PROCEDURES FOR PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS
IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION (SMORG)
(effective as of September 2011)

NOTE
A. Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) has only a general policy regarding procedures for PhD comprehensive examinations.

B. The comprehensive examination regulations are a departmental responsibility. However, they are subject to the School general policy, which is outlined in the document entitled, Procedures for PhD Comprehensive Examinations Written in The Faculty of Business (revised September 17, 2007).

C. According to Procedures for PhD Comprehensive Examinations Written in The Faculty of Business, “Students must pass the examination within a maximum of two attempts. In exceptional circumstances, a third attempt will be permitted with the consent of the student's supervisor, the Department Chair, and the Director of the PhD program.”

PURPOSE
The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to assess if the students are adequately prepared to proceed to the candidacy stage of the PhD program. Students must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the examining committee that they possess: (a) an adequate knowledge of the disciplines and the subject matters relevant to the examinations; and (b) the ability to pursue and complete original research at an advanced level.

PROCEDURES
The comprehensive examination consists of two parts: (A) a 2nd year paper and (B) three written exams.

A. The 2nd year paper

1. The 2nd year paper is a research paper written by the student, and normally based on primary or secondary data collected and analyzed during the first summer. The expectation is that the paper will be of appropriate quality for an academic conference submission.

2. The written paper should be submitted for evaluation by January 31 of the student’s second year in the program.

3. A small committee of faculty (the student's supervisor and two other faculty members) will evaluate the quality of the paper. The evaluation criteria should mirror what is typically used in the editorial process (theoretically and methodologically sound). The committee can judge the paper as “acceptable” or offer a “revise and resubmit” option with recommendations for improvement. The student shall then improve the paper and submit the paper again for evaluation. The deadline for resubmission is March 15.
4. After the paper is evaluated as acceptable, the student will make an oral presentation based on this paper. The audience will be the small committee (supervisor and two faculty who "accepted" the paper) and other interested faculty and students. The supervisor will determine who is invited to the presentation. The date of the presentation must be in advance of May 31 of the student's second year. This presentation will follow the format of scholarly presentations at the Academy of Management. Students will give a 15 minute oral presentation of their paper and then answer questions from the committee and other members of the audience. The total length of the presentation session will normally be approximately 30 minutes. Students will receive feedback on their presentation but will not be evaluated.

B. Three written exams

1. The 2nd year paper must be “accepted” and presented before the student is permitted to take the written exams.

2. The Chair of the Comprehensive Examination Committee for the written exams is the SMORG representative on the PhD Policy Committee. If the SMORG representative is also one of the examining professors, then the Chair of SMORG may appoint another professor to chair the committee. Other examining professors on the committee are normally those who design each of the written exams taken by a student. Thus, the composition of the committee may differ among students.

3. The three written exams are associated with the three core courses taken by the student. If a student has taken more than three of these courses, the student together with his or her supervisor will choose which three exams to write. The following six courses are considered core courses:

   - SMO 701 (Organization Theory, formerly ORG A 701),
   - SMO 702 (Human Behaviour in Organization, formerly ORG A 702),
   - SMO 703 (Strategic Management, formerly ORG A 703),
   - SMO 707 (Special Topics, formerly ORG A 707),
   - SMO 708 (Industrial Relations, formerly IND R 701,
   - SMO 709 (Human Resource Management, formerly HRM 703).

4. Usually, but not necessarily, the instructor of each core course designs the written exam, that is, the number of questions, their relative weight, and the amount of choice offered to the students. The SMORG Department is responsible for scheduling the exam and booking rooms.

5. Students are normally expected to use a university-supplied computer for their writing, but they must agree not to use the Internet or access any electronic files such as prepared notes, answers, or references. The electronic or hardcopy answers will be collected by the SMORG Office and forwarded to the relevant professor setting the exam, and copied to other members of the examining committee.
6. Students are allowed to bring in a single sheet of notes to each written exam. Each set of notes must fit on one side only of a letter-sized piece of paper. No other notes, books, articles, etc will be allowed during any part of the examinations.

7. The written exams will normally be held in mid-June. All three exams will normally be taken within one week. Each exam should last for up to four hours and should be taken on a different day.

8. The results of the written comprehensive examinations will normally be reported back to the students within one week of the last written exam. The Chair of the Committee will send each student a letter with the final result: Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail.

9. Students must pass the ENTIRE comprehensive examination, that is, its four parts. They must have their 2nd year paper accepted, and they must pass each of the three written exams. In case of a conditional pass on any of the three written exams, the Examination Committee will set one or more conditions that when satisfied will result in a pass for the entire comprehensive exam. Conditions will be set on a case-by-case basis. They may include, but are not limited to, the re-sitting of one written comprehensive examination; the re-writing of one or more questions from the comprehensive examination; and/or the completion of a paper on one of the comprehensive examination topics. Should the conditions not be fulfilled by the date specified by the Examination Committee, the result is that the student fails the comprehensive examination in its entirety.

10. For a student who obtains a conditional pass, or a fail, the chair of the Examination Committee will explain the reasons. The written note should briefly state in an unambiguous manner the reasons for the failure or conditional pass and can suggest that the student also speak to her/his supervisor or some other members of the Written Examination Committee.

11. Students who fail the exam will be encouraged to leave the program. If students request a second attempt, all components of the exam must be retaken within three months of the notification of the initial failure.