COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

General Information

All students seeking a master’s degree in special education are required to successfully complete a written comprehensive examination. This examination consists of two parts that address both the general field of special education and the student's area of specialization (e.g., emotional/behavioral disorders, learning disabilities, mental retardation, early childhood special education, severe disabilities, and general curriculum). Specialization questions will be selected in keeping with the student's academic preparation and career professional pursuits. Accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities. Students will complete the exam using a computer at their sites.

Orientation and Preparation

Students will be required to attend a one hour orientation scheduled for six (6) weeks prior to the exam. Students will be given a study guide for the general content objective test (multiple choice/true false), and four (4) questions from the specialization area(s) to prepare for the written essay examination.

Administrative Procedures

The exam will consist of two sections. For Part One students will log-in to Blackboard at 8:30 am and complete 100 multiple choice general special education content questions. After a 20-minute break, Part Two will begin and specialization essay questions (2) will be given to the student at 10:50 am and returned at 12:50 p.m. Students will be allowed to refer to a reference list for citations. This list will be submitted with your comprehensive exam. See example APA reference sheet (salmon colored sheet) for specific directions regarding preparation of the references.

Part One:

The established passing score for the general content section is 80; a score lower than 80 will result in re-taking the exam.
Part Two:

Evaluation Procedures

Procedures for evaluating the two written comprehensive essay questions are as follows:

Content

1.1 Content is accurate, up-to-date, and reflects knowledge of the professional literature, including at least three (3) appropriate references.

1.2 Content is comprehensive and reflects knowledge of and treatment of various perspectives on the subject.

Subtotal: 8

Organization and Presentation

1.1 Content is organized offering introductory statement(s), well-integrated discussion, and a summary/conclusion.

1.2 Content is well written and reflects graduate-level quality (e.g., clear, concise, proper grammar, syntax, spelling and marks of punctuation).

Subtotal: 2

Per Question Total: 10

Comprehensive Exams will be scored by at least two (2) faculty members; the average of these evaluations will determine if the student passes each of the written comprehensive questions. A minimum of 16 of 20 points must be earned on each question of the examination. In the event that a student earns 15 or fewer points on one question or does not attain a score of 80 on Part One, she/he should contact the graduate program director to arrange to re-take the exam from the area failed. If a student fails any two parts or more of the exam, then she/he may elect to repeat the exam process in accordance with the department schedule for comprehensive examinations.

Following the initial administration, a student is limited to one (1) reexamination. If a student fails the comprehensive examination twice, that student will be unable to receive the Master's Degree.

Revised Spring, 2009