

Clinical Comprehensive Exams (revised 12/18/2023)

*****Please review the Graduate Student Handbook for additional details and information. This document is not intended to provide a comprehensive description of the comprehensive exam options and process for the Clinical Psychology Program.***

Comprehensive exams represent an important milestone in your graduate career. The Clinical Program has adopted a comps system that is intended to sample behaviors that reflect your professional development as a clinical scientist. To achieve this end, the comps system is modeled after the kinds of scholarly activities in which you, as a clinical scientist, will engage (manuscript submission, grant applications, job talks, etc.).

The comps system is based on the "manuscript submission model." That is, it is a written test followed by a written response to written critiques of the original answers. An important dimension to this system is the opportunity to get direct and detailed feedback from peer review (i.e., comps raters) as well as an opportunity to respond to this feedback to help clarify your response. This exchange process is an important aspect of scholarly activity that the comps system attempts to emulate.

Students are given a total of two opportunities to successfully pass a comps format. It is important to note that failing twice, regardless of comps format, may result in dismissal from the program. Students may retake comps in the same or a different comprehensive format (i.e., MAP or grant submission). Students are only permitted to switch formats between attempts.

Passing comps and advancing to doctoral candidacy is an important milestone in one's graduate education, and it also offers an opportunity for focused learning and additional preparation for one's professional career. We hope that our comps system helps achieve these goals.

General/Integrative Exam Option

1. Take home exam, with a 65-hour turn-around for two general/integrative questions that is offered twice per year. All students will be given the G/I questions at the same time (Friday at 4:00pm with a deadline of Monday at 9:00am) for that particular semester.
 - a. First Friday of October
 - b. The Friday of the start of Spring Break
2. One of the questions will assess issues in research methods. The other question will require that students integrate knowledge across at least two foundational areas in

week following the completion of the exam. All feedback and ratings will be distributed to G/I comps raters prior to sending feedback to students. This will be done to allow for discussion of potential issues/concerns with regard to feedback and/or ratings. As soon as the ratings are final for all students, each student will be notified whether they will need to revise one or more of their answers.

4. First Submission

9. The suggested reading list for the general/integrative questions can be considered the following:
 - a. Reading major journals such as Psychological Bulletin, Journal of Clinical and Consulting Psychology, Journal of Psychopathology and Clinical Science (formerly Journal of Abnormal Psychology),

2 = revise and resubmit (> 1.4 average of three raters)

6. The application is not expected to be ready for formal submission to a grant funding agency, but rather a solid draft to be used in evaluating student competencies consistent with the comprehensive exam process.

Grading Rubric for All Comprehensive Exam Options

	Score of 1 (Adequate Response with Minor to Moderate Weaknesses)	Score of 2 (Incomplete Response with Fundamental Flaws)
Content Completeness	The student adequately addresses all components of the question/MAP/grant (e.g., aims, hypotheses, justification, method).	The student addresses only a subset of all essential components of the question/MAP/grant, or significant portions are left unattended.
Depth of Analysis	The response/product demonstrates a good understanding of the subject matter, with relevant examples and clear, linear reasoning.	The response/product lacks depth and may resort to surface-level descriptions and justification for research. Critical analysis is missing, and the student may rely heavily on general statements without backing them up with relevant examples or clear reasoning.
Clarity	The response/product is well-structured and logically organized. Transitions between ideas are smooth.	The response/product may be disjointed or lack a logical flow.