

**PLAN B
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

The following procedures have been established by the Department of Special Education as guidelines for the plan B option - Comprehensive Examination.

Eligibility of Student:

- Master of Education students who have been admitted to candidacy and who have:
 1. Fulfilled all prerequisite requirements.
 2. Completed a minimum of 33 credit hours, and
 3. Obtained written approval from their advisor

Preparation for the Examination:

- Students will obtain the approval of their advisor to take the written comprehensive examination. The *Approval to Take Comprehensive Examinations* form must be signed by the advisor and submitted to the Department Graduate Chair by the specified date of the semester in which they wish to take the exam (usually the end of the second week of classes).
- Six (6) weeks prior to the examination date, the student will be provided, by their Advisor, with ten (10) questions that reflect content knowledge from the (a) core area courses and (b) specialization area courses.
- It is strongly recommended that the student develop outlines and practice writing complete answers within the time limits to each of the questions. A sample answer will be provided as a model of expected performance. The student also will receive guidelines describing how the comprehensive examination committee will evaluate the exam.
- The examination will consist of four (4) specialization questions and two (2) core content questions. The student will select 3 out of 4 specialization and 1 out of 2 core content questions to answer during the actual examination.

Areas	Study Questions	Exam Questions	Selected Questions
Core	4	2	1
Specialty Area	6	4	3
Total	10	6	4

Examination Guidelines:

- The schedule of "due dates" and the dates of the Comprehensive Examination will be posted in the Department of Special Education at the beginning of each semester. Exams are only scheduled during the regular academic year (Fall & Spring semesters).
- The examination will take place on a Saturday beginning promptly at 9:00 AM and ending at 1:00 PM. This allows students four (4) hours to complete the examination (approximately one hour per question).
- Computers with the Microsoft Word processing program will be available for both PC and Mac users. Students will be provided with a thumb drive that is labeled with their number. The drive will be collected at the end of the examination period:
 - a. It is recommended that the students "save" the answer to each question as a separate file (e.g. Q1, Q2, etc.) as they finish it thus insuring that their work is periodically saved.
 - b. A hard copy of student answers will be printed from the disk for distribution to the readers at the end of the examination period before the computer is shut down to ensure that the answer can be printed out and successfully has been saved to the thumb drive and not the hard drive of the computer; no editing or changes can be made after the designated examination period.
- A minimum of two faculty members will read and evaluate the student's comprehensive examination. One faculty member will be the student's advisor and the other(s) will be selected based on their expertise addressing the content of the questions selected by the student. Readers will independently evaluate the student's answers to each question based on a rubric that uses a 0-4 rating scale. See attached evaluation rubric.
- A "Pass" on all four (4) questions results in successful completion of the comprehensive examination. ("Pass" requires a minimum rating of "2" in *each* category for each question; see attached rubric).
- If a student receives a "Pass" on at least three questions but does not pass one (1) question, then the student will be allowed to take that question home to rewrite. The student will have one week to rewrite and return the answer to their advisor. The rewritten answer will be evaluated by the advisor in consultation with other faculty members whose expertise falls in the area being addressed. The rewritten answer will be held to a higher standard of expectation in the conceptual level, accuracy and thoroughness, and mechanics of writing than that for written comps.
- A "Pass" on the rewritten question results in successful completion of the comprehensive examination. ("Pass" requires a minimum rating of "2" in each category; see attached rubric).

- Exception to rewriting a comprehensive examination question: any student who receives a zero (0) rating on any question does not pass the comprehensive examination and may not complete a rewrite.

Scheduling a Retake or Second Administration of the Comprehensive Examination:

- If a student's first attempt at the comprehensive examination is not successful, the student is allowed to "retake" the examination one more time during another semester. A new set of questions will be provided. A retake does not have to be the following semester. Application to take a comprehensive examination commits the student to doing the examination. When a student has applied to take the comprehensive exam and then "backs out" and does not take the exam, it will be counted as an unsuccessful exam. The student is allowed one chance only to "retake" the exam.
- It is suggested that any student who is asked to retake the comprehensive examination receive guidance from his/her advisor for studying and preparing for the next exam.
- If results from a second administration of the comprehensive examinations proves to be unsatisfactory, the student will be asked to meet with his/her advisor to discuss an alternative Plan B project.