

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination evaluates student's ability to integrate knowledge of counseling or marriage and family therapy, display critical and independent thinking and research skills, and demonstrate mastery of the field (teaching or supervision). The results of the examination provide evidence of independent thinking, appropriate organization, writing competency, critical analysis, and accuracy of documentation. The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to encourage students who are nearing graduation to engage in a systematic review of their coursework. The exam also provides faculty with one form of evidence to make determinations regarding the student's readiness for graduation.

The comprehensive exam will be in two parts: written and oral. Only those students in the last semester of their coursework will be allowed to attempt the comprehensive exam. The written portion of the exam will be composed of four questions and will be completed in two three-hour segments of time (one hour and thirty minutes per question). The first testing period will include a Research/Statistics question and a Supervision Models or Teaching Strategies question, depending on the student's chosen cognate area. The second testing period will include a Theories question (comparing or contrasting various therapeutic models) and a Counseling or Marriage & Family Practices question (counseling case scenario) based on the Psychological Testing and Psychopharmacological Issues courses for the counseling cognate or the Preventative Approaches and Affective Therapy courses for the marriage and family cognate. All questions will potentially cover some aspects from the Ethics course and the Integration course. Courses in process during the summer semester in which the comprehensive exam is offered will not be covered on the examination. The comprehensive exam will be offered every summer semester and on a case by case basis during the fall or spring semesters. The oral exam will generally follow within two weeks of the written examination and will provide the student an opportunity to explain, defend and elaborate on his/her written answers in response to a committee of faculty members from the doctoral program.

Three possible grades may be assigned to the written and oral examination: pass with distinction, pass, or fail. Students who do not successfully complete the comprehensive exam will have a remediation plan developed and enacted before scheduling a second attempt. In some cases the retake may include all four questions; in other cases the retake may be limited to select questions. If the second attempt is failed, the student will be dismissed from the program.