

Competencies (Start of Program 2017 or Prior)

Note: PhD students admitted during or before 2017 have the *option* of completing the "new" competency form described above, or they can utilize the "old" competency expectations effective at the time of their admission:

The PhD program also requires satisfactory completion of a set of competencies in research, teaching, and professional development. The minimum requirements for acquiring and demonstrating these competencies are identified below within each of these three areas. These competencies constitute a vital part of training and evaluation during the doctoral experience. Most students will have sufficient structured experiences within the doctoral program to enable them to complete these competencies. PhD students are responsible for planning and completing the competency requirements.

	Research	Teaching	Professional Development
Goals	Develop professional networks; share research and/or program results with peers.	Prepare, deliver, and evaluate a curriculum.	Develop professional networks; share research and/or program results with peers.
Procedures	A. Write and submit a grant proposal OR B. Write and submit a research manuscript for journal publication.	A. Teach 3-credit college level course (e.g., Department, Extension, other)	A. Membership and participation (presentation of papers or posters) in a professional organization (e.g., NCFR, SRA, AAMFT, NAEYC, GSA, APA) OR B. Develop, implement, and evaluate a needs-based program (e.g., workshops, public service, community-based prevention, mass media, or training), and disseminate findings (e.g., newspaper articles, presentations) to relevant constituents.

If a student has successfully completed the competencies, the Competency Form will be signed by the committee chair and supervisory committee members. Subsequently, the form must be submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC). If competencies have not been met, the student must complete the remaining requirements and reconvene the supervisory committee to evaluate whether the competencies have been met. Students who

do not complete competency requirements, will not be able to graduate (even if other defense forms are signed and completed)

Comprehensive Exam

The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to ensure that PhD graduates are capable of integrating perspectives on research methods, family relations, human development and/or marriage and family therapy. Successful completion of the comprehensive exam provides assurance that PhD graduates have acquired a level of understanding that enables them to generate integrative, intelligent, and creative research, and have acquired knowledge that qualifies them to teach courses in human development and family relations. We also expect that the comprehensive exam process (preparation, written responses, and oral performance) will provide optimal preparation for professional situations, such as conference presentations and employment interviews, where participants are required to think quickly and converse with a working knowledge of family relations, human development, and research methods.

The comprehensive exam, consisting of a written and an oral examination, is required of all PhD students. During the seven-hour written portion of the exam, students respond to a multi-part question that requires: 1) theoretical integration within the major emphasis, 2) a brief research prospectus that outlines a study from beginning to end (i.e., research question(s), testable hypotheses, a sample section, a measurement section, a research design section, and a proposed data analysis), and 3) a critique of the prospectus from one or more of the theoretical perspectives from the student's secondary emphasis.

While much of the material necessary for completion of the comprehensive exam is addressed in required and elective coursework within the program, we expect that doctoral students who are preparing for a comprehensive exam will find additional reliable resources from scholarly materials outside of curricular requirements. Students should seek out the original source, where possible.

The following study guide or menu of topics is provided

- [Integrated Exam](#)

The written portion of the comprehensive exam is offered twice per year (during the week before classes begin in the fall and spring semesters). The written portion of the exam occurs over two consecutive days (1st day 4 hours for Part 1, 2nd day 4 hours for Parts 2 & 3). All students in an exam cohort take the exam at a set time. Eight hours are allocated for the written exam (not to exceed 18 double spaced pages).

Eligibility to participate in the comprehensive exam requires completion of the following coursework:

- In Primary Area of Concentration, students choose 9 credits
- In Secondary Area of Concentration, students choose 6 credits
- In Research Methods, students need 12 credits of Research Methods courses
- Bolded courses are required to be completed prior to taking the exam

Human Development	Couples and Family Relations	Marriage and Family Therapy	Research Methods
7060	7070	7300	6031
6060	6070	7310	7032
7510	7210	7320	6600
7520	7220		7610
7530	7230		
7540	7910		

Doctoral students who have not met all of the prerequisite course requirements may petition the Comprehensive Examining Committee to request participation in a comprehensive examination. Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and usually involve relevant transfer credits from another university, department, or degree program that may substitute for the required coursework. To be given full consideration, the request for waiver, including a list of relevant course work, grades, and date of completion (signed by the student and their committee chair) must be submitted to the faculty graduate coordinator at least six weeks prior to the scheduled comprehensive examination. An approved request for waiver is confirmation of the student's intent to participate in the next scheduled comprehensive exam.

Doctoral students planning to take the comprehensive exam must notify the graduate program coordinator at least six weeks prior to the scheduled exam date. In order to demonstrate professionalism, any student wishing to cancel a scheduled exam must do so up to 48 hours prior to the exam date. Cancelling scheduled exams repeatedly may result in remediation. Non-attendance at any portion of a scheduled exam (Part 1, Part 2 and Oral) will result in failure, except in documented cases of [USU excused absence](#), jury duty, or military service.

Comprehensive Examining Committee

The Comprehensive Examining Committee will administer and evaluate both the written and oral portions of students' comprehensive exams. The Comprehensive Examining Committee will consist of the faculty graduate coordinator, and a faculty representative from 1) human development, 2) couple and family relations, and 3) research methods. The department head is included in the examination processes when possible. If a student has concentration in MFT, the MFT program director is also a member of the Comprehensive Examining Committee.

Students who desire/require accommodations for the written and/or oral portions of the comprehensive exam must consult with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) prior to the scheduled exam. The department will comply with the DRC's assessment and recommendations. If accommodations are not recommended by the DRC, no accommodations will be provided.

Students who fail the comprehensive exam twice will be dismissed from the program.

The Comprehensive Exam Process

The Written Exam

Questions for the comprehensive exam are written and graded by the Comprehensive Examining Committee. Students use the assigned computer lab (proctored) on the assigned examination date and time. Failure to come to any portion of the exam warrants a failure of this exam. If a student arrives late to the exam he or she does not receive extended time. Students can bring water, a pen, and blank paper, but no materials are needed for the exam. The department supplies a storage device (flash drive) for the exam. Students will have access to their Part 1 response on day 2 (via the flash drive), as this may facilitate writing the Part 2 and 3 responses, however they cannot edit their Part 1 response on day 2. If the written response passes (average score at or above 73%), an oral exam date will be set. Failed written exams are not eligible for an oral exam.

The Oral Exam

A short period of time (usually between two to six weeks) exists between the written portion of the comprehensive exam and the oral defense. Students are encouraged to use this time to prepare for the oral defense of their written response. For example, they may want to evaluate their written response(s) to find weaknesses, and then spend time consulting written resources to strengthen their understanding of those areas. Students may consult scholarly journal articles, books, internet resources, class notes, etc. as they prepare for their oral defense.

We expect that students will prepare for their oral examinations individually. They will not consult with others. **INCLUDING** peers in their exam cohort, as part of these preparations. One of the main purposes of the comprehensive exam is to ensure that doctoral students "have acquired a level of understanding." It would be contrary to this purpose if students prepared for the oral portion of the exam by consulting with their committee chair, faculty members, and other graduate students who have already completed the comprehensive exam.

Participating students may invite their committee chair to attend their oral exam, but committee chairs cannot vote regarding pass/fail following the oral exam. The Comprehensive Examining Committee will inform the student of their decision (Pass/Fail) during the oral exam and clarify procedures for repeating the written exam or remediation if necessary.

While participating in the oral exam, students are encouraged to bring a copy of the exam question and their written response (students are permitted to write notes in the margins of the written response that they bring to the oral exam). Any additional materials such as

books, peer-reviewed studies, former class PowerPoint slides, handouts, etc., will not be permitted during the oral examination.