Comprehensive Exam Schedule and Procedures
Department of Radio-Television-Film

The timing of comprehensive exams:

- most RTF students take their comprehensive exams shortly after finishing their coursework

- the RTF Graduate Advisor will consider requests for earlier completion of the exams and may grant such an exception if the student has completed almost all required coursework, particularly those courses necessary to complete the student’s dissertation successfully

- students entering the RTF program in Fall 2011 and after must complete their comprehensive exams by the end of their third year

Mid-way through the penultimate semester of coursework:

- the student contacts 3 faculty members (at least 2 from RTF) regarding their willingness to serve on her/his exam committee

- the student meets with each exam committee member individually to discuss her/his approach to the exams (e.g., broad or narrow focus, number of readings, open- or closed-book exam, number of questions to be answered, number of pages for the written exam)

- the student works with individual committee member to develop a reading list for that part of the exam

- the faculty members may provide sample reading lists and/or questions upon student’s request

During last semester of coursework:

- the student meets with each committee member periodically to discuss the readings

At least two months prior to first exam:

- the student finalizes all reading lists and shares final lists with all 3 exam committee members

At least two weeks prior to the first exam:

- the student selects the location for the completion of exams (exams do not need to be taken at school), and determines the order in which the exams will be completed as well as the days and times s/he wants to receive the exam questions

- the student informs each faculty member of the day of that portion of the exam

- the student submits to the RTF Graduate Coordinator a completed Comprehensive Exam Form (on the RTF Graduate Student website), which contains the following information: 1) the name, department, and email address of each faculty member on the exam committee; 2) the date and beginning time for each exam; and 3) any other special requirements
Exam process:

- each exam must be completed within eight hours, unless the RTF Graduate Advisor has granted the student’s request for additional time

- the three exams are typically spread out over one week, with one exam completed on Monday, one on Wednesday, and one on Friday

- on the day of each exam, the RTF Graduate Coordinator sends the student the exam question(s) at the student’s requested time

- the student must submit her/his answers as a Word doc or PDF attachment to the RTF Graduate Coordinator

Following final exam:

- within one business day from the completion of each exam, the RTF Graduate Coordinator forwards the student’s exam to all members of the committee

- each faculty member grades only her/his portion of the exam and submits a grade (High Pass, Pass, Low Pass, or Fail) to the RTF Graduate Coordinator within 2 weeks (10 business days) of the exam

- the student schedules a 1.5-hour exam review meeting with all committee members (optional for students enrolling prior to Fall 2011; required for students enrolling in Fall 2011 and after)

Between 10 and 15 business days of final exam:

- the student meets will all committee members for a review of the exams to discuss the student’s performance on the exams as well as plans for the student’s dissertation proposal

- individual faculty members may change the original grade assigned to their portion of the written exam based on the student’s performance during the oral review meeting

- one member of the committee reports the outcome of the review meeting to the RTF Graduate Coordinator, who then notifies the student of the results of the written exams and oral review

- individual committee members may forward any written comments on the exams directly to the student separate from the RTF Graduate Coordinator’s official notification

- if the student fails one or more of the written exams or the oral review, s/he may retake the failed portion(s) once, with the original committee member(s)

- if the student fails all three exams, the RTF Graduate Advisor notifies the RTF Graduate Studies Committee and the student’s program of study may be terminated

Ph.D. candidacy:

- students are encouraged to apply for candidacy within one semester of completing their exams