California State University, School of Social Work

Master’s in Social Work Comprehensive Exam

Spring 2018

The Master’s of Social Work program requires students to satisfactorily complete a culminating activity: a thesis, a community-based project, or a comprehensive examination as a condition of graduation. The culminating activity serves as an integrative experience in graduate education.

This Comprehensive Oral Examination is structured as **an integrative** paper incorporating the student’s best work. The Comprehensive Oral Examination should reflect advanced practice knowledge, skills and values applied to a micro, mezzo, or macro level case or effort from the Concentration-Year practicum. Students should choose a case or effort with which they have worked extensively. Each student will write a **maximum 12-page paper**, not including references, which analyzes the case while integrating core social work content. Please make sure to use 12-point font and at least one-inch margins. Students should look at the case retrospectively, discussing not only what was actually done on the case, but what could have been done given what the student knows about the population, problem and intervention from course material, practice experience and the relevant literature.

Students should organize their paper according to the following:

1. **Introduction**
2. Identify the case, your level of involvement in the case, and whether it is a micro, mezzo, or macro level case.
3. Discuss the presenting problem and relevant client information.
4. Discuss how diversity affect his/her/their life, experience with the problem, relationship with the agency, relationship with you and your co-workers, and any other relevant issues related to diversity.
5. Discuss how issues of social justice can be seen in this case, and how the social work value of increasing social justice might have influenced your work in this case.
6. Discuss how social work values and ethics affected your work with this case.
7. **Literature Review**

Provide a basic overview of the research and/or conceptual literature related to this case. Specifically, describe how issues related to this presenting problem have been addressed in the literature. Provide a discussion of the literature that guides your understanding of the population and/or the problem, and potential interventions that could be or were used in this case. You should review and cite a minimum of three peer-reviewed articles, at least one of which should be an empirical research study.

1. **Body of the Paper**
2. **Policy** – Discuss how at least one federal, state, county, local or agency policy has an impact on this case. You can discuss how it shaped the work you did, how it shapes the lives of the client, how it affects the work that the agency does, etc.
3. **Human Behavior and the Social Environment** – Discuss a theoretical framework that did or could have guided your work on this case. Discuss how the theory offers insight about the client, the population group, the problem and/or the intervention you chose. Examples of possible theories include: developmental, organizational, attachment, trauma, stress and coping, ecological systems, power, and empowerment. Make sure to clearly tie the theory to your case.
4. **Practice** – Describe the intervention, why it was chosen, what you did, how it worked, why it was appropriate for this client, and what intervention might have proven more effective, based on what you learned and discussed in the literature review and from your theoretical framework.
5. **Outcome Evaluation**
6. How did you, or could you have, evaluated the intervention to determine if it was successful. This should include a discussion of what “success” might mean in this case.
7. Discuss what you learned from this case that might shape the work you do in the future, what you still need to know to work with this client population, problem and/or intervention, and how you plan to continue to learn this material in the future.

* The Comprehensive Examination must be completed during the student’s last academic term with a submission date of no later than **Friday,** **February 2, 2018, 5:00 p.m.** The exam will be turned in online, using a Turnitin link that will be set up for this purpose. Students will receive instructions for accessing the link in late January.
* The actual writing of the Comprehensive Examination is solely the graduate student’s responsibility.
* The Comprehensive Examination cannot be more than **twelve** pages of narrative text, excluding references. **Any text beyond twelve pages will not be considered in the evaluation of the exam, this includes appendices, charts, and downloaded documents.**

The Comprehensive Examination will be read and evaluated by two faculty members who serve on the Comprehensive Exam Committee. Each section will receive a score of “pass” or “needs revision.” All sections must be passed to pass the exam. In the case of disagreement on the part of the two faculty readers, a third faculty member will review the Comprehensive Examination to cast the deciding vote. The Comprehensive Examination will be graded on the breadth, depth, and application of the core content areas to the case.

Comprehensive Examinations where any sections are evaluated as needing revision will be returned to the student to rewrite those sections. Students then will have to rewrite those sections and submit to Comprehensive Committee Chair, Dr. Seema Sehrawat. **Evaluators will provide written comments and instructions for revisions and/or rewriting**. The Office of Graduate Studies’ rules allow students to submit only one revised Comprehensive Examination.

**\*Please note: Faculty, including writing faculty, will not read, correct, or critique Comprehensive Examinations prior to submission; however, faculty including field instructors may discuss ideas and concepts with student authors.**