

College of Health and Human Services
Department of Child and Family Studies

Guidelines for the Comprehensive Examination for the Degree of Master of Arts

Purpose

The purpose of the comprehensive exam is twofold: first, it is designed to help students analyze and synthesize information that they have acquired over the period of their graduate study through course work and through field experience. Second, the examination will provide a measure of the student's preparedness as a professional in the field of Child and Family Studies.

Eligibility

1. Students will normally take the comprehensive exam in the quarter in which they complete their coursework or in a later quarter. If the coursework completion is in progress, the student must receive approval from a graduate advisor. The advisor will verify that the student is enrolled in the remaining courses.
2. The student must complete any of the incomplete work from previous quarters prior to taking the exam.
3. The student must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the graduate program.

Student Preparation

1. With the help of their graduate advisor, students will confirm their eligibility for the comprehensive exam.
2. The student will attend an orientation workshop about the comprehensive exam. This workshop will be conducted in Fall, Winter and Spring quarter by the Chair of the department or their designee.
3. Students are free to meet with individual faculty members who instructed in the graduate program.
4. Students will be provided with the names of other students who plan to take the exam as a means of facilitating the formation of study groups.

Development of the Examination

The comprehensive exam consists of five questions. The questions are based on the content covered in the core coursework (CHDV 500, CHDV 506, CHDV 507, CHDV 508A, CHDV 508B, and CHDV 509).

The questions are designed to test the student's ability to integrate and utilize theoretical and empirical knowledge pertinent to the contexts specified in the questions. The questions involve the following:

- a. Knowledge of basic concepts and empirically based information in child development.
- b. Development and application of research designs and analytical procedures in child development.
- c. Recent research and implications for future child outcome.
- d. Influential theories and their implication for practice.
- e. Application and evaluation of information.
- f. The structuring and implementation of programs and projects.

Administration of the Exam

1. The comprehensive exam will be administered in the seventh week of the Fall, Winter and Spring Quarters.
2. The time for the examination will not exceed 1 ½ hours per question. The examination is administered over 2 days, with three questions on day one and two on day two.
3. A student must pass all questions to be considered as having passed the comprehensive exam. Students may retake the exam in the event of not passing. Students must retake only those questions which they did not pass. The questions are not the same as the previously administered. The exam may be repeated two times for a total of three attempts. Inability to pass the comprehensive exam in three attempts will result in the termination of the student from the program.
4. Students are not identified by name but by a special number so that reviewers are blind to the identity of the student.

Evaluation

1. Student responses will be read by two faculty for a “pass” “no pass” evaluation. If there is disagreement in the evaluation by the two faculty members, the response will be evaluated by a third faculty member.
2. Responses will be evaluated along the following criteria:
 - a. Relevance – the extent to which the response reflects a grasp of the intent of the question.
 - b. Organization – the extent to which the response indicated the ability to present material in a logical sequence.
 - c. Analysis and Synthesis – the extent to which the response reflects an understanding of discrete issues and the ability to synthesize theory and empirical evidence.
 - d. Knowledge – the extent to which the response reflects conceptual accuracy and a mastery of the content.
 - e. Completeness – the degree to which all the aspects of the questions are addressed.
 - f. Writing style – the extent to which the writing is clear, concise, uses appropriate terminology and reflective of professional training.
3. Students will be notified of the results by the Chair, or their advisor within 3 to 4 weeks or by the date grades are due for that quarter.
4. Students who receive a “rewrite” evaluation on an answer should meet with their graduate advisor to discuss their performance. The graduate advisor will summarize the main issues related to the inadequate response, and suggest ways to strengthen performance in subsequent attempts.