

ENGLISH MA ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

EVALUATION RUBRIC

Having passed the written comprehensive examination, a non-thesis degree candidate in English sits for a one-hour oral comprehensive examination over the three areas of the written exam. The examining committee comprises three area specialists appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies in English, with one serving as Chair.

As with the written comprehensive examination, the committee members award the candidate a Pass, Fail, or High Pass for each area, according to the merits and deficiencies of the responses:

(A) PASS

A grade of Pass is awarded to a student who

- (1) demonstrates competent graduate-level knowledge of the works, facts, and broad cultural and aesthetic developments and theory defining the area;
- (2) directly answers the questions asked by the committee members;
- (3) is able to defend arguments about the topics competently;
- (4) is able to synthesize materials reasonably within theoretical contexts;
- (5) strikes a good balance between levels of generalization and specificity; and
- (6) can competently express himself or herself in spoken English.

(B) FAIL

A grade of Fail is given to a candidate who

- (1) fails to address the questions asked by the committee members;
- (2) fails to demonstrate competent graduate-level knowledge of the works, facts, and broad cultural and aesthetic developments and theory informing the area;
- (3) fails to develop defensible arguments in response to the questions;
- (4) is unable to express herself or himself clearly and coherently in spoken English.

The candidate who fails the oral comprehensive is allowed one opportunity to retake the examination.

(C) HIGH PASS

A grade of High Pass is awarded to a candidate who

- (1) demonstrates exceptional knowledge of the works, facts, and broad cultural and aesthetic developments and theory informing the area;

- (2) demonstrates an understanding of the subjects beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries;
- (3) is able to make significant and sophisticated arguments about the topics within rigorously defined theoretical contexts; and
- (4) has an impressive command of spoken English.