California State University, School of Social Work

Master’s in Social Work Oral 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** poster 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 create a poster (42 inches X 32 inches, font – up to 42 point font (and no smaller than 40pt.) for text boxes and 48 point font for headings),** which analyzes the case while integrating core social work content. 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 poster according to the template provided. **Remember, it is a poster and not a paper.** You don't have to write complete sentences; bullet points are encouraged and avoid using connecting words (such as, specifically, furthermore, etc.). Briefly provide clear and concise information that can serve as a summary. **Remember** that you are required to make an **oral presentation** about this case/effort in front of a committee of three reviewers consisting of at least two Social Work Faculty and a group of your peers. Each student will be allowed 10 minutes to present his or her case and 5 minutes for Q & A. You are required to use APA citation format in your poster for in-text citations. Citations must be included under the Literature review section and you must have at least three in-text citations under that section. Citations are encouraged in other sections as well. You should bring three copies of your poster (A4 size) and three copies of your APA style reference page to the oral presentation.

**Poster Handout Printing Instructions:**

To print the poster handout, when you click the print button, click the button ‘✔ Scale to Fit’ and that will allow you to print this poster on a A4 sheet. You are also required to provide an APA reference list on the back of the handouts you will bring for the faculty at the time of oral presentation.

Use following instructions to prepare your poster and oral presentation:

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 affects his/her/their life, experience with the problem, and 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. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **Outcome Evaluation**
5. 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.
6. 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 Oral Comprehensive Examination must be completed during the student’s last academic term. You will be asked to submit your poster no later than **Friday,** **February 2, 2018, 5:00 p.m.** Students will be asked to present their oral comprehensive exam at Annual Social Work Symposium on Thursday, February 8th from 2:30 – 5:00.
* The actual creating of the poster and oral presentation of the Comprehensive Examination is solely the graduate student’s responsibility.
* The poster portion of the Comprehensive Examination cannot be more than **42 inches X 32 inches and the oral portion cannot be more than 10 minutes**.

This Oral Comprehensive Examination will be 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 section to cast the deciding vote. The Oral Comprehensive Examination will be graded on the breadth, depth, and application of the core content areas to the case.

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

**Confidentiality statement:**

*When preparing case material for your Comprehensive Exam, all identifying information must be deleted and disguised so as to maintain, with certainty the confidentiality of the client and/or agencies. However, students should not change the essential character of the case so that the analysis is affected.*

*The following are suggestions for disguising client information:*

*•Disguise ages of all individuals discussed, though keep within the same developmental stage or subphase.*

*•Disguise all names including names of counties, towns, areas, and clearly indicate in the paper that names have been changed.*

*•Give no exact dates including birth dates, referral dates, marriage dates, divorce dates, etc.*

*•Give no specific places including place of employment, birthplace, neighborhood, etc.*

*•Describe and disguise in general terms (e.g., client grew up on the west coast in a mid-size city, in a poor neighborhood).*

*•Disguise exact occupations, describe in a general way (e.g., works in the helping profession, works in a blue collar job, etc.).*

*•Disguise all numbers (e.g., exact years of education, exact years of marriage, etc.).*

*•Consider other aspects of the case that you can change without compromising the integrity of the case analysis. Could you change or not state the specific drug to which an individual is addicted? Could you change the exact nature of a physical problem?*

**\*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.**