

MSPSE Comprehensive Exam Preparation Guide

Troy University

7/28/2009

POLICY

University Policy

Students admitted to candidacy in a graduate program requiring a comprehensive examination must pass the required comprehensive examination, written and/or oral, covering the work taken in the major field. All students must register in advance of comprehensive examinations in their academic departments. Students should consult with their advisors regarding procedures for scheduling and taking comprehensive examinations. This examination is usually taken during the last semester/term prior to graduation with actual exam dates coordinated with the student's advisor.

The passing of the comprehensive exams is not to be considered a waiver of any other requirement for any program. Students who have unsuccessfully attempted the comprehensive exam may not change their program of study.

Should students fail the comprehensive exam, they must successfully retake the exam within one year of the date originally taken.

College of Education Policy

1. Registration and scheduled dates for comprehensive examinations are determined by academic departments on each campus. Dates should be posted in advance and sent to the Dean of the College of Education.
2. Grades, scales, ratings, percentiles, rubrics, etc. for scoring the comprehensive examination are specific to the program and follow the same procedure for each campus. Passing scores (cut off) are determined by disciplinary program faculty and are the equivalent scores for campus.
3. Students may retake the exam three times within one academic year. This applies to all programs. For those students failing the comprehensive examination, a remedial plan will be developed with consultation from the academic advisor.
4. The administration of the comprehensive examination should include an approved university proctor.
5. Students must take the comprehensive examination at the home campus where 50% of the program has been completed.
6. Student names should not be on essay exams graded by faculty.
7. Reporting results to students is the responsibility of each academic department. Department Chairs report summary data to Associate Deans for accreditation and institutional effectiveness purposes.

MSPSE Comprehensive Exam Preparation Guide

Troy University

7/28/2009

MSPSE GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Each student usually completes a Comprehensive Examination during the session in which s/he plans to graduate. The exam is designed to aid the student in synthesizing what s/he has learned. Specific knowledge expectations will come from the required courses in the major.
2. The date and time for the comprehensive exam will be announced in the semester schedule or through classroom announcements. Complete information about the test may be obtained from the COE office.
3. Students **must register** in the COE office or other program designated sites to take the exam **one term ahead**. Deadline for registering is announced in the semester schedule and posted.
4. It normally takes 10 days to two weeks for evaluation of the exam. Each exam is read anonymously by the faculty. Results will be sent in written form to each student.
5. In the event that a student does not pass the written examination, his/her advisor and other members of the faculty will make recommendations for subsequent examinations or course work. If all parts are failed, the student may not retest until the next scheduled exam date. Students are permitted two subsequent opportunities to retest.
6. Areas tested are as follows:
 - PSE 6660 Trends and Issues in Adult Education
 - PSE 6670 Psychological Foundations of the Adult Learner
 - PSE 6680 Curriculum Development in Adult Education
 - PSE 6691 Research Methodology
 - The Student's Academic Specialty

MSPSE EXAMINATION FORMAT

1. You will be asked to complete **several** essay questions. You could have as many as five single questions **OR** you could be asked to choose questions from sets of essay questions.
2. Candidates will have between 4 and 6 hours to complete the exam, depending on the specific nature of the exam questions. Ask your advisor how much time you are allotted. It is up to the candidate to allocate the time spent on each question. Questions require the synthesis of information from a variety of sources (i.e., personal experiences and knowledge obtained from your courses).

MSPSE Comprehensive Exam Preparation Guide

Troy University

7/28/2009

3. Candidates should schedule time to **meet with their advisor** to discuss the exams and determine exactly which classes to prepare for and how to prepare.

MSPSE EXAM DAY FORMAT

1. It is expected of you to arrive at the testing site at least 20 minutes before the exam begins. The proctor(s) will be reviewing important examination guidelines during that time.
2. There are no scheduled breaks during the examination session.
3. The candidate may take a bathroom break when it is necessary. When leaving the room for a break, the student must leave all testing materials including personal items (i.e., purses, bags, etc.) in the testing area. Dictionaries and calculators are permitted. However, style manuals, electronic devices, thesauruses, and other study materials are NOT permitted in the testing area.
4. **Cell phones** are NOT permitted in the testing area.
5. **Food and drink** are allowed in the testing area.

