

# Comprehensive Exam Policy

## Graduate Research and Academic Steering Panel (GRASP) Physics & Space Sciences Department Florida Institute of Technology

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Each PhD student in the Physics & Space Sciences Department is required to pass a Comprehensive Exam. This exam is required to become a candidate for the PhD degree, and cannot be taken until the student has passed the Qualifying Exams. The exam consists of two parts:

- 1) Written Part: Two written, 2-hour exams preferably relevant to the subject area of the student's research but may also include other areas considered appropriate by the doctoral committee. These exams are at *graduate level*. Students must select 2 subjects from the following list after discussing their plans with their Major Advisor.

Advanced Electrodynamics  
Advanced Quantum Mechanics  
High-Energy Particle Physics  
Condensed Matter Physics  
Atmospheric Electrodynamics  
Stellar Astrophysics  
Galaxies and Cosmology  
Planetary Interiors  
Planetary Atmospheres  
Low-Energy Space Physics  
High-Energy Space Physics  
Other specialized subject exams, as approved by the GRASP

This section is expected to be taken in the semester following the successful completion of the Qualifying Exams, and does not require the completion of all coursework.

- 2) Oral Part: Following the successful completion of the written subject exams, the student will do an oral presentation of his/her PhD research topic (Proposal Conference). To comply with Graduate School policy, this cannot be done until all classroom coursework is complete.

### Rules for the Comprehensive Examination:

- (1) The examination must be passed at least one year before the PhD is awarded. Scheduling the examination to meet this requirement is the responsibility of the student and his or her doctoral committee. Note that the doctoral committee must be formed 60 days before the examination.
- (2) The written exams are to be composed by the student's doctoral committee.
- (3) The student must be enrolled at the time the oral examination (Proposal Conference) is taken, otherwise, a separate examination fee must be paid. The oral examination must be announced by the Graduate Program Office two weeks in advance.
- (4) To pass, the student must have the unanimous approval of the doctoral committee.
- (5) Consistent with University Policy, a student who fails a subject exam from the Comprehensive Exam will be allowed **one** opportunity to repeat that subject exam after a suitable period of study if the majority of the doctoral committee approves, taking into account the recommendation of the GRASP.