

Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

M.A. Exam Requirement

All CSAMES M.A. students must take a written and an oral M.A. exam at the completion of their studies. Usually, this means that the student will take exams during the spring semester of the second year in the program. The written and oral exams, taken one to two weeks apart, must be completed by April 10 for May graduation.

The Exam Committee

After consulting with the DGS, the student is responsible for assembling a committee of three faculty members, each from a different discipline. Normally, these are professors with whom the student has taken graduate seminars. The DGS serves as the Chair of the committee.

The Reading List

The exam is based on a list of 30 books, divided into three sections of 10 books each. In the fall of the second year, the student works with each examiner to compile a reading list consisting of 10 books. A number of closely related scholarly articles can substitute for a book, depending on the field. The entire reading list must be approved by the DGS before the end of the fall semester.

Before the Exam

Early in the spring semester of the second year, the student must submit to CSAMES's Office Support Associate a "Request to Schedule an M.A. Exam" form, which can be found linked to CSAMES's M.A. program website.

The Written Exam

The written portion of the MA exam is a take-home exam with 24 hours to complete. The student will receive 6 questions (2 from each committee member). The student must complete 1 question from each committee member for a total of 3 questions. The average length of the completed exam should be 15 pages (5 pages per answer). The essays should be double-spaced, in Times New Roman font size 12 or equivalent. Do not include footnotes or a bibliography. When citing sources, include only the authors' last name and page number in parenthesis, like this:

The more a press release provides the "building blocks" reporters need for the structure they build when they write their stories, the more likely it is to get used (Omang 1).

The entire committee reads and comments on every exam. Each answer is evaluated (high pass, pass, low pass, fail) by each committee member. In the event of a significant discrepancy in the evaluation of a given answer, the opinion that carries the most weight is that of the author of the question, or the expert in that discipline.

The Oral Exam

The one-hour oral exam allows the committee to meet with the student to discuss performance on the written exam and the student's future plans. The student may be asked to clarify or to elaborate on what they have written on the exam.

Graduation Information

Please review the Graduate College instructions: <https://grad.illinois.edu/faculty-staff/graduatingstudentchecklist>

Students must add their name to the degree list using UI Integrate Self-Service. If the student is unable to apply for graduation via Self-Service, the department will need to add the student by the deadline. See the [Academic Calendar](#) for deadlines. Information about the process is available through the Graduate Student Academic Services Office in the Graduate College.