

General Trends:

1. Most exams processes feature a timed written exam and an oral defense.
2. Timed exams range from 2-3/hours per essay over two days to take-home exams that last two weeks.
3. Of the timed written exams, Tufts appears to require the most written content – 45 pages over two weeks (or three 15-page essays). Northwestern Performance Studies seems to follow close behind with over 30 pages of writing over 9 days.
4. Most programs ask faculty to submit questions to students. Very few programs ask students to generate and submit their own exam questions. Two programs feature student-generated questions for their timed written exams.
 - a. University of Pittsburgh
 - b. University of Texas at Austin
5. Brown University is the only program to have an option for an identification-based competency exam, which asks students to correctly identify 38/50 plays. There is an alternative in which students take a theater history course and compose their own syllabus and rationale for a theater history course of their own.
6. Most programs ask students to compile their reading lists for their written and oral exams. There are several exceptions where the department appears to keep a “Major Works” list or exams are based on coursework content.
 - a. University of Hawai’i at Manoa
 - b. University of Colorado Boulder
 - c. Northwestern University – Performance Studies
 - d. Louisiana State University
7. Area lists for comprehensive exams vary in length, but most programs require around 100 texts/works/sources for these exams. University of Chicago has the shortest lists (at 30 works – due to the joint element of the degree) and Columbia and Tufts require the longest lists, where 100 works would be on the lower end of their guidance.
8. Portfolios in lieu of timed exams are a less common, but still prevalent, trend.
 - a. University of Chicago uses a portfolio in addition to an oral exam. The portfolio includes an article suitable for publication and a dissertation prospectus, as well as an annotated portfolio of creative work generated outside of coursework as well as in conjunction with a performance practice as research class.
 - b. Bowling Green State University does not have a timed written exam. Instead, students submit a portfolio with a written essay revised from class as well as a CV, pedagogy statement, prospectus, annotated bibliography, and four book/performance reviews.
9. Performance practice as research is largely not considered as part of the qualifying process in the field.

- a. Stanford, UChicago, Yale are the only institutions to require this as part of the examination process. Stanford's 2nd year qualifying exam requires students to participate in a departmental production and host a "talkback" with faculty. UChicago is instituting a new performance-based workshop program prior to the start of classes – creative work and writing generated during that program are submitted in the qualifying portfolio. Finally, Yale requires students to include a dramaturgy casebook from their work on a production as part of their qualifying portfolio.

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