

Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE)

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW

The comprehensive exam is an exit examination required of all Mental Health Master's degree students at the University of Redlands. The purpose of the exam is to assess the student's knowledge of counseling to ensure minimum competence in the field. The CPCE will also provide collective feedback that can be used by the program in developing/adapting curriculum.

BENEFITS OF USING THE CPCE

- Allows Master's program comprehensive exams to better meet psychometric standards.
- Gives programs an objective view of the knowledge level of their students.
- Allows programs to examine student functioning in various curricular areas.
- Promotes longitudinal self-study.
- Compares a program's results to national data.
- Stimulates student integration of knowledge learned in separate courses.
- Gives students comparative strength / weakness feedback.

Please note CPCE is NOT a licensure exam.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CPCE

The CPCE is researched, developed, and distributed by both the Research and Assessment Corporation for Counseling (RACC) and the Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE), two affiliate corporations of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). The item writing committee was selected from master's and doctoral level professionals. The committee compiled a comprehensive listing of texts used in counselor education programs. Each question was developed based on information found in the most commonly used textbooks.

CONTENT OF THE CPCE

The CPCE covers the eight Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) common-core areas as defined by their *Standards for Preparation*:

1. *Human growth and development* – studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels.
2. *Social and cultural foundations* – studies that provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society.

3. *Helping relationships* – studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes.
4. *Group work* – studies that provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, counseling theories, group counseling methods and skills, and other group work approaches.
5. *Career and lifestyle development* – studies that provide an understanding of career development and related life factors.
6. *Appraisal* – studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation.
7. *Research and program evaluation* – studies that provide an understanding of types of research methods, basic statistics, and ethical and legal considerations in research.
8. *Professional orientation and ethics* – studies that provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing.

These eight core areas serve as the primary theoretical basis for the examination. It is through these areas that the CPCE is associated with accepted professional standards.

FORMAT OF THE CPCE

The CPCE consists of 160 items with 20 items per CACREP area. Of the 20 items per section, 17 will be scored; the remaining three will be pretest items that are not identified to the student. The purpose of imbedded pre-testing is to generate actual score performance data on items. This allows CCE to select items for future test construction that have the most desirable psychometric attributes. Scores for each section and a total score will be reported for each student. The CCE will provide statistics on the program's students as well as national data.

A demographic questionnaire will be included on the answer sheet for research purposes. Students are allowed four hours to complete the examination. After each examination, upon obtaining the results from the CPCE office, we will contact students by mail of their grade results.

FAILURE OF THE EXAM

It is recommended that students take the exam within two (2) weeks of completion of their course work. Students who fail the exam must take it again following semester in order to graduate. A subsequent failure will postpone graduation. Students who fail the exam three (3) times should consult with their advisor to discuss a remedial plan in order to graduate. The CPCE national norms are used to determine the minimum passing score. The minimum passing score varies each year and is based on one standard deviation below the national mean.

ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION FOR THE CPCE

In order to be eligible for the comprehensive examination, students must have completed all the core courses and be a student in good standing. Applications for the CPCE can be downloaded from the Moodle site for Clinical Mental Health School of Education students. Students must apply a minimum of one month prior to the administration date of the exam. Deadline information is also available on the application. Applications should be turned in to the Practicum Coordinator on or before the deadline specified.

STUDY GUIDES

Listed below are two resources representative of the study materials available that offer preparation materials. **The Department does not endorse any one set of preparation materials.**

1. Academic Review provides preparation materials for the NCE. The CPCE is drawn from the same type of questions. www.academicreview.com
2. Mastering the National Counselor Examination (NCE) and the counselor preparation comprehensive examination (CPCE) by Bradley T. Erford.
<http://www.amazon.com/Mastering-Counselor-Preparation-Comprehensive-Counseling/dp/0137017502>
The Study Guide for the National Counselor Examination and CPCE by Dr. Andrew Helwig. Available at <http://www.counselor-exam-prep.com/cpce-counselor-preparation-comprehensive-examination.html>

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1200 East Colton Ave P.O. Box 3080

Redlands, CA, 92373

Tel: (909) 793-2121

Fax: (909) 793-2029