EXAMINATION EXPECTATIONS

1. Responses should be written legibly.
2. Responses should be grammatically correct and contain no punctuation or spelling errors.
3. Responses should be logically organized.
4. Factual knowledge should be correct.
5. Responses should answer the question directly.
6. Answers are expected to be inclusive and detailed. If possible, cite sources and give examples.

UNSUCCESSFUL EXAM RESPONSES

1. Exams rated “no pass” will be reviewed by at least two instructors.
2. In the event of a “no pass,” students will consult with his/her advisor regarding remediation.
3. The nature of remediation is contingent on the student’s exam responses. In some cases, a simple oral follow-up might be required. In other cases, students may be given time to review areas highlighted by his/her advisor and/or instructor and a

MSPSE Comprehensive Exam Preparation Guide

Troy University

7/28/2009

retake is scheduled. Finally, in some cases, students may be directed toward additional coursework to prepare for exam retake.

INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO THE eCampus

The following information is a slight variation from what is stated previously. eCampus does things a little differently. Otherwise, generally everything else is the same.

It takes 4-6 weeks to get the final results.

Remediation for a “no pass” is done with your advisor.

A retake of a comp exam can be done the next term or the student can wait until a later term but must successfully pass the comp exam within one year of the first attempt.

MSPSE Comprehensive Exam Preparation Guide

Troy University

7/28/2009

SPECIFIC COURSE GUIDANCE

The following information is provided to aid in discussing specific, unique requirements that you and your advisor (or respective instructor) might want to consider in preparing for your comprehensive exams. **DO NOT** use this as a study aid unless you have addressed these items with your advisor and/or instructor. Consult the appropriate advisor/faculty for **concentration unique requirements**.

PSE 6660 Trends and Issues in Adult Education

- Evaluate the impact of identified trends on educational policy, procedure, and outcomes.
- Analyze pros and cons of identified trends.
- Synthesize a position in regard to the trend, and defend it in terms of educational outcomes.
- Analyze relationships concerning identified trends and social, economic, political, cultural, and philosophical factors affecting adult schooling.
- Propose procedures for initiating and/or directing change relative to identified trends.
- Comprehend the historical development of American adult education from the colonial beginnings to the present.
- Evaluate the implications of current research for the classroom setting.

PSE 6670 Psychological Foundations of the Adult Learner

- Synthesize a personal understanding of the adult learner.
 - Identify essential principles associated with adult learning.
 - Explain a variety of psychological concepts related to adult learners.
 - Create a personal definition of the adult learner based on the literature, class discussion, and personal observations.
- Apply your personal understanding of the adult learner to psychological thought and contextual factors influencing adult learning.
 - Explain ideas in the field of psychology that assist in understanding the adult learner.
 - Relate the impact of individual differences, situational differences, and learning purposes on adult learning.
 - Apply knowledge of social and cultural influences of adult learners.

PSE 6680 Curriculum Development

- Comprehend the concept of “curriculum.”
- Development of the rationale for a new curriculum
- Development of aim, goal, and objective statements for a given curriculum
- Development of valid and reliable curriculum assessment instruments.

MSPSE Comprehensive Exam Preparation Guide

Troy University

7/28/2009

- Development of learning experiences to achieve the stated curriculum goals and objectives.
- Evaluation of curricula for adherence to recognized curriculum development procedures.
- Design of instructional plans
- Development of transfer-of-learning plans
- Preparation of budgeting and marketing plans

PSE 6691 Research Methodology

- Describe in general terms the steps to perform in any research study .i.e., the research process.
- Describe a quantitative research study, describing what characteristics make it a quantitative study. Discuss the question you intend to study, how you will gather data, analyze it, and report findings.
- Describe a qualitative research study, describing what characteristics make it a qualitative study, and how the approach differs from a quantitative study. Discuss the question you intend to study, how you will gather data, analyze it, and report findings.
- Discuss the variables to be considered in a study, how the study sample is to be determined, ethical issues, how one deals with potential bias in a study, and how internal and external reliability and validity would be determined.
- Evaluate the strengths and threats of a quantitative research study and address issues relating to your ability to generalize results based on existing threats, how the study might be redesigned to overcome the identified threats, potential ethical problems with the study, and practical significance of the study's results.

