INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXAMINATION COMMITTEE CHAIRS

1. Make sure that candidate has completed preliminary requirements on time:

- the language requirement (if applicable) must be completed by the middle of the semester before the term in which the examination is taken;
- both Plan B projects must be officially accepted and filed in the English office by the fifth week of the semester in which the exam is taken; the chair should make the Plan Bs available to examination committee members for their information (circulate the folder, then return it to the file cabinet in the English office);
- the reading list must be approved and distributed to all committee members at least four weeks before the examination.

(See attached Checklist for this year’s specific deadline dates.)

2. Make sure that candidate files the “Application for Degree” form by the first working day of the month in which he or she will complete the degree. If the candidate plans to participate in the Spring graduate commencement ceremony, the “Application for Degree” and “Commencement Attendance” form must be filed by the first working day of March. If the candidate has deviated from his or her “Degree Program Form” the candidate should petition to have the changes officially approved (petition forms are available in the UMD Graduate Office and online: http://www.grad.umn.edu/current_students/forms/gs59.pdf).

3. Have the candidate contact committee members about scheduling the written and oral portions of the exam – or do the scheduling yourself in consultation with the candidate and other committee members.

Because things get so hectic toward the end of the semester, encourage the candidate to work on scheduling early in the term. The oral component is obviously the most important, because the candidate and all committee members must have at least an hour and a half free at the same time (one hour for the exam proper and a half hour for committee deliberations). Have the English secretary reserve a room for the oral exam (e.g., one of the SBE conference rooms or the CLA conference room [Kirby Plaza 302]). Customarily, the candidate uses the office and computer of the committee chair when taking the written exams. If this is impossible, consult the DGS for an alternative arrangement.

From the Graduate Handbook:

The written portions of the exam will be taken on two days beginning on Monday of the twelfth week through Thursday on the thirteenth week of the semester. All written portions of the exam must be completed no later than Friday of the thirteenth week. The oral component of the exam is given on the fourth working day.
following completion of the written portions of the exam. This means that no oral will be taken before Monday of the thirteenth week or later than Thursday of the fourteenth week.

(See attached Checklist for current specific deadline dates.)

4. When the exam is scheduled, notify the Graduate Office (email grad@d.umn.edu or send a memo to MJ Leone in 431 DAdB) announcing the dates for the written and oral portions, listing the members of the examining committee, and requesting the official “Examination Report.” (According to Graduate School policy, this must be done one week before the exam, but it’s best to do it earlier in case complications should arise. E.g., if the membership of the committee has changed since the candidate filed the “Degree Program Transmittal Form,” the candidate must file an “Oral Examination Committee Substitutions” form.)

5. Solicit examination questions from the committee members. As the Handbook notes, there should be “some choice of questions.” That is, members might submit two or three questions from which the candidate will select one to answer. Remind committee members how much time the candidate will be spending on their part of the exam: two hours for the primary text portion, one hour for the related field, and three hours for the reading list(s) (ordinarily each Engl/Comp member will get one of the three hours).

6. Put the examination together and print it. In consultation with the candidate, decide which portions will be done on what days. Usually the primary text and related field parts are done on one day (3 hours) and the reading list(s) part on another (3 hours). The order of parts does not matter.

7. On the days of the written exams, get the candidate settled at the computer and give her/him the portion for that day. For the primary text part, the candidate may use the text itself and notes on the secondary materials. Unless the committee has decided otherwise, the candidate should not use books or notes during the reading list(s) or related field portions.

Give the candidate a copy of the written examinations (the questions and the candidate’s own responses) immediately after he or she finishes these portions of the exam. Remind the candidate to bring these materials to the oral examination. As soon as the written examination is completed, give each committee member a copy of the questions and responses, along with the Evaluation Form. (Ensure privacy by putting these materials in an envelope before placing them in faculty mailboxes.) Also, email the Evaluation Form to members in case they want to fill it out by computer; the DGS can supply this form in WordPerfect and Rich Text Format.

8. Conducting the oral portion (from the Graduate Handbook):

   1. The four faculty members who prepared and graded the student's written examination will conduct the oral examination.
   2. Students will be given copies of their written examinations immediately after they finish all
written portions of the exam.

3. Within two working days of the completion of the written examination, each examiner will read the examination and file a brief written report with the committee chair and the Director of Graduate Studies using the attached Evaluation Form. If two or more examiners provide reasons why the student should not proceed to the oral, the examining committee must decide whether to approve the student's taking the oral portion; if this approval is denied, the student is judged to have failed the exam.

4. Students who fail the written portion of the exam must be notified by the committee chair as soon as possible. In giving notification of failure, the committee chair will offer to discuss the exam with the student, taking into account the committee members’ explanatory comments.

5. The oral exam will take place on the fourth working day after completion of the written exam portions.

6. Oral examinations will normally last for one hour, during which each examiner will have an opportunity to question the candidate. Candidates will be allowed approximately five minutes to comment upon their own written examinations.

7. The chair of the committee, in consultation with the candidate, will determine the sequence in which examiners ask their questions. Examiners will restrict their questions during the oral examination largely to the fields, subjects, and readings on which they contributed questions for the written examination.

