

Master's Level Comprehensive Exam Information

The Comprehensive Examinations for the graduate degree programs are designed to provide an opportunity for graduate students to synthesize and apply their knowledge of specific content, educational concepts, and practices in a variety of situations in P-12 schools and other settings. The students are expected to demonstrate a thorough understanding of content, major educational concepts, theories, and research findings. Students are expected to have in-depth knowledge of the area of certification and/or their major areas of study (i.e., the exam for a person in the M.Ed. or MAT Biology program should expect questions from the biology field, or M.Ed. Student Affairs students should expect questions from the Student Affairs field). The specific type of examination/format is determined by each individual program/department. Contact the respective department chair/designated contact for general information. Study Guides are not provided.

What makes a good comprehensive exam question answer?

A comprehensive exam requires a comprehensive answer. A simple five- to seven-paragraph answer may not be sufficient. We don't weigh your answers (it's entirely possible to write several paragraphs of vague, incoherent faldernal); however, one cannot reasonably discuss an issue in depth in only a few paragraphs. Remember, the key word is "comprehensive." Graduate students are expected not only to evidence command of the facts, but also the ability to synthesize ideas and concepts from those facts. A good comprehensive answer explains the facts, discusses the interrelationship between and among various events, ideas, persons, etc., and explains why the outcomes of those interactions are significant. We're seeking the truth, not just facts. Not uncommonly, students will use information from multiple courses to answer a comprehensive exam question for a particular course/subject. You have to think both specifically and broadly – specific facts and broad implications. To prepare for the comprehensive exams, students are urged to spend several weeks studying notes, corrected papers, discussions, and course objectives/standards.

SAMPLES of questions which have been used in the past are below. Students should not assume that these questions, or even these topics, will be included on any specific examination. These questions are provided as a way to illustrate the nature of the questions that might be a part of your examination. On your actual examination, be sure to read all of the possible questions before making your selection of which questions to answer. Also, be sure to answer all parts of the questions, as given. Omission of parts of questions constitute failure to answer the question. Students should consider organization, mechanics of writing, spelling, and vocabulary usage, as well as sentence structure when writing an essay answer.

Examples of Comprehensive Exam Questions:

1. Describe current social conditions in American society that are also issues in our public schools. Justify the need for reform in these areas and describe how you would bring about this reform.
2. Behaviorism has been a dominant force in American psychology during the 20th

century. Identify at least three prominent advocates of behaviorism and describe five major concepts of this stream of psychology. Discuss the application of these concepts in teaching and changing behavior.

3. John Belton in *American Cinema/American Culture* contends that film represents “the temper of the age.” What does he mean by this statement? Why is this concept important for film historians? Pick either westerns, musicals, or science fiction movies to explain how that genre has reflected “the temper of the age” (make sure to define “genre” and explain what elements make film a particular genre).”

Examples of Comprehensive Exam Multiple Choice Questions:

1. All of the following are important principles for selecting a diagnosis except:

- A) Recent history is more important than remote history
- B) Be aware of residual symptoms and crisis features
- C) Be careful to only consider information that the client provides
- D) Attempt to obtain collateral information

2. According to IDEA, a special education evaluation must be performed within _

- a. Five days of receiving permission from parents
- b. Enrollment in kindergarten through second grade
- c. One year of the initial request
- d. no time limit

Exam Format

*Multiple-choice exam

**Essay exam

MSACE Counseling/Psychology Option **

- Contact: Dr. James Gilbert for exam details (jgilbert@uwa.edu).

MS EXP General (Thesis option OR comprehensive exam option) **

- Contact: Dr. Mark Davis for exam details (mdavis@uwa.edu)

MS EXP Clinical Option (Thesis option OR comprehensive exam option) **

- Contact: Dr. James Gilbert for exam details (jgilbert@uwa.edu)

MS EXP Health & Sports Psychology Option (Thesis option OR comprehensive exam option) **

- Contact: Dr. Mark Davis for exam details (mdavis@uwa.edu)

MS Family Counseling **

- Contact: Dr. James Gilbert for exam details (jgilbert@uwa.edu)

MS Clinical Mental Health Counseling *

- Contact: Dr. Brittany Hoover bhoover@uwa.edu

MS Sport Management **

- Contact: Dr. LaJuan Hutchinson lhutchinson@uwa.edu

MSACE General Studies **

- Contact: Dr. B.J. Kimbrough bkimbrough@uwa.edu

MAT, M.Ed. & MS -Physical Education **

- Contact: Dr. R.T. Floyd rtf@uwa.edu

MAT, M.Ed. & MS- Biological Sciences (Conservation Biology/Biology/General Science) **

- Contact: Dr. Roger Campbell rcampbell@uwa.edu

MAT & M.Ed- Social Sciences/History **

- Contact: Dr. Ashley Dumas adumas@uwa.edu

MAT & M.Ed -Mathematics **

- Contact: Dr. Thomas Ratkovich tratkovich@uwa.edu

MAT & M.Ed - English Language Arts **

- Contact: Dr. Kendrick Prewitt kprewitt@uwa.edu

Education

Contact: Dr. Shelley Melchior smelchior@uwa.edu

M.Ed - Early Childhood Education *

M.Ed - Elementary/Early Childhood Education *

M.Ed - Special Education *

M.Ed - Student Affairs *

- Contact: Dr. Celeste Wheat cwheat@uwa.edu