From: Len Richardson

To: Core Course Faculty writing Comprehensive Exams Shown Below

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| Exam & Professor | **Date and Time** | **Room** | **# Reg** | **Exam Ready?** |
| **Algebra –-- Robert Perlis** | |  | | --- | | Tues., January 6, 1 PM–4:00 PM | | 285 Lockett |  |  |
| Analysis –-- Len Richardson | Wed., January 6, 1 PM–4:00 PM | 285 Lockett |  |  |
| **Topology--- Neal Stoltzfus** | Fri., January 6, 1 PM–4:00 PM | 285 Lockett |  |  |

Each semester the Graduate Committee asks the most recent teachers of the three Common Core courses to write and grade the Comprehensive Examination. As a convenience you can download a standardized LaTeX format for the tests here:

[http://www.math.lsu.edu/grad/Core-1 Exam format.tex](http://www.math.lsu.edu/grad/Core-1%20Exam%20format.tex)

**These three Common Core Exams will be 3 hours each.** The three Core-I tests serve as the Final Exam for a Masters Degree, and as the PhD Qualifying Exam with a higher passing score required.

*We can expect that there will be demand for all 3 Core tests. I am asking students to sign up for the tests by May 10*.I will send you updated registration numbers for the Core Tests later.

This semester the Graduate Committee is requesting that you serve as the examiners for the next ComprehensiveExam. There is a test schedule posted on-line at <http://www.math.lsu.edu/gradfiles/CompSign_form.pdf>

*Your Exam should be typed and proof-read before the current**semester ends. Please send me a TeX or a LaTeX file together with a DVI file.*

**If you cannot write and grade the indicated test this term, please let me know as soon as possible!**

Also, it is very important that the examinations follow the guidelines in the description at <https://www.math.lsu.edu/grad/gradexams>, which is also on-line. You can download the syllabi and test banks in case you wish to use or adapt problems directly from the test bank. At the same site, you can download pdf files for the recent sets of Comprehensive Exams. (There may be a need to update the Core-1 syllabi after this fall term.)

**Please give me a LaTeX or TeX file for your exam by the end of the current semester, so the exams can be made ready for administration in time.**

**Guidelines for Writing the Exam**

The Graduate Committee asks you to keep in mind the following guidelines in writing the Exam.

1. Fairness to our students demands that the actual content of the Comprehensive Exam and the syllabi must be mutually consistent. It is *strongly recommended that you ask the most recent previous teacher of your course for feedback about your exam.* This will help to promote continuity, as well as fairness to students who need to repeat an exam for a course which was taught by the previous teacher of the course.
2. The duration of each **Core test** will **3 hours**. Each specifically required problem will come from the test bank, and a total of at least 1/2 to 2/3 of the problems on each test will come from the bank. There will normally be approximately 7 or 8 problems offered, and students will typically need to turn in 5 or 6 of these.
3. The Comprehensive Exam serves as a *Final Exam for a terminal MS degree,* and as the *PhD Qualifying Exam.* It is *not intended to be a prize examination*. You will be asked to judge the papers to determine whether or not each student has passed your test as part of the Final Exam for the MS, and as to whether or not each student has passed your test at the PhD-Qualifying level. The long experience of numerous members of the Department’s faculty shows that a **short, simple examination** is the **most useful** kind of test to use for distinguishing those students who are suitable for doctoral study from those who should stop with the MS. So *please write the Exam in such a way as to facilitate making these important judgments*. It has been observed that some good students are needlessly frightened away from a branch of mathematics because its corresponding Comprehensive tests are longer and more challenging than those of the other core branches of mathematics. Our purpose here is not to frighten students off, but to guide them well towards goals for which they are suited. *The informal understanding of the Department is that the Core Tests will bear a reasonably close resemblance to the range of questions in the Test Bank.* You will be asked also whether the student has passed your test at a sufficient level to qualify for the (honorary) designation of *distinguished PhD pass*.

Thank you for all the work you do in teaching and evaluating the progress of our graduate students.