicable.
3. Nothing in the present Protocol changes, alters, or abrogates the objectives, scope, and breadth of the Comprehensive Examination as outlined in UBC’s *Comprehensive Examination* policy⁴ and in EDST’s *PhD Comprehensive Examination Procedures* approved by GPACC on April 1st, 2010.⁵
 4. This Protocol is effective from the date of its approval until UBC formally resumes on campus operations, research services, and teaching, or until further notice, whichever comes first. EDST’s Graduate Advisor will issue a formal notification to extinguish the effect of the present Protocol following approvals by HAC and GPACC, respectively. If any extensions had already been granted when the Protocol has been formally extinguished, those existing extensions will hold and no more extensions of any length will be issued by any PhD Supervisory Committee.

END

⁴ Refer to: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/comprehensive-examination>

⁵ Refer to: <https://edst-educ.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2013/05/PhD-Comprehensive-Exam-revised-April-1-2010.pdf>