

Guide to Preparation for Master's Comprehensive Examinations

The culminating experience for the M.S. Community Mental Health Counseling and M.Ed. School Counseling master's degree programs is a final comprehensive examination. Students are required to take comprehensive exams during their final fall or spring semester enrollment in internship. Comprehensive exams are not offered in the summer; students are encouraged to plan accordingly. The application to complete comprehensive exams must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator by February 15th for the spring semester and September 15th for the fall semester you intend to complete the exam.

The Comprehensive Examination involves preparation of a final portfolio and an oral exam with members of your advisory committee. The specific date and time of your oral examination will be assigned after you have submitted your comprehensive examination application. Portfolios are due to your committee chair two weeks prior to your scheduled oral exam.

Required Portfolio Items

The following items must be included in your portfolio:

- a) A 3-4 page narrative that describes your growth as a professional counselor during your graduate studies and plans for your future career as a professional counselor;
- b) A 2-3 page discussion of your current multicultural and diversity competence, including citation of at least four critical learning incidents occurring during the time of your graduate studies that directly contributed to enhancing your multicultural knowledge, awareness, and skills;
- c) Two video or DVD recorded counseling sessions with the same client from your internship. The sessions chosen should be a "pre-post" snapshot of your work with the client, demonstrating a progression of client change and development of a strong therapeutic alliance. Please note that videos/DVDs must have excellent sound quality. Inaudible videos/DVDs will not be accepted. DVD recordings are the preferred method of submission;
- d) A one-page theoretical conceptualization of the client from the above videos or DVDs. Please be sure to mask identifying client information. Include the following items in your conceptualization:
 1. Background information about client
 2. Presenting issues
 3. Previous interventions, counseling, etc... that client has received
 4. Intervention plan (goals)
 5. Theory utilized

6. Techniques/interventions that are theory appropriate used in this session
 7. Proposed modification to the intervention plan (if needed)
 8. Areas of counselor strengths
 9. Areas of counselor concerns
- e) Evidence of membership in appropriate national, state, and regional counseling organizations including the American Counseling Association, the American School Counselor Association, American Mental Health Counselor Association, and the National Association of Alcohol & Drug Abuse Counselors. At a minimum, students should be a member of one national counseling organization and one state or regional organization;
 - f) Samples of materials developed for use in individual and/or small group counseling and guidance; and,
 - g) A current resume or curriculum vita.

Additional Portfolio Items

In addition to the above required portfolio items, students are encouraged to be creative and submit other evidence of their professional development as a counselor. Samples of class and field experience work, including copies of professional papers, or other projects demonstrating your counseling knowledge and skills may be included.

Oral Examination Procedures

Oral examinations will last approximately 30 minutes. Members of the student's advisory committee will participate in the oral examination. The student's committee chair will facilitate and lead the examination meeting. During the oral examination, students may be asked questions related to their professional portfolio as well as questions related to the CACREP core training areas, counseling foundations and practice, and questions regarding their counseling specialty area. Students may also be asked questions related to counseling theories, techniques, and conceptualization. At the conclusion of the examination, students will be asked to leave the meeting room while the advisory committee discusses the results and makes its recommendations. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisory committee chair for further information about the oral examination process.