

# OKLAHOMA CENTER FOR NEUROSCIENCE

## GENERAL EXAM PROCEDURES

In the Spring semester of the second year of graduate school, students in the Neuroscience graduate program take their General Examination in order to qualify for status as a Doctoral (Ph.D.) candidate. The General Exam is a comprehensive examination of the depth and breadth of knowledge in Neuroscience learned during the first year and a half of coursework and laboratory work. All Neuroscience required courses should be completed prior to the General Exam so students are academically ready to answer the questions posed on the written and oral parts of the exam. During this semester, students take no formal coursework, but are signed up for Journal Club (presentation skills), Current Topics (seminar), and Directed Readings (studying) in order to be registered for the minimum number of required hours and have ample time to focus on preparing for the General Exam.

The General Exam focuses on four main areas of Neuroscience:

Neurobiology

Neurophysiology

Neuroanatomy

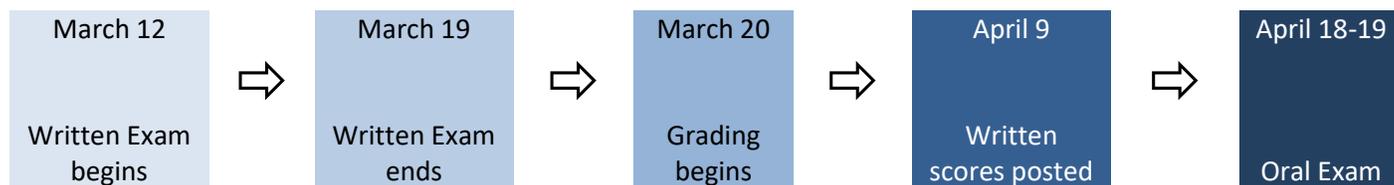
Neuropharmacology

The OCNS General Exam consists of two parts:

1. The Written General Exam consists of three thought-provoking questions generated by OCNS faculty. These questions assess depth of knowledge and ability to solve a theoretical problem with a Neuroscience focus. Students are expected to write a background, develop hypotheses, generate experimental designs, discuss expected results, and support their ideas with published references. Students pick two of three questions to answer. The exam is in take-home format and students have one week to answer these questions. Answers are graded by two OCNS faculty with expertise in that area. Students must earn an average of 80 to pass and move on to the Oral Exam.
2. The Oral General Exam consists of a 2-3 hour in-house examination and is scheduled approximately 3-4 weeks after the Written Exam has ended. Five OCNS faculty (excluding the student's Mentor) comprise the examining committee. At the beginning of the oral exam, the student will present their research plan. Faculty will then question the student on topics related to their research plan, may ask questions related to the written exam, and will question the student on various topics related to the four main areas of Neuroscience listed above.

Students must pass the written and oral portions of the General Exam to qualify as a Doctoral (Ph.D.) candidate in Neuroscience.

2018 General Exam Timeline:



After passing the General Exam, OCNS students are expected to assemble their Doctoral Advisory Committee, write an NIH F31-style proposal, and have their first committee meeting by the end of the Fall semester of their third year. The Doctoral Advisory Committee consists of the student's Mentor, three OCNS faculty, and one outside faculty member.