8. At the conclusion of the examination the candidate will be asked to leave the room so that the examiners can deliberate briefly and in private about its outcome and their recommendations. Each committee member will report his/her evaluation (Pass or Fail) of the overall exam (i.e., the combined written and oral). The candidate must be informed immediately thereafter about the results of the examination.

9. At its discretion, a committee may designate an exceptionally strong exam as a "High Pass." A student who receives a "High Pass" on the exam will be notified in writing by the Director of Graduate Studies.

10. The committee chair will offer to discuss the exam with a student who fails after taking the oral, taking into account the explanatory comments made by committee members on the report form and in deliberations immediately following the oral. A student who fails the exam will be allowed one opportunity to retake the portions that were not satisfactory.

During the exam, make sure that each examiner receives a fair and appropriate portion of the time allotted.

When the oral examination is completed, have all committee members sign the “Examination Report”; then return this form to the Graduate Office. Give one copy of the written examination and the candidate’s responses to the English secretary for official filing.

Please see the DGS with any questions or concerns about these procedures.
## CHECKLIST SPRING 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>middle of Fall semester</td>
<td>Candidate meets language requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Candidate completes &amp; files both Plan B projects; chair circulates the file to committee members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1 (preferably earlier)</td>
<td>Candidate files “Application for Degree” form if she or he plans to participate in the graduate commencement ceremony (otherwise this form must be filed by the first working day of the month when the degree will be completed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 7 (preferably earlier)</td>
<td>Reading list approved and distributed to committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>week of April 4 (preferably earlier)</td>
<td>Written and oral portions of exam scheduled and room reserved for oral exam; chair notifies Graduate Office &amp; requests “Examination Report.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11-21</td>
<td>Chair solicits examination questions and assembles exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 working days after written exam</td>
<td>Written exam conducted over two days; chair distributes copies of completed exam to candidate and committee members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th working day after written exam</td>
<td>Committee members submit Evaluation Form to chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>Oral exam; chair sends “Examination Report” to Graduate Office &amp; files copy of exam in English Dept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate Commencement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CHECKLIST FALL 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 6</td>
<td>Candidate completes &amp; files both Plan B projects and gives copy to each examination committee member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>Candidate meets language requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>Reading list approved and distributed to committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20 (preferably earlier)</td>
<td>Written and oral portions of exam scheduled and room reserved for oral exam; chair notifies Graduate Office &amp; requests “Examination Report.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>week of November 10 (preferably earlier)</td>
<td>Chair solicits examination questions and assembles exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1 (or earlier)</td>
<td>Candidate files Application for Degree form by the first working day of the month when the degree will be completed. If she or he plans to participate in the spring graduate commencement ceremony, candidate must file the Commencement Attendance Form by the first working day of March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 17 – Dec 1</td>
<td>Written exam conducted over two days; chair distributes copies of completed exam to candidate and committee members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 working days after written exam</td>
<td>Committee members submit Evaluation Form to chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th working day after written exam</td>
<td>Oral exam; chair sends “Examination Report” to Graduate Office &amp; files copy of exam in English Dept.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ENGLISH M.A. WRITTEN EXAMINATION: EVALUATION FORM

This form must be returned to the committee chair __________________________________________
(who will make a copy for the DGS) by the following date: _____________________.

NAME OF STUDENT:

NAME OF EXAMINER:

SECTION OF EXAM EXAMINER PREPARED:

(Please answer questions one through four with one of the following responses: satisfactory, unsatisfactory, exceptional.)

1. HOW DID THE STUDENT PERFORM ON THE SECTION(S) OF THE EXAM WHICH YOU PREPARED? PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN YOUR ASSESSMENT.

(In questions two through four, respond only for portions of the test you did not prepare.)

2. HOW DID THE STUDENT PERFORM ON THE TEXT ANALYSIS SECTION?

3. HOW DID THE STUDENT RESPOND ON THE READING LIST SECTION?
   Question 1
   Question 2
   Question 3
   Question 4

4. HOW DID THE STUDENT PERFORM ON THE RELATED FIELD SECTION?

5. IS THERE ANY REASON WHY THE STUDENT SHOULD NOT PROCEED TO THE ORAL PORTION OF THE EXAM?
   YES _____                           NO _____
   If you think there are reasons why the student should not proceed to the oral, please explain on the reverse.
   (If two or more examiners provide reasons why the student should not proceed to the oral, the examining committee must decide whether or not to approve the student’s taking the oral. If this approval is denied, the student will be judged to have failed the exam.)
7 July 2005

To: Kate, Marty, Mike, Carolyn

From: Steve Adams

Re: M.A. EXAM

Thanks so much for agreeing to chair a M.A. exam committee this year.

I’m experimenting with a list of instructions for chairs (enclosed), which I hope will be especially useful for faculty who perform that function infrequently.

Please pass along to me any suggestions you might have for improving the document. Where could it be clearer or more informative? What else should committee chairs be told to make their job as easy and efficient as possible?