

Comprehensive Examinations

Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Leadership (CIL)

Master's degree Comprehensive Examinations are designed to assess global understandings of those students completing Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction programs (various cognates) and the Master of Teaching program.

The computer-based examinations are administered near the mid-point of each quarter and a specified passing score is required in order to qualify for graduation. Students are required to register for the exam by specified deadlines in the College of Education Graduate Studies Office as well as with the Registrar's Office during registration of the quarter in which they plan to graduate.

The examinations are of essay-response format, are to be completed within a three-hour time frame, and require examinees to answer a total of five questions. In the Master of Science program examinees are required to respond to three-out-of-five *core* course questions and two-out-of-three *cognate* questions based on each student's particular plan of study. In the Master of Arts in Teaching program examinees are required to respond to five-out-of-eight questions. In both programs students may also be required to attend an oral exam, if needed, and recommended by the Department Head.

Students are encouraged to begin their preparation and review for the exam at the start of the quarter in which the exam is taken. Suggestions for review include:

- (a) reviewing notes and other materials covered in each course in;
- (b) re-reading passages of texts emphasized in class or those passages highlighted
- (c) reviewing important theories, principles and concepts as well as well-known education and related areas theorists, researchers, and writers.

Experience has shown that students "taking the exam process lightly" and/or "not beginning their preparation until near the exam date" tend to score poorly. Students are cautioned to carefully read all examination questions and to be certain to answer the questions exactly as posed. Not directly addressing the specific question will cause the student to receive no score for the question attempt. In addition, grammar, citations, and content coverage are considered in the scoring process for each question. For example, brief answers, poorly written, with no citations will receive a very low, if any, score. Although CIL faculty will not discuss specific Comprehensive Exam question(s), students may contact them for preparation advice. Additional questions about the Comprehensive Exam process may be directed to the Curriculum, Instruction, and Leadership office at 318-257-4609 or the Graduate Studies Office at 318-257-3229.

NOTE: The rubric currently used to grade the examinations questions is provided below. The rubric is followed by three sample comprehensive examination questions which are no longer used.

M.S. and M.A.T. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION SCORING RUBRIC

Student Number: _____ Course: _____

Evaluation Criteria	Score
4 = Excellence in all areas. Information is accurate. Citations are relevant. Knowledge base of degree program is demonstrated. Strong thesis is supported by illustration, detail, explanation. Response is rhetorically fluent and grammatically correct.	
3 = Good in all areas. Information is accurate in the main. Citations are relevant. Thesis is supported with some illustration, detail, explanation. Response is grammatically correct.	
2 = Adequate in the main. Information has few lapses. Citations are minor. Knowledge base is acceptable. Thesis is supported minimally with few grammatical errors.	
1 = Inadequate in most areas. Information is inaccurate. Citations are lacking/not relevant. There is a shallow knowledge base. Garbled thesis with weak support. Response is rhetorically immature and grammatically weak.	

NOTE: The following sample examination questions are for illustration purposes only and are no longer used in the Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Leadership comprehensive examinations.

SAMPLE QUESTION #1

An effective teacher adapts instruction to the needs and abilities of individual learners. This requires not only knowledge of content and pedagogy, but also knowledge of characteristics of the learner. With that premise in mind, comparatively discuss each of the following sets of concepts:

- a. Field-dependent and field-independent learners
- b. State anxiety and trait anxiety
- c. Environmental and hereditarian positions concerning general intelligence

SAMPLE QUESTION #2

Communication concerns are often major impediments to curriculum improvement. Discuss this issue, including common barriers to effective communication, no verbal language, bad habits of listening, Rogerian paraphrase, and other communicative components related to curriculum.

SAMPLE QUESTION #3

Louisiana operates under four types of law – two of which come from Civil Law Code tradition. Discuss the emergence of Civil Law, tracing its development through history and into the modern State of Louisiana Revised Statutes.